THE TEMPORALITIES OF WORKING LIVES: ORIENTATIONS TO TIME IN CAREER PORTRAITS AND IN THE LONDON BANKING INDUSTRY

by

Gerald Koessl

Thesis submitted to Goldsmiths, University of London

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

GOLDSMITHS

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

OCTOBER 2013

This thesis is dedicated to those who are

striving for social justice and equality

Declaration of Authorship

I, Gerald Koessl, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and that it has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Acknowledgements

Completing this PhD has probably been one of the most intellectually (and psychologically) challenging activities of my life so far. That is why it seems important to me to acknowledge some of the people and institutions that have enabled me to arrive at where I am today.

First and foremost I want to thank my supervisors Lisa Adkins and Alberto Toscano. They have been extremely helpful in guiding me through the oftentimes difficult process of writing this thesis. They have not only provided me with their expertise and feedback in the subject matter but they have also encouraged me to always critically rethink my assumptions and findings in order to come up with original ways of describing the social realities of the contemporary world of work.

I also want to thank numerous members of staff and PhD peers from Goldsmiths, with whom I had many interesting discussions that also helped me to develop my own research. Doing a PhD at Goldsmiths has also enabled me to attend and present at national and international conferences, meet some of the leading scholars within the field and to be part of an international research community.

I also owe my thanks to the University of London Central Research Fund, which helped me to fund large parts of the fieldwork for my research. Thanks also to the Vienna Institute for Social Science Documentation and Methodology, which provided some of the funding for doing this PhD. I am also grateful to all the people I interviewed or helped me to find interviewees for this research. It was only with the help of those people that I could actually undertake this research.

Last but not least, I want to thank my parents, my sister Claudia, her husband Joe and their amazing children Lydia and Siam, my sister Ulrike and her husband Conrad, my brother Christian and his wife Cornelia as well as all my friends for all their emotional and intellectual support over the last years. Above all, I want to thank Georgia Panteli, with whom I could share all the difficult and exciting moments of writing this PhD.

Abstract

By elaborating a Bourdieusian methodological framework, this thesis explores the temporalities of working lives in two different empirical settings. First, in portraits of people's careers featured in contemporary newspapers, and second, for two different kinds of workers associated with the banking industry in London. These two workforces consist of a group of people in their early and mid-careers who are involved in the 'core' activities of banks and a group of cleaning workers in the subcontracted 'periphery' of the banking industry. In regard to these empirical settings this thesis explores the interconnectedness between economic structures and individual working life temporalities. It does so by considering in particular two pervasive processes, namely individualisation and precarisation and it shows that these processes both operate at the level of time and narrative.

The analysis of career portraits shows that such portraits of (usually unknown) people's career in newspapers have a role model function and they serve as a technique of individualisation as they convey an individualised understanding of working lives, an individualisation which is in alignment with the neoliberal values of self-determination and individual autonomy. While career portraits enact de-temporalised and de-socialised notions of individual agency, my analysis of the two workforces in banking provide evidence for the socially and economically grounded nature of individual agency, in particular with regard to people's work biographies and their working futures. It is shown that although individualised understandings of work biography were an important feature among the group of people in their early and mid-careers in banking, the precariousness of the working conditions of cleaners force many of these workers to 'stabilise the present' whilst future plans and ambitions remain out of individual reach. However, in recent years, many of the cleaning workers have joined trade unions aiming to collectively improve their future.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

This thesis poses the question of whether or not the individualisation and precarisation of working lives can be understood as a reorganisation of the temporal relations of production. It asks: what drives processes of individualisation and precarisation of working lives? Are these processes substantively and/or conceptually related? And is their common ground that of temporality? Moreover, the thesis asks whether social divisions hardwired to processes of precarisation and individualisation can be understood as divisions of time.

Recent sociological debates identify time and temporality as central to the understanding of economic life. While the sociological interest in time is certainly not new and can be traced to the beginnings of sociology as a discipline, recent debates have included discussions around the changing nature of working time (e.g. Agger 2011, Ballard 2007, Basso 2003, Blount and Leroy 2007, Carrasco and Mayordomo 2005, Conaghan 2006, Glorieux et al. 2008, Odih 2003, 2007, Perrucci and MacDermid 2007, Poster 2007); arguments about the emergence of new working life biographies (e.g. Boltanski and Chiapello 2005, Hoerning et al. 1997, Hoerning et al. 1998, Leccardi 2005, Nowotny 1994, Reiter 2003, Sennett 1998, 2006, 2008a); disputes regarding the centrality of futurity for the operations of contemporary capitalism (e.g. Adam 2004, Adam and Groves 2007, Adkins 2009, Harris 2004); and explorations of time vis-à-vis work precariousness (e.g. Berlant 2011, Bourdieu 2003, Castel 2003, Castel and Doerre 2009, Mitropoulos 2005, Paugam 2000, Standing 2011).

These debates have been complemented by broader arguments for new conceptions of time, all of which in one way or another depart from ideas of clock-time or linear time. These conceptions include network time (Hassan 2003, Hassan and Purser 2007), timeless time (Castells 2000), real-time, situational time (Rosa 2005, Rosa and Scheuerman 2009), event time (Adkins 2009), intangible time (O'Carroll 2008), stratigraphic time (Colebrook 2009) and *Eigenzeit* (Nowotny 1994). In brief, there are numerous accounts suggesting that

economic and organisational changes over recent decades centre on shifts in temporality.

Given this broad range of literature and debates on questions of time and temporality, as well as the fact that time has often been an implicit topic in discussions on precariousness and individualisation, it is perhaps surprising that processes of individualisation and precarisation have not explicitly been explored from the perspective of time. This thesis attempts to bridge this gap by putting time and temporality at the core of these processes. This will be achieved via a temporal perspective that focuses on the interrelatedness of economic structures and individual working lives. Such a focus is important since, while there is a general agreement that we are moving towards a new temporal organisation of working lives, on the whole it has not been made clear how these temporalities may be taken up and lived in individual practices.

Thus, while time has been identified as a central issue in contemporary debates on economic life, there are few existing accounts exploring how these transformations may require individuals to develop new practices and attitudes towards time. Pierre Bourdieu's writings on time (1990b, 2000a, 2000c, 2005, 2010, Bourdieu and Sayad 1964) provide a valuable resource for such an exploration, especially since in these writings he elaborates on the interdependency of economic and temporal structures. By elaborating a Bourdieusian methodological framework, this thesis will therefore contribute to an exploration of the temporalities of working lives. It will do so for two different empirical settings. First, in portraits of people's careers featured in contemporary newspapers, and second, for two different kinds of workers associated with the banking industry in London.

In regard to these empirical settings this thesis explores the interconnectedness between economic structures and individual working lives. It does so pertaining to two pervasive processes, namely individualisation and precarisation, processes that many sociologists and social theorists posit as dominating social life in general, and economic life more particularly. At face value, however, processes of individualisation and precarisation are, however, contradictory. Specifically,

while individualisation has been conceptualised as concerning the necessity and ability to construct or shape one's own biography (Beck 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001, Giddens 1991) and hence one's own future, precariousness is usually associated with the opposite, that is, with the inability to plan or foresee one's future – with not 'having' a future (Berardi 2009b, Bourdieu 2000a, 2000c, 2003, Harris 2004, Standing 2011). Given that these processes are widely posited to dominate contemporary life – and especially economic life – we might then propose that the contemporary worker or potential worker faces a contradiction or disjuncture: s/he faces the necessity of individually shaping her or his future working life but must do so in a context of precarisation, that is, in a context where making a future is increasingly difficult to achieve. This apparent disjuncture or contradiction between individualisation and precarisation forms a key backdrop to this thesis. More specifically, recent debates on the individualisation and precarisation of work form the theoretical basis of this thesis, especially in as much as they concern relations of time.

By exploring the temporal nature of processes of individualisation and precarisation, this thesis will make three contributions to contemporary sociological debate. The first contribution concerns the relation between changing economic and organisational structures and individual futurities of working lives. While recent shifts in the economy have been conceptualised in terms of changing production methods and organisations (Gorz 1999, Harvey 1989, Marazzi 2008, 2011, Piore and Sabel 1984, Wills 2008, 2009a, Wills et al. 2010), it has remained largely unclear how individual practices and attitudes relate to temporal frameworks provided by economic or organisational contexts. In this thesis I will suggest that the changes from a Fordist to a Post-Fordist economic regime (Amin 1994, Jessop 1994, 1995, Kumar 2005, Lipietz 1995, Tonkiss 2006, Wigfield 2001) have involved a reorganisation of individual temporalities, a restructuring away from long-term, organisational career thinking towards flexible and situational futurities.

While changes towards a regime of flexibility have been discussed for example by Richard Sennett (1998, 2006), it has not been made clear how they can be conceptualised as an interdependency between economic and individual

temporalities and how this interdependency operates in a context of organisational polarisation processes. A Bourdieusian approach that takes into account not only the interrelation between economic and individual temporalities but also the socially structured nature of individual practices shall enable me to examine such polarisation processes and relations of interdependency. This thesis will therefore map the emergence of new practices and attitudes through which individuals anticipate their future and investigate how such anticipation is made possible or closed down by specific economic or organisational settings.

The second contribution concerns the divisions and disjunctures in individual temporalities resulting from these settings. To put this slightly differently: this thesis will examine how organisational changes – and especially polarisation and precarisation processes – shape possibilities for workers becoming agents of their working lives. As a working definition, polarisation in this context shall refer to processes within organisations that are creating divisions between workforces in terms of income, employment rights or access to promotional structures. In regard to such organisational change I will suggest that one major driver of precariousness at an organisational level has been the corporate practice of subcontracting, whereby segments of the workforce of an organisation are put at 'arms-length' from their real employer, a process which has placed a growing number of workers at the periphery of organisations. This peripheral position, however, has not only furthered divisions among different workforces but has also contributed to the growth of already existing social divisions.

These divisions, I will propose, can be understood as divisions of time with workers divided into those able to individually engage with their (future) working lives on the one hand and those unable to *colonise their own future* (Giddens 1991) and to develop individual narratives of the future on the other. I will suggest that Robert Castel's work on the relation between individualisation and precariousness (2003, 2009 and 2010) provides a useful resource for understanding such divisions. In accounting for socio-economic divisions as divisions of time, this thesis will argue that we are not moving towards *a* new temporal regime (as is often assumed) but towards increasingly polarised and

divided *regimes* of time that reflect economic and social core and periphery positions in organisations, as well as in society at large.

The third contribution this thesis makes to explore the temporal nature of processes of individualisation and precarisation concerns narratives of individualisation. As is well documented, writers such as Beck (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) have argued that contemporary processes of individualisation mean that individuals are increasingly confronted with their future working lives; indeed, they are increasingly required to actively engage with and create their own working futures. As this thesis will elaborate, this requirement is one which can be examined at the level of narrative. Through an analysis of aspects of contemporary news print-media, this thesis will elaborate how individuals are pervasively addressed as agents of their own working futures. By means of this analysis I will, however, put forward a critique of notions of individual agency and future orientation assumed by writers such as Beck. More specifically, I will elaborate how at the level of narrative, individualisation is in alignment with the (neoliberal) demand that individuals become authors of their own futures, including their future working lives – a demand that has been universalised and normalised via a number of media, including, as I will suggest, through the specific genre of the career portrait. These demands, as my thesis will further demonstrate, also have important implications for social class.

To elaborate these contributions, as I have already noted, this thesis draws on Bourdieu's methodological injunction against the separation between economic and temporal structures. In so doing this thesis makes two assumptions. First, it assumes that in order to understand the nature of individual practices and attitudes towards the future one needs to consider their embeddedness in specific historical, economic and social conditions. Second, it assumes that these practices and attitudes cannot be understood to be universal: different forms of the organization of economic relations correspond to different forms of temporality, and more specifically correspond to different ways in which individuals relate to their past, present and future working lives. Bourdieu's analysis of the indivisibility of economic and temporal structures lies behind the

decision to structure the thesis in terms of these two assumptions; moreover, an insistence on their inseparability allows me to develop a critique of commonly assumed notions of individual agency. Hence, by following Bourdieu's methodological prescriptions, I am able to develop a critique of the pervasive cultural assumption that all individuals should and can shape their own futures.

Drawing on this methodological framework this thesis will examine 180 career portraits collected from six different newspapers published in Britain and Austria over the period 2004-2010. Career portraits, which are usually published in weekend editions of daily or weekly newspapers, depict the working lives and careers of individuals in a variety of jobs. Typically, those portrayed are unknown to the public. In the analysis, particular attention will be paid to the underlying notions of agency assumed in these portraits. For example, by analysing the ways in which pasts, presents and futures are portrayed, I will consider the ways in which such portraits convey de-temporalised or socially disembedded notions of individual agency. In regard to these portraits, and following this analysis, this thesis will also ask what these kinds of representations do, sociologically speaking. Can they be understood as individualising techniques, and if so how?

In addition to an analysis of career portraits, this thesis examines the temporalities of the working lives of people associated with the banking industry in the City of London and in Canary Wharf, situated in London's docklands. These latter form the two main financial districts of London. The analysis will focus on two very different workforces. First, people in their early and mid-careers who are involved in the 'core' activities of banks; second, a group of cleaning workers in the subcontracted 'periphery' of the banking industry. Through data collected from semi-structured interviews with these two groups, this thesis explores how organisational settings and different conditions of work influence and shape individual future perspectives. Particular attention will be paid to questions of individual agency, that is, the possibilities for individuals to be agents of their future. The diverse positioning of the two groups in the banking industry, moreover, enables an investigation into polarisation within organisations and into how processes of individualisation and precariousness can be viewed from the perspective of time. As the discussion of such processes is

closely related to broader changes of the UK's and in particular of London's labour market, I will briefly outline some of its main features, especially those that are relevant to the importance of London as a global financial centre.

When speaking about the economy and the labour market of the UK it is important to bear in mind the distinctiveness of London's economy compared to the rest of the country. This is particularly true for the sectorial distribution of employment and for the distribution of incomes. As Chapter 8 will illustrate in more detail, while there has been a general shift towards service-sector work in the UK (as in most Western countries), this shift has resulted in a particularly strong growth of financial and business services in London, mainly at the expense of (light) manufacturing. The following graphs shows that today 26% of the London workforce is working in industries directly or indirectly related to banking, finance and insurance, a figure that is 10% higher than in the rest of the UK. It can also be seen that there is also a clear divide between London and the rest of the UK with regards to employment in manufacturing, and this is so despite a relative decline of this sector in the whole country over recent decades.

Employment rate by industry (working age)
source: GLA (http://data.london.gov.uk/labour-market-indicators)

Industry	London	United Kingdom
Agriculture and fishing	0.0	1.0
Energy and water	0.9	1.8
Manufacturing	3.3	9.8
Construction	6.7	7.0
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	15.7	18.7
Transport and communications	12.1	8.8
Banking, finance and insurance	26.0	16.2
Public admin. education and health	27.1	30.2
Other services	6.9	5.4

But previous decades have not only witnessed a sharp increase in service-sector employment but there has also been a rise in average qualification levels. Level 4 and above qualifications[1] have increased steadily between 2007 and 2012, with a rise of around 10% in London, where qualification levels are far above the UK average. The following graph illustrates these changes.

Proportion of working age people with Level 4+ qualifications (%)
source: GLA (http://data.london.gov.uk.labour-market-indicators)
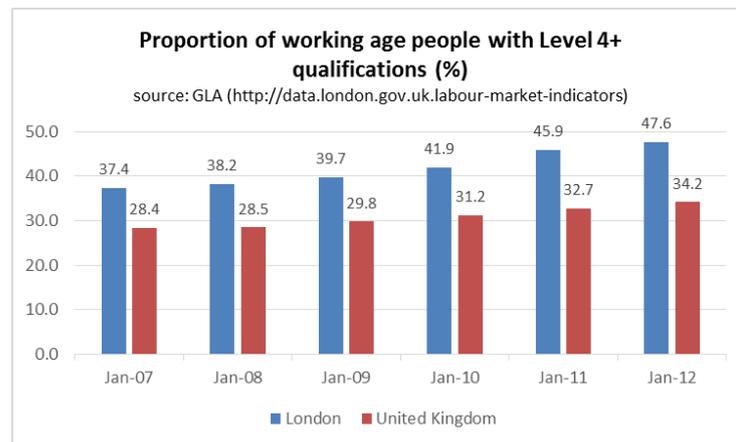
The expansion of service-sector work in the UK has further been paralleled by the rise in female labour participation rates. Nonetheless, the female employment rate is still considerably lower than for men, as the following table shows:

Employment rate (source: ONS Statistics 2013)		
	male	*female*
London	76.1%	62.6%
United Kingdom	76.0%	66.0%

There is however not only a difference in employment rates between men and women, but, crucially, a gender pay differential of almost 10% for full-time employees in the UK (Perfect 2012: 5). A distinctive gender division is also at work in terms of positions within organisations. While in London almost a third of the male workforce occupies higher managerial or higher professional occupations (NS-SeC[2] classification No 1) it is only a fifth among the female workforce who occupy similar positions. For the whole of the UK the disparity is

---

[1] http://ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-frameworks/levels-of-qualifications/
[2] National Statistics Socio-economic Classification

even greater; here men are double as likely to work in higher managerial and higher professional occupations than women (see following table).

Percentage of workforce in higher managerial and professional occupations (source: Census 2011)		
	male	*female*
London	32.4%	20.5%
United Kingdom	27.4%	14.4%

Apart from such divisions of gender, other important division in the UK's and even more so in London's workforce are migrant divisions of labour (Wills et al. 2010). Census data shows that between 2001 and 2011 the percentage of people living in London who were born in the UK went down from 72.9% in 2001 to 66.3% in 2011. A rapid change can also be identified in the ethnic composition of London's residents. While in 2001 almost 60% described themselves as 'White British' this figure dropped to around 45% in 2011. In other words, an increasing number of people in London (and to a lower degree also in the UK) and hence of its workforce consists of migrants, who have either arrived in the UK recently or have histories of migration. As Chapters 7 and 8 will discuss in further detail, the increasing reliance of London's labour market on migrant workers has had important implications for ongoing socio-economic polarisation processes, too. Migrant workers are more likely to be employed in low-paid and insecure jobs. The subsequent graph provides an overview of the likelihood of a number of different ethnic groups in London working in low-paid jobs, that is, in jobs that pay less than the London Living Wage which is currently set at £8.80 for London and at £7.65 for the rest of the UK.

Employees in London in low-paid (less than the London Living Wage) work by ethnicity
source: London's Poverty Profile

Ethnicity	Percentage
Pakistani or Bangladeshi	40%
Black African	34%
Black Caribbean	26%
Indian	23%
Other White	24%
White British	16%

The industries (in London) with the highest proportion of their workforce on low incomes can be found in caring, retail, the hospitality and catering sector and, importantly for my thesis, in the cleaning sector. Between 75 and 85 per cent of employees of the cleaning sector employees are employed in low pay jobs (Hoffman 2014). Low pay is particularly widespread among people working part-time. The median wage for part-time employees in London is less than 60 per cent of that for full-time employees (Hoffman 2014: 12), which is ever more significant as the proportion of part-time workers has increased steadily over recent years.

The increasing reliance on low-paid labour however has been paralleled by a rise of incomes in the top layers of the income distribution. Again, London deviates sharply from the figures for the rest of the UK. London's labour market shows a stark polarisation of incomes with a proportionately large number of people in the top tenth and bottom tenth of the income distribution.

High and low income households in England: proportion of regional population in bottom tenth and top tenth of income distrubution
source: London's Poverty Profile

Region	Bottom tenth	Top tenth
London	16%	17%
West Midlands	11%	7%
Yorks and Humberside	10%	7%
North West	10%	7%
North East	9%	7%
East Midlands	9%	7%
Eastern	9%	12%
South West	9%	8%
South East	8%	15%
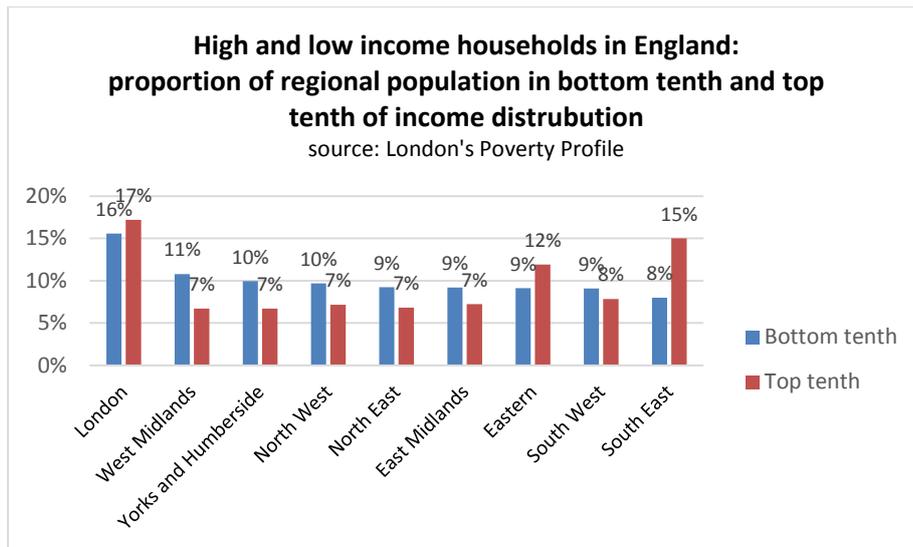
Chapter 8 will discuss these division and in particular the social and historical reasons and consequences why London's labour market exhibits these divisions in more depth. Crucially, this thesis will examine the causes, social divisions and in particular how such divisions can be understood from the perspective of time in theoretical and empirical registers.

Individualisation and precariousness in the context of a neoliberal and financialised economy

While this thesis is framed by theories of individualisation and precarisation, it is important to register that the research and fieldwork on which it is based coincided with the global financial crisis and its aftermath, a crisis which meant that a growing number of people working in banking and banking-related industries faced growing uncertainty regarding their futures. During the months that followed the bankruptcies of major international banks in 2008, there were numerous images circulating around the world showing bankers walking out of their offices and sitting in the streets after having lost their jobs. Images of unemployment and people feeling desperate and insecure about their future suddenly caught the attention of millions of people all over the world. In London, a centre of global finance, there was a general feeling that this may mark the decline or even the end of an entire industry. Within a few weeks, job insecurity and the spectre of unemployment became topics of everyday news.

Yet, while many people in banking lost their jobs after the so-called 'credit-crunch' in 2008, the insecuritisation and precarisation of work had long before become a reality of work for many people. And while it was big news when people in banking lost their jobs, insecure and precarious forms of employment are rarely deemed newsworthy. Indeed, it generally escapes the attention of the media that even within the banking and finance industry there are many workers in cleaning, security or catering jobs, whose conditions of work and incomes were poor before the events of 2008. While often labouring in the offices of large banking and financial organisations, such workers are usually employed by subcontracted specialist firms who pay only the legally required minimum wage. Such firms also typically do not offer any forms of social security, for example, sick pay or pension schemes. The existence of such insecure and precarious workers servicing the banking and finance industries demonstrate categorically that there was a 'crisis of work' long before the financial crisis reached the headlines of international news.

Paradoxically, the growth of job insecurity and precarious work has taken place during a time in which a neoliberal ethos of the enterprising self has become increasingly normalised. The enterprising self centres on the idea of the autonomous individual who takes responsibility for shaping his or her future career. The normalisation of the latter is evident in how recent decades have witnessed an enormous rise of self-help literature advising individuals on 'how to make a career' or 'how to be successful'. In focusing on the individual such literature has supported an individualised understanding of work. Such individualising tendencies within neoliberalism were observed by Michel Foucault in his lectures on governmentality at the Collège de France (Foucault 2007, 2008) and later by Nikolas Rose (1990, 1996). Drawing on Foucault, Rose critiques the view of individuals as entrepreneurial selves, suggesting that the autonomous, self-determined self of present-day economic life must be understood as a new form of the governance of subjects.

This neoliberal ethos, however, should not be understood to be only at issue in regard to the economic sphere, but also as central to the operations of the

modern state. Thus while the neoliberal state has typically cut public spending and reduced collective social security, it has also advocated the autonomous and entrepreneurial self, and in so doing both undercut and pathologised forms of state dependency. This can be observed especially at the level of social policy, where there has been a shift from collective systems of social security financed via taxes and/or social insurance contributions to a rhetoric that encourages individuals to take responsibility for themselves via the market. As David Harvey has observed, neoliberalism "values market exchange as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide to all human action, and substituting for all previously held ethical beliefs" (Harvey 2005: 3). It is this context of pervasive political and economic neo-liberalism that this thesis is set. Thus, rather than through the short-termism of the financial crisis, processes of individualisation and precarisation are understood in terms of the longer time scale of neo-liberalism. Before turning to the opening chapters of the thesis, in what follows I provide a brief outline of the thesis as a whole.

Thesis outline

In Chapters 1, 2 and 3 I review some of the key sociological conceptualisations of changes in contemporary working life biographies. I place special emphasis on how these conceptualisations might be read from the perspective of time and temporality. In Chapter 1, I discuss the theories of individualisation and reflexivisation of working lives put forward by Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens as well as critical responses to their theories. As working definitions, individualisation can be understood as a process that concerns a reorganisation of work biography as an *individual* work biography, while reflexivisation in this context can be viewed as a process that calls into question and thereby transforms individual orientations and practices to work biography. I suggest that Beck's and Giddens's understandings of the changing nature of working lives *are* about the organisation of time insofar as they offer notions of individualised and reflexive present and future orientation. Thereafter, I draw on Castel's writings on precarisation to discuss the relation between processes of individualisation and precarisation of working lives and show how both of these

processes can be conceptualised from the point of view of time. For the time being, the precarisation of work shall be understood in very general terms as a process which places individuals in a socio-economic state of insecurity or instability, mainly as a result of a weak bargaining power over their conditions of work.

Chapter 2 discusses the emergence of new temporal practices and habits in the context of working lives. By critically assessing some of the literature on the shift from Fordist to Post-Fordist modes of production and organisation, such as those of Bob Jessop, Michael Piore and Charles Sabel and David Harvey, I propose that this shift can be viewed as a change from linear to more flexible and discontinuous temporalities. I propose further that changes towards flexible temporalities at the level of organisations have produced increasingly polarised workforces, and in particular workforces divided by experiences of time.

In Chapter 3 I introduce Bourdieu's writings on time, writings which will then serve as the methodological framework for the empirical analysis of present-day working life temporalities. I discuss Bourdieu's early interest in questions of time, economy and work and complement this early work with his notion of *practice as temporalisation* introduced in later writings. The second part of this chapter outlines how Ricoeur and Lawler conceptualise the relation between narrative and time, in terms of the ways in which narratives link past and present events as well as the individual with the collective. By way of conclusion, this chapter juxtaposes the work of Bourdieu and Ricoeur to investigate the relation between time, narrative and practice.

The methodology of the thesis is presented in Chapter 4, after which Chapter 5 examines the temporality of practice and narrative at work in career portraits. As already noted, career portraits aim to capture individual working lives by describing a person's past and present career; they are often published in weekend editions of newspapers or in separate sections on work, careers or jobs, sections that may even be passed unnoticed for some of the readers. This chapter asks how and why career portraits have become an integral and unquestioned

part of most newspapers and enquires into what role they might play in conveying new values and attitudes towards work.

To address these questions this chapter analyses 180 career portraits in relation to the theories of individualisation and reflexivisation of working lives presented in Chapter 1. Bourdieu's temporalised understanding of practice is also mobilised in this analysis, especially to consider how individual practices, and especially practices of change, are represented in such portraits. In addition, Bourdieu's framework will be drawn upon to analyse what kinds of notions of agency such portraits assume.

A second chapter (Chapter 6) on career portraits identifies new temporal and economic practices, habits and structures that are enacted in these texts. More specifically, this chapter explores through the prism of these representations how people time or are timed by their working lives. This exploration will pay particular attention to issues of change or *practices of change* (e.g. 'breaking' with the familiar, changing career plans, searching for change, keeping up with change, etc.). In so doing, this chapter seeks to identify the practices and temporal outlooks individuals may draw on to relate to their past and future working lives. To put this somewhat differently, and to draw on the language of Bourdieu, this chapter investigates "the acquisition of new temporal habits" (Bourdieu 2000c: 28). This chapter then places these new temporal habits and practices in the context of discussions regarding current changes in the temporal nature of working lives, including the emergence of *situational time* or *potential time*. Finally, this chapter explores how career portraits depict and enact a blurring of boundaries between the spheres of work and life. More specifically this chapter explores to what extent individuals in career portraits "put to work their entire lives" (Marazzi 2007: 50).

Chapters 7 and 8 concern the workers employed in and servicing the banking and finance industry in London. Chapter 7 examines the working lives of employees who are directly involved in the activities of banks, while Chapter 8 focuses on the lives of workers subcontracted to clean the buildings housing banking activities. Together these two chapters broadly examine whether polarisation

processes within organisations can be understood from the perspective of time. In both these chapters, I investigate the temporal nature of organisational settings as well as the temporal effects of ongoing polarisation and precarisation processes on people's working lives. My analysis of these two different groups of workers maps out the practices and temporal orientations people develop according to their organisational, economic and social context. Particular attention is paid to how individuals relate to their future working lives, that is, to the question of how working futures are – or are not – made.

1. The individualisation versus the precarisation of working lives: a temporal perspective

1.1. Introduction

This chapter will address theories of individualisation and reflexivisation of working lives as well as the relation between individualisation and precarisation processes from a temporal perspective. The first part of this chapter will introduce Ulrich Beck's and Anthony Giddens's concepts of individualisation and reflexivisation of working life biographies and discuss what their theories say about the organisation of time in relation to the changing nature of working lives and careers. In so doing, I will mainly draw on Beck's concept of individualisation and destandardisation of labour as well as on Giddens's notion of disembedding and the reflexive self.[3] I will suggest that individualisation, according to Beck and Giddens, concerns the organisation of time especially to the extent that their writings imply that collective temporal structures are increasingly being replaced by individualised notions of time, that is, by notions of time in which individuals are increasingly required to time not only their present but also their future working lives.

As a next step, I will present some of the critiques that have been raised against Beck's and Giddens's concepts of individualisation and reflexivisation, in particular critiques which have suggested that Beck and Giddens have downplayed the structural dimensions of individualisation. This discussion serves a twofold purpose for this thesis. Firstly, it will enable me to place these analyses of individualisation and reflexivity in the context of more recent changes in the world of work, including processes of precarisation. Secondly, it will allow me to establish how individualisation is embedded in and dependent on – and hence does not exist in opposition to – structural and institutional resources.

---

[3] See also Nowotny (1994), who argues that "the previous 'standard biography', given an increasing tendency to participate in work and a stagnant social volume of available work, will be accessible only to a small fragmentary group of the gainfully employed in the future" (Nowotny 1994: 104).

Specifically, by adopting a class perspective, I will discuss the work of Michael Savage and Beverley Skeggs, who both argue that individualisation is not a process that demonstrates the declining influence of social class or structure but rather the product of the increasing dominance of a middle-class orientation to work and career. Thereafter, and extending this form of critique, I will draw on Robert Castel's writings on the relation between the modern individual and collective systems of social protection. In Castel's view, contemporary precarisation processes are reworking individualisation insofar as such processes are increasingly undermining the possibilities for individuals to shape their own working futures. For the context of my thesis this is significant insofar as precarisation processes are creating social and economic divisions between those who are (still) able to manage their present and future individually, which Castel describes in his concept of the *individu par excès* and those who are unable to anticipate their own future, conceptualised by Castel as the *individu par défaut*, division that will be significant in particular for empirical Chapters 7 and 8.[4]

1.2. Beck's theory of individualisation and do-it-yourself biography

Beck concurs with Giddens that we are witnessing a change from simple or first modernity, which started with the period of industrialisation, to second or reflexive modernity. Both authors agree that we are living in a different form of modernity rather than in a new era that has overcome or transgressed modernity (such as postmodernity). "We are witnessing not the end of but the beginning of modernity – beyond its classical industrial design" (Beck 1992: 10). Beck's theory of individualisation, therefore, has to be understood within the context of his macro theory of (reflexive) modernization. According to Beck reflexivity "does not mean reflection (as the adjective *reflexive* seems to suggest) but above all self-confrontation" (Beck 1999: 73).[5] Put differently, "simple modernization

---

[4] Castel's concepts of the *individu par excès* and the *individu par défaut* will be explained in detail in section 1.6 of this chapter.
[5] In his essay 'Jenseits von Klasse und Nation' (2008), Beck states that his individualisation thesis has often wrongly been misinterpreted from an overly subjective point of view and thus been attributed with notions of individualism or egoism. In this article he underlines that individualisation needs to be understood from a

becomes reflexive modernization to the extent that it disenchants and then dissolves its own taken-for-granted premises" (Beck et al. 2003: 3). Simple modernization was characterised by the centrality of institutions such as the nation-state, traditional gender and family roles or the existence of social classes as well as what Beck calls "full employment societies" (2003: 4), which, however, as Beck et al. (2003: 4) underline, were also based on a sexual division of labour. These institutions and social formations have increasingly become questioned and disintegrated with the advent of reflexive modernity. As Beck argues "the normal family, the normal career and the normal life history are all suddenly called into question and have to be renegotiated" (2003: 4). This "calling-into-question", as Beck famously argues (and has been extensively critiqued), has also entailed a declining influence of social class on individuals.

Beck's theory of reflexive modernization can thus be read as a theory of individualisation, that is, a theory of the decline of the norms and traditions associated with previously existing social institutions and their replacement by individual choices and decisions. As Beck puts it, "the individual becomes the reproduction unit of the social in the lifeworld" (Beck 1992: 90). In terms of working lives the process of individualisation means that "the normal biography (...) becomes the 'elective biography', the 'reflexive biography', the 'do-it-yourself biography'" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001: 3). Accordingly, Beck understands the individualisation of working lives as a process whereby "biographies become self-reflexive; socially prescribed biography is transformed into biography that is self-produced" (Beck 1992: 135). However, Beck does not claim that individualisation automatically means a higher degree of autonomy over one's life. On the contrary, he argues that "individualization is not based on the free decision of individuals (...) people are condemned to individualization" (Beck 1994: 14), and individualisation can bring with it new forms of risks and constraints. In Beck's understanding, reflexive forms of life open up possibilities and chances for individuals to take on (and may be compelled to take on) more self-driven and self-responsible ways of life. This, however, does not mean that inequalities cease to exist. Indeed, Beck argues that "[t]he reflexive conduct of

structural perspective (i.e. individualisation is not a matter of individual choice but is being imposed by modern social institutions).

life, the planning of one's own biography and social relations gives rise to a new inequality", which, he goes on to say, is "the inequality of dealing with insecurity and reflexivity" (Beck, 1992: 98). Thus, while Beck's discussion of the shift towards risk society can be understood as entailing increased agency in regard to social structures, he also makes clear that the so-called *do-it-yourself biography* can more easily become a *breakdown biography* (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001: 3, see also Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995).

While in 1986, when Beck's influential *Risk Society* (Beck 1992) was published, he discussed the aforementioned transformation of work biographies in terms of a *destandardisation of labour*, thirteen years later, in 1999 (Beck 2000), he describes the conditions of work that are increasingly becoming predominant in Western societies as a process of *Brazilianisation*. By *Brazilianisation* Beck was referring to the spread of temporary, insecure and discontinuous forms of employment in Western societies, societies that were previously dominated by a paradigm of full employment. Thus Beck uses the term *Brazilianisation* in order to state that employment relations in the West increasingly resemble those of the Global South. The job for life, he argues, "has disappeared. (...) all paid work is subject to the threat of replacement. (...) and labour market flexibility has become a political mantra" (2000: 2).

Individualisation in a risk society hence means the redistribution of risks away from the economy and the state towards the individual (2000: 3). And although individuals are increasingly required to create their own working life biographies, as he argues in *Risk Society* (1992), "no one can say what you must learn in order to be needed in the future" because skills and knowledge are subject to the same flexibility as are the markets (2000: 3). In other words, the securities, certainties and clearly defined boundaries of first modernity have been replaced by the insecurities, uncertainties and loss of boundaries of second modernity (2000: 70). This transformation, as Beck goes on to say, also entailed a shift in the temporal organisation of working lives, and in particular of the relation between work and non-work. Work in first modernity, according to Beck, "rested upon a high degree of both temporal and spatial standardisation of work contracts and labour deployment (2000: 77). A clear division between work and non-work,

temporally as well as spatially, was therefore a defining feature of work in first modernity. With the emergence of the risk regime, or reflexive modernisation, work has, however, become much more individualised and the relation between work and non-work has been newly defined. Specifically, Beck argues "the boundaries between work and non-work are starting to blur, in respect of time, space and contractual content" (2000: 77).

According to Beck, however, the shift from first to reflexive (or second) modernity, has not only involved a shift in the temporal relation between work and non-work but, importantly for this thesis, it has also encompassed a reorganisation of the temporalities of work biographies. Thus, from a temporal perspective, reflexive modernization marks a break with the idea that the future is knowable and foreseeable or, as Beck et al. (2003) state: "today the future is less and less deducible from the past" (2003: 13). The linear understanding of time, as a temporal continuity between past, present and future, is being replaced by an understanding of time as an individual resource. This individualised understanding of time, however, is accompanied by a higher degree of risks now faced by individuals. In discussing such risks, Beck et al. (2003) refer to Sennett's distinction between *surfers* and *drifters* in order to describe the effects of increasing contingencies on individual working life biographies. Beck et al. argue that the *surfer* stands for a type of individuality that "tries to be actively conscious of change as a means of steering" (Beck et al. 2003: 26). They go on to argue that "'drifters', by contrast, experience the contingency and non-continuity of life as a loss and a threat. The multiplicity of subject boundaries appears to them as something that harms their chances of making decisions and steering their lives" (Beck et al. 2003: 26).

Beck et al. (2003) draw on Sennett's distinction between surfers and drifters in order to highlight the bifurcation processes involved in ongoing transformations of work biographies, and – of particular interest for the present thesis – to the creation of divisions between those able to create their own working futures and those unable to do so in a context of uncertainty and discontinuity. The fact that working life futurities are increasingly becoming unpredictable, as Beck goes on to say, has also involved the necessity to imbue one's career trajectories with

meaning (Beck et al. 2003: 25). The individualisation of working lives, in Beck's terms, has thus not only meant that individuals increasingly have to shape and time their own working lives but also that they need to create their own career narratives. While questions addressing the relation between narrative and time will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3, the next section of this chapter will contrast Beck's thesis of individualisation and reflexivisation of work biographies with Giddens's writings on the transformations of working lives. In particular, I will show how Giddens's understanding of reflexivity can be understood from the perspective of time.

1.3. Giddens's concept of disembedding and the reflexive self

Giddens's analysis of modernity and reflexive modernity (or radicalised modernity as he also calls it) is often mentioned in conjunction with Beck's theory of individualisation and reflexivisation. Together with Scott Lash, the two authors also published *Reflexive Modernization* (Beck et al. 1994), in which each develops a different theoretical approach to the emergence of reflexive modernity. Giddens's approach to reflexivity differs from Beck's insofar as Giddens focuses on the psycho-social and the ontological (see for example his notion of ontological security, Giddens 1991) as well as on the relation between reflexivisation and identity, while Beck is more interested in reflexivisation from a societal point of view. The following section will draw on those aspects of Giddens's psycho-social theory that focus on the relation between reflexivity and time. More specifically I will critically discuss three of Giddens's concepts that – implicitly or explicitly – address this relation, namely *tradition*, *disembedding* and the *colonisation of the future*.

Giddens explicitly speaks about time when he discusses the concept of tradition. Tradition, according to Giddens, organises time insofar as it enacts a relation to the past, the present as well as to the future. Tradition, in Giddens's view, constitutes "an orientation to the past, such that the past has a heavy influence or, more accurately put, is made to have a heavy influence, over the present"

(Giddens 1994: 62). Tradition, Giddens goes on, is not simply about the way in which the past shapes the present but "is also about the future, since established practices are used as a way of organising future time" (1994: 62). Practices based on tradition shape the future, "without the need to carve it out as a separate territory" (1994: 62).

Thus, tradition concerns the organization of time (Giddens 1994: 96). In what Giddens terms post-traditional society (Giddens 1994) individual actions are, however, increasingly disembedded or 'lifted out' from social relations and from local contexts of interaction which in turn are replaced by abstract systems such as money or expert systems (Giddens 1990: 21-22). The disembedding of individual practices from their social context, in Giddens's view, also involves a process whereby "social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information", which, as he goes on to say, "thus constitutively alter[s] their character" (Giddens 1990: 38). In Giddens's view, such conditions, that is, conditions in which "the future is recognised to be intrinsically unknowable" (Giddens 1991: 111) due to rapidly changing social contexts, require individual agents to develop a higher degree of reflexivity regarding their (working) futures.

Giddens's understanding of reflexivity is thus closer to the notion of reflection, or more precisely, reflection upon one's own practices and habits than Beck's notion of reflexivity. As I will discuss later on in this chapter, this notion of reflexivity has been critiqued by several authors for its assumptions regarding individual agency. In contrast to Beck, who uses the term reflexivity mostly in order to describe social processes of self-confrontation, Giddens develops his theory of reflexivity around the notion of self-reflexivity. This notion of reflexivity as reflection is also at issue in his approach to risk and futurity, as the following statements indicate:

> Individuals seek to *colonise the future* for themselves as an intrinsic part of their life-planning. (…) All individuals establish a portfolio of risk assessment, which may be more or less clearly articulated, well informed and 'open'; or alternatively may be largely inertial (Giddens 1991: 125).

> Given the extreme reflexivity of late modernity, the future does not just consist of the expectation of events yet to come. 'Futures' are organised reflexively in the present in terms of chronic flow of knowledge into the environments about which such knowledge was developed (Giddens 1991: 29).

In other words "in modern social conditions, the more the individual seeks reflexively to forge a self-identity, they will be aware that current practices shape future outcomes" (Giddens 1991: 129). But the idea of a *colonisation of the future*, as he argues, also means that the future is "increasingly severed from the past" and hence that it "becomes a new terrain – a territory of counterfactual possibility" (1991: 111). This understanding of the future is at the same time linked to the notion of risk, as Giddens argues: "The notion of risk becomes central in a society which is taking leave of the past, of traditional ways of doing things, and which is opening itself up to a problematic future" (1991: 111). The fact that more people are now required to colonise their future individually, in Giddens's view also means that identities cease to be pre-given and start to become an object for reflection.

Giddens's account of reflexivity thus underlines the consequences of reflexive modernisation for the self and self-identity in society. Self-identity, according to Giddens, requires reflexive awareness of the self. This reflexive self-awareness, in Giddens's view, is also fundamental for the way in which individual biographies are shaped. Although Giddens's theory of reflexivity does not address in detail the relation between reflexivisation and the changing nature of working life biographies, his writings underscore that the process of reflexivisation has involved a process of individualisation, that is, a process whereby individuals are increasingly required to colonise their own working futures. But in foregrounding the psychosocial and ontological aspects of reflexivity, Giddens fails to address the economic contexts that require individuals to reflect on their own futures, including their working futures. This line of critique has been developed by several authors and I turn to discuss this bracketing of socio-economic context in the following section. Hence, the following discussion will present some of the main critiques of Beck and Giddens's theories and it will do so mainly in order to explore in more depth the relation between present-day transformation of work

biographies and questions of time and agency, questions that are crucial for the empirical Chapters 5 to 8.

1.4. A critical approach to individualisation and reflexivisation in the context of changing working life temporalities

The process of reflexive modernization has increasingly required individuals to take decisions about the course of their (working) lives and entails new forms of risk. According to risk society theory, the production of risks is accompanied by an increasing need to take decisions in order to prevent risks from occurring. "Risks always depend on decisions – that is they presuppose decisions. They arise from the transformation of uncertainty and hazards into decisions" (Beck 1999: 75). Put differently, the process of individualisation, as Beck and Giddens understand it, is not only constituted by a "freeing of agency from structure" (Lash 1994: 119) but at the same individuals increasingly have to face their 'risky freedoms' (see also Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). For the context of working lives and careers this has meant that individuals are increasingly required to take individual decisions regarding their working futures to a larger extent than in previous decades.[6]

Individualisation, however, not only enables but also forces people to make choices for which they are supposed to bear the consequences. Individualisation therefore means that failure to take the right decision is increasingly conceived to be the responsibility of the individual. As Deborah Lupton argues: "to choose the wrong kind of university degree, occupation or marriage partner, to face unemployment or marital breakdown, tends to be considered the result of an individual's faulty planning or decision-making rather than the outcome of broader social processes" (Lupton 1999: 72). However, this individualised

---

[6] Adam and Groves similarly state that "the locus of responsibility has altered (...) the future has been transformed into a contingent sphere not only of human potential, opportunity, and influence but of obligation and responsibility as well" (Adam and Groves 2007: 34). The argument that individuals are now increasingly required to take decisions regarding their futures has been confirmed empirically in Harris' study on young women's attitudes towards the future (Harris 2004).

understanding of decision-making and engagement with one's future working life cannot be taken for granted, as individuals can only do so in a context in which they are equipped with the necessary economic and social resources (see also Tulloch and Lupton 2003). It is from this perspective that Lupton further argues that

> the self-reflexive individual, as presented by Beck and Giddens, is a socially and economically privileged person who has the cultural and material resources to engage in self-inspection. Many people, however, simply lack the resources and techniques with which to engage in the project of self-reflexivity (Lupton 1999: 114).

As I will go on to elaborate in this chapter, a similar critique of Beck and, in particular, of Giddens's notion of the reflexive self has been put forward from a class perspective by Skeggs (2004a, 2004b) and Savage (2000).

In his book on Ulrich Beck, Gabe Mythen (2005) concurs with the arguments presented by Lupton and also emphasises the social and economic preconditions in which individualisation and reflexivisation are embedded. In addition, however, Mythen specifically discusses individualisation in the context of work and suggests that there has been a "reformatting in the temporal structure of work" (Mythen 2005: 132). This reformatting, Mythen argues, is evident among employees who are forced to work additional or shorter hours when required and can be seen in the "decline of collective bargaining and the utilisation of freelance, temporary and part-time staff" (2005: 132). In terms of work biographies, he suggests that there is an ongoing shift towards a system in which "job evaluation, re-training and career changes become less like options and more like necessities" (2005: 133). In this regime, personal career changes are not simply necessary, but failure to change can already be considered as risky, a point that will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 6. He further argues that it cannot be assumed that workplace change is a feature of individual choice and decision but needs instead to be situated within a wider culture of risk (2005: 132). Although Mythen agrees with Beck's position that we are living in a risk society, he emphasises that life in risk society affects different individuals in different ways. He states that while "in risk society narrative, everyone seems destined to share a similar individualised experience" and the "process of

individualisation may be universal", the "experience *of* this process will be heterogeneous" (2005: 138).

Mythen, however, disagrees with Beck's argument that risk positions are increasingly replacing class positions. On the contrary, Mythen argues that "the distribution of risk tends to reinforce rather than transform existing inequalities" (2005: 144). For Mythen "the unyielding reproduction of social divisions indicates that class, gender, age and ethnicity remain durable yardsticks of social opportunity" (Mythen 2004: 135). Although Mythen emphasises the importance of stratification processes along subjective experiences (2004: 146), nonetheless he does not further develop theoretically how the process of individualisation reworks social inequalities in terms of the resources people draw on when they make choices. Such an understanding – significant for the context of this thesis – is however pushed forward by Anthony Elliot (2002) via an exploration of individualisation and reflexivisation.

In general terms, Elliott agrees with Beck's thesis that we are witnessing a shift from (simple) modernity to reflexive modernity, and also with the idea that this shift entails a process of individualisation. Elliott, however, critiques Beck's understanding of individualisation for its "subjective backdrop", which, as he goes on to argue, presupposes "an active engagement with the self, with the body, with relationships and marriage, with gender norms, and with work", and hence forces individuals to take "decisions about their own lives and future course of action" (2002: 298). This decision-taking takes place in an individualised risk-regime, that is, in a regime where "risk is de-socialised" and where "risk-exposure and risk-avoidance is a matter of individual responsibility and navigation" (2002: 305). The privatisation of risks, as Elliott further argues, produces new forms of structural inequality, mainly due to the fact that individuals are not equipped with the same resources in dealing with these risks. Elliott states that "one must be able to deploy certain educational resources, symbolic goods, cultural and media capabilities, as well as cognitive and affective aptitudes, in order to count as a 'player' in the privatization of risk-detection and risk-management" (2002: 305). In contrast to those who possess these resources and goods, there are "people who cannot deploy such resources and capabilities", which is "often the

result of various material and class inequalities" (2002: 305). These people, Elliott concludes, "are likely to find themselves further disadvantaged and marginalized in a new world order of reflexive modernization" (2002: 305).

For the context of the present thesis, the critique of Beck's and Giddens's understanding of individualisation and reflexivisation presented so far has shown that individualisation is not a process that can be conceived as an overarching transformation impacting equally on all, but instead represents an interplay between the necessity to create and shape work biographies and the resources individuals possess to actually do so. However, while previous discussions and critiques of Beck's and Giddens's individualisation thesis have been mainly theoretical in nature, I will henceforth present empirical research that underscores and substantiates previously made arguments and I will show how such empirical findings help to understand the socio-economic context of my (empirical) research, especially the in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Let me begin with Quilgars and Abbott's empirical labour market research, in which they assess critically Beck's and Giddens's understanding of reflexivity.

In a qualitative study of 90 households in England, conducted between 1997 and 1998, Quilgars and Abbott explore individualisation vis-à-vis people's position on the labour market. The authors describe the period they investigated as one in which there has been "a general intensification of work, involving both increased speed of work and working longer hours and more overtime" (Quilgars and Abbott 2000: 19). These temporal changes of employment relations, as the authors argue, are the result of increasing labour market flexibilisation and deregulation, which have led to a rise in feelings of insecurity and risk among the workforce.[7] These developments in the labour market and the ongoing retreat of the welfare state have led to a transfer of responsibilities and risks to the individual.

Crucially, from the point of view of my concerns here, the empirical findings of Quilgars and Abbott's study evidence that the distribution of risky jobs and the

---

[7] A lot of the changes the authors describe were imposed politically during the period of Tony Blair's tenure as British prime minister. Blair declared that "Britain will have the most lightly regulated labour market of any leading economy in the world" (Quilgars and Abbott 2000: 18).

risk of unemployment varies considerably by sectors and types of jobs and is substantially higher among unskilled workers than it is among skilled workers or professionals. Quilgars and Abbott also demonstrate that these changes affect individuals and families in completely different ways, depending on their social and economic situation and resources. The analysis of their qualitative interviews shows that "households with dependent children were often particularly concerned about job security" (Quilgars and Abbott 2000: 26). Importantly however, and in line with Beck's account of the relation between individualisation and risk, Quilgars and Abbott's research also illustrates the individualistic nature of people's accounts of uncertainty and anxiety. Thus "discussions about trade unions and the role of collective responses in minimising job loss were conspicuous by their absence in the interviews" (2000: 21). Instead "the vast majority of individuals only spoke in terms of the scope for individual action" (2000: 27) – a finding that is key to my discussion of career portraits in Chapters 5 and 6.

Despite a general trend – identified by Quilgar and Abbott - showing that irrespective of social class, age or gender, work in Britain in the 1990s has become increasingly risky, the authors explain that socio-economic conditions were nonetheless a main factor in explaining variations as regards people's ability to individually plan and anticipate their future careers. Planning, as they argue, "was least possible for those who arguably most needed it" (2000: 27). Although many families they interviewed were "concerned with and conversant about planning the future" and "only too aware of increasing risks" they were "not in a position to protect themselves from such risks due simply to a lack of money" (2000: 33). This argument, which stresses the socio-economic conditioning of individual risk management and the ability to engage with one's working future, has also been put forward by Jones et al. (2006). Hence, in line with Quilgar and Abbott's (2000) argument, Jones et al. (2006) argue that "even where people are both willing and able to think and plan ahead, their capacity to do so is often limited by economic insecurity and lack of resources" (Jones et al. 2006).

The claim that individual futurities are grounded in socio-economic contexts has also been substantiated by Taylor-Gooby (2001). In a qualitative study, he investigates people's attitudes towards the future regarding employment, health, housing as well as other areas, and finds that the notions risk, uncertainty as well as opportunity or choice have different meanings for people from different social classes: "Working-class respondents tended to link greater choice to insecurity, while middle-class participants tended to view it in a more positive light" (2001: 203). Risk is therefore experienced in a variety of ways and these experiences play an important role in terms of the ways in which they influence people's future perspectives.

In the same study, Taylor-Gooby illustrates that feelings of insecurity in relation to employment are significantly higher among groups such as single parents or less affluent people, compared to other social groups. Many of the respondents stated that they were having difficulties in predicting their future circumstances accurately, which was largely due to the contingencies of social life, especially those events associated with increasingly flexible patterns of employment and family life (Taylor-Gooby 2001: 209-210). Taylor-Gooby, who directs his critique in particular against Giddens's notion of the reflexive-self, points to the political implications of individualisation, understood as the loosening influence of structure on individual agency. He writes:

> Evidence that people are often mistaken about their own futures has disturbing implications for the tradition of economic theorizing which sees individuals as rational actors able to make deliberative choices between alternatives to satisfy their future wants. It also has implications for policies loosely based on ideas drawn from that tradition, which impose greater responsibility on individuals to plan to meet their own needs (2001: 206).

The ongoing change from a system of collective to individual risk-management, a social vision that has been at the heart of many policy changes in recent decades and years, may therefore deepen existing inequalities or create new kinds of inequalities depending on the extent people are able to cope with those risks.[8]

---

[8] Taylor-Gooby (2001) as well as Taylor-Gooby et al. (1999) have also explored the question of risk, reflexivity and individualisation in relation to changes in social policies and in particular in relation to the

It has indeed been argued that the increasingly individualised risk-regime has produced new forms of inequality, which have opened up a division between the *winners* and *losers* of risk society. These divisions, as Marianne Cooper shows in an empirical study on different groups of workers in contemporary Silicon Valley, all coming from various socio-economic class backgrounds, are divisions of time, as testified by the considerable variations in how workers felt they were able to "navigate through the risk society" (Cooper 2008: 1229), and hence the degree to which they were in a position to plan their futures. By adopting a Bourdieusian perspective, she highlights how a "calculative anticipatory approach to lives and careers; a tendency to think about the future" was "more likely to be held among the highly educated, high earning individuals" (Cooper 2008: 1240).

In other words, an active engagement with, and awareness of, one's future as regards career and financial planning, as Cooper demonstrates in her study, was most prevalent among respondents from the middle-classes. While the people from working-class families in Cooper's study showed a lower inclination to actively engage with potential future risks, the middle-class habitus was better accustomed to a risk-regime, and people regularly spoke about ways in which they attempted to manage risks individually. In her research, Cooper thus provides evidence of "the impact that class has on ways of navigating privatized risk as clear relationships existing between these 'ways' and the dispositions (habitus) and resources (capitals) held by different workers" (Cooper 2008: 1238).

Importantly for the context of my research, Cooper's research provides evidence for the interrelation of attitudes towards the future and people's class location, showing that the way in which individuals relate to their working futures is shaped in significant respects by their socio-economic positioning. Cooper empirically demonstrates how Bourdieu's concept of habitus helps to broaden

restructuring of the welfare state. They claim that theories of individualisation that underline the role of individual agency have been used as an argumentative and rhetorical basis for social welfare policies in recent decades. More specifically, welfare state retrenchment and restructuring are advancing because confidence in the traditional state-centred method of tackling risk is in decline and has been replaced by the individualistic ethos of self-responsibility and self-management of risks (Taylor-Gooby et al. 1999).

the understanding of reflexivity, in particular in regard to individual futurities.[9] However, her findings also show that the contemporary risk regime, epitomised in the removal of public safety nets, is a major driver in terms of growing divisions between those able to maintain their individualised attitudes towards the future and those unable to do so. While Cooper's analysis dovetails with Taylor-Gooby's, particularly insofar as they both postulate a new inequality of risks, Cooper additionally shows how a class perspective provides further insight into the mechanisms at work in the assessment and management of risks. This (class) perspective will be of particular importance for the empirical analysis in Chapters 7 and 8, where I will investigate the working life temporalities of two different groups of workers, groups that belong to two different social classes. Therefore, the next section of this chapter will explore further how a class perspective can add to and deepen our understanding of the relation between individualisation and recent transformations of the temporalities of work biographies, especially in regard to attitudes towards the future.

1.5. The individualisation and reflexivisation of working lives from a class perspective

As noted earlier, while Beck and Giddens understand the process of individualisation as a decline of the influence of social class on individual practices and personal identities, theorists such as Beverley Skeggs and Michael Savage suggest that individualisation concerns the reorganisation and reformulation of class relations in society. By drawing on Bourdieu's concept of distinction, Savage (2000) emphasises the socially constructed nature of individualisation, as well as the ways in which the claim to 'be an individual' has been historically mobilised (by the middle-classes) as a form of distinction from the non-individual (Savage 2000: 107).

Individuality today, as Savage states, is "defined as self-control, autonomy, ability to judge and hence *be* an agent" (Savage 2000: 107). Yet rather than indicating a

---

[9] See also Adkins (2003), Adams (2003) and Sweetman (2003) on the relation between habitus and reflexivity.

decreasing influence of structure on individual agency, this understanding of individuality, Savage's argues, is the expression of middle-class agency. The process of individualisation, accordingly, is less about the weakening influence of social class on individuals and more about the increasing dominance of middle-class values of individuality. This middle-class notion of individuality, Savage goes on to argue, is the product of a historical development, in particular the history of employment relations. The predominant form of a middle-class career in the 20th century was the so-called organisational career, which usually involved the idea of occupational transitions through job ladders (Savage 2000: 129). Although "job mobility was common in most forms of capitalist employment (…) the idea of the career, by contrast, invoked a notion of individual development linked to structured mobility through a hierarchical sequence of jobs" (2000: 130). Accordingly, Savage relates the development of the middle-class career, in which the idea of self-development became central, to the process of individualisation. This process has taken place at the expense of manual labour. He argues that "manual labour has been increasingly identified as a form of subordinate and dependent labour. This has allowed white-collar and middle-class work to become more hegemonic in claiming to be the repository for individualistic values" (Savage 2000: 134).

While the early middle-class career has been associated with the organisational or the bureaucratic career and hence with the image of a career 'ladder' which can be climbed up within a single organisation, more recent conceptions of (middle-class) career have transformed this ideal. As Savage further notes, instead of pursuing 'conventional' bureaucratic careers, individuals now opt for a variety of entrepreneurial strategies, including self-employment (2000: 140). The career has been "redefined as a 'project of the self', allowing individuals to pursue their own 'life projects' in an environment offering them the resources and scope for self-development" (2000: 140, see also discussions in Chapters 5 and 6). In this context, as Savage goes on to argue, "promotion involves moving from a 'secure' environment to a 'risky' one, in which career advancement is defined as a Faustian gamble" (2000: 141).

Savage's account of individualisation clearly contests Beck's and Giddens's assumption of individualisation as a process manifesting the declining influence of social class on individual agency. Indeed, Savage's suggestion that contemporary individualisation, in particular as regards working lives, is the expression of class relations challenges the decline of class thesis at its very core. Beverley Skeggs agrees with Savage that the rise of individualisation can be understood as an increasing dominance of middle class modes of expression. However, Skeggs suggests that individualisation is not only an issue of class but also draws attention to the resources that are necessary for individual agency. Skeggs critiques Giddens's theory of individualisation and in particular his model of the reflexive self for "being a modern version of the 'rational actor'" (Skeggs 2004b: 82). She argues that Giddens's as well as Beck's concept of individualisation, in which individuals increasingly act reflexively in order to create a coherent biography is based on a dual model of the self, that is, a model

> which requires a self that reflects upon itself; simultaneously externalising the self from social relations, so that the former can reflect and plan its future actions, then reinsert itself back into society through internalisation: it is a self that therefore knows its self (Skeggs 2004b: 81).

By drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, she critiques this notion of the self for separating individual actions from objective structures or, to put it in more Bourdieusian terms, for detaching individual practices from the embodied objective structures of the habitus. Skeggs further notes that "by proposing the universality of this [reflexive] self, other forms of self-making are pathologized; people who do not display the requisite reflexivity are seen to be lacking, not fully formed selves, and this lack is moralized and individualized, a failure of the self to know its self" (Skeggs 2004b: 81).[10] The normalisation and naturalisation of the middle-class self, according to Skeggs, serves as a "re-legitimisation and justification of the habitus of the middle-class that does not want to name itself, be recognized or accept responsibility for its own power" (Skeggs 2004a: 60).

---

[10] For a discussion of the concept of reflexivity in Bourdieu see also Adkins (2003), Boyne (2002) and McNay (2000).

Both Savage and Skeggs therefore pay close attention to the classed nature of current individualisation processes. They show how individualisation is not a straightforward result of the declining influence of class on people's working lives but rather the expression of the predominance of attitudes, values and future orientations of a middle-class habitus. However, although Savage's and Skeggs's discussions add an important aspect to popular theories of individualisation, they do not consider how contemporary individualisation processes may be reworked in a context of pervasive precariousness, that is, in a context that brackets the possibilities of a growing number of individuals, including those considered to be middle-class, to be agents of their working futures.

As will be crucial for the discussion in Chapter 8, the possibility of individuals to be autonomous agents of their working futures is dependent on a number of social and personal resources. Hence, seen from a sociological point of view, a framing of individual practices and attitudes solely within a language of determination and choice, as is often done in popular depictions of people's careers, is problematic and will therefore be addressed in Chapters 5 and 6. The next section will situate the discussion of contemporary individualisation and reflexivisation processes in the context of recent theories of precarisation. Specifically, I will introduce Castel's theory of the development of wage-labour as well as his writings on individualisation in order to address the relation between individualisation and precarisation processes in regard to working biographies and in particular in regard to working futures.

1.6. From the emergence of wage-labour to contemporary precarisation of working lives: Castel's model of individualisation

Contrary to Beck's and Giddens's conceptualisation of individualisation as a reorganisation of the relation between structure and agency, Castel's historical approach to individualisation takes into account the economic and social preconditions that enabled and necessitated a more individualised stance

towards one's working life. In providing this account, Castel not only considers processes of individualisation but also of de-individualisation, that is, processes that disable individuals from shaping their own working futures. Castel asks how individualisation can be understood in relation to contemporary precarisation processes, which, according to him, are manifest in a reworking and erosion of some of the institutions that actually enabled an individualised engagement with one's working life. Castel's analysis thus highlights both the social and institutional (pre)conditions of individualisation, preconditions which are central in the analysis of empirical data presented in Chapters 7 and 8.

1.6.1. Wage-labour and individualisation

According to Castel, the history and development of wage-labour is intertwined with the historical process of individualisation. Castel's understanding of individualisation however differs from the sort discussed so far, in particular from Beck's and Giddens's versions of individualisation. This is because Castel is predominantly interested in the socio-economic and historical preconditions of individualisation and the resources that have enabled individuals to be agents of their work biographies. This is far less central in the work of Beck and Giddens, who conceptualise individualisation as the requirement for individuals to construct their own lives. Castel in fact refers to Beck, underlining his concept of choice in working life biographies by stating that the "necessity to be an individual has become generalised" (Castel 2009: 24). Castel further draws on Beck by stating that a society which increasingly becomes a society of individuals is at the same time a society in which future uncertainty increases as collective arrangements and structures are losing their influence on the individual (Castel 2009: 30-31). However, Castel adds that the "biographical model", of the sort outlined by Beck, is at risk of turning into a "biographical nightmare", when people lack the necessary resources in order to exist and act as individuals (Castel 2009: 144-146). Yet while Castel refers to Beck in his discussion of wage-labour, his approach in fact shares more similarities with Savage's and Skeggs's account of individualisation, as all three stress the resources presupposed by individualisation.

In Castel's analysis, the individualisation of working lives, seen as a process in which individuals are increasingly able to act independently and decide about the course of their working lives, has been a result of specific historical conditions, in which wage-labourers have acquired 'social property' (Castel 2009), mainly in the form of social insurance. The implementation of social insurance did not only mean a higher degree of security against the risk of inability to work due to accident, ill-health, old age or disability but it also established a form of solidarity among the workers. In addition to what he describes with social property, Castel argues that the major other factors that have improved the situation of wage-labourers and thus the status of wage-labour altogether, were the establishment of collective bargaining, the proliferation of trade unions and thus a certain stability and security of work. The creation of these institutions kept economic necessities at arm's length, enabling individuals to reflect upon their own lives and to engage more individually with their working futures. Castel's writings suggest that any analysis of changes to working lives, in particular with regard to processes of individualisation, has to be situated in the context of the development of modern wage-labour and the institutions of social protection that were established throughout its history. As well as analysing the historical and social preconditions and institutions of modern wage-labour, Castel develops a critique of contemporary precarisation processes, which he situates within his theory of wage-labour. Importantly for the present thesis, Castel discusses how such processes of precarisation re-work the individualisation of labour, especially with regard to the ever increasing demand to construct one's own work biography.

Contemporary precarisation processes – which for Castel are evident in the growing amount of people that are no longer protected through collectively established structures such as trade unions, collective bargaining or social insurance schemes – disintegrate individuals from collective systems of social protection. These processes of precarisation, however, take place in a socio-economic context of individualisation, that is, in a context in which it has become a pervasive requirement to determine the course of one's working future. Accordingly, the process of individualisation is not only one in which individuals

are increasingly able to construct their own life and thus behave like autonomous individuals, but they are also required to do so, even when they are not in a position to. Castel illustrates these pressures in the following manner:

> [I]t will be demanded, or indeed dictated, that impoverished individuals behave like autonomous individuals. (...) These positive prerogatives of individualism are subsequently applied to individuals who, in terms of their 'liberty', experience mainly the lack of attachments and, in terms of their autonomy, know only the lack of supports (Castel 2003: 449).

The misfit between individuals' social, legal and economic position and the demands imposed on them to time and plan their own work biographies, Castel states, has produced a bifurcation between two 'ideal types'[11] of individuality: the *individu par excès* and the *individu par défaut*.[12] In other words, individualisation in conditions of precarity has produced two different types of individuality, which I am going to outline in more detail in the remaining sections of this chapter. For now, however, it is important to note that for the purposes of this thesis these two types of individuality will serve as a central conceptual framework, in particular for explaining contemporary economic and social polarisation processes. This is elaborated in Chapters 7 and 8. Specifically, I will show how these two forms of individualisation help to understand the relation between present-day changes in the temporal nature of working lives, especially the ways in which individuals relate to their present and how they anticipate their working futures.

1.6.2. *Individu par excès* versus *individu par défaut*

As already noted, Castel suggests that the development of the modern individual, as far as it concerns working lives, was only possible through the creation of social property, in the sense of a right to social welfare and collective employment rights. Castel notes that it was in the 1970s, with the expansion of workers' rights and the enlargement of welfare arrangements, that considerable

---

[11] Ideal type in the sense of Max Weber.
[12]*individu par excès* (lit.: the 'abundant' individual); *individu par défaut* (lit.: the 'lacking', the defective individual).

parts of the population in Western Europe attained the status of individuals with a certain social independence (Castel 2009: 421). Ever since, according to Castel, we are witnessing a period in which many of the collectively established frameworks as regards working lives are either being increasingly questioned and undermined or often do not offer appropriate security and resources that are necessary to exist as an independent individual. A growing number of people find it difficult to maintain the status of an individual because they lose the necessary social property (Castel 2010: 303). Hence, in Castel's view, the precarisation of work means that the predominance of the unlimited employment contract which offered a degree of security and stability is fading (Castel 2008: 349).

The new types of contracts, so called 'atypical contracts', often do not offer the same kind of social protection and security that the unlimited contract offered. Castel describes this change as a shift from the *condition salariale,* the condition characterised by the employment status of the wage-labour society, to the *condition précaire* (Castel 2009: 169), in which the labour market has become more and more competitive and volatile (2009: 181).[13] These developments are creating a system of bifurcations between those who are individually able to create their own biographies and those who experience individualisation as a burden, because they lack the necessary social or economic resources to *be* an individual (Castel 2008: 412). The individualisation of working lives can thus be conceptualised as a twofold process.

Castel develops his concepts of the *individu par excès* and the *individu par défaut,* to represent a new kind of inequality as regards the relation between individualisation and precarisation of working lives in contemporary society.[14] The *individu par excès*, according to Castel, emerged out of a certain psychological culture, influenced by the *Human Potential Movement* or *Humanistic Psychology,* which led to a different understanding of the individual, including the relation individuals hold towards work.[15] Castel criticises this 'new psychological culture' for promoting a model of the individual that is completely

---

[13] For a more general discussion on recent processes of workplace precarisation see Castel and Doerre (2009), Doerre et al. (2009).

[14] See also Castel's discussion on different 'zones' of social exclusion (Castel 2000, Castel 2008 in Bude and Willisch, eds. (2008), pp. 69-86.

[15] For a more general discussion on contemporary individualisation see Corcuff et al. (2010).

disconnected from society. It is a type of individuality that he calls *hypertrophic individualism*, an individualism in which people think that their actions are not influenced by collective aspirations but rather by a desire for self-realization (Castel 2009: 429). "People have or believe to have within themselves the necessary resources that enable their social independence" (2009: 431).[i]

The *individus par excès* aim to realise their own project of the self by inscribing themselves in the present by means of creating socially and culturally accepted and valued narratives of work biography (see also Chapter 5, 6 and 8), as well as by exhibiting a high degree of individual agency about the ways in which they shape their work biographies.[16] Castel continues to argue that the rise of this form of individuality has been accompanied by a process of de-collectivisation, that is, a process whereby individuals have increasingly become detached from collective belongings and values (2009: 433). Importantly, for the context of this thesis, Chapters 5 and 6 will show how models of agency, similar to that of the *individus par excès* described by Castel, are enacted in career portraits in contemporary newspapers and magazines.

In contrast, by *individus par défaut* Castel refers to individuals who "lack the necessary resources in order to positively assume their liberty as individuals" (Castel 2009: 436).[17,ii] The emergence of the *individus par défaut,* according to Castel, is a result of both the restructuring of employment relations but also of collective systems of social security. More precisely, Castel posits that the driving force behind this bifurcation in terms of individualisation are changes to the temporalities of work, including the return of insecure and precarious work and the lower degree of social protection provided via an employment relationship. Castel underlines the centrality of such processes of precarisation by speaking of a 'Great Transformation' – a term borrowed from Karl Polanyi – with which he implies the historical significance of the present-day reorganisation of economic and employment structures. Such current transformations of pervasive

---

[16] In this aspect Castel's writings resonate to the concept of the enterprising self (Rose 1990, Rose and Miller 2008 or Broeckling 2007).

[17] When Castel speaks of resources, he means material as well as social and cultural resources in the sense of Bourdieu's capitals (Castel 2010: 298).

precariousness have made it increasingly difficult for individuals to maintain their social independence.

Crucially for my concerns, the retrenchment of entitlements from collective forms of social protection, in combination with the rise of precariousness in the workplace, as Castel argues, has produced a form of temporality that he describes as an *eternal present*, that is, a temporality that that does not allow individuals to inscribe themselves into a life project or develop individual future perspectives. In such a context, individuals, due to the lack of resources, are unable to stabilise the present and anticipate the future (Castel 2009: 437), a bracketing of individual agency that contrasts the increasing demand to individually shape one's working future. Hence, the term precarisation in this thesis shall be understood mainly in the sense that Castel has elaborated in his writings on wage-labour. More precisely, precarisation shall be understood as a social process which brackets individuals' possibilities of engaging with their working lives, and especially with their working futures. This understanding of work precariousness is particularly feasible for my empirical analysis as it considers the levels of individual agency and time, categories that are crucial for my conceptualisation of the transformations of work to be discussed in this thesis.

The polarisation processes of the sort outlined in Castel's theory of individualisation in a socio-economic context of precariousness (as a kind of ideal type) will be key for my empirical analysis, too. Importantly, by drawing on the conceptualisation of Castel, my empirical analysis of working lives of two different groups of workers in the London banking industry in Chapters 7 and 8 will thus not only consider the organisational side of people's temporalities of work, but it will also examine how people's temporalities of work are shaped by the existence (or absence) of collective structures, such as the integration into trade unions, collective bargaining agreements as well as their endowment with legal and social rights in the workplace.

1.7. Conclusion

The discussion of theories of individualisation and precarisation of working lives in this chapter has made clear that time and temporality are key categories for understanding past and present-day transformations of working lives. Moreover, by adopting a temporal perspective, this chapter has demonstrated that in order to understand (and research) contemporary transformations in working lives, in particular inasmuch as they concern processes of individualisation and precarisation, it is important to consider not only the changes within the workplace but also broader factors, including changing relations of class, changes in the political sphere and especially people's economic and socio-legal position on the labour market. However, whilst this chapter was able to address changes in the temporalities of work biographies, it has remained unclear so far how such changes operate at the level of organisations and forms of production. As an exploration of organisational structures, in particular inasmuch as they concern intra-organisational divisions of workforces, will be at the heart of my empirical analysis in Chapters 7 and 8, the next chapter will address how organisational and economic structures can be understood via the category of time. By doing so, the following chapter will underscore how predominant forms of production and organisational structures have shaped individual working life temporalities, in the past as well as in the present; I will pay particular attention to how such temporalities can be conceptualised in terms of different notions of time, such as linear time or situational time.

2. The temporality of economic and organisational structures: from *task time* to *situational time*

2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter concluded by suggesting that time and temporality are key categories for understanding past and present transformations of working lives. In this chapter, I will continue this exploration of social time by considering how forms of economic production and modes of organisation can be understood from a temporal perspective. I will begin with a recapitulation of E.P. Thompson's article on 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism' in order to describe how the period of industrialisation brought about a new organisation of time, particularly in regard to work and working habits. In a brief historical review, and by drawing on Thompson, I will examine how, with the rise of factories, clock-time increasingly organised production and people's working lives. The implementation of clock-time, as I will make clear, was accompanied by a transformation of individual temporalities and the formation of a new time-discipline. The chapter will go on to discuss how emerging ideas of Fordism encapsulated not only a reorganisation of production time but entailed an organisational reshaping that made linear and predictable working lives possible.

Thereafter, I will focus on the reorganisation of time *after* Fordism. Drawing on a range of resources, I will suggest that linear conceptions of time have been superseded by a new time regime in which notions of flexibility and discontinuity became more central, not only for the production of goods and services but also for organisations and for individual working life temporalities. I will propose that the notion of flexibility has become *the* paradigm both of production and organisational structures. These organisational structures, in turn, have fundamentally contributed to the constitution of present-day working temporalities. This chapter will also suggest that in this context, new understandings and conceptualisations of time are emerging, and in particular that linear time is increasingly being replaced by *potential time* or *situational time*, at the level of economic structures as well as at that of individual

temporalities. The discussion in this chapter is of particular importance for three of the forthcoming empirical chapters, which explore the emergence of new temporal practices and orientations in career portraits (Chapter 6) as well as the interrelation between organisational and individual temporalities among two different workforces in the London banking industry (Chapters 7 and 8).

2.2. From task-time to clock-time

E. P. Thompson's often quoted work on time and industrial capitalism describes different factors that contributed to forging a new kind of time consciousness and, along with that, new temporal habits.[18] He argues that "the transition to mature industrial society entailed a severe restructuring of working habits – new disciplines, new incentives, and a new human nature" (Thompson 1967: 57). Thompson's account of the rising dominance of industrial forms of production throughout the 18th and 19th centuries illustrates that people's working habits and the temporal structures of their working lives were to a large extent shaped by the prevalent mode of production. In the pre-industrial era, task-time was the predominant orientation to time. Task-time organises work around particular tasks that can vary in duration and rhythm rather than according to specific (constant) timeframes that are *pre*set. Task-orientation, also concerns a particular organisation of the relationship between work and life. As Thompson explains:

> A community in which task-orientation is common appears to show least demarcation between 'work' and 'life'. Social intercourse and labour are intermingled – the working-day lengthens or contracts according to the task – and there is no great sense of conflict between labour and 'passing the time of day' (Thompson 1967: 60).

During the period of industrialisation, task-time was increasingly replaced by clock-time and a new time-discipline that separated work and non-work, both

---

[18] Thompson also refers to Bourdieu's early work undertaken in Algeria on the Kabyle people's attitudes towards time (Thompson 1967: 58, see also Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of Bourdieu's theory of time).

temporally and spatially. Industrial forms of production were not (directly) dependent on the rhythms of nature any more but on machines that could be turned on and off at will and hence operated according to the logic of clock-time.

In terms of working lives, the implementation of clock-time, drastically reduced the worker's autonomy over the pace and rhythms of their working time, whilst cementing the distinction between the (temporal) spheres of work and non-work time. The differentiation of these spheres impacted on people's perception of 'ownership' over time, too, as Thompson makes clear:

> Those who are employed experience a distinction between their employer's time and their 'own' time. And the employer must use the time of this labour, and see it is not wasted: not the task but the value of time, when reduced to money is dominant (Thompson 1967: 61).

This separation fostered an understanding of work as the sphere of rationality, which is subject to the rhythms of external (i.e. the employer's) clock-time, as opposed to non-work time as one's own time, the sphere that escapes the rhythms of clock-time. Work in factories therefore required an entirely different time-discipline compared to that of task-time. Thompson further suggests that the rise of this new time-discipline is not least evidenced in "a general diffusion of clocks and watches", a diffusion accounted for by the fact that the "industrial revolution demanded a greater synchronization of labour" (1967: 69).

The new means of production were thus based on a temporal order that reshaped the daily patterns of work as well as people's *inward notation of time* (Glennie and Thrift 1996). Thompson goes on to show that the imposition of a new system of temporalities was an endeavour not only furthered by the factory owners but by all the main institutions within society that had educational or spiritual purposes such as schools or churches.[19] The fact that the 'imposition of a new system of temporalities' relied heavily on some of the key social institutions of each historical period is particularly important for the context of my research,

---

[19] Thompson notes: "Once within the school gates, the child entered the new universe of disciplined time" (1967: 84). On the implementation of a new time-discipline see also Rutz (1992) and Rotenberg (1992), who argue from the perspective of a new 'politics of time'.

not least because I will examine if, and to what extent, career portraits in newspapers play a role in conveying present-day attitudes towards time in Chapters 5 and 6.

Thompson's analysis further suggests that one of the main levels at which changes in people's *inward notation of time* are manifest, are the practices and attitudes individuals draw on in relating to the future. Thompson illustrates this point by discussing how the imposition of clock-time induced a transformation of individual practices and temporalities that required "new 'predictive' attitudes to the future" (Thompson: 1967: 91).[20] When Thompson discusses these 'new predictive attitudes' he does not mean that workers were able to map out their future working lives in a coherent way but rather that workers were required to develop a rationalised sense of their labour time insofar as they needed to think ahead in terms of a "methodical paying-out of energy" (1967: 91). Put differently, the rhythms of clock-time required workers to make sure that they optimised their 'vital energy' in relation to their working time, which is not surprising when the length of the working day and the conditions of work during this period are considered. The formation of new practices and attitudes towards time, in particular towards the future, hence depended on the internalisation of a new time discipline.[21] This process of internalisation was supported by a Puritan ethic, which preached an ever more efficient use of time in contrast to the idleness of 'un-used' time.[22]

This Puritan ethic as well as the increasing predominance of clock-time in the field of work has been accompanied by an imagery of time-as-currency (Thompson 1967: 87).[23] "Time is now currency: it is not passed but spent" (Thompson 1967: 61). This view of time as a resource that may not remain unused has more generally been associated with the development of capitalist forms of production, as Thompson further notes: "In mature capitalist society all

---

[20] Thompson refers to Bourdieu's work on the transformations in Algerian society in the 1960s and the formation of 'new attitudes towards time' of the Kabyle peasants who had to relocate to the rapidly growing cities of Algeria (Thompson 1967: 58, see also Chapter 3).
[21] See also Rubin (2007): *Time-work discipline in the 21st century*.
[22] See also Weber (2002): *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*.
[23] See also Benjamin Franklin's famous quote: "Time is money", which promotes an understanding of time as a (personal) resource that needs to be spent in a productive manner, available at: <www.historycarper.com/1748/01/01/advice-to-a-young-tradesman-written-by-an-old-one>, last accessed 09.09.2013.

time must be consumed, marketed, put to *use*; it is offensive for the labour force merely to 'pass the time'" (Thompson 1967: 90-91).[24] The 'time-as-currency' (or 'time-is-money') perspective hence introduced a new time-discipline, both at the level of production methods as well as individual temporalities and practices. While industrialised production in factories rationalised the use of (clock) time by viewing it as a productive factor that needed to be controlled and used in the most efficient manner, individuals were required to adapt to (and in fact submit to) this rationalised understanding of 'time as clock-time' by developing practices and attitudes that suited the industrial time regime.

Via this decisive analysis of the emergence of industrial capitalism, Thompson shows how economic transformations are simultaneously transformations of time. He demonstrates categorically that changes in economic structures fundamentally shape the habits, practices and temporal orientations of workers. As Glennie and Thrift observe in a reflection on Thompson's article: "[i]n examining time as a part of the changing culture of the 18th-century English working people, Thompson sought to unpack the connections between the restructuring of industrial working habits and changes in people's inward notation of time ... [which] ... entailed the imposition and eventual internalization of a specific 'time orientation to labour and life'" (Glennie and Thrift 1996: 276-277).

Thompson's ideas on the formation of new practices and temporal orientations will be central for thinking through more recent changes in the world of work later in this chapter. Before addressing such changes, however, I will introduce two concepts that have been central to the implementation of a new time regime, both at the level of organisations as well as for the 'inward notation of time', namely the concepts of Taylorism and Fordism. I will present those aspects of Ford's and Taylor's ideas, as well as some of the authors who were drawing on their ideas, in order to explore to what extent these ideas have shaped the temporal character of organisations and of individual working lives throughout the 20th century. Importantly for this thesis, this discussion will illustrate how

---

[24] Adam suggests that "it is only with our relating to the human creation of calendar and clock time as time, that time became (...) a resource to be used and allocated, and a commodity to be sold and exchanged on the labour market" (Adam 1990: 109, see also Adam 1995).

the primacy of time-efficiency and the desire to control the future, the former one being one of the central characteristics of Taylor's principles and the latter a key tenet of Fordism, have not only given rise to new methods of production but have also been major driving forces behind the (modern) organisational, linear career.

2.3. Taylorism, Fordism and the emergence of linear time

One of the main aims of Taylor's studies was to optimise the usage of time required for producing certain goods. The breaking-down of tasks into a set of smaller tasks, which could henceforth be performed by any worker regardless of skills, aimed to introduce greater time efficiency into the production of goods. Taylor's ideas about more efficient time use directed the control and management of time away from workers into the hands of management. This latter movement in part explains why his theory is called *Scientific Management*. Taylor's vision of time was entirely based on the notion of clock-time, which he used to measure and analyse work by breaking down tasks into temporally measurable units. Hassard, who writes about the relation between clock-time and Taylorism, notes that

> [i]n Taylorism we reach the highpoint in separating labour from the varied rhythms experienced in craft or agricultural work: clock rhythms replace fluctuating rhythms; machine-pacing replaces self-pacing; labour serves technology (Hassard 1989: 20).

With the advent of Taylorism, time was increasingly viewed within a context of 'time management', that is, as a factor that needs to be controlled and supervised in order to maximise its usage. Taylor's vision of time is based on a strongly commodified understanding of time. Hassard suggests that both clock-time and its specific application in Taylorism made possible that "time was discovered as a factor in production. Time was a value that could be translated into economic terms" (Hassard 1989: 20).

Fordism incorporated some elements of Taylor's principles as regards the control over time by managers as well as his (Taylor's) views on time efficiency. One of

the main principles of Fordism, however, relates to the assembly line and the breaking down of tasks into standardised units, which enabled the production of high quantities at a reduced cost (i.e. economies of scale). Mass production and the assembly line not only led to increasingly standardised products, but the centralised control and planning of work also contributed to the establishment of hierarchically organised corporations (see also Tonkiss 2006), which increased the degree of authority, control and surveillance – in other words, time-discipline – that can be exercised upon the workers. Piore and Sabel call the replacement of craft production by mass industrial production in the beginning of the 20th century the *first industrial divide* (Piore and Sabel 1984).

The hierarchical Fordist organisational structure was based on the idea of being able to plan future demands or to produce larger amounts that could be stocked and sold at a later time. The Fordist model, hence, incorporated a very strong sense of rationality towards the future, which was conceived as a linear extension of the present – predictable, knowable and therefore controllable. The idea of linearity was reflected in the temporality of individual working lives under Fordism, which were thought to evolve in a continuous and stable manner.[25] Bauman goes so far as to speak of a "'till death do us part' type of marriage vow between capital and labour" in order to describe the long-term nature of employment relationships and hence the linear understanding of time involved in Fordist regimes of production.

Fordist organizations, as Iedema further suggests, provided relatively linear career patterns and progressions on top of stable forms of work participation and identification (Iedema 2003: 101). The hierarchical Fordist organisation, with its centralised mechanisms of control, thus also gave rise to linear understandings of working lives and careers; career trajectories became increasingly shaped by organisational structures. Especially from the 1950s on, hierarchical corporations became synonymous with the idea of being able to 'make a career', that is, with the idea of 'climbing a career ladder' and experiencing some form of upward mobility, even across social classes, although this was mainly limited to the male, middle-class workforce. As Halford and Savage note:

---

[25] See also Bauman (2001): *The Individualized Society*, especially pp. 17-30 on 'The rise and fall of labour'.

> It has long been thought that one of the distinguishing features of middle-class people is their reliance on bureaucratic, organizational careers that allow them to move through an internal labour market from junior to more senior jobs (Halford et al. 1997: 117).

The rise of bureaucratic corporate structures created the conditions for the so-called organisational career and at the same time shaped the way in which individuals organise and plan their future working lives, including the development of their skills as well as the degrees of trust invested in organisations. From this perspective it is clear that Fordism is not only a mode of production and organisation but has also been a crucial factor in shaping individual working life temporalities in terms of practices and attitudes towards the future. This argument finds support in the work of Gramsci, who wrote about Fordism in his *Prison Notebooks*. He states that Fordism has created "a new type of man suited to the new type of work and productive processes" (Gramsci 1971: 286) and thereby underlines the argument that Fordism not only describes a mode of organising production-time but also the temporality of individual practices and life forms.

2.4. The end of linearity and the rise of flexibility? New temporalities in production methods and organisations

2.4.1. The temporal reorganisation of production after Fordism

In recent decades, Fordist production methods as well as organisational structures have increasingly been superseded by other methods, a transformation that has had major temporal ramifications. As the following discussion will suggest, the linear time of Fordism has been increasingly questioned and in many cases superseded by new forms of time which are more flexible and discontinuous.[26]

---

[26] Surely there are aspects of Fordism that remain operative until today, especially if we understand it in terms of the organisation of production.

One of the key concepts deployed to understand this shift is Post-Fordism (Jessop 1995, Kumar 2005, Lipietz 1995, Tonkiss 2006, Wigfield 2001). In what follows, I discuss three analyses of this transformation. All three conceptualise this transformation as a shift towards flexible modes of production, regulation and organisation.[27] All three also highlight how this shift has involved changes at the level of organisational and individual temporalities, too. More specifically, I will discuss Jessop's regulation approach, the theory of *flexible specialisation* by Piore and Sabel (1984) and the *flexible accumulation* thesis put forward by Harvey (1989). I discuss these specific authors because they all describe recent transformations in the world of work as a process of flexibilisation and they all pay particular attention to the temporalities involved in these shifts. The discussion of these authors allows me to elaborate how the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism may be understood as concerning a break with linear notions of time and the emergence of discontinuous and flexible temporalities, in particular in regard to economic and organisational structures. I turn first to Jessop.

Jessop draws on the regulation approach developed by Aglietta and Fernbach (1979) in order to demonstrate that the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism has not only involved changes at the level of modes of production, but has encompassed change in terms of social, economic and political spheres.[28] The aim of the regulation approach, as Amin describes it, is to "identify the structures, principles and mechanisms" of a certain regime (Amin 1994: 7). According to the regulation approach, each historical period is dominated by a principal regime of accumulation and a corresponding mode of political regulation, which, as Jessop's discussion shows, also rests upon a certain temporality.[29] As noted earlier, Fordism is based on a stable present and the

---

[27] Basso and Donis in fact state that "for the past twenty years the West has been one big building site of 'flexibility'" (2003: 67).

[28] See also Lash and Urry's distinction between organised and disorganised capitalism. They postulate a shift in the economic and political organisation of capitalism taking place in the 1970s and the 1980s. Lash and Urry (1987) characterise organised capitalism as a system in which markets become progressively regulated, where producer goods industries are growing and a bureaucratisation of control and managerial hierarchies start to emerge. The distinctive features of disorganised capitalism, in contrast, are a de-industrialising economy which is less regulated by nationally based corporations and is composed of an increasing number of service-sector workers. Disorganised capitalism is further characterised by a decline in the importance and effectiveness of national-level collective bargaining procedures and a shift from Taylorist to flexible forms of work organisation (Lash and Urry 1987: 3-6).

[29] In an article on the relation between globalisation and time, Jessop underlines the "contradiction between short-term economic calculation (especially in financial flows) and the long-term dynamic of 'real competition' rooted in resources (skills, trust, heightened reflexivity, collective mastery of techniques,

notion of a calculable future, both politically as well as economically. The Fordist state "managed wage relation[s] and labour market policies", which aimed to regulate "aggregate demand" in order to avoid "the violent cyclical swings characteristics of competitive markets" (Jessop 1994: 255). These policies imagined future demand to be manageable, which in turn was thought to "secure stable, calculable growth" (1994: 255). At the level of corporations, the Fordist temporality enacted a sense of rationality towards the future and hence the idea of managing and anticipating the future via practices of planning and rational calculation, practices that became increasingly questioned with the advent of post-Fordism.

In contrast to Fordist modes of economic regulation, Post-Fordism is "based on the dominance of a flexible and permanently innovative pattern of accumulation" (Jessop 1994: 258) and is demand rather than supply driven. These flexible forms of production are further "based on flexible machines or systems and an appropriately flexible workforce" (1994: 257). In terms of political regulation, Jessop claims that while the dynamics of Fordism are closely related to the form and function of the Keynesian welfare state and vice versa (1994: 254), in Post-Fordism, Keynesian forms of economic regulation are increasingly becoming "hollowed-out" by growing international competition as well as the already mentioned trends towards flexibility in production methods, which have made it more difficult to regulate supply and demand nationally. For these reasons, Jessop proposes that the Keynesian welfare state system has been succeeded by a Schumpeterian workfare state whose main objectives are to promote labour market flexibility and foster competition (1994: 263).

Although Jessop notes that in reality neither Fordist nor post-Fordist modes of regulation have ever been fully realised (see for example Jessop and Sum 2006), his writings provide evidence for the pronounced differences in regard to the temporalities involved in both regimes of capitalist accumulation. Importantly, Jessop's account shows that the temporality involved in post-Fordist modes of production and regulation breaks with the idea of linear time and hence with

---

economies of agglomeration and size) that may take years to create, stabilize, and reproduce" (Jessop 2010: 106).

Fordist practices of planning, which were based on stable and predictable futures. Instead, and as the next paragraph will show in more detail, post-Fordist temporalities rest upon an idea of futurity that emphasises flexibility and hence responsiveness to upcoming changes.

While Jessop's regulation approach conceptualises the temporalities involved in the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism from a very broad perspective, Piore and Sabel's account of recent transformations focus on the sphere of production. Their theory of *flexible specialisation,* which the authors coined in the early 1980s, describes an economic system that is based on flexible, craft-based production and is focused on specific items or markets. In this theory, Piore and Sabel claim that the temporal assumptions made in the regime of mass production, that is, assumptions of predictable demand and future planning, are no longer viable. More precisely, Taylorist and Fordist techniques of raising productivity by increasing the division of labour and thereby decreasing the amount of time necessary to produce a certain good have become unfeasible in a system of flexible specialisation.[30] Piore and Sabel date the advent of flexible specialisation, which was accompanied by a decline of Fordist modes of production, around the beginning of the 1970s. The economic and social preconditions that have enabled the rise of flexible specialisation are markets where future demands are increasingly difficult to predict and which are therefore not suited to mass production or the production to stock.

In contrast to mass production, which places emphasis on the reduction of cost through economies of scale, flexible specialisation is based on the notion of constant adaptability and of being able to respond to changing and unforeseeable circumstances in the market. From a temporal perspective, flexible specialisation, as described by Piore and Sabel, clearly breaks with the Fordist notion of linear time as described in section 2.3 and suggests a form of time which is open to change and not subject to forward-planning. More specifically, while the temporality of mass production was linear insofar as it required future demand to be inferable from past and present data, the temporality of flexible

---

[30] Similarly Elam, in his discussion of flexible specialisation, underlines this point: "In the world of flexible specialization further division of labour is no longer an effective means for raising productivity – the greatest social innovation of modern times is defunct" (Elam 1994: 53).

specialisation can achieve substantial raises in productivity not by planning ahead or developing long-term forecasts but instead by being able to respond in a rapid and flexible fashion to unforeseeable demands or events.[31] The temporalities involved in flexible specialisation therefore also require different skills and working practices compared to those necessary and required in the period of Fordism. Compared to Fordist modes of production, which did not require craft or artisanal skills, "flexible specialization calls for skill and flexibility in the worker as much as in the machines" (Kumar 2005: 44).

The fact that flexibilisation has become a predominant organisational form in Post-Fordist capitalism is further evidenced in Harvey's theory of flexible accumulation. While Piore and Sabel argue that Fordism has been superseded by flexible specialisation, Harvey describes the shift towards a new regime of production and organisation (after Fordism) as a shift towards flexible accumulation. Flexible accumulation, as Harvey states, "is marked by a direct confrontation with the rigidities of Fordism" (Harvey 1989: 147). Fordism was based on a system of mass production and required long-term and large-scale fixed capital investments and hence precluded flexibility (1989: 142). The temporality of Fordism was linear in nature as it assumed future demand and hence production to be to some extent deductible from the present. In contrast to the temporalities of Fordism, the succeeding regime of flexible accumulation

> rests on flexibility with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products, and patterns of consumption. It is characterized by the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets, and, above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation (Harvey 1989: 147).

Flexible accumulation, as Harvey's quotation implies here, concerns a form of temporality, in which, in contrast to the linear temporality of Fordism, the time for decision making processes have shrunk and are subject to rapid change, flux

---

[31] See also Marazzi, who argues that in contrast to Fordist modes of production, where productivity was based on the idea of increasing the quantity of a product and thus reducing the average cost per item, productivity in Post-Fordism is increasingly determined by the capacity to respond to unforeseen and unforeseeable situations, emerging situations, situations which make any sort of planning impracticable. Marazzi argues that this fact assigns a central role to occasionality (Marazzi 2008: 50).

and uncertainty (Harvey 1989: 124).[32] In a context of flexible accumulation, the future can no longer be encountered as a territory that is open to forward-planning but rather needs to be seen as a potential future, that is, a future that is open to constant change.

The shift to more flexible forms of production, which started to emerge mainly in the 1980s and was coupled with a quite different system of political and social regulation (Harvey 1989: 145), entailed a change in the economic structures, from industry and manufacturing to a service-based economy. Instead of producing for stock, in a flexible regime goods and services are increasingly produced 'just-in-time' in order to remain open to future changes in demand and thus to reduce the possibilities for taking incorrect (and costly) planning decisions about future production. Importantly for my concerns, it will be shown that the shift towards flexible forms of production and organisation have also involved a shift in the temporalities of work. More precisely, it will be argued that the degree of flexibility, including the pace of work, which is required by workers, can vary considerably, depending on their position and role within an organisation (see Chapters 7 and 8). Equally important for this thesis, Harvey's account of the shift towards flexible accumulation shows that this shift was not only an economic and political one but has also entailed a shift at the level of norms, habits and attitudes (Harvey 1989: 170), in particular inasmuch as they concern processes of individualisation. While in the period of the 1950s and 1960s collective (working class) norms and values were predominant, thereafter competitive and entrepreneurial individualism became the dominant characteristics and values of work. In terms of temporality, these values "emphasize the new, the fleeting, the ephemeral, the fugitive, and the contingent in modern life" and contrast with the "more solid values implanted under Fordism" (1989: 171).

In addition, and crucial for my discussion in Chapters 7 and 8, Harvey's Marxist approach considers flexible accumulation as an erosion of the power of labour in

---

[32] Harvey argues that flexible accumulation has involved a process of time-space compression: "I use the word 'compression' because a strong case can be made that the history of capitalism has been characterized by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us" (Harvey 1989: 240).

favour of capital; an erosion that is evidenced by the declining influence of trade unions over people's conditions of work as well as the implementation of organisational models that have contributed in creating precarious forms of work. Thus, part of the shift towards flexible accumulation was a restructuring of organisational models that reshaped internal labour markets and aimed to increase numerical and functional flexibility of the workforce. Harvey claims that "strong market volatility, heightened competition, and narrowing profit margins" (1989: 150) were decisive factors involved in the shift towards the flexibilisation of employment relationships and work.

When Harvey speaks about flexibility, he means not only the lengthening and shortening of working hours of employees according to varying demands but more importantly the increasing use of 'non-regular employment', such as temporary or subcontracted work. Harvey thus underscores that flexibilisation has involved organisational divides that have disenfranchised a growing number of the workforce via irregular and fixed-term employment contracts from those continuing to be employed with 'regular employment contracts'. As section 2.4.2 in this chapter will explore in more detail, the increasing use of non-regular employment has not only contributed to new divisions of workforces within organisations but, as will be shown, such divisions can be understood as divisions of time and temporality. Importantly for this thesis, such divisions will be examined empirically among people working in the banking industry in London in Chapters 7 and 8.

While all three of the analyses discussed above certainly are not entirely aligned, nonetheless they all suggest that the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism has involved a transformation of time. A linear, calculable and knowable future has been succeeded by a regime of flexibility, that is, by a form of time that is open to constant change and which is difficult to confront via practices of planning and prediction. This shift has been accompanied and induced by changes in the political sphere, including the embrace of policies concerned with market liberalisation. The following section will explore the shift in temporality at issue here within the context of organisational structures and labour markets. This discussion aims to conceptualise how the shift from a Fordist to a Post-Fordist

regime includes a transformation of corporate structures. It also aims to highlight how these structures shape the temporalities of individual working lives and careers. In this context I will pay particular attention to the question of how organisational restructurings – including the increasing use of subcontracting – can be understood from a temporal perspective, and especially to the issue of how such forms of restructuring concern a reorganisation of individual working life temporalities.

2.4.2. The contemporary reorganisation of time in organisations and labour markets: Flexibility and new divisions of work and time

Jessop, whose account of Post-Fordism was discussed above, claims that the rise of flexible production methods over recent decades has been accompanied by a change in organisational structures. He argues that "[t]he enterprise system could see a shift from the primacy of the hierarchical, well-staffed, bureaucratic 'Sloanist' (after A. Sloan, a former president of General Motors) form of corporate structure towards flatter, leaner, more flexible forms of organization" (Jessop 1994: 259). Efforts to increase flexibility and hence to respond to unforeseeable changes in the future as well as to cut down on the cost of labour (see also Chapter 8) are some of the reasons that explain why companies abandoned the hierarchical (and less flexible) model of organisation. One of the ways in which flexibility was sought was by increasingly drawing on intermittent, part-time or subcontracted labour.

These organisational practices have in turn contributed to creating new divisions between workers as regards possibilities for long-term employment, chances for internal career progression as well as the availability of incremental pay structures in organisations. Harvey (1989) further illustrates how such organisational restructurings have created new organisational divisions of 'core' and 'periphery' positions (within organisations) and suggests that these divisions are divisions of time insofar as the core group is "made up of employees with full time, permanent status and is central to the long term future of the organization" (1989: 150) while the periphery workforce is kept at arm's-length from the

organisation via short-term contracts, part-time work or subcontracting in order to increase the numerical flexibility of the workforce. As Harvey's analysis indicates, these divisions of time are manifest in the different possibilities for progression or degrees of job security and impact on the ways in which individuals are able to plan or engage with their future working lives. It is from this perspective that I will suggest in Chapters 7 and 8 that new divisions of work are also new divisions of time.

Importantly for this thesis, one of the ways in which these divisions of work and time have been created or expanded is via practices of subcontracting. Gorz, Marazzi and Wills illustrate this in their accounts of recent transformations in methods of production and of organisational structures. For all three of these authors, the changing nature of working lives is less marked by changes of the actual content of work (as the dramatic increase of IT technologies may suggest) but by the changing nature of employment relationships. In fact, Gorz suggests that the shift to post-Fordism has "changed the nature of wage relation much more than the nature of work" (Gorz 1999: 46). Subcontracting plays an important role in this context, as it separates workers from their 'real employers' (cf. Wills et al. 2010) and divides workforces into a core, which is "made up of permanent and full-time employees who are occupationally versatile and mobile" and "a sizeable mass of periphery workers, including a substantial proportion of insecure and temporary workers with variable hours and wages" (Gorz 1999: 48).

Via practices of subcontracting and outsourcing, organisations aim to reduce costs by externalising the fluctuations in demand and thereby achieving a higher degree of flexibility. Marazzi's account further shows that subcontracting not only creates divisions among workers but "externalise[s] entire segments of the workforce" in order to increase 'external flexibility' (Marazzi 2008: 48).[33] Such practices, Marazzi goes on to note, have also brought about the "individualization and the insecuritization of work (...) and have struck directly at the cost of labor, both in terms of salary and of social costs (social security, pensions)" (2008: 45);

---

[33] Marazzi uses the term 'external flexibility' in order to distinguish from practices that aim for 'internal flexibility, which is sought to be achieved by "streamlining the productive process" (Marazzi 2008: 48).

factors that make it increasingly hard for individuals to develop long-term goals within or across organisations.

While Marazzi's and Gorz's analyses of new divisions of labour are mainly theoretical in nature, in a series of publications Jane Wills (2008, 2009a, Wills et al 2010) has examined these divisions empirically in a variety of industries in London's service sector. Similar to the accounts by Gorz and Marazzi, Wills focuses on new divisions of work created via practices of subcontracting. Specifically, she (2008, 2009a, Wills et al., 2010) explores the effects of subcontracting on people's working lives in health care, catering, portering, domestic work and the cleaning industry of London. In these investigations Wills and her colleagues (Wills 2008, 2009a and Wills et al. 2010) illustrate the consequences of subcontracting on people's conditions of work and argue that the precarious nature of subcontracted work has left many workers unable to think about their future working lives in a 'strategic' fashion, not least because they are hardly able to stabilise their present condition. Wills goes so far to say that "[w]hereas the paradigmatic form of employment during the middle years of the twentieth century was the factory (…) subcontracted capitalism is becoming paradigmatic today" (Wills 2009a: 442).[34]

This literature clearly suggests in both empirical and theoretical registers that transformations of organisational structures towards models based on flexibility have contributed to the making of new divisions of workforces. Moreover, these divisions, as was suggested, are divisions of time. Thus, those working in periphery (e.g. in subcontracted) positions are - as Wills at al. note - often unable to relate to their future working lives in an intentional or planned fashion. But, such restructurings have not only affected the temporalities of work of peripheral workers but also those working in 'core' positions within organisations. As the following sections will illustrate the imperatives of flexibility and adaptability have increasingly shaped the ways in which individuals think about and how they relate to their working futures. In order to do so, I will start this section by

---

[34] By drawing on the *Workplace Employee Relations Survey* of 1998 for the UK (Cully et al. 1999 in: Wills 2009a: 444), Wills shows that 90% of the total workplaces (91% in the private sector and 88% in the public sector) have subcontracted one or more services, 28% have temporary agency workers, 44% fixed term contract employees and 13% freelance workers.

discussing Sennett's account of flexibilisation in order to show changes in organisational structures require different sets of individual practices and a different orientation to time.

Thereafter, I will enquire into the social and discursive contexts in which the formation of new individual temporalities is embedded by drawing on Boltanski and Chiapello's writings on the 'new spirit of capitalism'. I will end this chapter by critically engaging with Sennett's notion of *flexibility*, Boltanski and Chiapello's notion of *potential* as well as Rosa's theory of *situational time*. These concepts will help to account for emerging forms of organisational and individual temporalities presented throughout this chapter and will be used as theoretical frameworks for analysing and identifying new temporal practices and attitudes towards time - in particular towards the future – of people working in the banking industry in London (Chapters 7 and 8) as well as in newspaper career portraits (Chapters 5 and 6).

2.5. The reorganisations of individual time: New practices, habits and temporal orientations in present-day working lives

In *The Craftsman*, Richard Sennett (2008a) tells the stories of the construction of two houses. He uses these stories both as metaphors for contemporary models of working lives and also to describe the temporalities involved in the acquisition of skills. The first story is about a house that was designed by the architect Adolph Loos and the second concerns another house that was developed by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. As an architect, Loos had built numerous buildings and houses and could therefore draw on his extensive abilities and skills as an architect in the design and building of the house. Wittgenstein, as a philosopher, in his whole working life had only constructed a single house. His house was very much inspired and dominated by his philosophical ideas, especially those of purity and simplicity. Sennett tells these two stories in order

to illustrate two different models of work and working lives, in particular as regards narrative and the development of skills.

The two different kinds of housebuilding are important for Sennett as they are illustrative of two different historical types of working lives. The first, exemplified by Loos, represents the old model of the craftsman, who gets educated in a certain occupation and gains more and more experience throughout their working life within a field, in which the person normally stays. The second, exemplified by Wittgenstein, represents the more contemporary type of working life, which is characterised by doing a series of different jobs which do not necessarily concern the building up of the same skills and experiences but movement between and across tasks and projects. These two examples not only represent different models of working lives but they also say something about the *temporalities of work*, as each shows a different way of relating past experiences to the present, on the level of time as well as narrative. In the idea of craftsmanship, for example, at issue is a temporality of long-term engagement and the steady development of skills: of being able to do one thing well. Sennett writes that "all craftsmanship is founded on skill developed to a high degree. By one commonly used measure, about 10,000 hours of experience are required to produce a master carpenter or musician" (Sennett 2008b).

Craftsmanship is hence based on a linear notion of time as it favours a continuous accumulation of skills that can be used as resources in the future. Sennett contrasts the linear temporality involved in the idea of craftsmanship with the concept of potential. According to Sennett the (linear) accumulation of skills and hence of past achievement and service now "earns no employee a guaranteed place" (Sennett 2008a: 4). Instead the emphasis is now on potential skills. Here, employees are valued not for what they can do but for what they might do. Thus, according to Sennett, past experiences and established skill sets are increasingly eclipsed in organisations which now value potential. This notion of potential (skill), as it is used by Sennett, concerns a mode of temporality in which it is neither possible to assume a linear development of skills, as it was in the model of the craftsman, nor that skills and knowledge acquired within an organisation may be a resource in someone's future working life. As was made

clear earlier and as will be explored and criticised in further detail in empirical Chapters 7 and 8, such changes in temporality can partly be explained by organisational restructurings.

Sennett contrasts the model of the bureaucratic, organisational career with the career in flexible organisations.[35] As the discussion of Savage in Chapter 1 elaborated already, bureaucratic forms of organisations allowed individuals to climb up internal career ladders and thus corresponded to the ideals and values of loyalty, long-term thinking and the development of individual skills over a longer period of time. In contrast to the temporality of bureaucratic organisations, more flexible and networked forms of organisations have put an end to loyalty or long-term commitment and further a mindset that makes individuals think about their working lives outside the immediate organisation they are working for.[36] Hence, rather than thinking in terms of career progression within a corporation, individuals (are supposed to) start thinking in terms of their market-value (cf. Sennett 1998: 25, see also Chapter 7 on careers in banking).

Hence, Sennett's argument about the relation between post-organisational attitudes towards career and thinking in terms of 'market-value', as he describes it, implies a process of individualisation, as discussed in Chapter 1. Specifically, Sennett's argument suggests that the individualisation of working lives, as a process in which individuals are required to create their own career trajectories, has been paralleled by an increase of market orientation (see also Chapter 6). One of the major drivers of this orientation towards one's career, as Sennett proposes, has been the shift towards a more flexible form of capitalism (Sennett 1998, 2006) and the increasing use of short-term and intermittent work as well as the widespread use of subcontracting, which has already been explored in previous sections of this chapter.[37]

---

[35] The temporality of bureaucracies, as Sennett argues "teach the discipline of delayed gratification. Instead of judging whether your immediate activities matter to you, you learn to think about a future reward which will come if you obey orders now" (Sennett 2006: 31).

[36] Sennett suggests that "in place of organisations as pyramids, management wants now to think of organisations as networks" (Sennett 1998: 23).

[37] He argues that a considerable number of corporations have "farmed off many of the tasks they once did permanently in-house to small firms and to individuals employed on short-term contracts" (1998: 22).

This shift towards flexible capitalism and the greater emphasis individuals attribute to their 'market value', has impacted on people's narratives of the future, too. In Sennett's account there has been a marked break with the "strategic narrative" (2006: 79), predominant in previous decades, and we are now witnessing a model of narrative of the future where individuals are more "present-oriented" and aim to "evok[e] possibility rather than progression" in their working lives.[38] Despite using the term 'possibility' in this context, the understanding of futurity that is implied here is the temporality of potential that has been mentioned previously in this section. In terms of temporality, hence, Sennett's notion of potential needs to be understood in the context of his writings on the flexibilisation of work and organisations.

It is however also important to note that the changes in the temporalities of work, discussed in this chapter, have been subject to various critiques, including feminist critiques. This is so in particular in regard to arguments that suggest or imply that the increasing importance of service-sector employment has been accompanied by a decline of the linear, stable work biography. McDowell, for instance, criticises Sennett for exaggerating certain transformations in workplace identities whilst neglecting to examine women's labour market experiences (McDowell 2009: 46). McDowell further underlines that some of the claims about the transformation in orientations to work, as for example described by Sennett, are not empirically validated. By referring to Green's (empirical) study on 'job quality' (Green 2006), she argues that job insecurity – a key theme in Sennett's argument – has in fact declined between 1986 and 2001. Kevin Doogan (2009) argues in a similar vein. He evidences that in particular women now experience a higher degree of job security and longer job tenures with single employers than in previous decades. However, despite these critiques, Sennett's conceptualisation of the transformation of orientations to work biography will be crucial for my empirical analysis.

---

[38] Sennett notes that "in the 1970s, thinking in a strategic narrative accorded with the way institutions were perceived; such thinking, for an ambitious young person, does not accord with the way leading-edge institutions appear today. (Sennett 2006: 79).

Particularly important for my concerns here, Sennett's discussion shows that the ways in which individuals relate to their working futures – at the level of time and narrative – are being fundamentally shaped by the changes to organisational structures and cultures that have occurred over recent decades. Sennett's account of flexible capitalism and his accounts of new career practices and narratives will be of particular importance for Chapters 6 and 7, in which I will examine whether notions of potential and market-orientation can be identified in contemporary working lives. As well as in Sennett, the idea of potential as a new form of temporality remains largely implicit in Boltanski and Chiapello's account of present-day transformations of working lives. However, as *potential time* will be crucial for examining present-day orientations to working futures in career portraits and in the London banking industry, the following sections will spell out this form of temporality in Boltanski and Chiapello's significant work *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2005) in more detail.

Importantly, in this work Boltanski and Chiapello use the term 'potential' in order to conceptualise a break with linear time. Here, Boltanski and Chiapello juxtapose two different phases of capitalism. They compare management literature from the 1960s and the 1990s to examine the ways in which organisational structures, working practices and working temporalities have shifted. The authors note that compared to the managerial discourse of the 1960s, which was dominated by notions of hierarchy and long-term commitment, the 1990s witnessed the emergence of new managerial and organisational forms as well as individual practices that contrasted those they identified in the 1960s.[39] Specifically, they conceptualise these new forms and practices that have started to emerge in the 1990s with their model (serving as a sort of ideal type of organisation) of the *projective city*. Importantly for the context of my research, in the ideal type of the 'projective city', the project, the network and flexibility became core values, all of which were entangled in new forms of time. As the

---

[39] In the 1960s, Boltanski and Chiapello claim, organisations offered secure long-term positions and career opportunities within well-defined (bureaucratic) structures in exchange for loyalty and the acquisition of firm-specific knowledge. In a general climate of job security, individuals acquired practices and temporal orientations in which future working lives did not have to be mapped out and readjusted on a constant basis. On the contrary, individuals were required to develop a more linear approach to their working lives, which was centred on possibilities for advancement within corporate hierarchies.

following paragraphs will show, the idea of futurity as one that involves 'potential futures' is central here.

In the *projective city* firms increasingly "comprise of a multiplicity of projects associating a variety of people" (2005: 105) for a specific amount of time. By the end of the project "people are in search of a new engagement" (2005: 106). Individuals therefore require the skill to reorient themselves on a regular basis and are put into a constant mode of activity. The "ability to integrate into a new project" hence "constitutes one of the palpable signs of status" (2005: 106). In the projective city, as Boltanski and Chiapello suggest, working lives are "conceived as a succession of projects" (2005: 110). Thus, with the advent of the projective city, individuals had to acquire new practices and temporal outlooks as regards their working lives. In the projective city individuals are, for example, required to build up and maintain their 'employability'.

The term *employability* itself contains an understanding of time that is future-oriented as it reminds us that practices and skills are not simply an accumulation of past experiences but need to be constantly updated and are directed towards the future. The type of future the term employability implies, however, does not concern a known future which can be planned for, instead central here is the anticipation of an unpredictable and unknowable future. At the same time the compound word employability, that is, the ability to stay (or be) employed, conveys a strongly individualised understanding of work. This is so as it suggests that 'being employable' is something for which everyone is individually responsible. Boltanski and Chiapello also argue that individuals in the projective city are ideally not "attached to an occupation or clinging to a qualification" but are "adaptable and flexible" (2005: 112). Adaptability, flexibility and versatility are necessities in order to stay employable in the *projective city*; these individual qualities will be encountered again in empirical Chapters 6 and 7.

As this discussion suggests, the concept of the *projective city* concerns a relation to the future that is based on the notion of potential or, more specifically, on 'potential skills or abilities' that individuals need to develop which may increase future employability. The authors also indicate that in the projective city personal

and professional networks are resources central to such forms of potential. Indeed they argue that in the projective city, "the world is a network of potential connections" (2005: 114). As both private and professional networks can be turned into resources, individuals in the projective city "tend to ignore the differences between separate spheres – for example, the private, professional" (2005: 114). Individuals, as Boltanski and Chiapello go on to say, "know how to anticipate, sense, sniff out the links worth pursuing" (2005: 113). This de-differentiating characteristic of the practice of networking will be crucial for understanding individualisation processes in Chapters 6 and 7, too.

Boltanski and Chiapello as well as Sennett therefore make use of the term potential (time) in order to conceptualise changes in organisational and individual temporalities over the last decades. Thus both Sennett and Boltanski and Chiapello underscore the fact that individuals increasingly have to think in terms of 'potential skills' and need to be able to anticipate and sense upcoming changes or opportunities. There are, however, some important differences in the way these authors make use of the notion of *potential*. While Sennett focuses on the notion of *potential ability* and hence limits his understanding of potential to the sphere of skills, Boltanski and Chiapello conceptualise potential from a broader perspective. In their view potential also includes practices of networking as individuals seek to transform personal and professional contacts into potential resources.

The notion of potential, according to Boltanski and Chiapello, also conveys a strong sense of individualisation and 'responsibilisation' of people's working lives, as they explain in their discussion of the term employability. Nonetheless, both Sennett and Boltanski and Chiapello concur in their notion of futurity, as they agree that potential implies a future that is increasingly difficult to infer from the present. Significantly, for the present thesis, it will be examined whether such notions of futurity are encountered in popular depictions of careers in newspapers (Chapters 5 and 6) and in people's personal accounts of working futures in the London banking industry (Chapters 7 and 8). If so, it will then be investigated how individuals relate to such futures, both at the level of individual strategies of timing as well as at the level of narrative.

The strength of Boltanski and Chiapello's account of recent changes in the world of work, compared to Sennett's writings (2006) on the 'new culture of capitalism', is that they discuss not only the nature of new values and practices that emerged with the advent of the *projective city* but they also show that these transformations involved the justification of a new spirit of capitalism, as the title of their book conveys, which they demonstrate in their analysis of management texts from the 1960s and 1990s. The justification of this new spirit of capitalism, as Boltanski and Chiapello argue, was based on the critique of previous ideals and values of work and organisations. For example, they show that "[t]he management texts of the 1960s explicitly or implicitly criticise familial capitalism (…) whereas the principal foil of the 1990s texts is large, hierarchized, planned organizations" (2005: 64).[40] Critique was thus used in a very 'productive' way, which helped to make the practices, values and temporal orientations of the previous periods look dated in order to introduce new ones that corresponded to the organisational and structural requirements of a new period of capitalism. By drawing on Boltanski and Chiapello's conceptualisation of critique, Chapter 5 will show how critique of supposedly dated forms of career practices and orientations towards work and time are enacted in career portraits, in particular inasmuch as they concern processes of individualisation as laid out in Chapter 1.

As already noted, both Sennett's as well as Boltanski and Chiapello's discussions of potential time imply a process whereby individuals are increasingly held responsible for their working futures. However, the understanding of futurity concerned in potential (time), that is, an understanding that has also been encountered in the theories of individualisation, in particular of Beck's and Giddens's account presented in Chapter 1, has been contested by Hartmut Rosa's concept of situational time. More specifically, Rosa's notion of situational time posits a break with the idea of futurity as a field of (potential) individual agency altogether. Rosa discusses the concept of situational time within his theory of modernisation (Rosa 2003, 2005, Rosa and Scheuerman 2009), in which he

---

[40] In this context, Boltanski and Chiapello mention the example of job security. They argue that while in the 1960s, (job) security formed "part of the implicit definition of the work contract" (2005: 88), it was "not a dominant value in the 1990s" because it became "associated with status, hierarchy, bureaucracy – all of them things that are insistently denounced" (2005: 92).

distinguishes between 'classical' modernity and 'late' modernity. By adopting a temporal focus, Rosa suggests that the process of modernisation can primarily be understood as a reorganisation of time and individual temporalities at a variety of levels, including the state form, bureaucracy but, importantly for my thesis, he identifies a change of temporality at the level of individual working lives and working futures. Let me therefore briefly explain how Rosa conceptualises the shift from classical to late modernity as a shift in temporality.

Rosa turns first to classical modernity, and in particular the implementation of the legal (constitutional) and the social state. The latter, he suggests, established a framework in which it was possible to shape social and political change. (Rosa 2005: 155-156). These frameworks also brought about the conception of a knowable and foreseeable future, which became a central feature of modernity. On a political and economic level this understanding of futurity was expressed in the idea of a control- and manageable history and society, which was epitomised in the concept of *progress*. On an individual level these frameworks ended the contingencies of social life, which dominated much of the early periods of industrialisation and contributed to the establishment of more linear forms of (working) lives and identities, which were based on continuity. Rosa states that "'classical' modern identities were consequently long-term projects supposed to evolve like a *Bildungsroman*". (Rosa 2003: 19).

Linear time has, however, increasingly been replaced by *situational time* in late modernity (see also Rosa and Scheuerman 2009 as well as Hoerning et al. 1997, Hoerning et al. 1998 and King 2009). Rosa argues that a linear understanding of time and hence the idea of a knowable and foreseeable future, in late modernity, cannot be taken for granted any longer, both at the level of politics as well as at an individual level, including at the level of working lives. *Situational time* means that the "duration, sequence, rhythm and tempo of practices, events and connections is being decided at the time of occurrence, they do not follow any pre-defined time-plan" (Rosa 2005: 365).[iii] Hence, the emergence of situational time means that "both individual as well as collective time-frames and time-perspectives are being redefined on a constant basis depending on context and situation; time is being *temporalised*" (Rosa 2005: 50).[iv]

For the context of working lives this form of temporality implies that individuals are not trying to plan their future, but instead look for upcoming opportunities that are put into practice at their time of occurrence.[41] This form of temporality, however, requires individuals not only to be adaptable and open to unforeseeable changes but also that they individually relate and coordinate separate events in time. In other words, practices of individual timing are key in a context of situational time, as Hoerning et al (1997), who draw on Rosa's conceptualisation of time, suggest. Accordingly, "time-discipline in the sense of taking external temporal frameworks as a yardstick for individual practices is being superseded by the idea of *correct timing at the right time* and hence by notions such as spontaneity, alertness, attentiveness and the ability to adapt to change" (Hoerning et al. 1997: 54). The idea of adaptability in situational time includes the relation between work and non-work. While a strict separation between the spheres of work and life (non-work) were essential features of classical modernity, the same practices are now inadequate for the contemporary world of work which demands not separation and boundaries but flexibility, and especially flexibility in regard to upcoming events, a point that will be encountered again in Chapters 6 and 7.

Hence, while Rosa posits situational time in contrast to (classical) modern individualisation, that is, individualisation as a process in which individuals were enabled and also required to develop a linear approach towards their working futures, he notes that a socio-economic context of situational time may in fact reverse processes of individualisation (Rosa 2005: 443). Significantly for the present thesis, Rosa's analysis therefore provides an important link between new forms of temporality, as outlined by Sennett and Boltanski and Chiapello, and the theories of individualisation, introduced in Chapter 1. This is so, in particular as Rosa's concept of situational time undermines some of the assumptions about individualisation as a process of the declining influence of social structures on individual working lives, as Beck and Giddens would argue. In other words, while

---

[41] Cf. Baumann's understanding of postmodern identities, which are based on avoiding fixation and keeping options open (Bauman 1995: 81). "Accordingly, the idea of a whole life project is no longer desirable; instead, a flexible identity, a constant readiness to change and the ability to change at short notice, and an absence of commitments of the 'till death do us part' style have become not only attractive options but prerequisites for survival (Bauman 2002, in: Atkinson 2008: 6).

Rosa's notion of linear time implied some form of agency over the ways in which individuals were able to engage with their working futures, a socio-economic context of situational time brackets such possibilities as the future is decreasingly viewed as a terrain of possible agency. As such and significantly for this thesis, it will be examined whether notions of situational time are enacted in career portraits (Chapter 6) as well as in accounts of people working in the banking industry in London (Chapters 7 and 8), especially vis-à-vis processes of individualisation and people's ability to *be* agents of their working futures.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism from the perspective of time. In so doing it has established a theoretical connection between the temporalities of production methods, organisational structures and individual practices. More precisely, I have suggested that the shift from Fordist to Post-Fordist methods of production and organisation have entailed and required different ways in which individuals relate to their present and future working lives and careers. I have discussed in particular the ways in which Post-Fordism (or flexible specialisation) relies on flexible temporalities. The arguments presented in this chapter suggested that such flexible temporalities are expressed particularly in the ways in which individuals anticipate their working futures. Such futures are increasingly difficult to infer via practices of foresight and planning. Instead, new forms of temporality such as potential time and situational time characterise present-day Post-Fordism.

Importantly for this thesis, it was also made clear that Post-Fordist organisational models have been major factors for increasingly segmented or polarised workforces with a relatively stable employed core group of workers on the one hand and a flexibly employed or subcontracted periphery group of workers on the other hand. While in this chapter I described such organisational divisions from the perspective of time, empirical Chapters 7 and 8 will examine how such divisions can be understood as divisions of individual temporalities, especially in regard to individual futurities. The discussion in this chapter further

sought to put the idea of individualisation – as a process which requires an increasing number of workers to engage with their working futures – (see Chapter 1) in a historical, economic and organisational context.

It was shown that by considering these contexts that there exists an interrelation between the temporalities of different modes of production, organisations and individual attitudes towards time, especially towards the future. Hence, importantly for the empirical analysis to follow, this chapter suggests that processes of individualisation (as well as of de-individualisation) need to consider the temporalities involved in organisational restructurings, in particular inasmuch as they concern new divisions of workforces. Yet, while the theoretical positions discussed in this chapter have illustrated the interrelation of the temporalities of production, organisations and individual working lives, the following chapter will address this interrelation in a more systematic way, that is, in a way that will enable me to conceptualise and frame the empirical research in Chapters 5 to 8. As this interrelation – or better interdependency, as we will see – involves temporalities that operate both at the level of time *and* narrative, I will henceforth draw on Bourdieu's writings on time as well as on Paul Ricoeur's and Steph Lawler's concepts of narrative. The authors and concepts discussed in the following chapter will be crucial for conceptualising the methodology in Chapter 4 and shall thus be read as a preliminary to it.

3. The temporality of practice and narrative: Bourdieu, Ricoeur and Lawler

3.1. Introduction

To put it in very general terms, the previous two chapters showed how recent changes in work biographies, economic structures and political regulation can be conceptualised as changes of time and temporality. The authors and concepts discussed in these two chapters have considered such changes from a broad range of perspectives, including theories of individualisation, precarisation, Post-Fordism and Post-Marxism. However, whilst having discussed how such theories and concepts can be understood as describing a change in the temporalities of economy and working lives, these theories and concepts have not considered the temporal dimension of individual practices. Put differently, whilst accounting for changing organisational and individual temporalities in present-day economic life, the authors discussed so far have not based their theories of social change on appropriate theories of practice or, more specifically, on theories that take into account the temporality and hence the historicity of practice. A consideration of the temporal dimension of individual practices is important insofar as it helps to account for the necessary preconditions as well as the social and individual resources for such practices, including the possibilities for change of practices.

Hence, the first part of this chapter will discuss Bourdieu's early writings on the interdependence of economic and temporal structures in order to demonstrate how changes in economic structures can be understood to involve a dynamic and recursive reorganisation of temporal structures of society. Bourdieu's distinctive approach to time will take centre stage in my discussion not least because as we shall see in particular in Chapters 5, 7 and 8 this approach allows me to consider both the temporal nature of individual practices as well as the relation of agency and structure in working lives. While Bourdieu's writings on time will provide an important conceptual framework for analysing working lives throughout all empirical chapters, his notion of *temporality of practice* will serve as a vantage point for putting forward a critique of enactments of individual agency in career

portraits in Chapter 5. In other words, Bourdieu's temporalised understanding of individual practices will help to critique the ways in which work biographies are told in these portraits and in particular how past and present events as well as the individual and the collective are linked by means of narrative. Above all, this contrast between the temporality of practice and the temporality of narrative aims to identify over-individualistic or de-temporalised accounts of working lives (in Chapter 5).

As narratives – both in terms of individual narratives as well as socially circulating narratives – have been identified as crucial for the ways in which individuals relate to their past, present and future working lives (see e.g. discussion of Beck in Chapter 1 or Sennett in Chapter 2) and are hence key to understanding present-day work biographies, especially inasmuch as they concern relations to time, the second part of this chapter will discuss Paul Ricoeur's and Steph Lawler's concepts of narrative and time. The concepts they provide will enable me to analyse the temporal nature of working lives from the point of view of narrative, that is, how individuals relate to their working pasts and futures as well as to collective structures by means of narrative. I will end this chapter by identifying some of the divergences and convergences between the discussed theories of narrative and Bourdieu's theory of practice, especially those that concern the relation between narrative, time and agency and will hence be relevant for this thesis. However, before moving on to discussing the relevance of narrative for this thesis, let me begin by explaining how Bourdieu's writings on time can provide a conceptual framework for analysing working life temporalities in present-day economic life.

3.2. The interdependency of temporal and economic structures: Bourdieu's Algerian studies

In Bourdieu's early work on the transformation of Algerian society in the mid 20th century, he observed that changes in socio-economic structures not only meant a change in economic forms of production but also required individuals to develop a new orientation to time, and in particular towards the future. The interest in the relation between economic and temporal structures is reflected in the French title of his book *Structures économiques et structures temporelles*. During his time in Algeria, Bourdieu witnessed rapid economic changes and in particular he observed the results that this transformation had on the Kabyle people.[42] In the late 1950s and early 1960s, which was also the time of the Algerian war of independence against the French colonial system, many of those who previously worked in agriculture were forced to migrate to the rapidly growing cities. At the same time, Algeria witnessed what Bourdieu calls an 'historical acceleration', in which the traditional economy, primarily based on agriculture, was being replaced by a system of market relations. Bourdieu discusses the sudden confrontation of two different types of economic systems, usually separated by several hundreds of years (Bourdieu 2000a: 7): on the one hand the pre-capitalist economy of the Kabyle farmers, who experienced a massive 'uprooting', described in Bourdieu and Sayad's work *Le Déracinement* (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964), and, on the other hand, an economic system based on wage-labour and market structures.

From a temporal perspective, the traditional, pre-capitalist, cyclical temporal regime was governed by the collective rhythms of the agrarian calendar, which consisted of a system of oppositions between autumn and winter in contrast to spring and summer; work in the fields and sowing in contrast to harvesting and threshing; the day in contrast to the night; the male in contrast to the female etc. In the cyclical temporal regime, as Bourdieu further illustrates, economic practices were oriented to the 'upcoming' (future) either through past

---

[42] The Kabyle are a Berber speaking people in the northeast of Algeria, who at the time of Bourdieu's research were heavily affected by the economic changes and often had to move to nearby cities in order to find work.

experiences or through tradition (Bourdieu 2000a: 33). The future is therefore not carved out as a separate territory but rather organically contained in the present, as Bourdieu puts it (2000a: 34). In other words, in the context of cyclical time, individuals anticipate the future not through positing it as a separate entity from the present but rather through foreseeing it via their accumulated experiences and traditions (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964: 15-22). Bourdieu underscores this point by stating that "there is nothing more alien to a pre-capitalist economy than the idea of the future as a field of possibilities, which shall be discovered and mastered through rational planning" (Bourdieu 2000a: 32).[v]

Bourdieu opposes the cyclical understanding of time to the more rational, linear and future-oriented conception of time. In Algeria this understanding of time developed with the emergence of a new economic system based on wage-labour in the 1960s. This system was based on a calculative and quantitative understanding of time as regards working-hours, the convertibility of time into money, the keeping of strict time-schedules, but also the necessity to conceive of the future as a field of potentialities (Bourdieu 1964: 78). The calculative attitude towards time and thus towards the future was introduced through the imposition of market relations and did not exist beforehand. Calhoun argues that the previously existing economy, which was based on traditional culture, "discouraged the kind of 'rationality' rooted in projecting a distant time horizon and cause and effect analysis of investments and events that would shape it" (Calhoun 2006: 1406).

In order to clarify the two different understandings of futurity that Bourdieu identifies in his research, he uses two different notions of time. In fact, in their work *Le Déracinement*, Bourdieu and Sayad distinguish between the two French words for future, which they associate with different practices, meanings and orientations to time: *le futur* and *un 'à venir'* (*un avenir,* literally: a 'to come'). They use the term *un avenir* for the pre-capitalistic practice of foresight (*prévoyance*), which requires individuals to make provisions or arrangements for a largely unknown future. In contrast, they use the term *le futur* in the context of rationality, the idea of future planning and the capitalistic practice of forecasting

(*prevision*), in which individuals are able to plan, foresee and hence predict the future to a certain extent (Bourdieu 1963, 2000a, 2010).

Importantly for the concerns of this thesis, Bourdieu discusses these two different forms of temporality in order to show how the proliferation of new economic structures, especially the changing form of labour, as a commodity to be bought and sold on a 'labour market', has required individuals to develop an entirely new stance towards their working futures. Calhoun, who writes about the legacy of Pierre Bourdieu's study of Algeria, in fact speaks about a process of incapacitation in this context. Calhoun states that

> [t]he same people who could play the games of honour with consummate subtlety in peasant villages were incapacitated by the games of rationalized exchange in the cities. Labour migration and integration into the larger state and market thus stripped peasant habituses of their efficacy and indeed made the very efforts that previously had sustained village life and traditional culture potentially counterproductive (Calhoun 2006: 1505-1506).

This process of incapacitation, as Calhoun further notes, resulted in many of the migrants from rural areas having to live in sub-proletarian conditions. Based on his ethnographic work, Bourdieu hence suggests that one of the major causes for impoverishment and exclusion from economic life was the incapacity of these newly arrived rural migrants to engage in a rationalised system of market exchange. This system presupposed and required temporal habits and attitudes towards time, and especially towards the future, that were entirely alien to the newly arrived rural migrants. Another major factor in the development of a more rationalised attitude towards time, as Bourdieu observed, is connected to people's socio-economic position. More precisely, in his fieldwork Bourdieu observed that a calculative attitude towards the future could only develop above a certain level of socio-economic existence, a level that Bourdieu calls "threshold of calculability" (Bourdieu 2000a: 92). Below this threshold, as Bourdieu observed in his empirical research, there exist few chances to actively plan one's own future (Bourdieu 2000a: 20-22).

Bourdieu's understanding of the relation between economy and time hence provides two insights, which will be crucial for analysing working life temporalities in the empirical chapters to follow. Firstly, it critiques the assumption that rational exchange is a universal principle of economic life, by showing that the idea of a rational engagement with one's working life and future is a particular feature of capitalist economic structures. Secondly, Bourdieu's writings show that the production of a predominant economic habitus rests upon the acquisition of specific practices and attitudes towards time that are not equally accessible to all. These two points will be decisive for examining the emergence of new orientations to time and especially towards the future in career portraits, including processes that normalise and universalise such orientations and related practices.

Furthermore, although Bourdieu's writings on Algeria date back to the 1960s, I will show in Chapters 7 and 8 that they nonetheless provide a crucial backdrop for investigating the interdependency of economic and temporal structures in today's banking industry in London, in particular with regards to new divisions of workforces. However, while Bourdieu's Algerian studies – which belong to his early works – provide an important resource for analysing present-day economic and temporal structures, in these studies he had yet to fully develop his theory of practice, habitus and field, which includes his notion of the temporality of practice. As this notion will be key for examining the temporal nature of individual practices, the next section is going to introduce it, drawing primarily on Bourdieu's later work *Pascalian Mediations* (2000c).

3.3. The temporality of practice: linking past, present and future

Bourdieu posits his (corporeal) conceptualisation of the temporality of practice in opposition to both commonly held views about time and linguistic uses of the term 'time', as well as in opposition to a (natural) scientific understanding of time. More specifically, he criticises the idea of "time as a thing with which we have a relation of externality, that of a subject facing an object" (Bourdieu

2000b: 206) and hence of the perception of time as being external to practice. Bourdieu finds this idea of "time-as-thing" in the rationalist philosophical tradition running from Descartes to Kant and his epigones. Crucially for my concerns, Bourdieu advances his critique of these philosophical notions of time because he considers them also to be present within contemporary economics. Importantly, as he goes on to argue, the idea of time as something external to practice is even manifest in our ordinary language, when we speak of time as something that one can have, gain or waste (2000b: 206). In contrast to this rationalist and objectivist vision of time, Bourdieu introduces his corporeal understanding of time, that is, an understanding that considers time as being intrinsically connected to practice. Practice, as Bourdieu says, is entirely immersed in the current of time and therefore inseparable from temporality (Bourdieu 1990b: 81). In short, Bourdieu's theory of practice treats time as being a constitutive part of individual practices, best expressed in his notion of the *temporality of practice*. The notion of temporality of practice conveys how every action of an individual is a twofold act of temporalisation.

Firstly, practice is only possible through the generative structure of the habitus and therefore each action in the present is shaped by the past. Bourdieu underscores this point by stating that "[h]abitus is that presence of the past in the present which makes possible the presence in the present of the forth-coming." (Bourdieu 2000b: 210). In other words, individuals can *make* time, and therefore their future, only when they are "endowed with habitus adjusted to the field" (Bourdieu 2000b: 213). In fact, as Binkley adds in a critique of Bourdieu, "each habitus itself defines a specific temporality" (Binkley 2009: 97). This understanding of agency as being shaped and conditioned by the past in the form of the 'structuring structures' of habitus (Bourdieu 1984, 1990b) and therefore not being entirely subject to individual determination will be important for a critique of commonly-held views about contemporary life-courses, especially in regard to work biographies, as will be shown in Chapter 5.

Secondly – and equally important for the discussion of empirical data in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 – Bourdieu attributes importance not only to the ways in which the past shapes practices in the present but also to how futurity can be

understood in relation to individual practices. One of the main ways in which Bourdieu explains the future dimension of practices is in his concept of the *sense pratique*, often referred to with the metaphor of the 'feel for the game'. Indeed, Bourdieu uses the example of a ball game in order to describe the temporality of practice involved in a situation where there is a fit between the habitus and the field, which means that "everything that takes places seems *sensible* and agents have a capacity for practical anticipation of the 'upcoming' future contained in the present" (Bourdieu 1990b: 66). He explains such a situation in the following manner:

> A player who is involved and caught up in the game adjusts not to what he sees but to what he fore-sees, sees in advance in the directly perceived present; he passes the ball not to the spot where his team-mate is but to the spot he will reach (1990b: 81).

What Bourdieu's description of the game implies is that the 'feel for the game' works to a large degree on a non-reflexive level, that is, present as well as forthcoming practices do not need to be mapped out reflexively but are the result of a process of adjustment and engagement with an upcoming future. In terms of temporality, this means that time or the future do not become an explicit object of reflection or, as Bourdieu puts it, "social agents have 'strategies', which only rarely have a true strategic intention as a principle" (Bourdieu 1998a: 81). Bourdieu clarifies this point by drawing on Edmund Husserl's concept of protension. Hence, Bourdieu identifies two relationships to the future: the project and Husserl's notion of protension. He explains the two as follows:

> A project poses the future as future, that is, as a possible constituted as such, thus as possibly happening or not (...) and protension or pre-perceptive anticipation, a relationship to the future that is not a future but a future that is almost present. (...) They [the pre-perceptive anticipations, G.K.] are the fact of the habitus as a feel for the game. Having the feel for the game is having the game under the skin; it is to master in a practical way the future of the game; it is to have a sense of the history of the game (Bourdieu 1998a: 80).

Conversely, when a person does not have the so-called 'feel for the game', that is, when the subjective anticipations and the objective structures misfit, practice and therefore time becomes an object of reflection, as Bourdieu explains: "Time is

really experienced only when the quasi-automatic coincidence between expectations and chances, illusio and lusiones, expectations and the world which is there to fulfil them, is broken" (Bourdieu 2000b: 208).[43]

However, a misfit between habitus and field not only results in time becoming an object of reflection, but, even more important for this thesis, also in the fact that individuals lack the necessary resources to develop a *sense pratique* for anticipating the future in a given field. In other words, the future cannot be seen as a terrain of endless potential actions. Hence, Bourdieu suggests that the future is amenable to novel practices only when individuals can 'master the field', that is, when they are equipped with the necessary resources to do so. Crucially, this thesis will examine both the resources as well as the structural conditions in regard to possibilities for anticipating futurities, that is, futurities of work. Yet, while Bourdieu's account of the temporality of practice offers an important theoretical and conceptual frame for analysing contemporary working lives, it was only in one of his latest works on *The Social Structures of the Economy* that he draws on his temporalised understanding of practice in a more explicit fashion in order to put forward a social critique of de-temporalised and de-socialised notions of agency. As such questions will be central for analysing contemporary understandings of practice and orientations to time in career portraits, the following section will discuss Bourdieu's critique of practice in neoclassical economic theory.

3.4. The temporality of practice as a critique of neoclassical economic theory

Bourdieu states that his experience of the Algerian *déracinement* (uprooting) of the 1950s and 1960s taught him the "contingent character of so many behaviours which form part of our normal daily round: calculation of cost and profit, lending at interest, saving, credit, the creation of a reserve, investment or even work"

---

[43] Pilario (2005) argues that "the metaphor of the game evades both structural objectivism and rational-voluntarist subjectivism. One does play a game without necessarily being conscious of its explicit rules all the time" (2005: 124).

(Bourdieu 2005: 3). This experience of the contingent character of behaviours and attitudes towards time seems to be particularly present in his late work on *The Social Structures of the Economy* (2005), where he presents his critique of neoclassical economic theory, a theory that sees individuals as utility-maximising (rational) agents. This *homo economicus* view, as Bourdieu states, is "a kind of anthropological monster" and the "most extreme personification of the scholastic fallacy" (2005: 209).[44]

In particular he refers to Gary Becker (Nobel Prize laureate for Economics in 1992), whom he critiques in several of his writings, and whom he holds "responsible for the boldest attempts to export the model of the market and the technology of the neoclassical firm into all the social sciences" and thus to "provide a framework applicable to all human behaviour" (2005: 209).[45] In his critique of neoclassical economic theory, Bourdieu uses his temporalised account of agency in order to point out the a-historical and thus detemporalised nature of time in economic theory. In contrast to the understanding of practice in neoclassical economic theory, which presumes a universal concept of practice as utility-maximising and detached from social and economic conditions, Bourdieu emphasises the "social rootedness of economic practices". For Bourdieu, economic practices and dispositions are "historical institutions" (2005: 5) and therefore "not dependent on a universal human nature but dependent on a history that is the very history of the economic cosmos in which these dispositions are required and rewarded" (2005: 8).

Put differently, economic practices and economic rationality, in the way neoclassical economic theory understands them, are the product of Western economics and cannot assumed to be a universal model of individual agency. Bourdieu suggests that this model of agency has 'colonised' the economic and social sphere and, importantly for this thesis, has become predominant not only in explaining human behaviour but has also become normative in political and

---

44 Bourdieu describes the scholastic fallacy as the scientific viewpoint, often adopted by scientists, that assumes a subject-object relation between agents and their practices, or, as Bourdieu puts it, the scholastic fallacy is "creating agents with the reasoning reason of the scientist reasoning about their practices (and not the practical reason of the scientist acting in everyday life)" (Bourdieu 2000c: 60).
45 Foucault also refers to Gary Becker and the Chicago School of Economics in his lectures at the Collège de France on neo-liberalism and governmentality in 1978/1979.

social debates, thereby helping to implement neoliberal policies (see also Crouch 2011). The normative establishment of this economic habitus, as Bourdieu goes on to say, is the result of a struggle of actors in the economic field, in which institutions such as management and business schools have played a major role (see also Thrift 2001).[46] Hence, Bourdieu suggests that one of the economic and social spheres where this process of 'colonisation' with rational and strategic agency is most pervasive is in management theory. Management theory, as Bourdieu argues, "oscillates continually between the positive and the normative, and depends fundamentally on an overestimation of the degree to which conscious strategies play a role in business, as opposed to the structural constraints upon, and the dispositions of, managers" (Bourdieu 2005: 200, see also Boltanski and Chiapello 2005).

Importantly, for the concerns of my research, Bourdieu's critique of neoclassical economic theory shows that the normative establishment of a certain economic habitus, that is, a habitus that foregrounds notions of individual (and rational) agency and thereby downplays the structural dimension of economic practices, is a historical product and not an *a priori* of economic life. However, whilst Bourdieu argues that one of the major drivers in the proliferation of de-temporalised understandings of agency originated from economics, the discussion in Chapter 5 will demonstrate empirically that such understandings have increasingly been enacted in popular accounts of working lives in the relatively new genre of career portraits in newspapers, too. Sociologically speaking, such accounts of working lives are therefore not only interesting from the perspective of genre but also from the perspective of time.

Yet, in order to examine questions of time in a genre like career portraits, it is important to keep in mind that the way in which individuals in such texts narrate the causal and temporal relation between their past and present work biographies cannot be taken at face value. This is so, as the temporality of narrative in many cases engenders a sociologically problematic understanding of

---

[46] In a similar vein, Thrift comments on the pervasiveness of economic rationality into all spheres of social life by arguing that "[t]he language of economics has become common linguistic currency, making it increasingly difficult to conceive of the world in any other terms except those of a calculus of supply and demand" (Thrift 2005: 4).

individual agency, such as presented in the previous discussion. In other words, it will be argued that the temporality of narrative conflicts with the temporalised understanding of agency, posited by Bourdieu. Thus, as narrative will play a crucial role in my analysis of working lives, in particular inasmuch as it establishes links between past and present events as well as between agency and structure, the following section will introduce Paul Ricoeur's and Steph Lawler's theories of narrative. The discussion of these two authors will enable me to conceptualise and clarify the relation between time, narrative and agency, relations that will be crucial for the concerns of this thesis.

3.5. Narrative, time and agency

3.5.1. Ricoeur: the relation between time, narrative and social action

Ricoeur's notion of time, which is essential in his understanding of narrative and social action, stands in opposition to perceptions of time that consider time as an objectively given entity. Ricoeur refers to Augustine's *Confessions* when he speaks of the threefold nature of time, that is, a present of past things, a present of present things, and a present of future things (Ricoeur 1984: 11). With reference to Augustine, Ricoeur states that "[t]he present of past things is the memory; the present of present things is direct perception; and the present of future things is expectation" (Ricoeur 1984: 11). Similar to Bourdieu's critique of de-temporalised conceptions of time ('time-as-thing'), Ricoeur criticises the mathematical representation of time as an abstract succession of 'nows'. The "deficiency of this representation of time", he argues, is "that it takes into account neither the centrality of the present as an actual now nor the primacy of the future as the main orientation of human desire, nor the fundamental capacity of recollecting the past in the present" (Ricoeur 1991c: 100). Ricoeur's Augustinian inspired conception of time as a threefold present pays attention to the historicity of action as well as to the way in which past events or 'not-yet' events of the future impact on the way people act in the present. Ricoeur argues that "[w]hat counts here is the way in which everyday praxis orders the present of the future,

the present of the past, and the present of the present in terms of one another"
(Ricoeur 1984: 60).

Time, according to Ricoeur, is therefore constitutive of social action but social action at the same time 'makes sense' only through the 'organization of events' in time, which is the function of narrative: "I am calling narrative exactly what Aristotle calls *muthos*, the organization of the events" (Ricoeur 1984: 36). "Time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence" (Ricoeur 1984: 52). Ricoeur calls the way in which single events are transformed into a story *emplotment*: "Emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a simple succession" (Ricoeur 1984: 65). Emplotment, or the act of plotting, as he also calls it, is something that makes an "event more than a mere occurrence, something that just happens: it is that which contributes to the progress of the story (…) narration organises them into an intelligible whole" (Ricoeur 1991b: 426). Narrative, and in particular the process of emplotment, according to Ricoeur, are central elements in the way people temporalise themselves, or more specifically in the way they organise single events or actions, and establish coherence. The role of the plot in terms of mediation is threefold, as he argues:

> First, it is a mediation between the individual events or incidents and a story taken as a whole. (…) Furthermore, emplotment brings together factors as heterogeneous as agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results. (…) Plot is mediating in a third way, that of its temporal characteristics (Ricoeur 1984: 65-66).

Ricoeur speaks about the importance of narrative in the context of the organisation of single events in time but also in relation to identity, for which narrative is of central importance. Ricoeur conceives of identity as a form of narration and thus speaks of narrative identity. He argues that "human lives become more readable when they are interpreted in function of the stories people tell about themselves" (Ricoeur 1991d: 73).

The stories, though, that people tell about themselves are not mere inventions of individuals but are interwoven into a whole range of other circulating stories.

Ricoeur refers to the relation between individuals and others in a twofold way. First, he acknowledges that "the life history of each is caught up in the histories of others" (Ricoeur 1992: 161), which stands in contrast to over-individualistic perceptions of agency and second, he underlines the significance of narrative structures when he states that "it is precisely because of the elusive character of real life that we need the help of fiction to organise life retrospectively, after the fact, prepared to take as provisional and open to revision any figure of emplotment borrowed from fiction or from history" (Riceour 1992: 162). However, as the next section of this chapter will show, the function of narrative as ordering and relating separate events in time, including the ordering of life in retrospect, has been critiqued by Bourdieu for engendering 'illusionary' notions regarding the authorship of narratives of individual life trajectories. Yet, while such a critique will be important for analysing the relation between the temporality of narrative and the temporality of practice at the level of individual agency, Ricoeur's theory of narrative addresses the (sociologically crucial) structure-agency question also at the level of structure, that is, he speaks about 'narratives as structures'.

Ricoeur refers to the role of narrative as structure in his book *From Text to Action* (1991a), in which he introduces the distinction between narration as act and narrative as structure. This distinction is important both in terms of the role of texts and their relation to action as well as in terms of the understanding of texts and fiction as sources of imagination. Ricoeur calls this distinction the twofold nature of narratives. Narratives, according to Ricoeur, are essential in the production of meaning in individual action but, at the same time, narratives also exist as 'structures' insofar as they influence individual actions. Narratives in this sense can exist in oral as well as written forms and have an important role in the creation and adaptation of individual ambitions and actions. Texts play a particular role in this context, as my analysis of career portraits in newspapers in Chapter 5 will show.

Ricoeur argues against the traditional view of texts that are concerned to maintain the distinction between the 'inside' and the 'outside' of a text, that is to say, of the text itself and the reader. Narratives, as Ricoeur argues, are composed

and configured not in the text but in the reader of a text, which makes possible the reconfiguration of life. (Ricoeur 1991b: 430). Ricoeur states that "plotting is the work of the text and the reader jointly. (…) in this sense we can already say that stories are told but also lived in the imaginary mode" (Ricoeur 1991b: 432). Imagination and action are thus closely connected and cannot be regarded as separate. "Without imagination, there is no action, we shall say. And this is so in several different ways: on the level of projects, on the level of motivations, and on the level of the very power to act" (Ricoeur 1991a: 177). The centrality of narrative that Ricoeur is speaking about is thus not only important retrospectively but also in terms of the development of future motivations, as he states:

> The function of the project, turned toward the future, and that of the narrative, turned toward the past, here exchange their schemata and their grids, as the project borrows the narrative's structuring power and the narrative receives the project's capacity for anticipating. Next, imagination is involved in the very process of motivation (Ricoeur 1991a: 177).

Ricoeur's understanding of narrative as structure, and in particular the idea of narrative as a source of imagination that orients human motivations and behaviour, has important implications for analysing popular accounts (texts) of working lives. This is so in particular for the current socio-economic context of individualisation, outlined in Chapter 1. In other words, by adopting a Ricoeurian perspective of 'narrative as structure', individualisation can be understood a process that does not only involve a reorganisation of class, economic or organisational structures (see Chapters 1 and 2) but also as a process that is played out to a considerable extent at the level of narrative.

Specifically, as Chapter 5 will demonstrate empirically, individualisation involves a narrative that conveys an understanding of work biography as an individual project and hence as an outcome of individual strategies. It will further be suggested that in the context of work, narratives as sources of imagination for individual motivation receive a significant degree of their authority and legitimacy via a process of othering, that is, via an operation that creates hierarchies and oppositions in terms of the attributes and values associated with orientations to work and time. However, such attributes and values not only

involve specific orientations to time but also, as Chapter 5 will make clear, how individuals relate to social structures such as their family or class background as well as their educational qualifications. Steph Lawler's twofold conceptualisation of narrative as 'linking device', that is, of narrative as link between both past and present events as well as the individual and the collective provides the necessary framework for the empirical analysis to follow and will therefore be discussed in the next section.

3.5.2. Lawler: the significance of narrative as 'linking device'

Lawler's twofold conceptualisation of narrative is informed by Ricoeur's theory of narrative, in particular by his distinction between narrative as structure and narration as act. Firstly, as Lawler (2002) argues, narratives are social products because, although they are produced by people, they do not solely "originate with the individual: rather, they circulate culturally to provide a repertoire from which people can produce their own stories" (2002: 242). And secondly, as Lawler underscores, narration is also an act and narratives thus serve as "interpretive devices, through which people represent themselves, both to themselves and to others (...) [they] contain transformation (change over time), some kind of 'action' and characters, all of which are brought together within an overall 'plot'" (2002: 242). While narrative as (social) structure has already been discussed in the previous section, the discussion of Lawler's conception of narrative will focus on narrative as act. More specifically, as Lawler argues, narratives are significant for both linking past and present, but also the individual and the collective, because they enable individuals to establish meaning in terms of relating past and present events and practices and allow the individual to embed individual actions in collective structures. Let me briefly explain this twofold function of narrative, which will serve as a methodological frame for analysing present-day working lives.

Narratives relate past and present events in time and thereby "connote and constitute movement – the movement from the potential to the actual, from what could be to what is, from past to present, from present to future" (Lawler 2002:

250). Through this process of linking past and present and thus temporally relating disparate events and practices in time, narratives also convey ideas about the temporal nature of practice, as will be investigated in Chapter 5. The temporality of narrative, as Lawler goes on to say "makes later events seem the natural and inevitable culmination of earlier ones" and thus "naturalise the plot" (2002: 250). Ricoeur argues in a similar way, stating that by narratively linking past and present events, it is also possible to "read time backwards (…) by reading the end into the beginning and the beginning into the end" (Ricoeur 1980: 183). As the next section of this chapter will elaborate in more detail, such ways in which narratives relate past and present events in time often imply a sociologically speaking problematic understanding of practice and will hence be explored in career portraits as well, as Chapter 5 will show.

As already noted, the second reason why Lawler understands narrative as a 'linking device' is because it relates the individual and the collective. More precisely, Lawler argues that "narratives of individual lives must always incorporate other life narratives" (2002: 251), which she contrasts to over-individualistic interpretations of the individual. Lawler underlines her argument by stating that once "the connectivity of personal narratives comes to the fore (…) the myth of the 'atomized individual' is immediately exploded" (2002: 251). While the narrative linking between the individual and the collective will be explored throughout the empirical chapters to follow, the latter point, which relates to the dis-embeddedness of the individual narratives from other (social) narratives, will be of particular importance in Chapter 5. Hence, Lawler's understanding of narrative will allow me to conceptualise the sociological relevance of narrative not only in terms of the previously mentioned temporality between past and present events but also in terms of how narrative links the individual and the collective.

Yet, while it has been shown so far that narrative is crucial for understanding the temporal nature of agency, there are also some important implications and limitations when looking at the relation between time and narrative. This is so in particular in regard to the diverging understandings of the significance of narrative in creating coherence and unity in (working) lives. As such diverging

understandings will be key for the analysis of work biographies and futurities of work in empirical Chapter 5, the last section of this chapter will address these divergences (as well as convergences) among the authors discussed so far in this chapter, especially insofar as they concern the biographical dimension.

3.6. Work biography: narrative unity of (working) life or biographical illusion?

The discussion so far in this chapter has presented two different views about the relation between time, agency and narrative. In this concluding section I want to synthesise these different views, showing how such a synthesis can add to our understanding of the temporal nature of working lives, especially in terms of widespread depictions of working lives in print-media. The first view, offered in the discussion of Bourdieu, emphasised the temporality of individual practices and criticised the idea of individuals being reflexive agents of biographically-significant life-choices and hence of individuals being authors of their own narratives of working lives.

Bourdieu's criticism of narrative approaches to social theory is probably best expressed in his essay on the *Biographic illusion* (2000d), in which he critiques the biographical enterprise (*l'entreprise biographique*). Specifically, this critique (of the biographical enterprise) concerns the idea and desire to conceive one's life as an (auto) biographical narrative and hence the idea of treating life as if it was a story. He does so by saying that biographical narratives use a retrospective logic of intentionality in order to establish coherence between different events in time (Bourdieu 2000d). This kind of logic is opposed to his logic of practice, which considers practice as being immersed in the current of time rather than being a product of intentionality. In other words, biographical narratives usually confer a rhetoric of intentionality and directedness to individual practices that these practices may not have had in their original social context.

Hence, while Ricoeur as well as Lawler hold that individuals can build and maintain a variety of life narratives, and could therefore attach different

meanings to their actions over time, Bourdieu's position instead suggests that such an attachment of meaning remains a rhetorical illusion, since individuals never have full access to the meaning of their actions. Specifically, Bourdieu states that the 'biographical enterprise', involves an inclination "toward making oneself the ideologist of one's own life, through the selection of a few significant events with a view to elucidating an overall purpose, and through the creation of causal or final links between them which will make them coherent" (Bourdieu 2000d: 300). Crucially, such processes of 'narrative linking', that is, of connecting different events in time as well as connecting the individual and the collective (see discussion on Lawler) are performed not only by individuals but also in written accounts about other people's (working) lives, which is the case in career portraits as Chapters 5 and 6 will examine empirically.

Despite these pronounced differences in understanding the relation between narrative and time, there are a few convergences between the theories of narrative considered in this chapter and Bourdieu's critique of biographical narratives which are worth noting. Precisely, these convergences concern Bourdieu's and Ricoeur's temporalised understanding of individual agency. Both Ricoeur and Bourdieu conceive individual action as embedded in historical and social structures. Ricoeur's Augustinian-inspired concept of time, in which he speaks about the centrality of past in the form of memory, and of the future in the form of expectation as regards the present, substantially corresponds to Bourdieu's notion of the temporality of practice, which also conceives of the present as being embedded in the past in the form of habitus, as well as anticipating the future in the form of the *sense pratique* (the feel for the game).

Lois McNay underscores this convergence between Bourdieu and Ricoeur by arguing that while "Bourdieu develops the temporalized account of agency in the context of the spatial dimension of power, that is, through the ideas of corporeal dispositions (habitus) and social structure (the field). Ricoeur elaborates the temporal dialectic in terms of the narrative structure of self-identity" (McNay 2000: 23). Yet, while there are certainly convergences between Bourdieu's and Ricoeur's understanding of time and agency, it has also been made clear that it is in fact the points where Bourdieu's understanding of agency departs from

Ricoeur's and Lawler's theory of narrative that opens up a conceptual framework for investigating present-day economic life. In particular, this has been illustrated in Lawler's understanding of the twofold significance of narrative, which – with Bourdieu's concepts – will be crucial for framing the following methodology chapter.

4. Methodology

4.1. Introduction: Researching the temporalities of working lives in career portraits and in the London banking industry

As indicated in the Introduction, the empirical research on which this thesis is based draws on Bourdieu's methodological writings on the interdependency of economic and temporal structures, including his temporalised understanding of practice. It is also informed by Ricoeur's and in particular by Lawler's notions of narrative. This chapter will show how the concepts drawn from these authors, which were introduced in the previous chapter, will be used in order to examine changes in the temporalities of working lives in two different empirical settings:

a) in career portraits of six newspapers, from Austria and Britain;
b) in two different workforces in the London banking industry.

The first part of this chapter will introduce the context and object of the empirical research. I will then show how I am going to operationalise the concepts of Bourdieu, Ricoeur and Lawler in order to investigate the two social settings. This section will be followed by a detailed description of how the data were collected, which methodological problems were encountered in this process and how the data were analysed.

4.2. Research objectives and context of research

To put it in very general terms, the aim of this thesis is to explore the orientations individuals hold towards their past, present and future work biographies. As was made clear in the first three chapters, an investigation of such orientations is important as they are indicative of recent processes of individualisation and precarisation of work, processes that are crucial for understanding present-day transformations in economic life. Is individualisation manifest in certain

orientations to time, in individual practices and habits in the two empirical settings chosen for my analysis? And if so, do such orientations and practices give evidence for (new) emerging temporalities of work? Chapter 3 has further identified the importance of narrative for grasping the temporal nature of work biographies. Hence, what can a consideration of narrative add to our understanding of individualisation, in particular inasmuch as it concerns questions of time? Yet, while individualisation is certainly an essential feature of contemporary transformations of economic life, previous (theory) chapters have attributed an equally important role to processes of precarisation, especially in regard to new divisions of workforces.

This thesis will address the key question of how such divisions within workforces – for instance, as caused by the increasing use of subcontracting – can be understood as divisions of time and temporality. Crucially, these questions will be posed in the two previously mentioned empirical contexts: portrayals of individual careers in newspapers and personal accounts of working lives in the banking industry in London. By investigating these two contexts, this thesis will ask whether the transformations of work and time discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 can be observed in (print) media or in personally conducted interviews, and if so, in what ways. The next section will formulate the questions posed so far in more (conceptual) detail for the two empirical settings investigated in this thesis.

4.2.1. Researching the temporalities of work in career portraits

Career portraits are stories of individual working lives and capture a person's past and present career, they give evidence of how goals were achieved in this career and are usually published in daily or weekly newspapers – either in weekend editions or in separate sections on work, career or jobs. Historically speaking, career portraits are a relatively new genre of text and many newspapers have only started publishing them in the last ten to twenty years. From a sociological point of view, career portraits are interesting for reasons of genre, time and narrative. Let me explain briefly why this is so.

First, as Chapter 5 will elaborate, career portraits share similarities with the genres of portraiture and biography and they are instructive in terms of attitudes to work, which poses questions as to what career portraits *do* in terms of present changes in the world of work, in particular in regard to increasingly individualistic perceptions of work and career, as discussed in Chapter 1. An exploration of career portraits therefore aims to address the sociological importance of how individuals *are supposed to* live and shape their working lives and how, in doing so, these portraits universalise and normalise certain (career) practices and attitudes towards work and time. More precisely, by adopting a Bourdieusian perspective, that is, a perspective that takes into account the socially and economically contingent – as well as classed – character of individual practices and attitudes towards work and time, this thesis will examine the proliferation of certain practices and orientations to time in career portraits. In doing so, I will ask what these practices and orientations mean in terms of processes of individualisation and in terms of contemporary class relations. Bourdieu's writings on the interdependency of economic and temporal structures, as discussed in Chapter 3, will provide the necessary conceptual framework for examining how individuals in career portraits relate to their past, present and future working lives.

This investigation will pay particular attention to individualisation processes of the sort described in Chapter 1 and I will examine whether such processes are manifest at the level of how individuals relate to their work biographies. If individualisation is evident in career portraits, in what ways is it enacted? Are work biographies portrayed as the outcome of individual strategies and efforts or are they depicted as embedded in organisational or economic contexts? Furthermore, how do career portraits enact the (temporal) boundaries between the spheres of work and non-work? And crucially, can a Bourdieusian perspective that conceptualises transformations in the social structures of the economy as transformations of time help us identify the forms of temporality that have been discussed in Chapter 2, including situational time or potential time?

The second reason why career portraits are relevant for studying present-day temporalities of economic life is because, as my analysis will suggest, they enact

certain models of individual agency, which have important implications for our understanding of individualisation as well. By drawing on Bourdieu's concept of *temporality of practice* and on Lawler's conceptual framing of narrative as a 'linking device', as introduced in Chapter 3, I will explore whether the stories of individual working lives that are told in career portraits relate past and present events, as well as the individual and the collective, from the point of view of narrative, and if so in what ways. Specifically, I will analyse the underlying temporalities of practices in terms of the ways in which career portraits establish coherence over time or, to put it in Ricoeur's terms, how career portraits emplot the work biographies of individuals by means of narrative. In other words, I will contrast the temporalities and causalities of narrative established in career portraits with the *temporality of practice*, as outlined by Bourdieu. I will suggest that career portraits not only establish narrative (and often causal) links within the stories of individual working lives but also perform a certain *temporality* and thus enact ideas of how individuals are connected to their past (working lives) and to collective structures. In this context, I will also ask whether career portraits affirm or critique such collective structures, including ideas about the role of economic or market structures.

Specifically, Bourdieu's temporalised understanding of agency will allow me to examine whether career portraits enact de-temporalised and de-socialised notions of individual agency and of individual (career) change, and if so, how and why. This is particularly important because, as Savage and Skeggs have suggested in work discussed in Chapter 1, individualisation is not a process in which class is losing its influence on individual life courses but one in which middle-class forms of individualisation have become hegemonic. Hence, can career portraits be characterised as an individualisation technique, which promote a middle-class habitus and corresponding individualised attitudes towards work and time? If so, what does the presence or absence of markers of social class in career portraits tell us about the nature of the relation between individualisation and social class? Yet, as my analysis will show, while individualisation is certainly an issue in terms of the ways in which career portraits depict individual working lives, career portraits cannot reveal how processes of individualisation operate at the level of lived experiences and the personal accounts provided by work biographies. As

such accounts of working lives are crucial for investigating the temporalities of work in present-day economic life – in particular in regard to individualisation and precarisation processes – the following section will explain how these (personal accounts of) working lives were researched by drawing on the conceptual framework offered in the first three chapters.

4.2.2. Researching the temporalities of work in the London banking industry

The second part of the empirical research on which this thesis is based concerns the temporalities of working lives and careers of two very different types of service-sector workers and employees in the London banking industry. These are, on the one hand, employees who are directly involved in the activities of the bank, including front and back-office positions, and, on the other hand, subcontracted cleaning workers of the bank buildings. Although the differences between these two types of workforces could not be bigger, both are paradigmatic of the present-day service-sector industry in regard to divisions between core and periphery workforces. The novel aspect that my research will contribute involves asking whether these two different workforces, situated within the same industry and in fact within the same buildings, can be understood in terms of a dual economy of time and individual temporalities.

By drawing on Bourdieu's writings on time and temporality, I will examine the interrelation of economic (and organisational) structures and individual temporalities. As laid out in Chapter 3, Bourdieu holds that specific (historic) economic structures produce and require a certain orientation to time as well as certain (temporal) practices. Bourdieu also made clear that these orientations to time and the formation of these practices are predominantly shaped by people's socio-economic position, particularly in relation to their working lives. Yet, while Bourdieu's research took place in a socio-historic context that cannot easily be compared with today's economic life, let alone today's economic structures, his insights and the concepts he developed provide a strong (and sufficiently general) conceptual backdrop for analysing present-day working life

temporalities. As already noted in Chapters 1 and 2, two of the major drivers of present-day changes in the temporalities of working lives are processes of individualisation and precarisation.

Hence, are processes of individualisation and precarisation operating at the level of time? If so, what are the specific ways in which such processes are manifest in the ways that individuals think about and relate to their past and future working lives, both in terms of individual practices and orientations to time? More specifically, can individuals draw on their past experiences and resources or are they required to 'break' with their past? Hence, what do such continuities and discontinuities in regard to people's working life temporalities tell us about individualisation and precariousness? Moreover, to what extent are individuals able to shape their working futures and to what extent do they anticipate their future via practices of planning? And crucially, in regard to the Bourdieusian perspective adopted in this thesis, can these orientations to time and individual temporalities be conceptualised as being interdependent with economic and organisational structures, especially in terms of new divisions of time and work? Before showing how these questions have framed the analysis of data in this thesis, the next section will explain which specific data has been collected and how this has been done.

4.3. Data Collection

The method of data collection consisted of a random selection of career portraits in British (Irish[47]) and Austrian daily and weekly newspapers from the years 2006 to 2010, semi-structured interviews with journalists and editors of the respective newspapers and semi-structured interviews with the core and the subcontracted workforce in the banking industry in London. The following section will explain the rationale of this process in more detail.

4.3.1. Career portraits in British (Irish) and Austrian daily and weekly newspapers

4.3.1.1. Collection of the newspapers and career portraits

The newspapers that were chosen for the analysis are the online edition of *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist* and *The Financial Times* from Britain and *Die Presse* and *Der Standard* from Austria. The reason why newspapers from these two countries were chosen for analysis mainly has to do with the fact that the author is most familiar with the media landscape in these two countries. However, as the analysis does not include a systematic comparison of career portraits of these two countries but instead an investigation of the (temporal) commonalities across all newspapers, it may have well been the newspapers from other (European) countries that could have been selected.

The selection criteria of the newspapers were related to the type of people being portrayed as well as the availability of career portraits in newspapers. As the data collection showed, there were a certain number of career portraits that featured celebrities or famous people. Such portraits were, however, not selected as the focus of this research was mainly unknown people's career portraits. It is also worth noting that not all newspapers publish career portraits; it is mostly newspapers with readers of medium to high levels of income and education that

---

[47] Some of the career portraits from *The Times* are from the Irish edition because the online edition, from where the career portraits were gathered, contains both British as well as Irish career portraits.

portray people's working lives. This also explains why there were no red top newspapers chosen for the analysis. Thus, most red top newspapers do not publish portraits of individual working lives. This aspect, which clearly relates to issues of class and stratification processes, will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5. In regard to selection criteria, it was also important that the respective newspapers had been publishing career portraits for at least two to three years and thus had a 'history' of doing so. This was necessary for being able to collect a sufficient amount of data as well as to get a proper understanding of the history of this genre from the interviews with journalists and editors of the newspapers. Altogether, 180 career portraits from six different newspapers (30 from each newspaper) were selected for analysis. From the already mentioned six newspapers, a random sample of 30 career portraits, covering the years 2004 to 2010, was drawn:

Austrian newspapers:

- *Der Standard* (30 portraits from the years 2006 – 2009)
- *Die Presse* (30 portraits from the years 2008 - 2009)

British newspapers:

- *The Times* (30 portraits from the years 2004 – 2009)
- *The Economist* (30 portraits from the years 2007 - 2009)
- *The Financial Times* (30 portraits from the years 2009 - 2010)
- *The Guardian* (30 portraits from the years 2007 – 2010)

Wherever possible, the data were gathered on the homepages of the respective newspapers. In cases where this was not possible, career portraits were transcribed from printed newspapers in libraries. The data gathered were then stored and investigated with qualitative data analysis software. Additionally, readership profiles were obtained from various online sources, including the homepages of the respective newspapers.

4.3.1.2. Semi-structured interviews with journalist and editors of the newspapers

In order to get a better understanding of the histories and motivations of newspapers in publishing career portraits, thirteen interviews with journalists and editors were conducted, most of them via telephone. Specifically, from these thirteen interviews one was with *Der Standard*, one with *Die Presse*, three were with *The Times*, two with *The Economist*, three with *The Financial Times* and three with *The Guardian*. With the consent of the interviewees, the conversations were recorded and then transcribed. In these interviews I asked the journalists or editors about the history of career portraits within their newspaper – including preceding (other) series of career portraits – and when they first started publishing personalised career stories. In addition, I enquired about the rationale for starting a series on individual careers and working lives and the motivations behind publishing (often unknown) people's personal careers in newspapers. Due to the wide range of people, sectors and hence careers being portrayed in the pieces, I also enquired into the choice of these particular people and sectors, especially in relation to the readership profiles of the respective newspapers.

4.3.2. Semi-structured interviews with core and periphery workers in the banking and finance industry of London

While it was relatively easy to contact journalists writing career portraits in newspapers, it proved to be more difficult to find potential interviewees among employees in the banking industry in London. After several attempts to establish contact with Human Resources departments of banks, which did not succeed at all, I had to find other ways of getting access to interviewees. Eventually, I was able to find interviewees through personal contacts. From then on, I asked the people I interviewed whether it would be possible to find at least one more person from their colleagues or friends who would be willing to participate in an interview. While this snowball sampling technique proved to be the only way to establish contact with potential interviewees it also meant that I could not easily determine the nature of my sample in terms of age, gender or ethnicity. On an

occasion when I mentioned my problems with establishing contact in one of the conducted interviews, I was told that maybe two or three years prior to the beginning of my fieldwork in 2008 – that is in 2005 or 2006 – the Human Resources departments might have reacted differently, but that in a period of crisis no bank would be interested in cooperating with people from outside the bank.

It was slightly easier to get in contact with the subcontracted cleaning workforce. I was able to attend regular events of the campaign *Justice for Cleaners*, which demands better conditions of work and payment for the workers and is organised mainly through the trade union Unite. At regular meetings of the cleaning workers branch committee of the union, I got in contact with a lot of the workers who I then interviewed about their working lives. These meetings were also a good opportunity to do some interviews with organisers and representatives of the union about their activities and the challenges of organising labour under conditions of subcontracting, the financial crisis and the increasing number of migrant workers in London. Considering the precarious situation of many of the cleaning workers, I found it appropriate to offer some form of payment in order to recognise their situation and their restricted amount of time available. Through a grant from the Central Research Fund of the University of London, I was able to offer 20 Pounds for each personal interview, which normally lasted around one to one and a half hours. I could get a lot of new contacts at the meetings of the union through organisers but also with the help of people that I had already interviewed. With the consent of the cleaning workers as well as the group of people working in banking, the conducted interviews were recorded and later transcribed and prepared for analysis with QDA software.[48] For purposes of confidentiality and anonymity the names of the interviewees used in Chapters 5 to 8 were altered and are thus not their real names.

Altogether, I managed to conduct 37 interviews within the period from September 2009 to August 2010. Of these 37 interviews, 16 were with people working in banking (in trading, risk management, compliance, etc.), 19 with cleaning workers and two with trade union organisers in the cleaning industry.

---

[48] For the data analysis the qualitative data analysis software *Maxqda* was used.

While the 16 people working in banking were predominantly in their early and mid-careers, male and not older than 45 years, the second group of cleaning workers was distributed more equally in terms of gender and age. Specifically, from those working in banking 11 out of the 16 interviewees were male (5 female) and 10 out of the 16 were 30 years old or younger (6 interviewees were older than 30 years). From the other group of cleaners 10 were male (9 female) and 9 were up to 45 years old (10 were older than 45 years of age). It is also important to note that while all of the interviewees in banking were either UK or EU citizens, the group of cleaners consisted predominantly of individuals from African (especially Ghanaian and Nigerian) origin who had migrated to the UK for political or economic reasons.

The semi-structured interviews with both groups explored the interviewees' past, present and (anticipated) future working life with a particular emphasis on notions of change. Specifically, the interviewees were invited to start speaking about their educational background and then continue with the history of their working lives until their most recent job. In this context, I focused in particular on which resources people were drawing on in both finding and changing jobs. In terms of the interviewees' present job I asked them first to describe the work they have been doing and then focused on questions such as the pace of their work, the way in which their working time has been organised, as well as how the financial crisis has impacted on their conditions of work.

Thereafter, I continued asking about the way they think about the future of their working lives, whether they wanted to change their job or expected any changes and to what extent they felt able to determine the course of their work biographies. I was also interested in whether (job) insecurity plays a role in thinking about the future and whether the 'experience of the crisis' changed or influenced the way they think about their (working) futures. Although the interviews were pre-structured by these questions, I also aimed to keep the interview situation open to other topics that might emerge during the interviews. At the end of each interview I noted down the participants' age, gender and ethnicity. The data that was generated from these interviews was coded and

analysed by drawing on the conceptual framework developed in Chapters 1-3. The following section will explain this process in more detail.

4.4. Data Analysis

The data on which the discussions in Chapters 5 to 8 are based was coded and analysed by drawing on a grounded theory approach. This methodological approach allowed for a repeated reading and contextualising of the data within the questions posed in section 4.2, whilst providing enough interpretative space to identify other (new) patterns than those assumed beforehand. As a first step in my analysis, all the interview data from interviews with journalists and editors of newspapers was transcribed and saved in qualitative data analysis (QDA) software. Equally, the 180 career portraits as well as the 36 interviews with people working in the banking industry in London were stored and prepared for analysis with QDA software. This section will explain how the research questions informed the analysis of each of these (three) datasets as well as how these questions were crucial for the coding of the data and hence for the establishment of conceptual links to the theoretical discussions presented in Chapters 1-3.

4.4.1. Analysis of semi-structured interviews with journalist and editors of newspapers that publish career portraits

The data gathered from the thirteen semi-structured interviews with journalists and editors of newspapers that publish career portraits was mainly analysed in terms of the social and historical significance of career portraits and hence in terms of what the genre of portraiture *does* – sociologically speaking – in regard to the ways in which careers and working lives are imagined and told. Based on the questions posed in section 4.2.1, the coding of the transcribed interviews grouped interview statements in terms of the *idea behind career portraits*, the *history of career portraits in newspapers* and the *selection criteria* of people who are portrayed. The following coding scheme illustrates this:
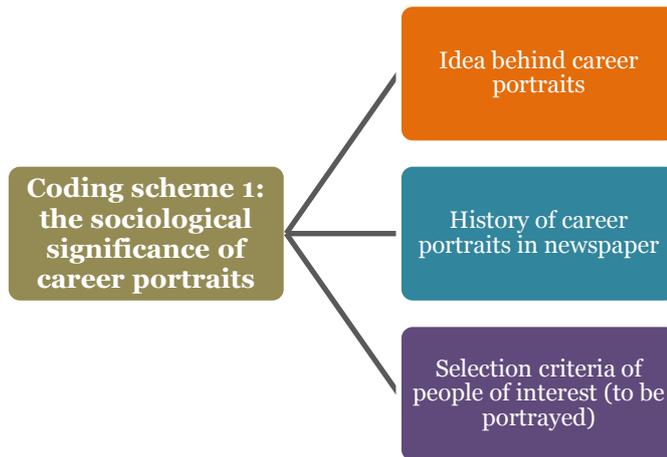
Interview segments that were coded with any of the three themes were then integrated into the discussion of career portraits, especially in Chapter 5 on the relevance of genre for understanding contemporary individualisation processes in economic life. The analysis of interviews with journalists and editors of newspapers hence provided an important backdrop and socio-historical context for this research and it prepared the ground for analysing the actual content of career portraits. The way in which the content was analysed shall be explained in the following section.

4.4.2. Analysis of career portraits

The 180 career portraits gathered from two Austrian and four British newspapers (6 newspapers with 30 career portraits each) were analysed from the perspective of time and narrative, as laid out in section 4.2.1. By drawing on Lawler's conceptualisation of narrative as a linking device as well as on Bourdieu's temporalised understanding of practice, my analysis in Chapter 5 will identify a number of ways in which career portraits narratively link past and present events, as well as the individual and collective structures and which temporalities (of practice) there are involved in these specific ways. After reading through the career portraits numerous times and categorising the data according to these questions, the following scheme of codes and sub-codes was established:
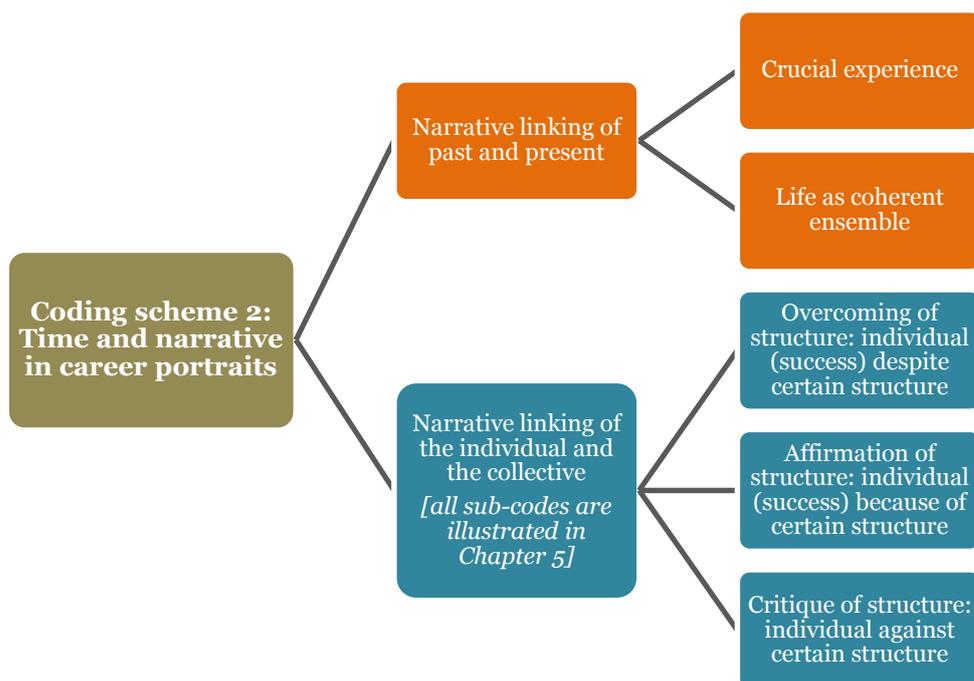
Importantly, this hierarchical coding scheme shows that the two main codes (*narrative linking of past and present* and *narrative linking of the individual and the collective*) were derived from the research questions and are explained and conceptually linked to theoretical discussions via the five sub-codes, which were established throughout the analysis of the data. While Chapter 5 will show in more detail how this coding scheme ramifies even more by moving to a (hierarchically lower) level of sub-codes that denote specific text segments within career portraits, for my concerns here it is important to note that these codes engender temporalities of work biographies that will add to our understanding of the mechanisms at work in processes of individualisation, in particular in terms of how individualisation works at the level of narrative.

After having identified career portraits as an instructive genre and hence as having the function of an individualising technique in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 will analyse individualisation in terms of practices, habits and orientations to time that are enacted in these portraits. Crucially, these enactments of the ways in which individual work biographies *can* and *should* be lived were examined by drawing on Bourdieu's Algerian studies, in particular on his account of how transformations in economic structures necessitated individuals to adopt new

practices, habits and orientations to time. Hence, my analysis in Chapter 6 coded the 180 career portraits in terms of how the people portrayed *time* their work biographies, including how they speak about the social context and causes for change within their careers, as well as how individuals relate (and are supposed to relate) to their past, present and future working lives. Specifically, by approaching the texts with the questions posed in section 4.2.1, my analysis in Chapter 6 extracted four main codes - including a number of sub-codes – which were assigned to text segments with the use of QDA software. The following coding scheme 3 depicts the hierarchical coding scheme, which is the outcome of the analysis performed on the selected career portraits:
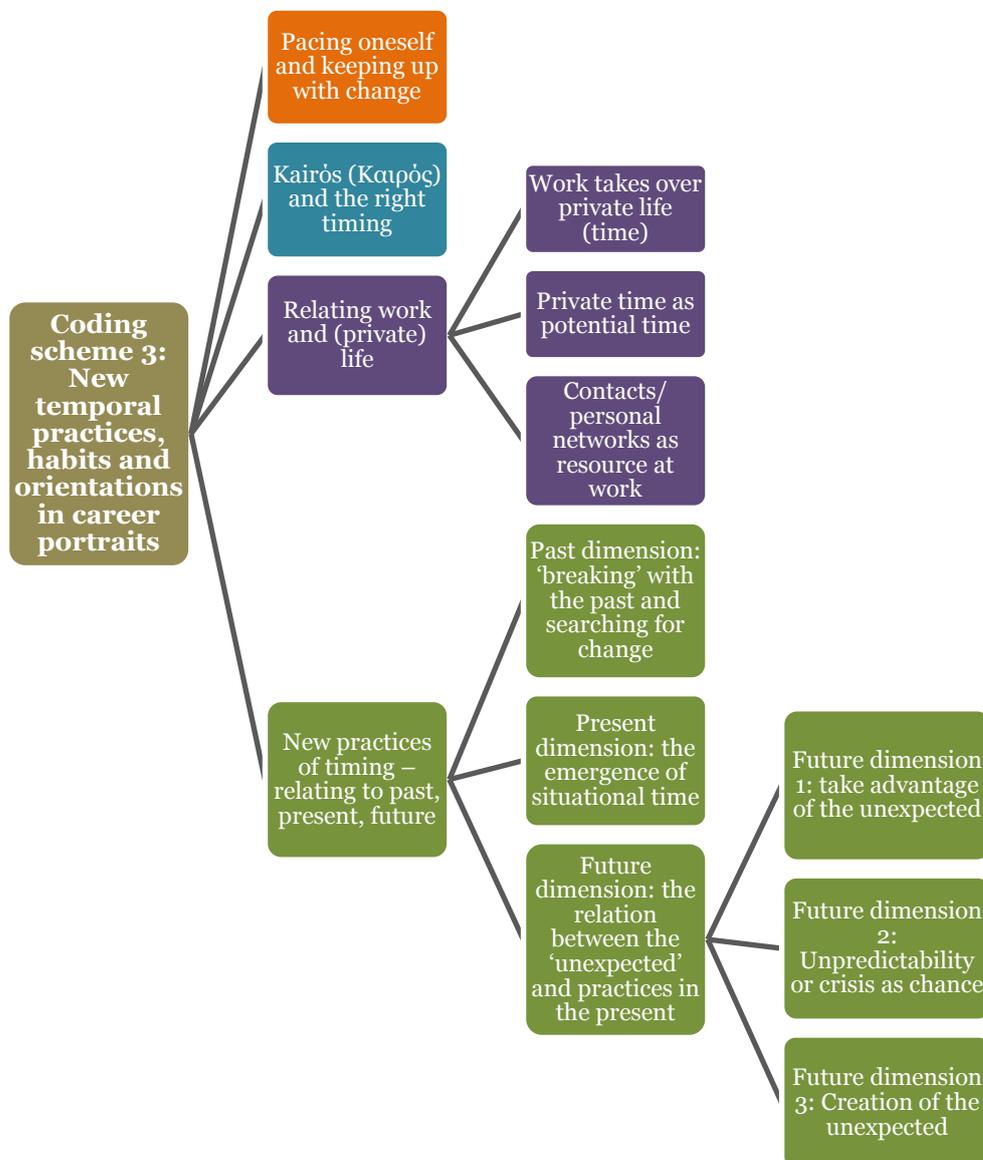
Contrary to the previous system of codes, this hierarchical coding scheme was established in a bottom-up fashion as the research questions posed in this Chapter were more general and hence did not allow for a coding of the career portraits with already established (main) codes. In other words, the questions posed in Chapter 6 did not define the main codes (as it is the case in Chapter 5) but were created bottom-up by building numerous sub-codes, which were then grouped conceptually in order to generate codes that reach a level of (conceptual) generality that made it possible to relate the data to the theoretical framework developed in Chapters 1 to 3.

4.4.3. Analysis of semi-structured interviews with core and periphery workers in the London banking and finance industry

As already noted, the interview data on working lives of people in the banking industry in London consists of two different groups, which will be explored in two separate chapters. The first of these two groups – the group of core workers – will be explored in Chapter 7. The 16 interviews that were conducted with individuals working in banking were transcribed and thereafter analysed and coded with QDA software. Most importantly, and following Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the interdependency of economic and temporal structures, my analysis examined to what extent the economic and organisational context of these workers *structure* and *time* their working lives – especially at a biographical level - as well as which orientations to time individuals develop according to these contexts. Specifically, my analysis in Chapter 7 extracted numerous codes from the 16 interview transcripts with banking employees, which were then grouped around concepts that were elaborated in the theory chapters. As the following graph shows, coding scheme 5 consists of five main codes and six sub-codes, some of which ramify to an even more detailed level. Crucially, the six main codes (including their sub-codes) denote text segments in which interviewees speak about their work histories, the reasons for changes to their work biographies, how they imagined their working futures as well as which (temporal) effects the financial crisis of 2008 had on their working lives.

Coding scheme 4: temporalities of working lives of early and mid career employees in the London banking industry

- Getting into banking – reasons, motivations, histories
- Fast-paced, competitive and intense rhythms of work
  - working excessive hours
  - working hours and pace of work according to rhythms of the 'market'
- The market as 'pacemaker' for one's career
  - 'moving' with the market
  - knowing one's 'place' (value) on the market
- Practices of timing
  - Past and present dimension
    - Situational temporalities
    - Past (experience) as resource
    - Inscribing' oneself into the present – the CV as narrative
  - Future dimension
    - Banking as time-limited career
    - Personal networks as resource
- Effects of the financial crisis

Like the coding scheme of the career portraits, this scheme too is hierarchical. These hierarchies represent different levels of conceptual abstraction and hence show how specific text segments in the interviews relate to more abstract concepts with sociological relevance, most notably to concepts within the theories of individualisation and time discussed in Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

In a similar fashion as the (first) group of employees in banking, the interviews with the second group of subcontracted cleaning workers were analysed by focusing on the ways in which the economic and organisational settings and

conditions of work interrelate with and shape the temporalities of people's working lives. Again, the general framework for this analysis is based on the theoretical concepts laid out in Chapter 3 and in particular on Bourdieu's writings on how individual orientations to time and practices are embedded in specific economic and social structures. Based on these theoretical assumptions, the coding of the interviews and the development of analytical categories extracted three main codes and seven sub-codes, all of which ramify to an even more detailed and fine grained level of other sub-codes. The following coding scheme 5 shows how these codes and sub-codes were grouped according to underlying theoretical concepts:

Coding scheme 5: temporalities of working lives of subcontracted cleaning workers in the London banking industry

- Getting into cleaning – reasons, motivations, histories

- Subcontracting as employment paradigm – the effects
  - worsening conditions of work
  - time intensification
  - redundancies

- Practices of timing – relating to past, present and future
  - The 'invisibility' of past experiences and skills
  - Stabilising the present and losing the future - precarious-ness
    - physically demanding work / effects on health
    - having to go to work when sick / no sick pay
    - time / financial pressures to find job
    - no increase of wages (payrise) or progression
    - no pension provision
    - no night allowance
    - no job security
    - no respect from managers
    - having to do a second job to make ends meet
  - (Im-)possibilities of individual change
    - no future planning possible / cleaning as time-limited job
    - cannot 'afford' individual future planning
    - desire / plan to open own business in the future (to compensate for precarious future income)
  - Collective futures
    - improvement / expected change through trade union
    - (collective) legal regulations provide stability (security)
    - personal / ethnic support networks

This coding scheme illustrates how several sub-codes, each of which denotes a number of interview segments, acquire conceptual and sociological relevance after grouping them into a main code. This is so in particular in regard to issues of work precariousness and how precariousness operates vis-à-vis people's orientation to time and their ability to shape their working futures. Yet, while the categories depicted in the previous coding scheme 5 will be discussed in Chapter 8, I will start my empirical analysis of working life temporalities by examining the relevance of genre for present-day individualisation processes in career portraits in the following Chapter 5.

5. The temporalities of working lives in career portraits of British and Austrian newspapers

5.1. Introduction

Previous chapters made clear how processes of individualisation and precarisation can be understood and conceptualised from the perspective of time. It was further shown in the methodology chapter how this theoretical and conceptual framework enabled me to investigate changes in the temporalities of working lives in two different empirical settings. These two empirical settings will henceforth be investigated in the remaining four chapters. This chapter will interrogate career portraits in contemporary British (Irish) and Austrian newspapers from the perspective of genre, time and narrative. Career portraits aim to capture individual working lives by describing a person's past and present career and are often published in weekend editions of newspapers or in separate sections on work, careers or jobs. Historically speaking, career portraits are a relatively new genre of text and many newspapers did not start publishing them until a few years ago. From a sociological point of view, career portraits are interesting insofar as they do not merely narrate and represent people's working lives but, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, they possess an instructive side, performing a role-model-like function, conveying certain ideas and values about work and career. I will further suggest that this instructive side is closely related to the genres that career portraits draw on, namely portraiture and biography. I will thus start the discussion of career portraits by investigating the relevance of these two (historical) genres for the analysis of career portraits.

I will then draw on Bourdieu's concept of *temporality of practice* as well as on Lawler's understanding of narrative – both discussed in Chapter 3 – in order to examine notions of temporality, agency and structure in career portraits. Specifically, I will explore whether the stories of individuals narratively relate past and present events, as well as the individual and the collective, and if so, in what ways. By telling the stories of individual working lives, career portraits give account of individual practices as well as how these practices are related to the

portrayed person's past and to collective structures. Bourdieu's concept of 'temporality of practice' will enable me to empirically investigate career portraits' underlying notions of agency, in respect of how the *temporality of narrative* (i.e. the narrative 'linking') relates to the *temporality of practice.* Investigating portraits in this way enables me to ask whether career portraits *are* about the organisation of time and if so in which ways.

I will further ask whether career portraits do not just convey ideas about the individual but also about more general issues and structures relating to the world of work and if so, in which ways. I will therefore analyse the relation between the individual and the collective (Lawler 2002) in terms of individual agency as well as with regards to collective structures or social and cultural narratives. Specifically, I will enquire whether individual career stories either critique or affirm certain structural narratives. As noted in detail in the methodology chapter, I will analyse 180 career portraits from two Austrian (*Der Standard*, *Die Presse*) and four British (Irish) (*The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist* and *The Financial Times*) newspapers from the years 2005 to 2010 as well as interviews with journalists and editors of the respective newspapers about the idea and history of career portraits.

5.2. Situating the career portrait

5.2.1. The portraiture of careers and the relevance of genre

Before discussing the content of career portraits in detail, I will introduce the genre portraiture more generally and I will do so for two reasons. First, to get a better understanding of the history of this genre and second, to assess whether the genre portraiture can be useful for the analysis of career portraits. Historically speaking, portraits have been used for a variety of purposes. Shearer West, in her book on portraiture (2004), identifies six main functions of portraits: the portrait as a work of art, the portrait as biography, the portrait as document, the portrait as proxy and gift, the portrait as commemoration and memorial, and the portrait as political tool (West 2004). Although West, and

most of the other literature on portraiture, speaks about portraits in the context of visual arts, I will draw on some of the ideas in the history of portraiture in order to elaborate how portraiture can be understood as a genre from a sociological point of view, in particular for the analysis of career portraits. One of the main features of portraiture is 'likeness', which means that the portrait shows a similarity with a particular individual. A portrait usually depicts a face, which, apart from the person's physical features, can "represent the subject's social position or 'inner life', such as their character or virtues" (2004: 21). It is from this broader perspective of the genre portraiture, as I will later suggest, that career portraits *are* a form of portraiture.

Historically speaking, it is not entirely clear how long portraiture has existed. Some argue that it originated in the period of the Renaissance while others argue that it can be dated back to the Neolithic period (West 2004: 14). What can be said with certainty is that it is a predominantly Western art form (West 2004: 17). Portraiture, as West argues, however tends to represent a specific group of people and its practice tends to flourish in cultures that privilege the notion of the individual over that of the collective (2004: 17). One of the reasons why portraiture is said to have established as an art form in 16th century Renaissance is because during this period, which was also the time of Humanism, the notion of the individual became more and more important in European art (Woodall 1997, West 2004). Later on in the 19th century, as West goes on to explain, this focus on the individual became a central feature of Romantic art and literature as well as of the Romantic portrait:

> [T]he idea that portraits should communicate something about the sitter's psychological state of personality is a concept that evolved gradually and became common only after nineteenth-century Romanticism fuelled the idea of a personality cult, that is, a fascination with the particular qualities, idiosyncrasies, and actions of a celebrated individual (West 2004: 29).

The history of portraiture, hence, can only be understood comprehensively in relation to the development of Western individuality, which, however, has at the same time been a history of class, gender and race.

Until the nineteenth century, portraiture was mainly reserved for the aristocracy. Only rarely were people from lower ranks of society depicted in portraits. The nineteenth century, though, with its socio-economic changes caused by industrialisation, witnessed a growing influence of the middle classes on economic life and at the same time a decline of the aristocracy. While the aristocratic portrait was justified by and based on the idea of ancestry, the portraits of the emerging bourgeoisie needed a different form of legitimisation. The idea of achievement, which was important in justifying the bourgeois portrait, was "articulated by 'images of individuality' which focused on the inner self, as opposed to rank and power characteristic of aristocratic identity" (Woodall 1997: 15). The emerging middle class and its increasing representation and presence in portraits, though, was also criticised and seen as a threat to the aristocracy. The criticism at the time was that the portraits of people from the middle classes favoured self-presentation instead of "higher values", which the aristocracy thought to represent in the portraits (West 2004: 85).[49] The painter Henry Fuseli, for instance, expressed his rejection to portraits of people from the 'middle ranks of society' as follows:

> Since liberty and commerce have more levelled the ranks of society, and more equally diffused opulence, private importance has been increased...and hence portrait-painting, which formerly was the exclusive property of princes, or a tribute to beauty, prowess, genius, talent, and distinguished character, is now become a kind of family calendar, engrossed by the mutual charities, of parents, children, brothers, nephews, cousins and relatives of all colours (Fuseli 1848 in West 2004: 86).

The history of portraiture and the act of portraying people is therefore strongly related to questions of power and class. It was only people who were either in a power position or had enough money that were portrayed. At the same time, portraiture has been a way to show the distinctiveness of one's social status or personality in relation to other (lower classes) of society. Parallel to portraiture, in the seventeenth and eighteenth century the ideas of individual identity and self-consciousness were increasingly verbalised, which was enhanced by the

---

[49] West (2004) uses the term "higher values", as the values of the aristocracy in opposition to the values of the emerging middle classes. He argues that in the 16th and 17th century, the painter Gian Paolo Lomazzo or the writer Charles Sorel create a futuristic dystopia where, as these authors would argue "...human vanity has spread to all levels of society to the point where self-image and self-presentation becomes more important than higher values" (2004: 85).

rapid development of the genres of biography and autobiography (West 2004: 17). Career portraits, as a specific genre of text and (usually) image, combine elements of both portraiture as well as biography. Therefore, in what follows, I will briefly explore the relevance of (auto-) biography for the study of career portraits as well.

Crucially for my concerns, both portraiture and (auto-) biography are genres that attribute significant importance to the idea of individuality and both genres are closely related to the history of Western individualism. The genre of biography, as a written account of someone's life produced by another, can be dated back to Ancient times – Greek as well as Roman – but it was not until the late eighteenth century that in a handful of isolated instances in England and Germany the term "autobiography" and its synonym "self-biography" appeared (Mascuch 1997: 19).[50] Mascuch suggests that there is a relation between the "origins of the individualist self and the modern autobiographical practice" (1997: 19). As Philippe Lejeune puts it: "The autobiographical form gives each person the opportunity to believe that he is a complete and responsible subject" (Lejeune 1980 in: Mascuch 1997: 13) or, as Mascuch similarly puts it: "[t]he modern autobiographer is therefore the prototype of the individualist self, and the modern autobiography is the ideal medium of individualist self-identity. Furthermore, as a form of personal action, modern autobiographical practice constitutes the essential mode of individualist agency" (Mascuch 1997: 23).

In summary then, modern biography and autobiography as well as portraiture have been linked to the social and cultural changes during the eighteenth and nineteenth century that gave rise to the individualist self and thus the desire of the emerging middle-classes to conceive of themselves as individuals.[51] The genres of biography and portraiture have both a classed, raced as well as gendered history. Plummer, for instance, argues about the genre of auto/biography that "[t]he dominant forms of auto/biography that appeared in

---

[50] Erben argues that the "modern biography emerges during the eighteenth century as part of the Enlightenment's commitment to understanding the relationship between morality, ethics and the vagaries of everyday existence" (Erben 1993: 15).
[51] The view of individuals as independent agents (from society) could also be related to possessive individualism as an ethos of liberal capitalism, as Macpherson (2011), for instance, does.

the public domain were those of the wealthy and powerful, which usually meant white, western, middle and upper class men" (Plummer 2001: 90).

In the nineteenth and twentieth century, the genre of biography was also critiqued for its 'Great Men' tradition, which tended to "exclude other forms of 'life-writing' such as diaries, letters and journals, often adopted by women and those outside mainstream literary culture" (Marcus 1994: 1, see also Stanley 1992, 1993). Nowadays, as Plummer argues "at the start of the twenty-first century, the telling of life stories has become such a voluminous business that we could even start to talk of something like an 'auto/biographical society': life stories are everywhere" (Plummer 2001: 78). Although Plummer speaks of an *auto/biographical society*, which suggests that more and more people tell their life-stories, not least through new forms of communication technologies such as internet blogs or social media, this does not mean that questions of class and gender have become irrelevant in terms of people's life narratives (see for example Peterson 1994).

On the contrary, the increasing number of biographical accounts of individuals in newspapers, magazines as well as the internet promotes the idea of the individual as the sole creator of her or his life-narrative (cf. Marcus 1994: 4) and makes invisible the individual and cultural resources that are necessary to do so, resources which are central to current articulations of class and gender. Before turning to discuss the latter, I will however turn first to a discussion of how career portraits can be situated in relation to the two genres of portraiture and biography, in particular in relation to contemporary processes of the individualisation of working lives and careers.

5.2.2. The career portrait: between individualisation and 'narrativisation' of work

Although career portraits are not portraits in the conventional sense, I propose that they can be discussed in the context of portraiture for two reasons. As presented in the previous section, two of the main features of portraiture are

likeness and a focus on the individual. Both of them apply to career portraits. Career portraits narrate the work and life of a single individual and they aim to do so through likeness. They usually depict an individual's working life in relation to her or his personality and 'inner life' which includes biographical information. It is thus from this perspective that I suggest that career portraits are indeed a form of portraiture and that a consideration of the (historical) genres of portraiture facilitates in locating present-day career portraits both in terms of genre as well as in terms of their social and historical meaning. Moreover, career portraits combine elements of both portraiture as well as (auto) biography and they do so specifically in the context of everyday accounts of careers and working lives in newspapers. Considering the historical alignment between the genres of portraiture and (auto) biography with (Western) varieties of individualism, as discussed in the previous section, I will suggest that career portraits serve as an *individualising technique* in regard to the attitudes and temporal orientations individuals are supposed to hold towards their careers. Let me explain this point in some more detail.

The similarity between (visual) portraiture as a genre and career portraits, as already noted, lies in the ambition to capture the subject's personality or character. The difference, though, between conventional portraits and career portraits is that the former one conveys an aura of continuity (of values, of the royal court, etc.) to its spectators, while the latter aims instead to establish a relation of identification to its reader (spectator) and hence evoke a change of attitude in that reader. A career portrait will enable the reader to relate one's own personality to the portrayed person, which is not a primary intention of a conventional portrait. Rachel Bridge, who is a journalist from *The Times* and writes for the series *How I made it*, puts it as follows: "People read the column and feel that they can relate to it and think 'Oh, I can do that too'. (...) So, it's the human side of making money and being successful really".

As this quote indicates, the aim of career portraits – in comparison to conventional portraits – is not only to tell the story of an individual working life through likeness, but additionally to evoke identification with the portrayed person in the reader. Essentially, career portraits tell their readers that it is down

to their own determination and will to achieve the same or similar goals as the portrayed person. People who read the career portraits are supposed to positively identify with the person's aspirations, values and practices and the portraits should thus serve as a role model.[52] From a historical point of view, it is worth noting that career portraits, as (coherent) narratives of individual working lives appear at a time which has been characterised by its precariousness, insecurity and the rise of unpredictability (e.g. Sennett 1998, 2006; Castel 2000, 2009) or, as Beck (1992) famously put it, when the do-it-yourself biography can easily turn into a breakdown-biography. Similarly, Evans, in her book about *The Impossibility of Auto/biography* (1998) poses interesting questions about the relation between individualisation and narrative, when she states that

> [i]f the self in modernity is more fractured than in previous historical periods, the impulse by many writers has been to try to heal the sense of fragmentation by embracing documentation and emphatically chronological narrative (Evans 1998: 26).

By drawing on Evans I therefore suggest that career portraits can be seen as a desire to "experience life as an organised and coherent process, in which rational choices are made" (Evans 1998: 1, see also Evans 1993). Career portraits can thus be located in the wider transformations in the world of work and the changing rhythms of working lives. The changes that have been described with the shift from Fordism to Post-Fordism (see Chapter 2) brought about more flexible modes of production, new forms of organisations and hence new types of career trajectories. Working lives have become increasingly subject to the rhetoric of individual change and motivation (witnessed, for instance, in the rise of motivation studies in the 1970s which stressed individual rather than collective attitudes to work). These changes, I suggest, have also been reflected in the way in which newspapers write about work.[53] Ian Wylie, the editor of the Saturday Works Section of the *Guardian,* underlines this point in the following statement:

---

[52] Cavarero speaks about the 'desire for one's story', i.e. a "desire to hear one's own story in life" and of "being a narratable self" (Cavarero 2000: 32-45).
[53] Dyer and Humphries discuss contemporary literature on career planning in the context of a shift from bureaucratic notions of career to career as a 'project of the self' (Dyer and Humphries 2002).

I think it is interesting to see how newspapers have changed the way they handle the topic of work. If you go back to the 70s or the 80s, when you read about work in newspapers it would be very much about employment, industrial relations, it would have been about strikes, it would have been about collective bargaining; it would have been about industrial action. That's because these were the days of big employers, big single employers. And then in the 90s it sort of moved to a period where employers tended to be more small and medium sized, and the unions have lost a lot of their power… so work became a lot more individual issue, you know it wasn't about unions, it wasn't about what we can do as a workforce, it's more about "What can I do as a worker?", and that has been reflected in the newspapers.

Wylie very clearly speaks about the relation between the changes in the world of work and the way in which newspapers have been responding to these changes. The emergence of the genre of career portraits, according to Wylie, epitomises these changes by treating the topic of work in an increasingly individualistic context. The destandardisation of labour (cf. Beck 1992) and working lives, together with the weakening influence of single organisations in shaping individual working lives, was paralleled by an increasing amount of literature on self-help or guidance books on how to actually 'make a career'. From this perspective, career portraits offer coherent narratives of individual working lives and convey the idea of career as a series of individual strategies and intentions. At the same time, they attempt to underline the individual qualities and the motivational side in people's working lives. In an interview with Kathy Foley, a journalist who writes career portraits for *The Times*, she said that

the series sought to show the personality traits of those who had "made it" in business (…) [it] was aimed at the Irish business community, but also sought to be of interest to the general reader. In writing these interviews, I tried to humanise the subjects and convey some idea of their personality as an individual and as an entrepreneur, and aimed to include more colour than one would in a straight business news article.

Matthew Bishop, a journalist from *The Economist*, gives a similar account of what the idea of doing career portraits is. He argues that the series *Face Value* aimed to

put a human face in our writing about business in the Economist. I think too often, a lot of our readers felt that the articles were all very much ideas based but without

being able to ground them in a human. So it was kind of hard sometimes to really understand something like these ideas. So we wanted to bring people into the business coverage and in a more overt way.

Karin Bauer, the editor of the career pages (*Karrieren Standard*) of the Austrian newspaper *Der Standard* presents the idea behind the series *Karriere Porträt* (the career portraits) in the following manner:

> The idea is to describe the career paths of individuals and in particular which motivations and career concept they have. Not everybody thinks of career as 'becoming boss'. We also portray a lot of people who would rather say that their career driver is 'to follow their own passion and interests'.[vi]

As these statements suggest, the notions of work and career have lost their organisational and collective context and have taken on a more individualistic meaning. Career is regarded as a set of strategies which are thought to be the result of an active engagement with one's work environment. The above statements also give evidence of the emotional and personality-driven nature that the concept career has acquired. Accordingly, career is seen less within the framework of an organisation or institution but rather as a realisation of oneself or one's passions. The focus on the individual in career portraits is underlined by the fact that they enable the reader to identify with the portrayed person and at the same time offer advice on how to deal with certain problems and how to assess certain situations in one's own career. Rose Costello, a journalist from the *Irish Times*, emphasises the instructional side of *How I made it* in the following manner:

> It's on the small business page because the idea is to give advice as well as to tell somebody's story. The whole idea is to give advice. So every week, if you read it, what you'll see is: we have a story of how the person started their career, where they come from, how they got into business, what problems they had. But every week you'll find that there is advice, you know... what lessons a person has learned and advice to give to somebody starting out, mistakes they might have made... and that's a key part of the piece. It's meant to be instructional.

When asked about the idea behind career portraits in *Die Presse* (called *High Potential*, *High Performer* or *Fixstarter*), Johanna Zugmann, the editor of the series, explains that

> the portraits should serve as 'role models', as an encouragement and as an example of 'how you can succeed in doing something' because I believe that it always reassures people when they read about somebody who has achieved something.[vii]

The career portrait as instructional text, role model and piece of advice aims to evoke aspirations and is supposed to give guidance on how to 'make a career' by offering the story of another person to which the reader can relate and which can be used as a guidance for one's own (future) career. Thus, from a narrative point of view, career portraits share a similarity to the genre of biography insofar as both convey the idea of seeing individuals' lives as coherent stories with an individual as its main narrator, who is able to create her/his own (work) biography.

In his study on the emerging genre of biography in the America of the nineteenth century Scott Casper describes how the new genre of biography was central in contributing to the establishment of a "biographical imagination", that is, an understanding of the readers "to conceive of their own lives as stories, with themselves as author and protagonist" (Casper 1999: 14). Casper also points to the circumstances that enabled the establishment and shaping of this "biographical imagination", which were "a market economy, evangelical religion as well as romanticism that encouraged people to think of themselves as free agents, characters in the making (and on the make) on stages of their own devising" (1999: 14). In a similar fashion career portraits presuppose and promote the idea of career as a narrative, which is not least a precondition in the selection of people that are of interest for portrayal, as Rachel Bridge from *The Times* explains: "The most important criteria from my point of view is that they must have an interesting story to tell."

The 'telling of a story', however, works most convincingly through (narrative) genres such as portraiture and biography, which focus on the telling of an

individual narrative. With reference to McLuhan's famous statement that 'the medium is the message' (McLuhan and Fiore 2008), I thus want to conclude that the genre, or more specifically the genres of portraiture and biography, are part of the message of career portraits and serve as individualising techniques regarding working lives. In the context of the career, portraiture as well as (auto) biography support the idea of working life as an individual narrative. In contrast to classical (visual) portraiture, in the form of painting, which has principally memorial or representational functions, career portraits aim to evoke identification with the portrayed person, which is best expressed by the idea of the "I can do that, too" (of the reader), as Rachel Bridge, a journalist from *The Times* put it.

The idea is that through identification, which is facilitated by the structure of narrative, the reader will be able to relate easier to other people's stories as well as to economic topics, as Kathy Foley, a journalist from *The Times* states: "The Business section was aimed at the Irish business community, but also sought to be of interest to the general reader". How these economic topics are enacted in the stories of individual working lives and how such enactments can be understood in terms of structure and agency shall be part of one of the following sections of this chapter. Before moving to discuss such enactments, however, I will briefly outline the different types of career portraits in the different newspapers, analysed in this thesis. This is important, as not all career portraits in the respective newspapers are addressed to the same readers, which has important implications for analysing their content too, as I will detail.

5.3. A temporal and narrative analysis of career portraits

5.3.1. A brief description of the selected career portraits

The newspapers that were selected for analysis include the online edition of *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist* and the *Financial Times* from Britain and *Die Presse* and *Der Standard* from Austria. As discussed in the methodology chapter, the selection criteria of the newspapers were the type of people being

portrayed as well as the availability of the portraits in newspapers. The focus is on career portraits of unknown people than on portraits of celebrities or other well-known people. In terms of the availability of newspapers that publish career portraits, as I will show further on, it is mostly newspapers with readers of medium to high levels of income and education that portray people's working lives, which suggests that career portraits convey middle-class attitudes and values of work. Additionally, it was also important for the selection that the respective newspapers have been publishing career portraits for some years and thus have a certain 'history' in doing so, which was necessary in order to be able to collect a sufficient amount of data. Considering all these points, six newspapers (two Austrian and four British/Irish) were chosen for the analysis. From those newspapers, a random sample of career portraits from the years 2004 to 2010 was drawn. The following section will briefly introduce the newspapers and the series of career portraits selected for analysis.

5.3.1.1. British and Irish newspapers

The Times: *How I made it*

The series in *The Times*, which is called *How I made it*, started around the year 1999 and focuses primarily on entrepreneurs who have "started up their business from scratch with not much money", as Rachel Bridge states. This series is published in *The Sunday Times* and in *The Irish Times*, which are both available on the online edition of *The Times*.[54] Each article portrays the career of an entrepreneur, normally in a small to medium sized business and is situated in a section of the newspaper which discusses similarly sized businesses. The *Irish Times* started publishing *How I made it* a few years after *The Sunday Times* but basically followed the idea and format of the British Edition, which makes them look very much alike.

---

[54] <business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/entrepreneur>, last accessed 14.07.2010.

The Guardian: A Working Life

The series that portrays people's working lives in the *Guardian* is called *A Working Life* and has existed since 2006. Before that a section called *Rise* existed, which, according to Ian Wylie, the editor of this section, was primarily about "graduates taking their first job". Another section that spoke about work in a more personal manner was called *Office Hours* and focused on people going into secretarial or admin jobs. A particularity of the *Guardian* is that it prefers to portray the working lives of "ordinary, day-to-day people" rather than "really successful ones" as Ian Wylie states, because all the latter ones "want to do is talk about success and not so much about their lows and difficulties". Stories that portray both the low as well as the high points of one's working life, according to Wylie, make it easier for the reader to identify with the person.

The Economist: Face Value

Face Value, according to the journalists interviewed from *The Economist*, has been published since the late 1990s. The focus of this series is people who are either running a business or are involved in business in any related way, as for example politicians or people writing books about business. According to the journalist Tom Standage, this section of *The Economist* is interested in those who have "some interesting views, which have implications for business". Although *Face Value* was not the first series to portray people's careers, it was the first time that articles were primarily "grounded in the human", as Matthew Bishop, a journalist from *The Economist* says. Before the series *Face Value* another type of profile existed which was called *The Management Focus* but "there wasn't the focus on people as it is in the *Face Value*", as Bishop argues. *Face Value*, Tom Standage explains, consists almost exclusively of career portraits of people in top managerial positions:

> It's not always the CEO, sometimes it's the head of strategy or the COO or somebody
> else, the CTO.[55] But idea is to say: this company is doing this and the reason it's doing

---

[55] CEO = chief executive officer, COO = chief operating officer, CTO = chief technical officer.

this is because there is the story of a person behind it. So that's what we are trying to do. It's not always possible, but the best face values are the ones that will work in that sense.

The Financial Times

The Financial Times has been portraying individual careers "for decades". Career portraits have always been an important part of the newspaper, as journalist Jonathan Moules explains. Most of the portraits in the *Financial Times*, as Andrew Bolger, journalist and writer of career portraits, further comments, are entrepreneurs and this is so despite the fact the "a lot of the readers are working for corporate organisations and finance". Andrew Bolger goes on to explain that there is the focus on entrepreneurs because

> a lot of our readers have ideas or thoughts about setting up their own business and becoming entrepreneurs and of course entrepreneurs are an important part of the economy. So, it's partly to give a picture of people who are already running their own business or readers who are not in that position but are thinking about doing it. So, I'm just telling the stories of people who have built businesses, how they have done it and the lessons they have learned along the way.

In comparison to other newspapers, the portraits in *The Financial Times* quite evidently pay particular attention to the financial aspects in individual career stories. As Andrew Bolger put it:

> Perhaps we focus just a bit more on the technical business side of it rather than... perhaps other papers would do a bit more about their lifestyle than the nature of the business. We obviously talk about their business opportunities but then we are going to a bit more detail as to how exactly they got started.

5.3.1.2. Austrian newspapers

Die Presse: High Potential/High Performer/Fixstarter

The Austrian daily newspaper *Die Presse* has started publishing career portraits in 2005 and they have varying names including *High Potential*, *High Performer* or *Fixstarter*. The establishment of career portraits and more generally the introduction of career pages with extensive commentary on people's careers in newspapers, as the interviews with journalists and editors made clear, were becoming increasingly important within the newspaper market. The interview with Johanna Zugmann, the editor of the careers pages of *Die Presse*, evidences this: "When I came to *Die Presse* in 2004, we came up with a new career section, which we launched in 2005. We managed to become the third player within the market of career sections, among the *Standard* and the *Kurier*".[viii]

Der Standard: Karriere Porträt

Despite being a relatively new newspaper in Austria, career related topics have been important ever since *Der Standard* was launched in 1988. In recent years the career pages (*Karrieren Standard*) have grown in numbers and, apart from job offers, include career advice, including the so-called career portraits (Karriere Porträts). The *Karrieren Standard* is usually published in the weekend edition (Saturday/Sunday) of the newspaper.

5.3.2. The correspondence between content and readership in career portraits

Career portraits vary as to the individuals that are being profiled or the style of the portraits, which is due to several reasons. One of these reasons lies in the different readers that each newspaper has. When asked about the relationship between the portraits and the readers of the *Guardian*, Ian Wylie, the editor of the Saturday *Works Section* explains:

> The Saturday Guardian has around half a million readers, maybe a bit more, and that can vary from a 16 year old, through to a 30 year old unemployed, to a 50 year old career changer, to a 70 year old retiree, and the challenge for us is really to somehow make work relevant to all of those people.

In terms of its readers *The Guardian* addresses a relatively heterogeneous audience, which is also reflected in the portraits of *A Working Life*. As my research showed, the portraits can vary from an experienced histopathologist to a middle-aged refuse collector. The portraits, accordingly, take into account the diversity of its readers, including their educational background or age. On the one hand, this helps to address the demands and interests of the readers and on the other hand enables the newspaper to differentiate itself from other newspapers with different audiences.

Taking a look at the readership profile of *The Economist*, it becomes obvious that there is a relationship between its readers and the people that are being portrayed. According to the homepage of *The Economist*, its readers earn an average of £111,050 a year, 53 % are in senior management positions and 39 % are so-called 'c-suite', which means that their job titles include or start with the word 'chief'.[56] This is also reflected in the positions of those being portrayed in *The Economist's Face Value*, which are most of the times people in managerial positions.

In terms of its readers, *The Financial Times* is addressed to people working in finance and business, most of them in managerial positions, as Mike Southon from *The Financial Times* states:

> The Financial Times is very much geared up for the City... you know chief executives, FTSE 500... you know the top companies and top business people in business companies. (...) So... although my particular column is often about people, there is obviously a good financial footing to it.[57]

---

[56] <theideaspeople.economist.com>, last accessed 12.10.2010.
[57] FTSE = Financial Times Stock Exchange; FTSE 500 = the 500 most highly capitalised UK companies listed on the London Stock Exchange.

The career narratives of the *Financial Times* hence focus more on the technical aspects of doing business or finance and pay less attention to the person's detailed career history. In terms of narrative, the portraits of the *Financial Times* are less instructive from the biographical side but rather from the perspective of how to solve specific technical and financial problems, which corresponds to the demands and interests of its readers.

The particularity about the readers of *Der Standard* is that they are relatively young (with an average age of below 40), usually with an educational level that reaches Matura (final degree at secondary school at the age of 18 or 19, similar to A-level in the UK) or university.[58] Although most of the portraits are about individuals in medium or high managerial positions in the business sector, some also feature artists, designers or cultural managers, according to Karin Bauer, the editor of the career pages of *Der Standard*.[ix]

The readership profile of *Die Presse* shows that the newspaper is mostly read by people having finished secondary or higher education and with incomes above the national average income.[59] This distribution is also reflected in the people that are being portrayed in the series of *Die Presse*.

In brief, across the six different newspapers analysed in this thesis, both the content as well as the people that are being portrayed correspond to the readership profiles of the newspapers in terms of income, age and professional status. *The Financial Times* and *The Economist*, as financial newspapers are slightly different to the other newspapers in terms of the content and the narratives. They both focus more on technical and financial aspects of decisions that the portrayed person takes and less on a detailed biographical narration of their working life. Their career portraits often serve to discuss a more general economic or political theme through a personal narrative, as Matthew Bishop, a journalist from *The Economist*, explains:

> The art of a good Face Value was finding someone who was an interesting person but
> also who is currently engaged in something, some decisions or activities that may

---

[58] <www.wien-konkret.at/wirtschaft/printmedien/3/standard-leser>, last accessed 15.10.2010.
[59] <diepresse.com/unternehmen/pressenews/ 294162/index.do>, last accessed 03.11.2010.

then be interesting from an intellectual point of view because… you know a goal of
The Economist is to help people understand the world better. And we wanted to find
people and business leaders whose stories really helped us to shine a light on a bigger
issue going on in the world.

I will return to the issue of how career portraits relate individual stories to more
general structures in society later on in this chapter in section 5.3.3.2, which
discusses how career portraits link the individual and the collective by means of
narrative.

5.3.3. Narrative analysis of career portraits

The next section will draw on the framework laid out in the methodology chapter,
in particular on Lawler's concept of narrative and on Bourdieu's temporalised
understanding of practice, in order to explore whether career portraits
narratively relate past and present events as well as the individual and the
collective, and if so, in what ways. I will juxtapose this analysis of the temporal
nature of narrative with a Bourdieusian analysis that considers the *temporality
of practice* in order to investigate underlying notions of practice and time in
career portraits.

5.3.3.1. Narrative linking of past and present

As discussed in Chapter 3, one of the main characteristics of narrative is that it
"draw[s] a configuration out of a simple succession" (Ricoeur 1984: 65).
Narrative therefore creates coherence in regard to separate events in time.
Additionally, Lawler describes one of the main features of narrative as being that
it links past and present events in time. Career portraits usually narrate disparate
events of someone's working life – most often in a chronological order – and they
link these events in different ways. More precisely, in career portraits, the
narrative often establishes a connection between two different points or periods
of time (past and present) in the portrayed person's life and in so doing they

create coherence. The link or connection is usually established between the person's past (a point of origin) and their present career (achievements).

My analysis of the career portraits so far has shown that there are mainly two ways in which this 'linking process' takes place. The first narrative linking of past and present events is enacted via expressions that describe the portrayed person's working life as an intentional project and their life thus as a *coherent ensemble*.[60] The second way in which past and present events are linked – and hence narrative coherence established – is through the description of *crucial experiences*, that is (singular) experiences or events that are described as being crucial to the career of the portrayed person. Both ways narratively relate disparate events, not only temporally but also causally. By portraying life as a *coherent ensemble*, career portraits create a link between past and present events and they do so by implying that a present situation is the logical result of an intentional project (taken in the past). The following two extracts from career portraits illustrate this. The keywords that indicate this specific relation to time are highlighted bold:

> **From a young age**, James Taylor found it a struggle to accept authority. He preferred to do things his own way. (…) "**I always felt I was different**," he said. "I had a bit of a problem taking orders from teachers. **I think I've always known** that working for myself was the only option." (…) **Taylor had a natural talent** for entrepreneurial activity and spent much of his early years developing it. "**I was always doing** something, whether it was flogging designer clothes in college or doing jumble sales as a kid," he said (*The Times,* 30.03.2008).

> He started earning money **from a young age**, doing paper rounds and selling copies of computer games and music tapes in the school playground. On Saturdays he worked in a shoe shop (*The Times,* 22.02.2009).

As these examples show, the text segments which imply life as a coherent ensemble are evidenced by expressions such as "from a young age", "I always felt…" or "had a natural talent…" and they so specifically by giving the impression

---

[60] The name of this code derives from Bourdieu's writing on the *Illusion biographique* (1986) where he uses the term *ensemble coherent* to put forward a critique of commonly assumed notions of biography as being a coherent and intentional project.

of an intentional directedness of life. This common sense assumption of life narratives as intentional projects, which is often used in order to describe people's life trajectories, has been discussed by Bourdieu (1986) in his writing on the *biographical illusion*, in which he critiques notions of individual agency used in everyday language. Bourdieu criticises the "Sartrian notion of the individual as an original project", which understands life as "unfolding in a chronological order which is also a logical order" (...) and "comprises a beginning, certain stages and an end" (Bourdieu 1986). In *Practical Reason* (1998a), Bourdieu illustrates this critique by using the example of the career description of a university professor:

> Very often researchers, because they are inspired by a will to demystify, tend to act as if agents always had as an end, in the sense of a goal, the end, in the sense of conclusion, of their trajectory. Transforming the journey into a project, they act as if the consecrated university professor, whose career they study, had in mind the ambition of becoming a professor at the Collège de France from the moment when he chose a discipline, a thesis director, a topic of research. They give a more or less cynical calculating consciousness as the principle of agent's behaviors in a field (Bourdieu 1998a: 82).

In a similar fashion, career portraits, by describing life as a coherent ensemble, retroactively equip stories of individual careers with a logic of intentionality that they may not have had in the first place or, as Bourdieu describes in his example of the university professor, convey an understanding of practice that "always has an end, in the sense of a goal (...) [or] trajectory" (1998a: 82).

The second way in which career portraits establish narrative *and* causal coherence between past and present events is by linking present (career) achievements to the past via *crucial experiences*. The following extracts illustrate this (keywords are highlighted bold):

> In his twenties, Steve Steinman stood up in a pub and performed a song by rocker Meatloaf. "I got up with my guitar and a frilly shirt and a wig on, and sang as a tribute to Meatloaf," said Steinman. **"That's where it all started."** He had little idea then that this cash-in-hand work would be the genesis of a successful business (*The Times*, 18.01.2009).

> When a friend of his father's showed Andrew Ritchie the Bickerton folding bike he was selling in the mid-1970s **it sparked an obsession that drives** Ritchie **to this day** (*The Times*, 20.07.2008).

The code *crucial experience* is evidenced by expressions such as "that's where it all started", "one day, when he was 17..." or "it sparked an obsession". These expressions indicate a specific moment in time which is portrayed as being crucial for the career of the person and at the same time establish a causal link between the crucial experience and the future development of the person's working life. Importantly for my concerns, the purpose of such expressions is not only to link separate events temporally but also causally. From a Bourdieusian perspective, the two ways of temporally and causally linking past and present events described so far (i.e. via the narrative devices *life as coherent ensemble* and *crucial experiences*) are based on a detemporalised understanding of practice.

Bourdieu discusses detemporalisation in his theory of practice (1990b) and his later writings on time (2000c). Bourdieu parallels this (detemporalised) notion of time with our normal uses of time, which "inclines us to consider time as a thing that a subject faces as an object" (Bourdieu 2000c: 206), and which is thus "the opposite of that of practice because it tends to ignore time and so to detemporalize practice" (Bourdieu 1990b: 81). In contrast to such detemporalised accounts, Bourdieu describes individual agency as being interwoven in a complex relation of incorporated social structures, past experiences, whilst at the same time being directed towards the future (mostly on a pre-reflexive level). This is what Bourdieu calls the 'temporality of practice'. By detemporalised I thus refer to the fact that practice in career portraits is being constituted by temporal relations only to the extent that either one specific point in time (*a crucial experience*) has been most significant or that someone has become what one always (intentionally) wanted to become (life as a coherent ensemble).

While the former one overestimates the significance of single events and rapid change over a more continual approach to practice, the latter one in retrospect

equips past events and practices with a rhetoric of intentionality in order to underline the active role of the individual. To say, for instance, that one has become what *one always wanted to become* means to say that there is a clear and intended connection between past, present (and future) events. It gives an account of human agency which sees individual practice as being the result of subjective intentions rather than immersed in the temporality of practice.

Bridget Fowler (2004, 2005) draws similar conclusions about the temporal nature of practice in obituaries. In a study of obituaries from 1900 as well as from 2000/01 of some of the major British newspapers as well as *Le Monde* and the *New York Times*, Fowler concurs with Bourdieus's view that

> we must avoid the seductive common-sense inherent in the unitary view of the subject. In clarifying what he calls the 'biographic illusion', Bourdieu discusses the 'contraband' of the 'mountain path view' of life's route. The 'rhetorical illusion' he suggests is that life makes up a homogeneous whole, a coherent, directed ensemble, which can be understood as the single arena of a subjective – or even – 'objective' – intention (Fowler 2004: 151).

As Fowler shows in her study, obituaries *are* also about the organisation of time in the sense that either "transformative aspects of agency may be disclosed in the obituary" as well as that certain "taken-for-granted assumptions of future orientation" do not consider appropriately that "alternative projects for the future can only be anticipated at a certain level of distance from necessity" (Fowler 2004: 162). Fowler draws similar conclusions to those reached in my analysis of career portraits, in particular in regard to underlying notions of agency and temporality. But more than this, she also discusses how such (detemporalised) understandings of agency and time are important in relation to processes of social stratification. In her study of obituaries, Fowler analyses how descriptions of individual agency and attitudes towards the future serve as a way of distinction. She states that it is "[a]ctive projects for the future – along with obligations to others – that serve to distinguish those individuals with 'justified social existence'" from those without (2004: 162).

Fowler's analysis of obituaries further points to the social and structural context of this genre of text when she describes how certain social classes and women were heavily underrepresented in these pieces. Her research of obituaries from the years 1900 and from 2000 also illustrates that the predominance of certain social groups or social classes heavily depends on the specific socio-historic context. While for example in 1900, the aristocratic obituary was still predominant, in the obituaries of 2000 there were a higher number of middle-class people being portrayed. Issues of social class or, more specifically, the absence of such issues, in particular in regard to the relation between people's social class background and their own career trajectories, were also an important feature in my analysis of career portraits. The following sections, discussing the way in which career portraits narratively link the individual and the collective, will illustrate this feature.

5.3.3.2. Narrative linking of the individual and the collective

The second 'significance' of narratives, described by Lawler (2002), refers to the narrative linking of the individual and the collective. My analysis of career portraits from this point of view has shown that there are mainly three ways in which the individual and the collective are linked by means of narrative. These three ways have been coded with following three themes (codes) and will henceforth be explored in more detail:

a) ***Overcoming of structure***: individual (success) ***despite*** certain structure
b) ***Affirmation of structure***: individual (success) ***because of*** certain structure
c) ***Critique of structure***: individual ***against*** certain structure

With 'the individual' in this context I mean all efforts, ambitions and aspirations that the text (career portrait) attributes to the portrayed person, whereas by 'collective structures' I mean all institutions, organisations, other actors as well as socially circulating narratives (see Lawler 2002) in the text.

The first code *individual (success)* **despite** *certain structure* refers to passages in career portraits where an individual is successful or recognised **in spite of** certain structural/social hindrances or problems. The second code *individual (success)* **because of** *certain structure* has been assigned to text segments which express an affirmation of (market) structures and the third code *individual* **against** *certain structure* was used for passages that criticise institutions, structures or popular narratives by opposing them to the motivations and aspirations of the individual who is being portrayed.

5.3.3.2.1. *Overcoming of structure: individual (success) despite certain structure*

Many of the career portraits, which are in most cases stories of success, describe how an individual is successful despite certain structural difficulties or problems. In other words, a large number of career portraits analysed convey the idea that the individual managed to 'overcome' structural problems in pursuing her or his career. Thus, one way in which the individual is related to the collective or to social structures, is through a narrative where the individual is 'overcoming' these structures. Coding scheme 2a illustrates in detail the code *successful in spite of certain structure* with the initial sub-codings on the right, the main codes that group and summarise these codes in the middle and the main code, which has finally been extracted and linked to concepts laid out in Chapters 1 to 3, on the left (see also methodology chapter).
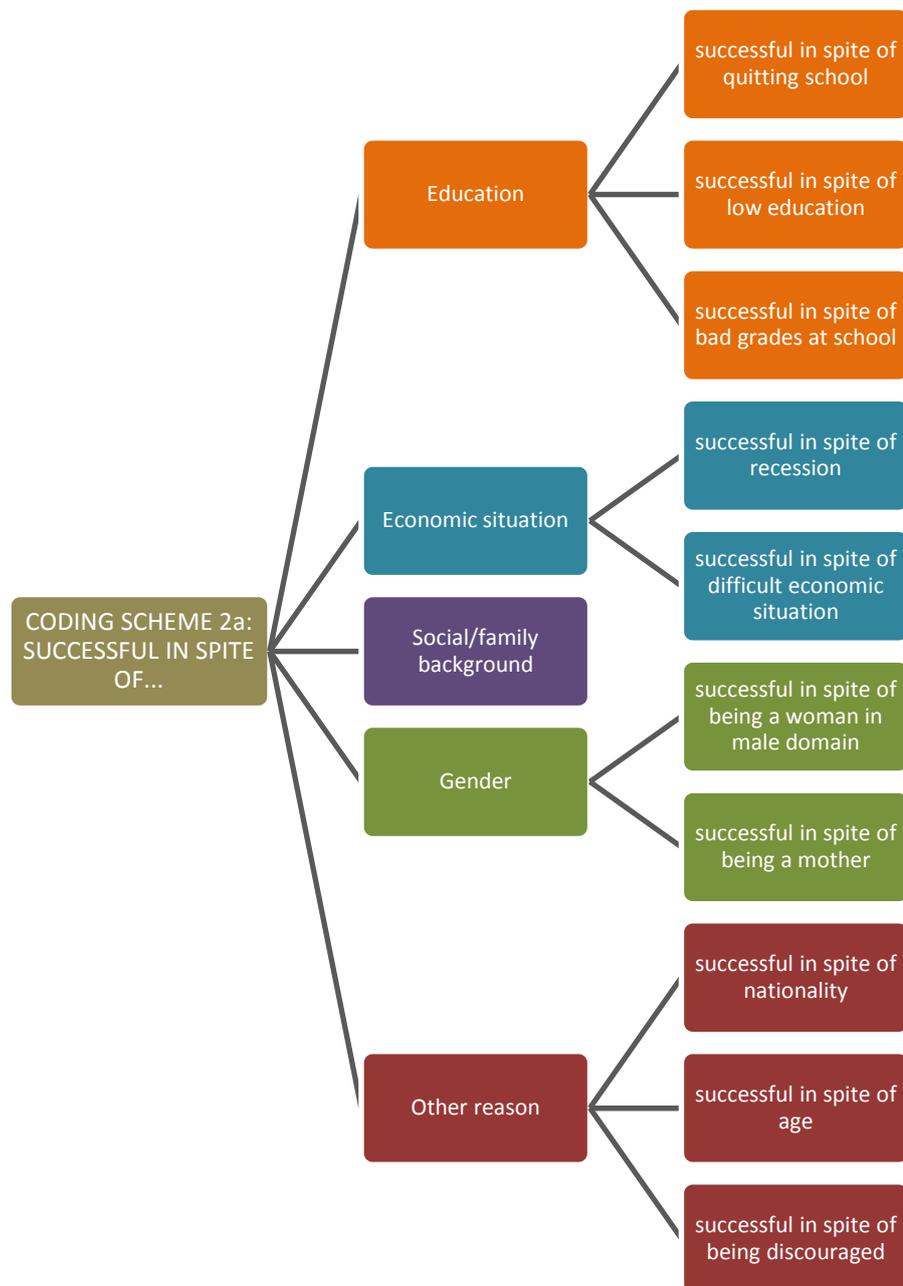
The five groups of codes that derive from the ten sub-codes are *economic situation*, *education*, *social background/family*, *gender* and *other reason* and summarise the content of their sub-codes. *Education*, for example, refers to three codes in which the portrayed individual has managed to achieve a certain goal *in spite of* either quitting school or having bad grades. In the *Financial Times* of 12 August 2009, for instance, the following statement indicates this code: "Not many people who leave school at 15 go on to establish a multimillion pound company, but that has been the achievement of Tom Smith."

Another text extract, taken from *The Economist* of 16 February 2008 (code-group *economic situation*), indicates the code *successful in spite of industry* and thus describes how someone managed to be successful in spite of working in an industry where it is hard to make any profit:

> Last summer Arcelor Mittal launched its new corporate identity with a lavish party at the Musee Rodin in Paris. The company's motto ("Boldness changes everything") is no empty boast, but a neat reflection of the way Mr Mittal's dealmaking **created a world-leading steel giant from virtually nothing** in barely a dozen years. **People expect that sort of thing in Silicon Valley--but not in mature industries like steel** (*The Economist*, 16.02.2008).

Despite their difference, these two examples indicate a specific relation of agency and structure from a narrative point of view. They both play down the relevance of structural relations in society: in the first case the relation between educational achievement and future career prospects and in the second case the relation between the profitability of an industry and individual chances of being successful in this industry. Structural problems are used to create a narrative of success in order to underline the achievements of the individual. This conveys an understanding of social structure as something that one should see as a challenge that can be 'overcome'. In another extract from a career portrait the described person is successful *in spite of her family background* and her (average) performance at school:

> As a teenager, Gretchen Monahan worked part-time at Yolanda's, a busy women's boutique and salon in the Boston suburb of Waltham. She steamed dresses, answered the phone, sewed labels, and waited tables in the cafe. The almost magical way in which a manicure or a new frock could make a woman feel better about life **made a deep impression**. "**I loved that place**," says Ms Monahan, who **was raised by her extended family and grew up in modest circumstances**. "It was a head-to-toe woman's haven where women networked, pampered and re-newed (*The Financial Times*, 05.08.2009).

As this extract further underlines, career portraits commonly portray women in a rather sexist way by emphasising the bodily characteristics and experiences compared to the previous (male) example where the individual's actions and

achievements are more central to the way in which a narrative of overcoming is formulated.

The same career portrait continues by emphasising the emotional engagement of the portrayed person with her work and the personal dedication to her career:

> For Ms Monahan, whose glossy good looks and **lively personality** belie her shrewd business sense, Yolanda's offered a model of what was possible. '**In high school, I was never going to be an A student,**' she says over lunch at the fashionable Boston restaurant Radius. 'I wanted to get out and get a job. But **I needed to find a way to take what I was passionate about and link it with an actual career**' (*The Times*, 05.08.2009).

Both text passages underscore the ambitions and personal motivations of the individual (I loved that…, I was passionate about…) and highlight the significance of single events (made a deep impression…). These rhetorical devices stand in opposition to Bourdieu's temporalised understanding of agency and they do so as they overstate the significance of intentionality and the possibilities for self-directedness of life. Bourdieu calls this a 'rhetorical illusion' (Bourdieu 1986). Sociologically speaking, this 'rhetorical illusion' underestimates the relevance of social structure in career portraits. Similar to the critique that was put forward in the context of narrative as a linking device of past and present events, here the narrative link between the individual and the collective is based on a detemporalised model of agency and thus suggests a type of (entrepreneurial) individuality that does not consider appropriately the social, economic and cultural embeddedness of practices. Therefore, collective structures are portrayed as hindrances that individuals aim to 'overcome' rather than as structuring individual practices.

To put it in the language of Bourdieu, career portraits disembed individual practices from social structures insofar as they enact notions of agency that do not consider appropriately the habitual, non-intentional as well as the socially grounded dimension of practice, whilst conveying an understanding of practice which highlights conceptions of individual choice and independence. However, the fact that career portraits convey a de-socialised and de-temporalised

understanding of individual agency and thereby make invisible the social resources of individual (career) achievements does not mean that questions of social class in the analysis of career portraits can be dismissed. On the contrary, I suggest that the individualistic attitudes and values towards work and career conveyed in career portraits, express the increasing predominance of middle-class forms of individualisation in the sphere of work, which consider career advancement as being mainly shaped by someone's individual efforts rather than by someone's social class background.

This claim about the normalisation of middle-class modes of individualisation adds weight to Savage's and Skeggs's conceptualisation of contemporary individualisation processes, discussed in Chapter 1. Moreover and complementing Savage's and Skeggs's argument, by viewing career portraits not as actual representations of contemporary working lives but as an instructive genre, my analysis suggests that individualisation operates both at the level of time and narrative. The next element I will discuss, within the context of how career portraits narratively establish a link between the individual and the collective is the 'structural side' of the portraits. Career portraits do not only convey ideas about the individual, as I demonstrated previously, but are also used to constitute, affirm or criticise societal structures or socially circulating narratives.

5.3.3.2.2. *Affirmation of structure: individual (success) due to certain structure*

With the *affirmation of structure* in the analysis of career portraits, I mean those structural elements that are identified in the texts as being either beneficial to the portrayed person's career or as involving practices or statements of the person that affirm certain structures. Most notably, and as my analysis has shown, this is the case in terms of narratives of economic liberalisation or marketisation, which are often positively related to the portrayed person's career. Coding scheme 2b illustrates how the career portraits were coded in this regard with the initial sub-codes on the right and the main code *marketisation/implementation of market*

structures that summarises the sub-codes on the left (see also coding scheme 2 in the methodology chapter):

As these codes illustrate, individual career stories are narratively linked with *notions of the market*, that is, narratives that advocate the implementation or introduction of market structures. Newspapers use individual career stories in order to discuss issues of more general interest, which was also expressed in an interview with Matthew Bishop, a journalist from *The Economist*, as the following statement shows:

> We wanted to actually do it in a way that was unique to the Economist; by finding people who were really a very good lens, their life and their decisions that they were taking were a good lens in which we could look at a particular idea, or trend or something. So the art of a good face value was finding someone who was an interesting person but also who is currently engaged in something, some decisions or activities that may then be interesting from an intellectual point of view because... you know, a goal of the Economist is to help people understand the world better. And we wanted to find people and business leaders whose stories really helped us to shine a light on a bigger issue going on in the world.

This 'lens-function', as mentioned in the above quote, is supported by the power of storytelling in terms of conveying ideas or values about work. Individuals in career portraits express their support for the efficiency of the market (*market as the best listening device*), as extract 1 shows or, as extract 2 evidences, marketisation or market structures ('in the course of a privatization') are positively related to the career of the portrayed person. Another way of affirming market structures in career portraits is through portraits of how a person successfully implemented market structures in previously non-market based industries or sectors, as text extracts 3 and 4 indicate:

Extract 1:

> Her **advocacy of market-based approaches** is inspired not by ideology but the firm conviction that **markets are the best "listening device"** to ascertain the real needs and wants of poor consumers (*The Economist,* 23.05.2009).

Extract 2:

> **In the course of a privatization**, he took over a microbiology laboratory in Linz, which he **rapidly turned into a leading national supplier** of high quality microbiological analyses (*Die Presse,* 11.07.08).[x]

Extract 3:

> From a shed in Richmond, Surrey, Leggett founded Solarcentury, **initially a not-for-profit** advocacy organisation, seeking to bring together solar-energy firms and institutions concerned about climate change. In 2000 Solarcentury raised £6m from the founder of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Stephan Schmidheiny, and **transformed the organisation into a commercial business**, designing and selling solar panels (*The Times,* 26.10.08).

Extract 4:

> We have been preparing for this day for years. The **former monopolist introduced market structures in the company** and from now on treated his clients like kings (*Die Presse,* 15.08.08).[xi]

Career portraits, accordingly, provide a notion of the market and business as something personal, that is, as something that is the result of individual motivations and personal knowledge. At the same time they aim to "put a human face on economic issues", as Matthew Bishop from *The Economist* states. Career portraits thus attribute a language of emotion and individual aspiration to a sphere that was formerly considered to be a realm of rationality and calculation. In terms of linking *the individual and the collective,* career portraits thus enact a relation between individual agency and social structures, which tends to *subjectivise and personalise the market.* I will briefly discuss this by drawing on Thrift's notion of the *new economy* as well as on Knorr-Cetina's idea of the market as an 'object of attachment'.

As the analysis of career portraits so far indicates, markets are portrayed as domains of personal engagement where people individually apply, implement or articulate market structures, sometimes in areas that were previously not or only partly governed by market structures. The very fact that issues of marketisation or the implementation of market structures (see e.g. the codes *market terminology in political agenda*, *applying business methods in international aid* or *spread entrepreneurship in developing countries*) are articulated through a (career) story of personal motivations and aspirations conveys the idea of the economy or the market as a field of personal engagement.

This idea is also expressed by Thrift (2001) when he discusses the so-called *new economy* and the way in which it produces new sets of practices and ideas, which people, and in particular managers, feel they *are part of* (2001: 116). Thrift argues that the *new economy* is "both a rhetorical frame for producing business effects and a source of ideas about how business (and the management self) should be conducted" (2001: 116). Although Thrift does not discuss career

portraits specifically, he argues that amongst business schools, management consultants and management gurus, newspapers play an essential role in conveying and shaping new ideas, economic practices and thus spread ideas and certain understandings of the economy.[61] Thrift states that "[b]y the late 1990s even the *Financial Times* had declared itself the 'newspaper of the *new economy*'" (2001: 114).

The idea that the economy or, more precisely the market, is a field of personal engagement is also expressed in the work of Knorr-Cetina and Bruegger. The market, according to them, is no longer perceived as a structure external to individuals but increasingly seen as an "object of attachment", as Knorr-Cetina and Bruegger (2002) put it. In their study of trading floors, the authors (2002) argue that the market can become an object to which traders develop a "postsocial relationship", which is constituted by the "notion of lack and wanting" (2002: 164). Career portraits, in a similar fashion, *personalise the market* insofar as they establish a relation between personal motivations or feelings of lack and market structures and thus provide a notion of the market as a sphere and object of individual attachment. As text extracts 1 and 2 indicate, the individual and collective structures are narratively related by affirming market structures through individual career stories as well as by personalizing and subjectivising the notion of the economy or the market. This affirmative (narrative) relation between the individual and collective structures contrasts with the notion of critique, which, as I will demonstrate in the next section, was also identified in career portraits.

---

[61] In an article on Performing cultures in the new economy, Thrift (2000) draws on Callon's concept of framing in order to describe how business magazines were essential in framing the 'new economy'. Specifically he analyses the magazine *Fast Company* and states how the "magazine is based upon a semi-naturalistic depiction of business people. (...) This democratic depiction of business is enhanced by numerous characteristic biographies which are meant to act as a role model for those working in the new economy" (Thrift 2000: 679).

5.3.3.2.3. Critique of structure

The narrative link between the individual and collective structures in career portraits, as I have demonstrated so far, is established through notions of *overcoming* as well as *affirmation*. The third way of 'narrative linking' that has been identified in career portraits is through means of *critique*. More precisely, the portrayed individual is either opposed to certain structures or criticises structures for not allowing them to pursue a goal or career. Coding scheme 2c visualises the initial sub-codes (on the right) as well as the way in which the main code *othering/critique of structure* was extracted via a process of abstraction to a level that has allowed me to discuss these codes in the context of the concepts introduced in Chapters 1 to 3:

CODING SCHEME 2c: OTHERING / CRITIQUE OF STRUCTURE

Othering of public / bureaucratic organisations
- private business more flexible than public
- private management of public institutions
- no career prospect in public sector
- private business as model for public sector
- public / bureaucratic structures inefficient

Othering of 'old' corporate cultures
- inefficiency of traditional management
- 'old' corporate structure in opposition to career thinking
- new / more efficient management of 'old' corporation

Othering of (theoretical) education
- social skills instead of theory
- education too theoretical (not for 'real' life)

The text segments grouped under the three middle codes summarise all of the other sub-codes and they perform a critique of structures in relation to (a) *public and/or bureaucratic organisations,* (b) *'old' corporate structures* and (c) *theoretical education.* As already noted in the methodology chapters, each of the (main) codes was generated from a number of sub-codes, which were the result

of the initial coding of the text. The first code (a) has thus six sub-codes, (b) has three and (c) has two (see coding scheme 2c). In text segments that were assigned code (a), the portrayed individual expresses a discontent with public and/or bureaucratic organisations, as the following two extracts of career portraits indicate:

Extract 1:

> In 'The Blue Sweater', her recently published autobiography, she describes her past frustrations working in such pillars of finance and development as Chase Manhattan bank, the African Development Bank and the Rockefeller Foundation. **She found them bureaucratic, distant and condescending** to those they sought to help. So in 2001 she set up Acumen Fund, a 'social venture capital' outfit, to **promote what she calls 'patient capitalism'** (*The Economist*, 23.05.09).

Extract 2:

> Politicians also need to act: Italy's **public sector is too large and too inefficient, its labour market too rigid** and its infrastructure weak, she complains. 'These weights must be lifted from our shoulders, she says--just the sort of thing Confindustria's members like to hear. **As its deputy chairman, she has attacked the energy sector as a protected, coddled industry that places a burden on manufacturing and needs a sharp dose of competition** (*The Economist*, 15.03.08).

Both examples express dissatisfaction with bureaucratic organisations or public institutions, which are associated with being *distant* and *condescending* or *inefficient* and *rigid*. These adjectives are contrasted with more competitive and (neo) liberal notions of the economy as well as organisations (see also Thrift 2005). Not only do career portraits establish an opposition between public and private and associate them with labels such as inefficient versus efficient but at the same time this opposition is interwoven into the success story of an individual career. This form of critique of public and/or bureaucratic organisations is opposed to the active, self-realizing individual.

The second code (*critique of 'old' corporate structures/career*), as coding scheme 2c shows, was assigned to text segments, in which individuals criticise corporate structures or organisational careers as being dated and 'old', whilst opposing

them to 'new' notions of career and organisations. The following two extracts from career portraits illustrate such forms of critique and opposition:

Extract 1:

> After a rapid start and three years at Austrian Airlines in the frequent-flyer department, **there weren't any career-highs to expect. Despite of her prestigious job and her secure position** as an employee **she wanted more from her career** (*Der Standard,* 17.03.07).[xii]

Extract 2:

> In the beginning we were running the company in a threesome for four years but we had very different ideas of how to do that. **My father was still bound to a very conservative**, almost authoritarian **management style**. My brother and **I, on the contrary, wanted to realise new ideas.** (*Der Standard,* 28.04.07).[xiii]

In these text segments, the portrayed person contrasts the idea of either 'making a career' or 'realizing one's ideas' with the 'secure employee position' or a 'conservative management style'. Again, an opposition of new versus old is established. Whereas the 'old career' is associated with corporate structures or the system of secure long-term employment, the 'new career' is portrayed as the individually determined career in which new ideas are realised. As I will discuss in detail later on in this chapter, these oppositions not only serve to create oppositions between old and new careers or between the old corporate world versus the new managerial type of organisation but can also be regarded from the perspective of *othering*.

A critique of structures, enacted via the stories of individual careers, was not only expressed in relation to work but encompassed other areas, including education. As the following extract illustrates this is done via the critique of theoretical education, which is described as not useful for 'the real issues in life':

> Taylor returned home and began a degree in psychology and teacher training at Cardiff University. However, by the time he reached his third year, he had all but abandoned his lectures to focus on what he felt was his real education. '**I lost my faith in the education system**,' he said. '**I realized that all I was doing was loading my short-term memory to pass exams**. At school they teach you how

to dissect a frog but **nobody teaches you how to relate to people or how to start a business - the real issues in life**. **I realized I had to start doing that myself** (*The Times*, 30.03.08).

As the examples provided in this section demonstrate, career portraits establish an opposition of *old* versus *new, bureaucracy or public sector administration* versus *efficiency* and of *theoretical education* versus *practice* ('real issues in life'). Importantly, this is done via a process of 'othering'. Although the concept of *othering* has been used most famously in the context of postcolonial theory (see Edward Said's *Orientalism*), as well as in theories of race and gender, I am drawing on the way in which Thrift is using this term in his discussion of the *new economy*, and especially on his discussion of how the newness of the *new economy* depends on a process of *othering*.[62] In this discussion, Thrift describes how in the rhetoric of the *new economy* "the 'old economy' of heavy industry, bureaucratic ways, deficit of entrepreneurial spirit and general lack of economic sparkle" (Thrift 2001: 117), is continuously opposed to the so-called *new economy,* indeed, it is positioned as the other to the *new economy*.

This process of othering is also enacted in career portraits. Thus many of the analysed portraits perform such an othering role. In such portraits dichotomies are established by opposing historically evolved structures such as bureaucracy to more entrepreneurial, market-based and individually driven forms of organisations. The 'old economy' type of career, which is characterised as relatively stable, secure and organisational is opposed by the *new economy* type of career which is portrayed as more individualistic, self-realizing and competitive.[63] But the process of *othering* does not just establish a dichotomy that distinguishes between old versus new, inefficient versus efficient or uncompetitive versus competitive it also creates a hierarchy between them. It creates what Thrift calls "an economic negative", which lays out a parting line of what should and what "cannot be" (Thrift 2001: 117). Boltanski and Chiapello,

---

[62] See also Perrons et al. (2005): Work, Life and Time in the New Economy
[63] In a study of a Scandinavian design firm, Jensen (2007) shows how the dichotomy between 'old economy' and 'new economy' was used to underline the futuristic equipment and furniture of their design. The notion of the 'old economy' design was defined as 'the other' and contrasted with the virtues of the 'new economy' design of their offices (e.g. community in contrast to social isolation, boundarilessness in contrast to demarcations, flexibility in contrast to stable patterns of work, etc.).

whose account of changing temporalities of work was discussed in Chapter 2, similarly speak about the notion of critique in relation to the establishment of a new model of work and careers. In their work *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2005*)*, in which they conduct an empirical comparison of management literature from the 1960's and the 1990's, they conclude that

> [...] the imposition of a new managerial norm is nearly always accompanied by criticism of a prior state of capitalism and a previous way of making profit, both of which must be abandoned to make way for a new model. We shall thus see that the management texts of the 1960s explicitly or implicitly criticize familial capitalism, whereas the principal foil of the 1990s texts is large, hierarchized, planned organizations. Criticism of the old savoir faire and habits, which are presented as outmoded, is the way in which the relation between past and present functions in this literature bereft of historical memory (2005: 64).

Boltanski and Chiapello thus underline the importance of criticism in the formation and implementation of new ideas and practices. As my previous discussion shows, critique is also deployed in a systematic manner in career portraits. This is so in particular as the imposition of a new model of career or working life was repeatedly placed in opposition to other models of work and career, as was shown. Furthermore, and as the next chapter will argue, career portraits engender a new model of career and work specifically by enacting a new orientation to time and work. However, before moving on to the next chapter, let me conclude on some of the main points of my analysis of career portraits made so far.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on Bourdieu's notion of *temporality of practice* as well as on Lawler's and Ricoeur's concept of narrative in order to examine the relation between narrative, time and individual agency in career portraits. It was shown that the temporal and causal links established in career portraits in terms of how past events or collective structures influence individual practices do not consider appropriately the temporal and historical nature of practices. It was further

demonstrated that while individual practices are being detemporalised in career portraits, structural elements such as hierarchical organisations or public administration are being temporalised by portraying these structures as dated or via a process of othering. My analysis in this chapter has also made clear that these rhetorical and narrative strategies of temporalisation and detemporalisation, deployed in career portraits, have important implications for process of the individualisation of work, in particular from a historical and from a class perspective.

By adopting a Bourdieusian class perspective and by taking account of the fact that the genre of career portrait is a genre that is published mainly in newspapers that are addressed to the middle classes (as was shown in terms of their readership profiles), I could further show that the orientations to career and work conveyed in such portraits can be viewed as expressions of middle-class forms of individualisation and middle-class values of work. In a socio-economic context of the decline of the linear, organisational career, (as discussed in Chapter 2), in which individuals are increasingly required to shape their own work biographies, career portraits hence offer a rhetorical frame to the middle classes to attribute notions of intentionality, individuality and directedness to their biographies. In fact, career portraits have articulated what it actually means to 'make a career' and they have done so by performing a notion of career as a 'project of the self' (Savage 2000, see Chapter 1). Most importantly, it was shown that career portraits derive their authority and hence their power to universalise and normalise new orientations to work and career from their performative character, that is, by the fact that the people being portrayed have a role model like function and are therefore not mere descriptions of people's careers.

Yet, while this chapter could put forward a critique of the temporalities of agency and narrative that are conveyed in career portraits as well as what these temporalities *do* in terms of the individualisation of work, it has not been made clear what orientations to time career portraits convey. In other words, while career portraits have been identified as an individualising technique, the next chapter will examine individualisation vis-à-vis the orientations to time and the career practices that are enacted in these portraits.

6. New temporal practices, habits and orientations in career portraits

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated how career portraits can be understood from the perspective of genre, time and narrative and it was argued that the instructive nature of career portraits serves as an individualising technique, in particular in terms of the temporalities of practice enacted in such portraits. This chapter continues my analysis of career portraits by considering in more detail the type of practices, habits and orientations to work and how these can be related to the debates presented in Chapters 1, 2 and 3. These practices and temporal orientations, I will suggest, engender discontinuous, situational as well as more individualised temporalities of work, temporalities that radically depart from Fordist linear, collective time, as discussed in Chapter 2. As outlined in the methodology chapter, the following discussion is based on 180 career portraits in four British and two Austrian newspapers from the years 2004 to 2010.

In the analysis of the portraits presented here I will pay special attention to how people *time* and *are timed* by their working lives and to the question of change. In regard to the latter, I will look into notions of change in terms of practices of change (e.g.: 'breaking' with the familiar, changing career plans, searching for change, keeping up with change) and thus try to identify new types of temporal (career) practices or, to put it in Bourdieusian terms, I will aim to examine 'the acquisition of new temporal habits' (Bourdieu 2000b: 28). The other points that will be examined in this chapter are the social, economic or cultural resources people draw on in career portraits as well as the question of what these resources can reveal about the changing nature and shifting boundaries of the temporal relation between work and (private) life. I will investigate to what extent work related practices draw on individual (past) resources that were previously associated with the private realm (friends, family, personal networks etc.), or, to put it in Christian Marazzi's terms, I will explore to what extent individuals in career portraits "put to work their entire lives" (Marazzi 2008: 50). By adopting a

Bourdieusian perspective that considers the temporal and historical nature of individual practices, this chapter adds a critical perspective to contemporary theories of individualisation. It does so in regard to the question of how individualisation can be understood as a reorganisation of time and in particular of individual orientations to time and work. While the first half of this chapter focuses on the reorganisation of time in terms of peoples' work practices - including the ways in which individuals relate these practices to their private lives – the second half of this chapter examines changes in work temporalities at the level of work biographies. Let me begin the discussion of my empirical findings by showing how career portraits enact an individualisation in regard to orientations to time and work.

6.2. The individualisation and personalisation of time and work in career portraits

The individualisation of time and work in the career portraits analysed was evidenced in three different ways. First these processes were evident in regard to the relation between individual and social temporalities, that is, to the ways in which individuals portrayed in the portraits temporally relate their working lives to economic or social changes and how they individually *time* their lives in order to 'keep up' with these changes. Second, they were evident in notions of *timing as an individual practice*. Finally, they were evident in how the individuals portray a requirement to manage the relation between work and non-work, a requirement set against a background of a de-differentiation of these spheres. In what follows, I address these three dimensions in turn. However, before beginning the discussion of my findings, it is important to point out that career portraits do not only tell stories concerning how individual practices are related to changes in the economy, the market or organisations, but as elaborated in Chapter 5, they also suggest how individuals should or can negotiate this relationship. Thus portraits have an instructive role, a role which is crucial for understanding the genre as well as the social context of the individual text extracts presented throughout this chapter.

6.2.1. Pacing oneself and keeping up with change

There are many examples in career portraits that indicate how individuals are required to adapt to and keep up with rapidly changing environments and economic conditions within their working lives. Specifically, my analysis of career portraits suggests that this is so in particular in terms of how individuals need to keep pace with the market. The text segments that have been assigned code (a) *keeping pace with the market* indicate how the notion of the market is used in career portraits to describe a certain rhythm or tempo that is constituted by market forces.[64] The following three text extracts give evidence of how the market is positioned in this way:

Extract 1:

> But as he contemplated retirement last year, Mr Tucci decided **he could not simply rest on his laurels**. The technology **industry was changing too rapidly**, and he wondered if his company's greatest transformation was yet to come. So he signed a contract extension to continue through 2012. (...) Mr Tucci is enthralled by the **fast pace of change** in the data business. "I like to go fast in cars, on boats, on ski runs and in business," he says (*The Financial Times,* 24.05.2010).

Extract 2:

> 'The single most important thing was to dismantle the organisational structure of Fiat,' he recalls. 'We tore it apart in 60 days, removing a large number of leaders who had been there a long time and who represented an **operating style that lay outside any proper understanding of market dynamics**.' In their place Mr Marchionne brought in **a younger generation of executives who could respond to his demand for accountability, openness and rapid communication** (*The Economist*, 25.04.2009).

Extract 3:

> With the **old-aged structure**, the company **can't actively** embrace new technology and **lead changes** because it is relatively harder for older employees to adjust to the **rapidly changing IT environment** (*The Financial Times*, 08.03.2010).

---

[64] See also Smollan et al.'s discussion on people's emotional responses to organizational change and the necessity to keep up with the temporalities of change (Smollan et al. 2010).

The first example gives evidence of how individual practices are adapted and hence kept in pace with the market. It underlines the individual aspect of the engagement in the "fast pace of change in the data business" by presenting these economic dynamics as being a part of the portrayed person's personal aspirations. The second and third examples conflate "market dynamics" with a "younger generation" or workforce that is able to keep up with the faster rhythms of the market. As the latter two examples indicate, individuals increasingly have to be more time aware as regards their ability to adapt to rapidly changing environments as well as regards their skills that need to be updated more often in a fast paced economy and world of work. In fact, as the following three text segments suggest, the notion of adaptability and flexibility have become essential for the way in which individuals are supposed to temporalise themselves:

Extract 1:

> Only the **people who can adapt, adjust and are lucky** - I am not so arrogant to think that luck has nothing to do with it - **will survive** (*The Financial Times*, 05.08.2009).

Extract 2:

> The third lesson was that in such a **fast-moving realm** the **price of inaction** is far greater than the cost of a mistake (*The Financial Times*, 06.10.2007).

Extract 3:

> 'The PC **industry today is a race** in efficiency,' says Wanli Wang, PC analyst at HSBC. 'Lenovo is now showing **the will to keep up**, but it remains to be seen whether it can deliver' (*The Financial Times*, 05.07.2010).

These three extracts demonstrate not only that flexibility and the ability to keep up with new circumstances are requirements of contemporary working lives but also that, inflexibility or the inability to keep up with change has become a form of risk whose consequences each individual has to bear. As discussed in Chapter 1, the individualisation of working lives entails precisely this "redistribution of risks towards the individual" (Beck 2000: 3). In terms of temporality, such processes mean that individuals need to develop an awareness of how they *time* their own working lives in relation to the rhythms and pace of the market, the

organisation they work, or more generally the economy.[65] In career portraits notions of timing were not only presented as a favourable individual characteristic, but there were also examples of the negative consequences of ill-timing, that is, the inability or unwillingness to time or pace one's working life, in particular in accordance with the rhythms of the (labour) market. This is illustrated in the following extract:

> Far-fetched notions that once seemed fit only for science fiction are **rapidly** becoming Thacker's daily grind. 'It's a field that's **moving really quickly**,' she says. 'I took time off for maternity leave, and when I came back **things had moved on so much**' (*The Guardian*, 29.11.2008).

While (in)flexibility was certainly an issue in terms of the orientations to time individuals hold in career portraits, my analysis also suggests that flexibility served as a disciplining technique by telling the stories of individuals whose career progression or simply their continuation of employment required them to expose a high degree of flexibility, temporally or spatially. The following extract demonstrates this:

> He had spent much of his early career working his way up from marketing manager to chief executive of Smith's Crisps, but he left when the parent company **United Biscuits wanted him to move** to southern England. Born and educated in Northumberland, McKechnie was **reluctant to go**. 'It meant moving down south where houses were expensive and schools were ridiculous,' he said. 'I was told that **if I didn't, I wouldn't have a job in six months**' (*The Times*, 28.12.2008).

As these examples illustrate, working lives are decreasingly *timed* by organisations or collectively shared career trajectories and instead are timed by the pace of the market, a pace to which each individual must relate. As noted in Chapter 4, the way in which portrayed individuals (narratively) relate to the

---

[65] The prevalence of 'market time' has not least been furthered by the growing number of people working in the service-sector industry and new forms of communication technology at work. These changes have equally contributed to the changing rhythms and pace of work. As the *Fifth European Working Conditions Survey* of 2010 shows: "For most workers (67%) in the EU27, the pace of work is set by direct demands from people – for example, interacting with a client. By contrast, only 18% of European workers have their pace of work set by the automatic speed of a machine, and this proportion has been decreasing over the past 15 years", <www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2010/74/en/3/EF1074EN.pdf >, last accessed 20.10.2011.

market tends to *subjectivise and personalise the market* (see section 5.3.3.2.2) by depicting it as a domain of personal engagement (Knorr-Cetina and Bruegger 2002, Thrift 2001). From the perspective of time, career portraits further personalise *themarket* insofar as individuals are required to personally adapt to its flexible rhythms and fluctuations as well as to potential future risks. My analysis of career portraits thus suggests that the model of the bureaucratic, hierarchical organisation, paradigmatic for the temporalities in Fordism, has been superseded by an individualised notion of time, in which time has become *internalised* to the extent that personal time and timing must be individually managed.

Given, as argued in Chapter 5, that career portraits are not simply representations of working lives but are an instructional genre, they must be then understood not only as portraying this internalisation of time – or timing – but also giving instructions to readers regarding this time and its management. Thus career portraits give examples of how readers as individuals might 'manage' their own career, their 'work-life balance' or the fast-paced workplace environments through the use of timing techniques. And this is so regardless of whether people are equipped with the necessary resources to do so. This individualised understanding of time is further evidenced by the presence of *kairological time* in career portraits, an understanding of time that I shall discuss next.

6.2.2. Kairòs (καιρός) and the right timing – timing as an individual practice

As my analysis of career portraits has suggested so far, individual timing has become a central feature both in the organisation of everyday working tasks as well as in professional futures. Timing as a form of individual practice has superseded the rigid external rhythms of clock-time. The word *to time* as a verb indicates that it is something one *does* rather than something that simply exists as an external force. The notion of *timing*, however, is also suggestive of an individualised concept of time. The idea of *to time* or *good timing* as a form of practice was personified in the Ancient Greek God of Καιρός (Kairos). There were

two words for time in Ancient Greece: καιρός (kairos) translatable as 'the right moment to do something' and χρόνος (chronos) as the quantitative-sequential form of time. Urry (2008), uses the term *kairological time* in order to describe a form of individual temporality when someone has the "sense of when a particular event should take place in the future, or just when it is the right time for something to occur" (Urry 2008: 184). In the career portraits analysed, this form of time was at play, particularly in regard to expressions of good timing in relation to particular practices or decisions. But also, interestingly, bad or faulty timing was portrayed. The excerpts below show how individuals did *the right thing at the right time* in terms of their career:

Extract 1:

> In the end, the likeliest **reason** why Mr Scott is **stepping down** is **timing**. Wal-Mart's performance and reputation have never been better, and there is **little for him to gain by staying on** (*The Economist*, 29.11.2008).

Extract 2:

> Ms Whitman also mentioned a fourth lesson during her talk at Stanford. Her main job as boss, she said, is to put '**the right person in the right job at the right time**'. She **emphasised the word 'time'**, since a manager who was right a few years ago may no longer be today (*The Economist*, 06.10.2007).

To *do the right thing at the right time* is also central in those parts of career portraits, where individuals discuss decisions that relate to the rhythm or pace of the market:

Extract 3:

> Then he drives the sale price up, of course, by using his knowledge of the industry to find at least two publishers who are willing to compete for a book - and pitching it to them in the best possible way. **'Timing,' he insists, 'is a really important thing'** (*The Guardian*, 07.02.2009).

Extract 4:

> **Their timing was spot-on**. A large drinks firm had just brought out Aqua Libra, which had created a whole new market for adult soft drinks which Morris and his

elderflower cordial were instantly able to tap into. 'We just happened to be in **the right place at the right time**,' he said (*The Times*, 29.10.2006).

In contrast to the right or good timing, regularly found in career portraits, bad or ill timing is sometimes portrayed, a portrayal which acts as a reminder of the consequences of doing things at the wrong time. The following acts as a good example:

> When you've created this idea and you're ready to go and you've done your research and you sell it in [to a journalist], and get a feeling that it's gone well. And then some big news story fills several pages inside and knocks your story out of the paper. And there's no explanation you can give back to the client. **It wasn't the idea that was wrong, it was just the timing** (*The Guardian*, 26.01.2008).

Placing the above examples in the context of debates on individualisation, it is clear that individualisation centrally concerns the organisation of time insofar, as time is increasingly being *internalised* by individuals, who are supposed to become the main agents of *timing* as regards their working lives and careers. Kairological time, hence, essentially is a key determinant of individualisation. This is so in particular as career portraits convey an understanding of time that is first and foremost grounded within the individual and by their ability to take decisions or do things at the right time, rather than by organisational temporalities or decision-making processes. The rising demands on individuals to develop individual strategies of timing can also be observed in terms of how career portraits enact the relation between work and non-work. The following section therefore explores how the changing relation between these two spheres is being enacted in career portraits.

6.2.3. Relating work and (private) life

As discussed in Chapter 2, during the process of industrialisation the world of work became increasingly separated from the life-world, both temporally and spatially. This separation was fundamental for the "uninhibited acceleration of productive economic processes" (Rosa 2003: 21) and fostered an understanding of work (time) as the sphere of the professional and public and non-work (private, leisure) time as the sphere of private and social life.[66] According to a range of authors, however, this separation is unstable. Indeed despite different theoretical approaches (Hochschild 2003, Gottschall and Voss 2005, Illouz 2007, Kratzer and Sauer 2007, Marazzi 2008, Voelker 2008, Voss 1994, 2004), there is a general agreement that the dichotomy between work and non-work can no longer capture the complexities of contemporary economic life. This change in the relation between these two spheres is neatly captured in one of the career portraits from *The Guardian*. Here a male expedition leader and explorer comments "for me, my life is my work and my work is my life" (*The Guardian*, 21.02.2009).

The next sections will suggest that the individualisation of working lives has radically reorganised the relation between work and life. I will propose that the internalisation of time and the rise of individual practices of timing have fostered an understanding of time and temporality that does not distinguish between the categories 'at work' and 'not at work', but instead replaces these categories by a more fluid understanding of the two and the relationship between them. My empirical analysis of career portraits suggests four different ways in which the relation between work and life is being (re-) organised. First, *work is taking over or extends into private life*, second, the *private/spare time distinction is cast as a potential economic opportunity*, third, people's *personal networks or friends are framed as resources* and finally, this reorganisation is suggested in the way that people are portrayed as *individually attempting to balance work and life*.

---

[66] See also Mitropoulos (2005).

6.2.3.1. Work takes over private life (time)

Within the career portraits analysed, work was often portrayed as *taking over private life*. Interestingly, however, in portraits portraying this extension it was not critically questioned. Instead it was depicted as the result of hard work, job commitment and as a way to be successful in the future. The following three text extracts provide evidence of this slippage:

Extract 1:

> That first year was **hard work**. We were completely focused, it was like our baby - we **sacrificed everything for it**, she said (*The Times*, 29.06.2008).

Extract 2:

> That summer Thomas got married to his fiancée, Diane. On the first day of the honeymoon Thomas had to **stay in their hotel room using his laptop to answer customer queries and keep up with the work** (*The Times*, 24.08.2008).

Extract 3:

> Mr Levitan has **come into his office on a Sunday** morning because it is the only time he has to sit down and reflect on how Vector has thrived since he abandoned his law practice in the early 1990s to set up in business to manage musicians full time (*The Financial Times*, 30.06.2009).

While in the first example, the notion of hard work is associated with the idea of self-sacrifice and hence the idea of giving up everything else for one's work, the second and third text segments give evidence of how time traditionally regarded as non-work or private time (one's honeymoon or Sunday) are used for job purposes. Significant here is not only the blurring boundaries between work and life but also that it is portrayed as a matter of personal choice. Indeed, the dissolution of the separation of work and life and the extension of work-time into private time are depicted as necessary to contemporary working lives and essential for personal career advancement.

6.2.3.2. Private time as potential time

The second way in which the reorganisation of work time and life time is portrayed in career portraits is in the presentation of private or spare time as a time that holds a *potential economic opportunity*. The following extracts demonstrate this dimension:

Extract 1:

> His next stroke of good fortune came while he was **attending the Ivor Novello music awards as the guest of a family friend**. While he was at his table loudly voicing his opinions, he was overheard by a businessman at the next table who **promptly offered him a job** (*The Times*, 20.04.2008).

Extract 2:

> **While he was mulling various business ideas, he and his wife, Rebecca, went on holiday** to France and visited a forest adventure course. Mayhew was **immediately taken with the idea of opening a similar business in Britain**. 'We were watching this family having the time of their life. The 10 and 15-year-old were loving it, but so were the parents' (*The Times*, 04.01.2009).

Both examples show how in the private time of the portrayed person - in the first case during the attendance of an event in spare time and in the second case during the private holidays - an unexpected opportunity or idea came up that transformed her/his working life in a decisive way. Apart from the fact that a separation between professional and private life is questioned in these examples, they also indicate that time is being thought of as a 'constant potential' that waits to be activated and transformed into something economically more rewarding than time that is 'simply being passed'. Interestingly, this notion of contemporary time as potential time adds weight to Sennett's notion of potential, discussed in Chapter 2. Moreover, the notion of potential discussed in this section suggests that potential time is not only relevant in terms of work time but, crucially, also applies to private time. In other words, potential time does not distinguish between work and life but puts to work people's entire lives (Marazzi 2008). The relation between time and the notion of potential will also be explored in the case

of working lives and careers in the banking industry in London, in particular in Chapter 7.

6.2.3.3. Contacts/personal networks as resource at work

The third way in which the relation between work time and life time is blurred in the portraits concerns the use of personal and social networks for job and career purposes. The following two extracts illustrate this use of networks:

Extract 1:

> Making the most of contacts in the industry has also been critical. '**Networking is very important** if you want to promote your company and product,' he said. '**Use your business and personal contacts** and, in return, repay favours and buy products and services from your contacts' (*The Times*, 29.01.2006).

Extract 2:

> None of this would be possible, of course, if Harwood did not **keep up his contacts** within the book trade - often, as the industry stereotype has it, **over a meal and a glass or two of wine**. 'People joke about the publishing lunch, but it's incredibly important,' he says. 'It really is, joking aside. You could sit in their office and have a cup of coffee, but **if you want to get to know someone you need them to relax** … And it's one of the few perks of the job, a good lunch now and again' (*The Guardian*, 07.02.2009).

These examples suggest that 'the network' has become a new paradigm of how work and careers are organised and maintained, both in the present and the future. As the first interview extract demonstrates, personal contacts, friends as well as colleagues at work are regarded as potential contacts that can be activated in the future. As extract two further illustrates, *networking as a practice* (Wittel 2001) unhinges the traditional separation between the time spent at work and the time *not* spent at work. In fact, a strict separation between these spheres would prove to be counterproductive as it would not allow individuals to build up networks that could potentially be vital for their future career. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

My analysis of career portraits in this chapter so far has discussed the increasing prevalence of notions of individual timing – as a doing, that is as a practice - both in the context of work as well as in the reworking of the work-life divide. Indeed I have argued that an understanding of time as timing is crucial in the context of the process of individualisation. The second part of this chapter will explore the biographical dimension of such practices. Specifically, I will investigate how career portraits portray relationships between past, present and future in regard to working lives.

6.3. New *practices of timing* – past, present, future

My analysis of the biographical dimension of career portraits identified three ways in which individual practices and orientations relate to the past, present and future. First, individuals were commonly portrayed as 'breaking' with or radically changing their past working lives in order to mark a step towards an individually determined career. At the same time, however, career portraits also portrayed people's past working lives as a valuable resource for their careers. Second, there was evidence of situational time in terms of how individuals reacted to and coped with present circumstances. And third, the future was frequently conceived as being unpredictable and shaped by unexpected factors. The remaining part of this chapter discusses this threefold biographical dimension in more detail.

6.3.1. Past dimension: 'breaking' with the past and searching for change

Throughout the different types of career portraits that have been examined, there were numerous examples that tell how individuals 'broke' with their past working life in order to change to a more challenging or personally rewarding career. These moments of change, however, were not portrayed as a result of external circumstances but instead were described as intentional acts and were usually

associated with expressions that indicated a 'forward movement'. The following three text extracts illustrate this:

Extract 1:

> As a result, though he continued training as a sideline, Fergus chose a more **conventional career** when he left school. 'I did **normal jobs**,' he says, 'admin-based jobs. But I **didn't find them fulfilling**. I like being outdoors and having the **ability to move around**. I got sacked from a few jobs because I wasn't putting in 100%.' Finally, **he realised he had had enough**. '**I came to a turning point** in around 2003 when I thought, I'm sick of working for other people part-time,' he says. 'So I did my YMCA training course, and I attended Southampton University and did a sports studies degree. I just thought, "**I'm going to do it myself**". And I've never looked back from there' (*The Guardian*, 04.10.2008).

Extract 2:

> Leggett **left his teaching post determined to make a difference**. He became an environmental campaigner and the scientific director of Greenpeace International's climate campaign (*The Times*, 26.10.2008).

Extract 3:

> Among the subsequent job offers was Henkel's proposal that he join its management board - with an expectation on both sides that he would shortly become chief executive if he performed well. It was, he says, the right time to **leave one industry and learn something new** (*The Financial Times*, 01.08.2010).

However, these examples further indicate that the notion of change and the idea of 'breaking' with one's previous working life are contextualised within social practices, that is, within practices that emphasise the active and individually driven nature of a person's working life. While such notions of change are key to understanding the temporalities of work biographies in career portraits, my analysis also provided evidence which emphasised the importance of the past as a resource for careers. This was so in particular in terms of past experiences and individuals' awareness that previous employment accrues (and builds up) in the form of personal skills and knowledge that can be used in the future. This notion of the past is illustrated in the following two extracts:

Extract 1:

> Because I think once you've got your first job it's easy then, because you've got a bit of **experience and you can build on** it. Getting that first job is the challenge (*The Guardian*, 10.01.2009).

Extract 2:

> Mizrahi thinks his **earlier careers have helped him** run a small business by equipping him with a wide **variety of skills** (*The Times*, 05.08.2007).

Career portraits, hence, attribute crucial significance to the idea of viewing people's past working life as a personal resource and they do so in a context of change and discontinuity. From a narrative point of view, these findings suggest that individuals are required to develop their own career narratives, narratives in which a change of job or career are expressions of individual agency rather than the result of external changes (cf. Miller and Morgan 1993 in *The CV as an Autobiographical Practice*). As Chapter 7 will discuss in more detail, the 'CV as an autobiographical practice' (Miller and Morgan 1993) plays a significant role in the ways in which career narratives are articulated. While the idea of change was an important feature in terms of how people's working pasts were portrayed, change was also a significant characteristic in terms of how individuals adapt to changing circumstances. The practices and temporal orientations that career portraits associate with such notions of change will henceforth be conceptualised as situational time. The following discussion will explain in more detail in which ways this concept of time was evident in career portraits.

6.3.2. Present dimension: the emergence of *situational time*

As discussed in Chapter 2, situational time describes a form of temporality that breaks with linear time and hence with practices based on a knowable and foreseeable future. In career portraits, situational time was evidenced in a number of different ways. One of the main characteristics of situational time identified in career portraits was a rejection of practices of planning and instead a portrayal of a temporality in which practices and decisions are shaped by

present (situational) circumstances. The following three extracts from career portraits illustrate this:

Extract 1:

> **We really try to build a timeline, and an arc of a career**. But the second thing **is not being too locked into that timeline**, because we're in a business of a ton of variables, and **everything can change at a moment's notice** (*The Financial Times*, 30.06.2009).

Extract 2:

> A few days after spending a weekend in Vienna last in January – a Christmas present to his girlfriend – the native Italian **received a job offer** from a headhunter to lead the department 'Financial Institutions International Sales' of the RZB.[67] A **coincidence at the right time** because up **till then he had not planned to continue staying** in Austria (*Die Presse,* 05.09.2008).[xiv]

Extract 3:

> After his study he **originally planned to go abroad** and therefore applied for positions all over the world and was invited to job interviews twice to Frankfurt. Finally, he **got a job as a Key Account Manager** in the Austrian Spar-Casse, which **was anything else but planned** (*Die Presse,* 10.08.2008).[xv]

The first extract illustrates how the understanding of the very idea of 'making a career' stands in opposition to the linear organisational and Fordist career. The notion of "being locked into a timeline", which is contrasted with the phrase "everything can change at a moment's notice", contrasts linear time with situational time, the latter one being clearly favoured as a more useful orientation to time and career. Extracts two and three further underline the fact that situational time stands in opposition to practices of planning, practices that have been associated with linear time as Chapter 2 argued. Instead, decisions are predominantly shaped and framed by new, unforeseeable situations and are therefore often taken in real time or, as Rosa put it, individuals have to "take things as they come" (Rosa 2009: 34).[68] Acting in a context of situational time,

---

[67] RZB (= Raiffeisen Zentralbank) is the central institution of the Austrian Raiffeisen Banking Group, <www.rzb.at>, last accessed 13.04.2013.
[68] See also Castells notion of 'working in real time' (2000: 465-467).

however, requires a high degree of temporal and spatial flexibility, as the following extract from a career portrait further underlines:

> In February 2005 he received a phone call. The director at that time Georg Eichler said that he could offer a position in an **exciting project** and **asked whether she could come the following day**. 'Of course, she said, where shall I come to?' 'To Kuala Lumpur, he said'. **The next morning I was sitting already in the plane'** (*Die Presse*, 05.12.2008).[xvi]

This example, which speaks about career change, highlights the fact that individual careers are not only increasingly unfolding according to a logic of situational time, but also that the ability to act in such a context of situational time, requires individuals to 'break' with context, to be able to adjust quickly to new situations and embrace fast-paced change in order to 'make a career'. In such a time regime, practices, habits and decisions are revised on a constant basis and altered if needed. Rosa uses the metaphor of the *surfer* in order to describe the type of individual who is not only able to adapt but who actually thrives in a context of situational time.

Thus, in line with Rosa's argument, my analysis of career portraits so far suggests that careers and working lives are increasingly following a situational time regime, that is, a time regime that radically departs from linear notions of time. My analysis also suggests that situational time involves new model of futurity. While linear time - engendered in the organisational, bureaucratic career - was based on predictability and foreseeable working futures, situational time breaks with this understanding of futurity. As such notions of futurity are crucial for understanding the reorganisation of contemporary work biographies, the last section of this chapter explores how individuals in career portraits relate to their working futures and what temporalities this involves.

6.3.3. Future dimension: Futurity and situational time

My analysis of career portraits identified two different ways in which individuals referred to or imagined their working futures. These imaginations of working

futures consisted primarily of strategies and practices that were expected to help these individuals in (progressing) in their careers. First, there were numerous portraits in which individuals told how they would take advantage of unexpected future events or situations. Second, individuals commonly viewed moments of future unpredictability as moments of chance (and not as instances of uncertainty as one might assume).

In telling the stories of people's working lives, career portraits usually do not only tell what individuals have achieved in their past careers, but also how they think about their future careers. In doing so, career portraits engender certain orientations to the future. Specifically, working futures were not imagined in terms of foreseeable or knowable futures but as 'open futures', that is, as futures in which the 'unexpected' plays a crucial role. In fact, as the following two extracts from career portraits illustrate, individuals frequently told how they took advantage of 'the unexpected' or – at least - that they were thinking of doing so:

Extract 1:

> He puts his success down to his willingness to **keep an open mind about where life is heading**. 'I believe that life is like a big ocean, so why not swim with it and go with the flow of the waves rather than fight them,' he said. '**I found that you may try to plan things in life, but then life takes you in a direction it wants**' (*The Times*, 05.08.2007).

Extract 2:

> She **doesn't believe in planning her career at all**: 'There was always an **opportunity coming up**. You only have to **stay flexible in your mind and grab the chances** that are offered to you' (*Die Presse*, 03.10.2008).[xvii]

These two extracts suggest that working futures are not imagined as an outcome of individual career planning but instead are articulated and framed in a context of situational time, that is, a context in which individuals need to take advantage of unforeseeable upcoming opportunities. Thus, the concept of situational time is also at issue in terms of career portraits' futurities. Situational futurities, however, were not only enacted in terms of individuals taking advantage of

upcoming opportunities but these temporalities were also affirmed by career portraits that emphasised the positive aspects of situations of unpredictability or – in some instances – of moments of crisis. This is illustrated in the following three text extracts:

Extract 1:

> Over tea and a granita - crushed frozen coffee - he tells me the thing he **enjoys** most about the job is its **unpredictability**. 'I really enjoy having to think out of the box,' he says (*The Guardian*, 25.08.2007).

Extract 2:

> Paradoxically, in the circumstances, he **enjoys the unpredictability of the job**. 'I can be watching the telly one minute and on the way to London or Sheffield the next' (*The Guardian*, 17.01.2009).

Extract 3:

> 'The **crisis has been an acid test** for us,' Mr Zetsche says. 'But in the end, these moments, where everything is turning against you and the company is drifting into the wrong direction, these are the only **moments in** a management **career when you really grow'** (*The Financial Times*, 14.06.2010).

These extracts from career portraits do not just enact a relation between individual practices and notions of unpredictability of the future or of crisis, they also report how individuals successfully deal with them and how they turn them into assets in their working lives and careers. By taking into account the instructive role of career portraits (see discussion in Chapter 5), the previous three text extracts convey an orientation to time and career, in which unforeseeable situations or situations of crisis are framed as chances and not as factors that inhibit people's career prospects. Crucially, career portraits positively affirm situational time as a new form of temporality, both at the level of work practices as well as at the level of work biography. This form of temporality, however, has implications for processes of individualisation, too, as the following conclusion will outline.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter examined the temporalities of work in career portraits. In doing so, my analysis identified orientations to time as well as individual practices that are indicative of new ways in which individuals relate to their past, present and future working lives. Specifically, I could show that time, and in particular biographical time, is increasingly articulated as *timing*, that is, as something individuals *do* rather than as an external structure. I argued that such notions of timing are indicative of processes of individualisation of work biographies. Individualisation, however, was not only evident in notions of individual timing but also in the ways in which career portraits enact the relation between work and life as well as in terms of new practices of timing.

At issue were in particular potential time and situational time. Importantly, the practices and orientations to time that have been characterised with the concepts potential time and situational time not only indicated a shift in the temporalities of work but also evidenced processes of individualisation. In line with the argument made in Chapter 5, I suggest that such practices and orientations are not universal but are instead expressions of middle-class forms of individualisation. Furthermore, a Bourdieusian perspective of practice and class implies that these practices are not equally accessible to all but instead that individuals need to be equipped with the necessary resources in order to acquire such practices and orientations to their working lives.

An assumption of universality of individualised notions of work and time, such as those enacted in career portraits, is particularly problematic in the context of precariousness. Such a socio-economic context actually makes it increasingly difficult for individuals to engage with their working futures in a manner that career portraits encourage individuals to do. Thus, while the previous two chapters investigated the temporalities of working lives of individuals being portrayed in print-media, the following two chapters will explore in more detail the temporalities of work in actual interviews with people; specifically among people working in the banking industry in London. The discussion in the following two chapters will thus contrast the empirical analysis of individual

career stories told in career portraits with an analysis of personally conducted interviews about people's work biographies.

7. The temporalities of working lives of early and mid-career employees in the London banking industry

7.1. Introduction

In the previous two empirical chapters, I examined career portraits in two Austrian and four British newspapers from the perspective of time and temporality. In Chapter 5, by drawing on Bourdieu's writings on time, I put forward a critique of the underlying notions of individual agency in career portraits as being de-temporalised. In Chapter 6, I moved on to investigate the emergence of new temporal practices, habits and orientations to time present in career portraits. The discussion in these two chapters showed that time and temporality - in particular the relation between time, individual practices and attitudes towards the future - are key to understanding transformations of present-day working lives and careers. However, while such transformations could be identified in portraits of people's careers, these portraits do not and cannot capture the empirical reality of how individuals themselves account for their working life temporalities. Hence the following two chapters will empirically examine the temporalities of working lives for two groups of people in the banking and finance industry in the City of London and in Canary Wharf. These two groups consist of people in their early and mid-careers who are directly involved in the activities of banking, on the one hand, and of cleaners who work in the subcontracted service industry of these banks, on the other. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with these two groups and much of the discussion in the following two chapters is based on the data generated in these interviews.

In this chapter, I will explore the first group of people interviewed, that is, people in their early and mid-careers in various positions, who work in the banking industry in London. Sixteen interviews were carried out between August 2009 and June 2010 and the data from these interviews will be analysed in order to establish how individuals relate to the past, present and future of their working

lives and careers. More specifically, I will ask how individuals imagine the future of their working lives, whether they think of making a career within their current place of work and to what extent individuals are engaged in practices of planning. I will further investigate the relation between the decline of organisational careers (which will be empirically elaborated in this chapter) and the increasing importance of personal networks for engaging with one's future working life. I will also ask what the increasing reliance on these networks *does* (or *undoes*) in terms of the relation between the spheres of work and life. In addition, this chapter will examine to what extent individuals are able to draw on past experiences when thinking about their present and future careers as well as whether individuals aim to establish coherence between their past and present working lives, and if so, how. Throughout this chapter, I will pay particular attention to notions of time that indicate a shift towards more individualised understandings of time as *timing* and I will critically discuss how these findings can be understood in the context of theories of individualisation and Bourdieu's writings on time, as presented in Chapters 1 and 3. As the interviews for this research project took place between summer 2009 and spring 2010, I will also pay attention to the financial crisis, its impact on individual working lives as well as on its potentially transformative nature on individual practices and future plans. However, before analysing the interviews in more detail, I will begin this chapter with a brief overview of the historical preconditions that have shaped the temporalities of careers in banking in past decades, which will help to clarify some of the major differences and changes to the present-day situation.

7.2. Careers in the past

Chapter 2 made clear the organisational and temporal changes that the shift from a Fordist to a post-Fordist regime has entailed. This shift has been particularly marked in the context of banking, where organisational structures and, accordingly, the temporalities of working lives have undergone fundamental changes. While once embodying the temporalities and values of the organisational career, careers in banking have become more competitive, individually driven and fast paced. Moreover, single organisations no longer

structures working biographies. This change has been described in detail by Halford et al. (1997), who note that in the recent past

> banking has offered a paradigmatic example of the linear organisational career. All entrants began at the bottom, working their way up through a series of well-defined jobs, in strict order. (...) All jobs in banking were arranged hierarchically, occupying a specific role in the 'job ladder'. As an individual 'climbed the ladder' it was impossible to 'miss out' a particular stage. (...) This type of career structure emphasized the hierarchical character of job. (...) There was a high degree of predictability about promotion prospects built into this career (Halford et al. 1997: 112-115).

Halford et al.'s description of the temporalities of careers in banking in the past resembles the characteristics of the Fordist organisational career, as discussed in Chapter 2. In particular the emphasis on hierarchical structures and formalised, predictable careers shaped by organisations rather than by individuals and their personal career strategies resonates with such modes.[69] Indeed, until the 1980s, banking, and in particular retail banking, was "characterized by secure jobs-for-life employment policies" (Storey et al. 1997: 30). Hence banks offered life-time employment, structured career opportunities and welfare-oriented personnel policies and "promoted unitarism, encourage[d] an ethos of teamwork, shared interest and loyalty [and] a commitment beyond the cash nexus" (Storey et al. 1997: 25). The predictable, linear career, however, was mostly limited to the male workforce. Thus women in banking were commonly employed in 'non-promotable' occupations, for instance as secretaries or messengers (Halford et al 1997: 114). This point is underscored by Storey et al. who observe that "a regular amount of labour turnover [was] (...) experienced among clerical, mainly female, staff" (1997: 30).

In her study on merchant banks in London in the 1990s, McDowell (1997) also shows that despite the commonly held view that banking after the 1980s has become more accessible both in terms of gender and social class, this industry has remained dominated by men. In her work (McDowell 1997) she argues that one of the main reasons for this was that most women felt unable to combine

---

[69] Cf. Hall's different models of career: career as advancement, career as profession, career as a lifelong sequence of jobs, career as a lifelong sequence of role-related experiences (Hall 2002).

family life with their intense working rhythms and long working hours and thus had to take a decision for either making a career *or* having a family. More generally, McDowell finds that the world of merchant banking was associated with different notions of masculinity, creating an environment that made women feel 'out of place'.

Although banking offered this kind of career only to some, nonetheless this 'old' model of banking and career enabled individuals to foresee their future working lives. That is, the old banking career enacted a particular temporal model of working life, one which was predictable, linear and knowable. On the basis of interviews with bankers who had experienced the 'old' model, Halford et al. (1997) argue that "nearly all the career narratives of our respondents tended to emphasise the lack of choice or strategic intent" (1997: 160). Thus, "the culture of banking, with its paternalistic ethos, its emphasis upon loyalty and steadiness, was not one which traditionally encouraged instrumental planning by its employees" (1997: 161). Halford et al's account of careers in banking thus suggests that there is a direct link between predominant forms of organisational structures and the ways in which individuals engage with their future working lives. To put this in Bourdieusian terms, Halford et al.'s study implies that the organisational structures of banking in past decades engendered a habitus that did not have to engage with the future in an active or strategic way since the future was already there. Such organisational and temporal modes of working life are crucial to understand contemporary transformations which depart from these modes, as my empirical analysis in the following section will illustrate.

7.3. Contemporary changes 1: getting into banking

The organisational structures and the ways in which individuals progressed within these structures in previous decades, as they were described in the previous section, strongly contrast with the empirical data on present-day careers in banking analysed in this thesis. This is particularly true for the banking industry in London, which, as Chapter 8 will discuss in more detail, ever since the 1980s experienced not only considerable growth, but also a transformation of

its organisational cultures and structures. The rapid expansion of the banking and financial services industry, along with associated business services, increasingly attracted young graduates seeking to find employment in a sector whose average incomes – including starting salaries - were considerably higher than in other industries. Although some of the enthusiasm and excitement about this industry started to fade with the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008, most of the people interviewed confirmed the view that banking would provide for an exceptional lifestyle. So did Lorna, a risk analyst from Commerzbank, who entered the banking industry in 2006. Speaking about the time after she graduated, when she was searching for a job, she commented that finding a job

> was very easy and it was very appealing because banking was booming, the lifestyle that it provided was amazing. It was equivalent with success, the pay was fantastic, was better than anything else that graduates could do and it just made sense in that phase (Lorna, risk analyst at Commerzbank, 28 years old).

There were however also others, who were more critical about the fact that banking had acquired an aura of excitement, with a compliance officer from Barclays commenting that the culture of banking before 2008 made people think that they were "doing something very special" when compared to other industries. Others expressed that by working in banking, they felt that they were "in the heart of what's going on", as a female risk analyst put it, meaning that their workplaces were positioned in one of the major centres of global banking and finance.

It is also important to note that the majority of the people that were interviewed started working in the banking industry during a time when financial services were booming, which also affected the recruitment policies of banks.[70] Many of those interviewed stated that in the early to mid 2000s – the time when they started their careers in banking - banks were recruiting people not only from the fields of business, finance or economics but from a large variety of areas, including technical studies. This was underlined by interviewees who studied

---

[70] According to the Financial Stability Report 2008 by the Bank of England, in mid 2007, the credit boom has come to an abrupt end, <www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/fsr/2008/fsrfull0804.pdf>, p. 15, last accessed 04.08.2012.

engineering, emphasising that according to their experience banks highly appreciated the technical way of thinking, which they said was important to understand banking and especially the financial markets. As a female risk analyst from Commerzbank noted, "they [the banks] love them [graduates from engineering] for their rational approach". Similarly, Nicolas, who works as a derivative trader at Merrill Lynch, stated that "engineers are very commonly employed in derivatives because we have a higher level of complexity".

Although this point will not be explored in further detail, it is interesting to note the assumption of (technical) rationality in this context, which associates the sphere of finance and banking with the attributes of rationality and calculability. In fact, this assumption was heavily criticised during the course of the financial crisis, when trading was increasingly viewed as 'gambling' with highly speculative products rather than being based on rational or well-informed decision making. Another reason why careers in banking had become an attractive option in the early 2000s, in particular for young graduates, is because of organisational cultures which were no longer based on ideas of seniority or linearity and instead enabled a relatively young workforce to quickly progress within or across organisations. Although there were some considerable variations among different banks in regard to this latter point, the next section will illustrate these organisational cultures and environments and in particular, how they shaped individuals' temporalities of work.

7.4. Contemporary changes 2: Fast-paced, competitive and intense rhythms of work and career

In terms of organisational cultures as well as people's everyday working rhythms and pace of work, the most striking result to emerge from the analysed interview data is that the hierarchical, bureaucratic and hence collective structures, typical for banks as organisations in the past (as previous sections indicated), were practically absent. Instead, my analysis suggests a very different set of organisational structures and cultures, corresponding also to a different mindset in terms of the ways in which people think about their careers. The majority of

the interviewees described the organisational cultures and rhythms as being primarily fast-paced, highly individualistic and competitive. This was particularly true for those working in front-office positions, such as traders and investment bankers. Andrew, for example, who works in the IT support side of the trading arm of Deutsche Bank, describes the fast-paced organisational culture of this bank in the following manner:

> It's a combination **of working hours which can be longer** than generally in the sector, a **delivery-and-achievement-driven culture**, so you are constantly reminded that **you need to deliver value**. (...) the working environment is **very competitive** (...) so everybody is trying to be the best. (...) but there is a significant reward for that (...) they [the employees] **personally try to be recognized for the work** they do. So that's what makes it a **fast paced environment**. In some other industries it will be acceptable for you to do 80 per cent of what you can do; here you have to give 100 per cent (Andrew, technology officer at Deutsche Bank, 32 years).

Andrew's statement not only illustrates the delivery-driven and competitive nature of banks as organisations but it also underlines that such organisational contexts further individualised attitudes towards work, including attitudes about individual achievement ('they personally try to be recognized for the work they do'). This performance-based culture was particularly evident among those interviewees who work in investment banking, where working hours can be extraordinarily long and the need to perform and compete against colleagues were strongest among all interviewees. These individualised and competitive understandings of work stand in contrast to the organisational career and habitus, which are based on "loyalty and steadiness" (Halford et al. 1997: 161), as outlined in section 7.2. The already quoted interview with Andrew, who works at the investment banking department of Deutsche Bank, provides evidence of such competition:

> American banks also have something which is called **up-or-out policy**, so they **get rid of the bottom 10 to 15 per cent of the workforce every year** and then they **promote the top 10 to 15 per cent from the level below** so you **constantly have a changing environment**, essentially **everybody wants to be better** (Andrew, technology officer at Deutsche Bank, 32 years).

Policies such as 'up-or-out', as mentioned in Andrew's interview excerpt, represent extreme forms of performance-based organisational cultures, which neither apply for all banks nor for all positions within the same bank. However, in another interview with Norman, who works in the field of solution architecture in the commercial banking side of Barclays, he similarly stated how performance-based promotions are increasingly replacing the idea of promotion based on seniority and experience:

> **It's about performance** and about moving into roles when they become available. It's not like for example as a consultant you do three years as an associate and then you get to the next level. **People who are quite young jump into quite senior grades**, just because maybe **they are good or they are lucky** that they got in the right post at the right time. What is **hard, is to progress in your same role**, so **a lot of people jump and change** because of that, it's quite **hard to get a promotion in the same role** (Norman, solution architect at Barclays, 26 years).

This interview excerpt, in line with many of the other interviews, shows that individuals, instead of trying to work their way up an organisational career ladder, change companies and roles in order to increase their income and/or progress in their career. In addition to the increasingly pervasive idea of post-organisational careers, evidenced in many of the interviews, practices and attitudes about people's future working lives have also been questioned and reworked as a result of the recent financial crisis, as section 7.7 will show. Performance-based and highly competitive working cultures, as my analysis of the data suggests, often require individuals to work considerably more than 'standard working hours' of 40 hours per week.[71] Although some of the interviewees stated that their working hours were not excessive or not longer than in other industries, there were several interviewees who stated that they were doing exceptionally long hours. As such statements had important implications for people's organisation of working time – in particular in relation to non-working time – and their future orientations, I will quote four interview extracts, before I go on discussing them in some more detail:

---

[71] See also <www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/WorkingHoursAndTimeOff/DG_174586> for working hours regulations in the UK.

Excerpt 1:

> **I work for something like 15 - 16 hours a day** and I never felt that I wanted to leave, I **really enjoyed it**. (...) For almost two years I was **working until midnight**, I was **working weekends**, so I **never had a break**. So I could **work on a Saturday, I could work on a Sunday**, for a very long time but I never had a problem. I got physically tired but I never felt that mentally that was a problem (Cecilia, risk analyst at unknown bank, 28 years).

Excerpt 2:

> The thing is... my view of banking is... **I do really long hours**, you gonna do **16 hours a day**, so really, really long hours. But I thought that's fine, I can do really long hours, I don't mind doing that. That's fine; you **work really hard, you get really good pay**, it's worth it. And then I did really long hours, it was literally 6 o'clock in the morning till 10 or 11 in the evening and I was working with much older people, they weren't my age. So, working and that kind of lifestyle... **your social life is crumbled**, you don't get to see anyone ever. Even the weekends, you are working a lot of weekends (Raymond, compliance officer at Citibank, 25 years).

Excerpt 3:

> The **working hours are long**, so **if you have a family it's like a hell**; it's a lot of hours (Sue, risk analyst at Barclays, 26 years).

Excerpt 4:

> I was doing **9 to 5.30 here**, going home, logging on at about 7 and **working till 3 o'clock in the morning**. (...) And I'm also doing that because **I think that it will help me in my future career** (Margret, compliance officer at Citibank, 29 years).

The first two interview excerpts indicate that excessive working hours were not necessarily regarded as being imposed from outside or as something that individuals wanted to change. While Cecilia states that she "never had a problem with doing that", Raymond stresses the financially rewarding aspect of working long hours. At the same time, the second and third interview excerpts of Raymond and Sue also give evidence of the effect of these extensive working hours on their social or family life, which as they say is "crumbling" or "hell for the family". Legally, these excessive hours are only possible in the UK if individuals voluntarily opt-out of the *European Working Time Directive* that

normally does not allow more than an average of 48 hours per week.[72] From a work-life perspective, these excessive working hours mean a complete elimination of social time, leaving hardly any time to be spent with friends, partners or family, as the interviews indicated. However, as the interview excerpts further demonstrate, individuals accepted or were willing to work under these conditions, as they thought that it would either pay off to do so financially in the present or career-wise in the future, as the last interview extract from Margret indicates.

Working hours, however, were not only extensive, as a number of interviewees reported, but also varied considerably in terms of when they needed to work long hours. These variations were particularly evident among those working in front-office positions such as traders or risk managers, that is, among those being more directly exposed to the daily, weekly or monthly rhythms of financial markets. The following two interview extracts illustrate this:

Excerpt 1:

> The **pace is defined by the market**. So according to the market... that's what your pace is (Brian, trader at Citibank, 32 years).

Excerpt 2:

> The **pace is mainly driven by the front office, by the activity of the market**. So the people who bring the business in quite often dictate the pace of work. That's why it has been less long hours than a year before, really. It's very quiet right now but this will probably change again (Nigel, risk analyst at Commerzbank, 39 years).

As these statements suggest, the financial markets were commonly associated with a certain pace or rhythm, a pace or rhythm which crucially shaped the temporalities of people's working lives. These temporalities also provide evidence for a situational conception of working time, in the sense that workloads can vary, intensify and decrease according to real-time variations on the financial markets. These situational temporalities, however, also demanded a high degree

---

[72] The opt-out from the Working Time Directive was not specific to the UK, but the UK was the only country within Europe to make widespread use of its provisions, <www.eu-working-directive.co.uk>, last accessed 29.06.2011.

of flexibility from the side of those working in front-office positions, as the activities on the market were usually difficult to predict.

Using the language of Bourdieu, organisational and corporate structures have contributed to the creation of a habitus that has not only incorporated and adapted to the tendencies of the field, i.e. the fast-paced and competitive environment of banking, but more generally inculcates an increasingly individualised attitude to work. This latter attitude became evident when interviewees articulated notions of individual agency in the context of excessive working hours. Although people admitted that these long working hours had 'crumbling' effects on their social life, those affected usually framed it within a language of individual choice. This individualised understanding of work and working time was also apparent in the ways in which people viewed themselves in relation to the organisation they were working, as Andrew, a male technology officer at Deutsche Bank, commented: "I don't have much company allegiance and I doubt anybody does, so you go and work for whoever pays more". As the following section will discuss in further detail, such statements suggest that the ways in which individuals progress in their careers has undergone a major transformation, a transformation that involved a shift from working lives being predominantly shaped by organisational contexts to working lives being mainly driven by the requirements of the (labour) market.

7.5. The market as 'pacemaker' – individualisation and personalisation of 'market time'

The fact that individuals who were interviewed showed little attachment to organisations, as the last statement by Andrew made clear, however, does not mean that corporate cultures were no longer important. On the contrary, there were many interviewees who emphasised how vital it was for them to work in an environment that matched their personal ambitions and future perspectives. Yet, when personal aspirations and organisational structures misfit, that is, when people did not see any opportunities within a company, they moved on to another one. Therefore, individuals did not confine their future or career perspective to single organisations but rather attached themselves to the market and changed their place of work or their job according to opportunities available on the (labour) market more generally. Hence, instead of pursuing linear careers and thinking about the future in a way that would assume predictability or linearity, individuals timed and related to their future careers by remaining open to change and by regularly looking out for new upcoming opportunities. In other words, individuals attached themselves to the temporalities of the market and not to the temporalities of (single) organisations. The excerpt from an interview with Nicolas documents this point:

> **People tend to move when the markets are good** and everything is healthy. So before and in previous years people tended to change banks **because instead of progressing linear** they **do it stepwise**. You know, you progress within the bank and then when you make a move you move to someone who (a), pays you more money and (b), gives you a better role… so you go higher and higher and statistically the **people who get paid the most are people who have changed a lot their jobs** (Nicolas, trader at Merrill Lynch, 30 years).

As this statement shows, career advancement was usually not confined to intra-organisational career trajectories, which would indeed presuppose a certain degree of trust in the organisation and a belief that delayed gratification is a suitable and sensible way for progressing in one's career.[73] Banks as

---

[73] See also Grey's discussion on the disciplining function of career (Grey 1994) or Evetts (1992), who underlines the different understandings of career (organisational versus individual).

organisations did not seem to inspire any of these values and work attitudes to the people interviewed.

My analysis of interview data further showed that this orientation towards the market went in hand with a high degree of reflexivity as regards how people *timed* their working lives and with a noticeable awareness of how they positioned themselves vis-à-vis the (labour) market. In alignment with such orientations towards the market, identified in my discussion of career portraits in Chapter 6, many of the interviewees described how they attuned and timed changes to their careers (as well as anticipations about possible changes) to the temporalities and rhythms of the (labour) market whilst being less concerned about intra-organisational ways of progression. These attitudes are evidenced in the following statements:

Excerpt 1:

> I tried to do something that would not be in compliance, something that would interest me more... but I quickly **realised** that... **how the market was**... I **didn't really have much choice** but to stay in compliance (Raymond, compliance officer at Citibank, 25 years).

Excerpt 2:

> salarywise, I'm probably not ... I'm completely underpaid but if I look at the long term, I can get another year experience and **wait till the market has picked up** and the jobs are out there and they are paying well, I'll probably be a better candidate then, **I'll probably gonna be very competitive on the market** (Margret, compliance officer at Citibank, 29 years).

Specifically, these interview excerpts suggest that such a market orientation is manifest in the ways in which individuals view their skills, their expertise in a field or their past work experiences in terms of a present or potential future market value. This reflexivity about their 'market value', however, also required individuals to develop an understanding and knowledge of how they are situated within this market and how they relate their skills and experiences to the temporalities of the market. This was so in particular in terms of how such skills

and experienced can be turned into potential resources in the future. The interview extracts of Daniel, Dora and Paul illustrate this point:

Excerpt 1:

> Especially **what I'm doing at the moment**, it means actually **I will be much more marketable**. (...) So it **puts me in a much stronger position** (...) because **my skills**, at the moment **are in very high demand** (Daniel, compliance officer at Citibank, 40 years).

Excerpt 2:

> **...with my skills, I would be pretty marketable**. (...) I worked here for a while. I've got a qualification as an accountant. So, I've got good **skills that I could use in the future** (Dora, internal auditor, 34 years).

Excerpt 3:

> The **time counts in my benefit** because I am **building experience**, I am **building a track record**, and you know in this era, in this age, **in this market cycle**, I would not be earning more if I moved to somewhere else (Paul, investment banker at JPMorgan, 30 years).

These interview excerpts, which show how individuals relate to the temporalities of the market, give evidence not only of the individualised nature of work, present among people in their early and mid-careers in banking, but further show that individualisation operates via an internalisation of 'market time'. In other words, my analysis suggests that the declining reliance of individuals on organisational career trajectories was replaced by an increasing attachment to the market, an attachment which views personal skills and qualifications not merely as an accumulation of past experiences but rather as potentialities, whose value is dependent on the "market cycle", as one interviewee put it.[74]

Taken together then, my analysis of interview data with people in their early and mid-careers in the banking industry in London suggests that the decreasing importance of organisational career thinking, identified in the beginning of this chapter, has made place for an orientation to work and in particular towards the

---

[74] See also Adkins' discussion on the relation between labour and time in her article 'From retroactivation to futurity: the end of the sexual contract' (Adkins 2008).

future, in which the notion of 'the market' plays a crucial role. It was shown that, instead of temporalities of organisations, individuals' working lives were largely shaped by the temporalities of markets, both of the temporalities of labour markets as well as of the temporalities of financial markets. However, while so far I have mainly focused on the temporalities of work at the level of everyday work practice and organisational rhythms, I now turn attention to the temporalities of work at biographical level. Hence, in what follows, I will identify in more detail the orientations to work biography - in particular to the future - including the personal and social resources individuals draw on, and I will examine the mode(s) of temporality involved.

7.6. Practices, attitudes and orientations to time

My analysis of interviews with people in their early and mid-careers in banking showed that there were a number of different ways in which the practices and orientations to time of this group of workers can be conceptualised. First, there was evidence for situational time. Second, there was a very strong 'CV orientation' of work biographies, that is, work biographies were commonly understood as personal narratives that needed to be 'written'. And third, working futures within the banking industry were generally imagined to be 'time-limited'. This orientation towards the future also had important implications for people's personal networks and resources. Let me explain these points in more detail in the following sections.

7.6.1. Situational time as biographical time

Chapter 2 introduced Rosa's theory of time in order to conceptualise contemporary changes in working lives and careers. Chapter 6 evidenced this form of temporality in career portraits. This form of temporality, which is based on an orientation to time in which individuals decreasingly plan or foresee the future of their work biographies but instead act in a context in which they anticipate the forthcoming by being open to upcoming changes or, as Rosa puts

it, by "taking things as they come" (Rosa and Scheuerman 2009: 34), was also identified in personal interviews with the group of people working in banking. The following interview extracts illustrate this situational understanding of time:

Excerpt 1:

And I think the recession is not over... I've got a bad feeling about this year. I feel better staying in the same place and from there... waiting to see what happens. I **might think about changing jobs** in the middle of next year **if an opportunity comes up** (Nigel, risk analyst at Commerzbank, 39 years).

Excerpt 2:

I didn't really decide to come to London and stay, it was more like a visit. So, I stayed for a month but then during this month **I came across an opportunity.** I was lucky enough to get a job that I said: ok let's explore, I stayed there for five more months and then I said ok... I will stay a bit longer (Paul, investment banker at JPMorgan, 30 years).

Excerpt 3:

I'll be looking at what I can do... find new opportunities, possibly within a bank, possibly within a smaller organisation. There is a certain amount of businesses in London that are still making money... private equity, hedge fund business. So **there are more and more opportunities coming up now** (David, risk manager at Commerzbank, 31 years).

These three interview extracts suggest that individuals cannot and do not want to fore-see or predict the future of their careers or working lives but rather prepare themselves for (potentially) upcoming opportunities.[75] Hence, while these findings add weight to Rosa's argument about the emergence of situational time in late modernity, they are also significant in regard to Sennett's notion of potential.

However, while Sennett argues that individuals increasingly need to develop potential abilities instead of relying on their accumulated (past) experiences, my

---

[75] Adkins (2008) suggests that "labour power is organized not with reference to the past but with reference to an open future" (2008: 183). In a study of web designers, she shows that "value does not lay in the past (i.e. in accumulated skills and capacities) but in the potential future, i.e. "in the generation of potential but not yet existing customers" (Adkins 2008: 194).

analysis of interview data indicates a different relation between potential abilities and past experiences. More specifically, while Sennett posits that potential abilities have become more important than past (accumulated) experience (Sennett 2006: 127), my data analysis suggests that potential abilities operate via past experiences. Put differently, by putting together different experiences into a coherent career narrative, often referred to as 'track record', many interviewees aimed to increase their chances of potentially changing job or finding new employment in the future as well as of keeping up with changing demands on the labour market (see also previous section 7.5.) One of the ways in which career narratives were 'written' was via a distinctive CV (curriculum vitae) orientation, that is, an orientation towards one's work biography as a CV narrative. The following section will explain this in more detail.

7.6.2. CV narrative: 'inscribing' oneself into the present

My analysis of interview data showed that careers or, more precisely, career trajectories, were usually imagined in terms of CV narratives. In these interviews, the CV represented both the social necessity of having to give account of one's past work biography and career – as for instance in the situation of a job interview - and at the same time CVs acted as a differentiating devices, that is, individuals aimed to differentiate themselves from others through their own (personal) work history. This twofold function of CV narratives was evident when people commented on the relevance and importance of CVs for their present and future working lives, as the following three interview extracts illustrate:

Excerpt 1:

> The bank that I was working for was a very, very good place to work for before the takeover. So, it was a **very strong name to have on your CV** (Lorna, risk analyst at Commerzbank, 28 years).

Excerpt 2:

> It's difficult now to think of... in terms of roles external to Barclays and because **I progressed quite quickly into a kind of management position but if you look at my CV, I have like 3 and a bit years experience, so it's not... from an external perspective I'm not as marketable as I am internally** (Norman, solution architect at Barclays, 26 years).

Excerpt 3:

> Quite soon I realized that things were getting worse but **I was still quite junior in my career, so I had to stay. Because if you see my career on my CV... I wanted to build up more knowledge so that I'm literally able to sell myself and my skills**. So I wanted to stay **because it wouldn't have been good for my career to leave too early** (Philip, business analyst at Barclays, 25 years).

These interview extracts illustrate both the individualising effect and the social character of the notion of CV. With regard to the social and cultural character of the CV, the three examples suggest that CVs are not merely descriptions of people's past experiences and qualifications but that the ways in which CV narratives are told are based on a specific social understanding of how individuals are expected to shape their work biographies. More specifically, as the three interview excerpts highlight, these narratives value certain social or cultural practices over others. Such practices can include a shared understanding about the reputation of a company ('good' versus 'less good' company name in the first example), the pace or nature of career progression (progression across organisations is more valued than within an organisation in the second example) or the amount of time one is supposed to stay within an organisation, including the knowledge about when it is a 'good time' to change to another one (third example; see also discussion on kairological time in Chapter 6).

Taken together then, my analysis of interviews showed that the CV serves as a device, which individuals use to 'inscribe' their working life and their experiences into the present by means of culturally and socially understandable and appreciated narratives. The examples further emphasise the individualised understanding of time as *timing* (see Chapter 6.2). This is so as they underline

the interviewees' awareness of how long to stay in a certain position or within a certain organisation in accordance with how such practices of timing are viewed from an external (market) perspective, as was already pointed out in section 7.5. Specifically, for the context of people in their early and mid-careers in banking, the necessity to develop their own narratives of work, including the fact that individuals perceive their career trajectories in terms of CV narratives, is not least due to the fact that the vast majority of those interviewed did not plan to stay within their current job or organisation for more than a limited number of years. The next section will therefore explore the future perspectives among this group of workers as well as how the individualised understanding of working futures can be understood in the context of an increasing importance of social networks when speaking about these futures.

7.6.3. Banking as time-limited career

There were a number of differing ways in which the interviewees imagined their future working lives and careers. However, one of the most significant results to emerge from my analysis is the absence of any long-term future plans within banking. This is so, as most of the interviewees regarded banking as a time-limited career and the future perspectives they developed within their current place of work were hence only short-term. The following interview excerpts illustrate this:

Excerpt 1:

> I don't know... I think after working in a bank... **I think on the long run I want to do something else but I don't know what it is yet**. I think my days in banking in London... **I probably stay for another 3, 4, 5 years but something is gonna have to change** (Nigel, risk analyst at Commerzbank, 39 years).

Excerpt 2:

> **Very few people go into banking and say 'that's what I want to do for the rest of my life'**. (...) And I see myself more long term in the bank now than I ever had in the past. But that does not mean that I want to be there in 10 years' time. **My**

outlooks changed from being 2 years to being 5 years (Nicolas, trader at Merrill Lynch, 30 years).

These previous two statements demonstrate that banking - and this is particularly true for those working in front-office positions - has transformed into a 'field of temporary engagement' and people did not even intend or aim to stay within this field, not to speak within a single organisation, for a longer period of time. There was strong evidence that in particular young people regarded the intense and competitive rhythms - in combination with long working hours - as an acceptable compromise for a short-term career in banking with an average income that was considerably higher than what they could earn in any other industry. In other words, many of the interviewees stated that they 'invested' some of their years in banking in order to earn enough to be able to do 'something they really like' after their time in banking. These career attitudes in the banking industry have also been noted in the news. In April 2011, the magazine *Square Mile*, which writes about all different aspects of 'City-Life' and banking in London, published an article on young people's careers in the banking industry of London. Although the article is written in a satirical style, it provides an interesting perspective on the career outlooks people in banking hold when they start working in this industry. In particular, the article speaks about a group of young people in their early careers discussing their career plans for the future:

> [...] the discussion turned to our long-term career plans. There was not one among us who wasn't adamant that they'd only do this City nonsense for about ten years max and then move on to something more fulfilling (...) We even referred to work periods in the Square Mile as if they were prison sentences ... someone who'd got out after a 'ten-year stretch' while those still in the game at 50 were called 'lifers' (Squaremile.com 14.04.2011: 29-31).[76]

The actual reasons people give for not wanting to stay for a longer period in the banking industry vary from the fast and intense working rhythms ("It's very fast paced... You can't have that for more than 10 to 20 years", Cecilia, risk analyst at

---

[76]<www.squaremile.com/features/10889/How-Much-Cash-Do-You-Need-To-Escape.html?printable=yes>, last accessed 03.08.2013.

unknown bank, 28 years old) to psychological and social factors, as Raymond states:

> My view is now... I want to stay as a temp because it pays very much and **in the long term I don't want to stay in banking because banking is full of depressing people**... I don't wanna be one of them. The people that are high up, they are just very depressed (Raymond, compliance officer at Citibank, 25 years).

Raymond went on to say that these conditions were in fact the reason for abandoning long-term thinking or planning a career within the company. He stated that "the most important thing is the wage for me. I'm not thinking in terms of career anymore, because I find it too depressing to think in career terms. (...) My outlook is for money; that I wanna have enough... once I've got it I'll be a lot happier and do something else" (Raymond, compliance officer at Citibank). These examples indicate that short-termism is not a coincidental by-product of the finance industry but has become normality for both banks as organisations as well as for individuals who engage in a career in banking.[77] However, despite the absence of long-term future perspectives within the banking industry and the often mentioned desire to do something entirely different after their careers in banking, some of the interviewees also mentioned that they saw how some of their colleagues became accustomed to a particular life-style, based on a relatively good income that they could not easily give up. A male trader from Citibank, for instance, described the situation of some of his colleagues, who are married, have a mortgage and maybe children: "They have families, they have three kids in private schools, their wives don't work and they are the only source of income". There were others too, who admitted that the way in which they think about their future now may change once they take up a mortgage or have children. It therefore remains out of the scope of this research to assess whether those who mentioned that they would only stay in banking for a short period of

---

[77] It is worth noting at this point that short-termism and the possibility to generate high incomes within short time spans was not only a feature of organisational and individual temporalities, but has often been critiqued for lying at the heart of trading decisions as regards financial products and hence being one of the causes of the financial crisis of 2008. Urry, for example, points out the commodified understanding of the future itself in the finance industry: "Money is traded for money especially in terms of its future values; this global hybrid is organized around calculations of, and bets on, hugely uncertain commodified futures" (Urry 2002: 19).

time will change their opinion in the future or whether they will really quit and start doing something else.

The absence of long-term future plans and the fact that many of those interviewed stated that they did not intend to stay within their current place of work for a longer period of time, also has implications for the importance of personal networks and professional relationships. My findings suggest that this is so in particular in regard to people's working futures. The relevance of these networks and relationships as resources will thus be explored in further detail in the following section.

7.6.4. Personal networks as resource for the future

Chapter 6 discussed how individuals increasingly draw on personal and social resources in their working lives and careers. I argued that *networking as a practice*, as Wittel (2001) calls it, indicates both an individualisation of work as well as a de-differentiation of the spheres of work and life. Among the group of those working in banking, personal and social networks were mainly regarded as a means of 'securing' or getting control over one's own future. As the time-spans individuals spent within one organisation were often only short-term, the movement through the labour market and the search for new opportunities strongly depended on personal contacts and networks. The following two interview extracts show this:

> I think **the market now works more through social networks than through applying for a job**. I think it has changed. Now I also know more people. I **think social networks have become more important because the market has become more competitive**. It is very difficult to apply for a job with a CV to get noticed, because if they haven't seen you, they won't look at your CV, **they will look at those that their friends told them to look at** (Cecilia, risk analyst at unknown bank, 28 years).

In another interview, when asked about the practices and strategies for finding a new job, Nigel responded in the following manner:

I got it through a friend. Friends who I used to work with in banking in New Zealand knew that something was coming up and he got my name in his head. **I also think for finding work in the future, personal networks will be very important for me** (Nigel, risk analyst at Commerzbank, 39 years).

These interview extracts indicate that the *practice of networking* is crucial for the ways in which individuals sought to gain control or aimed to remain in control over the future of their working lives.[78] In line with Wittel's argument, my interview data further suggests that networking as a practice is not only indicating an individualisation of work but also a redefinition and reworking of the boundaries between work and non-work. The two previous interview extracts further illustrate that networking as a social practice is closely related to the fact that the respondents had to situate themselves in a strongly individual manner on the labour market and that they could not rely on external structures such as organisations for anticipating their working future. Networking was hence regarded as a means of trying to bring the future under individual control and to "reduce risk and generate security", to put it in the words of Wittel (2001: 57). In particular the second interview excerpt from Nigel additionally highlights that it is through social networks that individuals have access to the latest and most important information as regards the opening of new positions and opportunities. This reliance on networks, however, also has implications for the relation between the spheres of work and non-work, spheres that were viewed as differentiated in the Fordist regime of work, as Chapter 2 argued.

In line with Chapter 6, which argued that networking as a practice reworks the boundaries between the spheres of work and non-work, my analysis of the group of workers examined in this chapter suggests a de-differentiation of these spheres. This was so mainly because, as the previous two interview statements indicate, both friends, personal and professional contacts or networks were equally regarded as potential resources for people's careers. To put it in the words of Marazzi, by drawing on personal and social networks individuals are

---

[78] Hassan (2003) introduces the notion of 'network time', which is "beginning to displace, neutralize, sublimate and otherwise upset other temporal relationships in our work, home and leisure environments" (Hassan 2003: 235, see also Hassan and Purser 2007). Similarly, Westenholz (2006) is speaking of the historical shifts from task-time to clock-time, which is presently followed by 'network time'.

"putting to work [their] entire lives" (Marazzi 2008: 50). My interview data also made clear that these contacts and networks were usually established and maintained not only during working hours but often at times outside the official working hours. Taken together, these findings suggests that a de-differentiation of the spheres of work and on-work was at issue mainly in regard to people's social resources and the activation of these resources took place both in and out of people's working-hours.

Hence, while a consideration of networking as an individual practice was certainly at issue in terms of a contemporary de-differentiation of the spheres of work and non-work, I now will turn attention to another important point of this chapter, which is the historical and economical context in which this research is located. More specifically, the period in which the interviews, on which this chapter is based were conducted, that is, between August 2009 and June 2010, was also a period in which the financial crisis was still affecting many of the working lives of those working in the banking industry. Thus, after the previous discussion on orientations to work and time of people in their early and mid-careers in the banking industry of London, I will now examine the ways in which the recent financial crisis has impacted on these orientations and on people's work practices.

7.7. The effects and the transformative nature of the financial crisis of 2008

In recent literature the financial crisis has mainly been conceptualised from an economic perspective that looks at how banks as agents have shaped, contributed to and been affected by the crisis and how the rise of financial capitalism is in fact prone to producing financial and economic instability or crisis (Brummer 2009, Callinicos 2010, Foster and Magdoff 2009, Nesvetailova 2007). However, there is less literature that looks at the crisis from the perspective of individual working lives and careers with respect to the transformative aspect of the financial crisis as regards individual practices and future orientations. The following section will therefore examine how the group of people in their early and mid-careers in

banking account for the main changes during that period as well as how it has impacted on their working lives, including how it has transformed people's orientation to work, both towards their work biographies as well as towards everyday work practices.

My analysis of interviews has evidenced that the effects of the crisis on people's conditions of work varied considerably from those saying that the crisis resulted in a culture of insecurity, including some mentioning that they were afraid of being made redundant, to those seeing the crisis as a chance or an interesting experience to go through while working in a bank. Rapidly changing organisational environments, either due to mergers with other banks or due to whole teams within an organisation being laid off, either meant that people lost their jobs or were suddenly confronted with new organisational cultures. In many of the interviewees these experiences triggered some more general reflections about their work, about the industry they are working or about the future of their working lives. The following example from an interview with Lorna illustrates this:

> For me it was a **very unpleasant experience**, **it was very valuable of course to have lived through a crisis in a bank**. I think it **was really interesting**. And as soon as I stopped panicking, I thought it's actually **quite funny**, it's like a movie. But I think I come completely from one end of the spectrum. So when the crisis hit and things started going really pear shaped, really badly, I was... **I started thinking about banking in a more philosophical way**, so maybe this is not worth doing. And **maybe I need to do something that is more productive**, something where you can actually **see the product and you know that you are not destroying a global economy**. You know, that was my thought, this is what the banking crisis caused me to think (Lorna, risk analyst at Commerzbank, 28 years).

Lorna's account of the crisis shows an interesting ambiguity between the "unpleasant experience", which she says was a result of the "very intense climate of insecurity for everyone", and the statement that it was in fact "very valuable to have lived through a crisis in a bank". The interview excerpt indicates that although the crisis may have caused temporary insecurities about her place in the organisation, it did not lead to more fundamental anxieties about her future

working life. In fact, as Lorna's example as well as other interviewees reported, the crisis was partly regarded a 'historical event' that one can witness 'first hand'. It is however important to note at this point that most of the interviewees were in their early and mid-careers, with the former group being less inclined to mention any profound feelings of insecurity than the latter one.

Although Lorna was finally made redundant in August 2009, which, due to the generous severance payment, she actually wanted to ("I really wanted to be made redundant"), and her not knowing what exactly she would do in the future, she did not experience any major form insecurity or anxiety about her future. This is so as she both got a "nice compensation for being made redundant" and at the same time she felt comfortable that with her educational background and her experiences she would find another job soon again. Put differently, as she was equipped with the necessary economic and social resources, even the fact that she lost her job did not result in future uncertainty but rather led to a re-evaluation of future plans and the desire to "do what she is passionate about", as she put in the following statement:

> For me, a very important thing in **my next job** would be to be able **to work on something I believe in** rather than something I really don't believe in and also work **with people who are passionate** about what they do and are not in it just for the money or the glory (Lorna, risk analyst at Commerzbank, 28 years).

Daniel, 40 years old and in his mid-career, gave a somewhat different account of the transformative nature of the crisis on his practices and attitudes towards his future career. Daniel was working for ten years as a contracted consultant for a number of banks in London, which for him meant that he could earn more than in a permanent role but also that he had to search for new opportunities and contracts on a constant basis. These contracts, as he stated, lasted from six months to three years. Shortly before the financial crisis, which went along with organisational restructurings and the layoff of subcontracted consultants, Daniel decided to take on a permanent job with Barclays. He went on to say that "in hindsight [this] was a very good decision" as he could not any longer be made redundant as easily as in his position as a contracted consultant. The financial crisis made him realise and appreciate the advantages and benefits of having a

permanent job and the higher degree of job security that comes along with that. In the interview he described the differences between his job as a contracted consultant and his permanent position in the following manner:

> By **moving to a permanent role**, you know, you **get training**, you get a creative element that **you get to build up** and also one of the issues have been, as an IT consultant especially, is that, although your contracts are a bit longer, you know, maybe your contract is only 6 months, mine were minimum a year, some were 3 years but it means that **you're never sure of what you're gonna be doing in 6 months time**, so I decided to change. If I gonna **work for a company**, then **you don't have to keep changing**, **looking for new jobs**, for **new opportunities all the time,** you can build up a little bit. So I moved over. In hindsight it was a very good move (Daniel, compliance officer at Barclays, 40 years).

Apart from the fact that the crisis made Daniel appreciate the non-monetary aspects of his job, his example also shows that job instability does not necessarily equal job insecurity. People in their early and mid-careers often consciously chose to work as contractors as the lower degree of job stability was compensated for by a higher income. Raymond (25 years), who works at Citibank, also preferred to temporarily earn a considerably higher amount instead of enjoying better job stability. He explained that "they [the banks] take you on and they'll say however long they want to; say 3 months, 6 months (…). But temporary work is paid a lot better than permanent work, but you have no guarantee that you can stay" (Raymond, compliance officer at Citibank).

This instability, however, requires a high degree of individual flexibility, which may be difficult to sustain over a long period of time, in particular with commitments, children or financial liabilities, as Daniel's example shows:

> You know I think there **comes a point** in time when **you have two children** and **a mortgage** and you **get a bit older** (…) I'll probably stay for the next years because also I have to **think about my pension** and stuff. (…) I already had worked for Barclays as a consultant but I **decided to become permanent** for Barclays, which was quite a change really (Daniel, compliance officer at Barclays, 40 years).

In Daniel's case, the crisis triggered the desire for a permanent position, which had henceforth enabled him to plan and control the future to a bigger extent than he could by being dependent on consecutive short-term contracts. His career move can hence be described as one from the periphery of the company to its core (see also the discussion on core versus periphery in section 2.4.2). Daniel's change to a permanent position, however, does not mean that he now has a clear plan of his future working life but rather that he will "probably stay for the next years" at Barclays in order to progress within his role.

Another main finding in terms of the effects of the crisis on people's work biographies occurred at the level of narrative. Restructurings, mergers or takeovers – induced by the crisis - often meant that organisational and promotional structures were altered in a fashion that made it difficult to identify people's career trajectories. In other words, due to the crisis, individuals could not progress in a way that would be recognizable to people outside the organisation that underwent these changes. David's example illustrates this well. In 2004, David started to work for Dresdner Bank, which was taken over by Commerzbank in 2008. One of the problems of the organisational restructuring that went along with this takeover was that the commonly known career structures and hierarchies were eliminated, which also impacted on the way in which he would build a career narrative ('a track record') and thereby increase his marketability and hence employability. Specifically, David described the effects of this takeover on his career narrative as follows:

> There is some sort of idea that **after 4 or 5 years in business**, **if you haven't moved up to a certain level**... **you should probably look for something else**. The trick is that if you **work for an organisation that refuses to put that structure in place** for whatever reason **you have a real hard time selling yourself outside of that organisation** because **they will ask: what are you?** Then you say, well, I should be, I would be somewhere else but what are you talking about. It's an additional part of this bizarre... I think they see that to make the organisation flatter, I would argue it just adds confusion as well, because you don't have a real hierarchy, I mean you actually do have a very strict hierarchy but it's just very hard to know what it is and **it's not building you in a recognizable fashion**. So you kind of get the worst of all, **you get the hierarchy but you don't get any promotion** (David, risk manager at Commerzbank, 31 years).

The financial crisis, however, has not only had a transformative impact on people's practices, future perspectives and career narratives, as the previous examples showed. As I will now demonstrate, it has also provoked behaviours or contributed to working conditions that are counter-intuitive inasmuch as the crisis did not impact negatively but positively on certain individual careers. In a few instances, the crisis has even opened up job opportunities that would not have been possible without the effects of the crisis on organisations. The following extract of an interview with a male solution architect at Barclays gives evidence of this:

> So for me I guess **it** [the crisis] **came at a quite good time** because... although I was quite junior, I've been quite successful in my role and so **I was quickly given a lot more responsibility**, which takes me to where I am now.. I look after an area in... a technology-driven area in the business, so I'm kind of leading it now, which **would never have happened if the recession didn't happen** because we wouldn't have cut the people and I wouldn't have stepped up as quickly as I could. So for me, on the big exam question, **how has the recession impacted me**? I would have to say: **very positive** (Norman, solution architect at Barclays, 26 years).

The second counter-intuitive finding to emerge from my analysis concerns the competitive, fast-paced rhythms of work, including the prevalence of excessive working hours. Although many people lost their jobs due to the crisis and workloads in general went down, there were also departments within banks whose demand increased as a result of the crisis. The majority of interviewees, however, in particular among those groups whose rhythms of work are dependent on the activities of the market, reported that due to the crisis their working hours went down to what is usually associated with 'normal (full time) working hours', i.e. around 35 to 40 hours a week, as the interview extract with Nigel illustrates:

> **These days I'm working not much more than 40 hours a week**. **In the past** it has been **a lot more** than that. It has been very quiet in the last year which has been reflected in the hours (Nigel, risk analyst at Commerzbank, 39 years).

Similarly, Nicolas gave account of the working hours before and during the financial crisis and explained how the crisis impacted on his conditions of work and on his work-life balance:

> **I work a lot less now**, **I used to go to work at 7 and leave at 6.30, 7.00 o'clock every day**. **Now I'm going at 7.30 and leave at 5**. So it's... we joke about it... but **2009 has been the year of the lifestyle**. For the first time, we were **putting our personal life ahead of the professional life**. So, if we had to leave early because we had to catch an early flight, you catch an early flight. If you want to leave early because of a theatre or to go to whatever, we just did it. So it was a lot more human, it was a lot more relaxed, it was the year of the lifestyle (Nicolas, trader at Merrill Lynch, 30 years).

These accounts do not only show that working hours were reduced to a 'normal' level, paradoxically the crisis has also led to a 'rediscovery' of social time, as Nicolas states in the second example. Another counterintuitive situation that had been caused by the financial crisis has to do with the fact that when people were made redundant, they usually got paid a redundancy package that far exceeded those in any other industry. These redundancy packages, though, were only paid when people were made redundant and not when they quit or were being dismissed for other reasons. Lorna, who was working for Dresdner Bank, tells about how she and her colleagues were in fact 'trying to be made redundant':

> I mean, **I really wanted to be made redundant** and I was probably the only person in my team who was made redundant but for me **it was really hard work to be made redundant**. I really had to try a lot. I know it's such a paradox but **a lot of people just wanted their money**, they just **wanted a big chunk of easy money and get out of there**. It was really tempting and you know for someone not as senior as myself, for someone who doesn't see their career as the most important thing in their lives, it really did make sense (Lorna, risk analyst at Commerzbank, 28 years).

This 'reversal of logic' was also stated by David, who speaks about himself and a friend of his, who both regret keeping their jobs, although for different reasons. David, due to the takeover of Dresdner Bank by Commerzbank, suddenly found himself in an organisation and in a corporate culture in which he could not see himself making a career anymore. All his ideas of "honesty, integrity and being

able to trust an organization, which [he] used as a guideline for long-term planning have been thoroughly shaken" (David, risk manager at Commerzbank, 31 years) by the takeover, which happened as a result of the crisis. David's friend, on the contrary, actually wanted to be made redundant, which David describes in the following manner:

> **A friend of mine called me** last week and **was crying because she didn't get fired** and the rest of the team did. So she wanted to be thrown out. She wanted to be paid off to leave the organisation, which is pretty amazing... **becoming emotionally destroyed because of keeping your job**. I mean... normally you should be pretty thankful if you didn't get fired but everyone has different expectations. Normally, I would take it as a personal failure if I get fired, whether it is or not, but I would take that as a personal failing that I haven't performed up to the level that would be deemed valuable (David, risk manager at Commerzbank, 31 years).

David contrasts his friend's bizarre statement of "becoming emotionally destroyed because of keeping her job" with his view that would consider being laid off as a personal failure and hence reveals the paradoxical behaviours and reactions that were triggered because of the crisis. Taken together, the previous examples suggest that the crisis in 2008 impacted in a variety of ways on organisations and individual working lives. Most crucially, the examples discussed show that the crisis of 2008 did not primarily result in what is commonly associated with a situation of 'crisis' such as an increase of job insecurity or anxiety about the future, but largely in a re-evaluation of future orientations and work values.

7.8. Conclusion

This chapter has considered the temporalities of working lives of people in their early and mid-careers working in the banking industry in London. Crucially for my concerns, the empirical analysis performed in this chapter gave evidence of the individualistic orientations to career and time among this group of workers. It was shown that among this group of workers individualisation operates via an

internalisation of market time. As such, these results add weight to Sennett's thesis of market orientation, as discussed in Chapter 2, which states that work biographies are decreasingly shaped by organisational contexts and instead by individuals' potential skills and abilities, which they use to relate to the (labour) market. At issue, however, was also situational time. This was so in particular in regard to people's working futures, which were not anticipated via practices of planning but via an orientation to the future that aimed to develop potential skills for unforeseen upcoming opportunities. Situational temporalities also indicated an orientation to work biography that was post-organisational and hence an orientation that was marked by a pronounced short-termism in regard to organisational forms of career progression. Hence, while such orientations to work and time were prevalent among the majority of interviewees, it is important to note that these orientations may be limited to the group of people in their early and mid-careers that were directly involved in the core activities of banks. In order to examine to what extent these orientations indeed differ in other – more peripheral – positions within the banking industry, I will now continue to investigate another group of workers employed by this industry. I will examine the temporalities of work of subcontracted cleaning workers in the banking industry in London.

8. The temporalities of working lives of subcontracted cleaning workers in the London banking industry

8.1. Introduction

After examining the temporalities of working lives of people in their early and mid-careers in the banking industry of London in the last chapter, I now turn attention to a workforce that is easily forgotten and overlooked in this industry. This workforce comprises service-sector workers who allow everyday business to take place and includes cleaners, security staff and caterers. Typically, these services are not provided in-house but are contracted-out to specialist firms. More specifically, this chapter investigates the temporalities of work of cleaners who are employed by subcontracted specialist cleaning firms in the two main financial districts of London; the City of London or, more precisely, the Square Mile, and Canary Wharf. The City of London, including the Square Mile - as it only covers the approximate size of one square mile - is located in Central London. Canary Wharf, which is situated within an area of the former docklands of London, is the second major financial centre in London after the City. While the City of London has been the historical centre for business and finance, Canary Wharf was built in the 1980s as an extension of the City, during a time when financial services were expanding rapidly and port-related industries were in decline.

Similar to previous chapters, I will draw on Bourdieu's conceptualisation of time in order to analyse how and through which practices and narratives individuals relate to their past, present and future working lives. I will also explore the relation between the temporalities of individual working lives and theories of individualisation and precarisation as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. My analysis in this chapter is based on 18 interviews with cleaning workers of different age groups who service the banking industry and on two interviews with trade union organisers. These interviews were conducted between October 2009 and March 2010 and consist exclusively of workers who were not born in the UK and thus

have histories of migration. As will be argued, this sample of workers is not skewed in regard to the ethnic composition of cleaning workers in London's banking industry, but in fact reflects the empirical reality of these workers. While these histories of migration are crucial for understanding the dynamics of this industry, I will pay particular attention to processes of subcontracting and precarisation. The interviews drawn on throughout this chapter also revealed the importance of trade unions for the way in which cleaners imagine their futures. As such this chapter will examine the role of unions in shaping the temporal structures of the working lives of this group of workers. However, before analysing the empirical data, I will briefly discuss the context of this research, namely the changing structure of London's economy and the growing inequalities and processes of polarisation in London's service-sector, and specifically the situation in the banking and finance industry, which has become dependent on subcontracted cleaning workers in recent decades.

More specifically, I will first discuss how subcontracting as a business practice has become a new employment paradigm in the low-paid service sector of the banking and finance industry in London and how this subcontracted cleaning industry mainly employs migrant workers, which has created a new migrant division of labour. Thereafter, this chapter will argue that the changing of contractors often results in a deterioration of conditions of work and frequently leads to an intensification of time, where workers need to do more work in the same amount of time. In this context I will also discuss how changing contractors mitigate against upward mobility or incremental wages within the cleaning industry. The third section will then show that the precarious nature of employment relationships in the cleaning industry requires workers to 'stabilise the present', often by doing two or three jobs, without being able to plan or confront the future individually. The last sections will go on by illustrating the importance of trade unions for the futurities of cleaners and it will provide evidence for the challenges of organised labour in the context of subcontracting. As such, this chapter will suggest that individualisation and precarisation are not contradictory developments in contemporary service-sector economies, including banking, but can be conceptualised as co-existing modes of temporality in core and periphery positions in organisations.

8.2. The rise of London as a centre for banking and finance and new migrant divisions of labour

This section will briefly outline the historical changes in London's economic and social structures over the last decades, from an economy which was to a large extent based on light manufacturing to one primarily based on services. In this context I will argue that the rise of service sector work did not only transform the nature of work, but also of employment relations, as an increasing amount of companies are subcontracting some of their services to specialist firms. I will thus pay particular attention to the business practice of subcontracting, in particular in regard to how this practice impacts on individual temporalities of work.

The transformation of London from an industrial to a post-industrial city based on services can be traced back to the mid 1960s, the time when many of the industries, mainly light manufacturing, started to decline in scope. "Manufacturing employment accounted for almost a third of London's labour force in 1961 but just 7 per cent today", as Butler and Hamnett argue (2009: 47). Hamnett (2003) describes this dramatic shift of London's economic structure in more detail. He argues that while "in 1961 London had 1.45 million manufacturing jobs (32.4 per cent of the total) (...) by 1981 it had fallen by just over 50 per cent to 681,000 (19 per cent of the total)" (Hamnett 2003: 31).[79] This process of deindustrialisation was paralleled by a downturn of London as a major port and with it port-related work in the docklands. From the 1960s onwards many of the docks became redundant, which left big parts of former docklands derelict.

The process of deindustrialisation and the end of London as a major port had far-reaching impacts on the composition of London's workforce, which witnessed a radical decline in manual jobs.[80] This decline of London's manufacturing

---

[79] Hamnett shows that London's economy consisted mainly of light manufacturing such as electrical engineering, food, drink and tobacco, chemicals, instrument engineering, paper and printing, furniture making, clothing and footwear (Hamnett 2003: 31).

[80] Hamnett explores the economic reasons for the changing economic structures of London's economy and argues that: "[t]he demise of dock work in London is a result of changes in transport technology, including a move to larger ships, containerisation, and decisions made by the Port of London authority and others to

industry and hence of manufacturing as a reasonable sector of employment was also evidenced in interviews with cleaners who are of an age group who experienced a different world of work in the past. Adenike's example, who was 62 years at the time of the interview, illustrates this point well. She grew up in Nigeria and arrived in the UK in 1965 at the age of 18. At that time, many of the light manufacturing industries of the East End in London still existed. As she was trained as a textile sewer, she found a job in Whitechapel, an area which at the time housed numerous textile factories. She did this job for 30 years until most of the industries closed down and she found work in the growing service sector, in her particular case in cleaning. In the following interview extract she speaks about the time she was working as a sewer in Whitechapel:

> I worked in different companies in the industry of 'ladies coat manufacturing'. That's what I did for 30 years but in different companies. But then the companies closed and I had to find something else (Adenike, female cleaner for Lancaster at Merrill Lynch, 62 years).

As Adenike goes on to explain, the wages were low in these industries, but workers moved easily from one factory to another one, often in pursuit of small increases in pay:

> The wages were very low, but if they pay you 45 pounds a week and a friend asked me: 'Oh how much do you get? 45 pounds? In my place it is 50 pounds'. Then you would run to the other place and work there (Adenike, female cleaner for Lancaster at Merrill Lynch, 62 years).

As Adenike's example already indicates, while employment in manufacturing and port-related industries declined over the last decades, there has been a considerable growth of the service-sector. Specifically, in London this growth of the service-sector mainly took place in banking, finance, insurance and business services (Hamnett 2003: 32). These transformations, however, were not a straightforward result of economic and technological changes, but were also induced politically by the Conservative government in the UK under Thatcher, as

---

shift port activities downstream to purpose-built facilities. So too, the close or decentralisation of manufacturing from London, and the associated decline of manual jobs, reflects corporate decisions to close down and/or seek lower-cost production sites elsewhere in Britain or abroad" (Hamnett 2003: 14).

Toulouse (1992) or Helleiner (1994) suggest. Indeed, Toulouse critically comments that the transformations of London's economic and social structures are not a "consequence of the globalization of finance capital" but, as he suggests, "much of what happened in London was caused by the Thatcher government's attempts to use state power to shape the social polarization wrought by economic restructuring to class-based ends" (Toulouse 1992: 56). Geographically speaking, these attempts are most obvious in Canary Wharf, an area in London's former docklands, which is the "architectural embodiment of Thatcherism" (Tallon 2010: 58), as Tallon adds. Tallon goes on to argue that the construction of Canary Wharf was only possible with the strong support it got from the Conservative government in the 1980s (Tallon 2010: 58), which established Canary Wharf as the second major financial centre in London after the City.

The establishment of London as a centre for banking and finance has thus been enabled by neoliberal policies that deregulated financial services (Buck et al. 2002, Butler and Hamnett 2009, Massey 2007, Toulouse 1992), which in turn "strengthened its role as one of the major control centres for the global economic and financial system" (Hamnett 2003: 4). A major turning point in this context was the so-called 'big bang deregulation' in 1986, which opened up the City internationally (cf. Hamnett 2003: 22, Toulouse 1992, www.economist.com).[81] This shift towards an economy heavily based on banking and finance is also reflected in the number of people working in related industries. As already noted in part previously, Massey states that "between 1978 and 2000 finance and business services grew by 81 per cent in Greater London (582,000 jobs) while manufacturing declined by 63 per cent (432,000 jobs)" (Massey 2007: 32).

The rise of London as a 'global city' (Sassen 2001) or 'world city' (Friedmann and Wolff 1982, Massey 2007), based to a large extent on banking and financial services, however, was also accompanied by new forms of inequalities that reflected the changing corporate structures in the service-sector economy (see

---

[81] The Big Bang of 1986 commonly refers to a change in financial regulation and technology, which had far-reaching effects on the whole banking and finance sector in London. By referring to Auger (2000), Hamnett describes that what the Big Bang did was "to break down the traditional institutional barriers between jobbers and stockbrokers and the barriers to international ownership of London-based firms" (Hamnett 2003: 19). On London's big bang deregulation see also 'Capital City: London as a financial centre', *The Economist*, 19.10.2006, <www.economist.com/node/8058157>, last accessed 03.02.2011.

also Chapter 2). In her global city thesis, Sassen (2001) suggests that the establishment of London as a global city and the growth of finance and banking have contributed to an "expansion of both a high-income stratum and a low-income stratum of workers" (Sassen 2001: 271) and hence to a polarisation of the city's workforce. A similar thesis was put forward by Friedmann and Wolff already in 1982. Here they argued that the rise of 'world cities' was paralleled by a process of social polarisation. The assumption of social polarisation for the case of London has however been contested by Hamnett (2003), who distinguishes between polarisation and inequality.

By conceptualising polarisation as the "growth of number of earners at both the top and the bottom ends of the income distribution at the expense of the middle", Hamnett (2003: 75) rejects the assumption of social polarisation (based on the *New Earnings Survey* between 1979 and 1995) by demonstrating empirically that this is not the case for London's social structure. Put differently, "there are not more low earners than there were thirty years ago if we look at inflation adjusted earnings". Nonetheless, the inequalities, which he defines as the "extent of dispersion between different levels of income/earnings" (2003: 75), did grow. This means that the growth of incomes in the low-wage sector has grown much slower than those of the top deciles and quartiles of the income distribution. For Hamnett this rise in inequality clearly "reflects London's role as a global city and its industrial and occupational composition" (Hamnett 2003: 79).

The growth in earnings inequalities in the service-sector is particularly evident in London's banking and finance industry, which employs two very different types of workforces. By drawing on her empirical research on contract cleaners in London (Wills 2008), Wills illustrates these two types of workforces:

> The stark divides between rich and poor are nowhere more evident than at Canary Wharf and in the City of London. The well-heeled army of analysts, brokers, dealers and traders do their business in the gleaming tower blocks and offices alongside a supporting cast of low-paid caterers, cleaners and security staff (Wills 2008: 305).

In line with Wills's argument, Sassen argues that "the rapid growth of the financial industry and of highly specialised services generates not only high level

technical and administrative jobs but also low wage unskilled jobs" (Sassen 1996: 583). In the case of London's banking and finance industry, these low-paid jobs are mainly filled by migrants (see also Pai 2004). Wills et al. (2010) indeed argue that a 'new migrant division of labour' has been put in place over recent decades.

> London now depends on an army of foreign-born workers to clean its offices, care for its sick, make beds, and serve at its restaurants and bars. (…) in relation to its global-city status, London has become almost wholly reliant on foreign-born workers to do the city's 'bottom-end' jobs (Wills et al. 2010: 1).

In this chapter, I will suggest that this 'migrant division of labour' is particularly true for subcontracted cleaners in London's two financial districts, that is, the City and Canary Wharf. In these two districts a large proportion of cleaning workers come from countries that were once under British colonial rule such as Nigeria or Ghana (cf. Wills et al. 2010: 61). As noted earlier, these cleaning workers are typically employed by subcontracted specialist cleaning firms. In fact, my analysis of interviews so far has identified subcontracting as a major factor in shaping the rhythms and the pace of work practices as well as of individual work biographies. Furthermore, subcontracting has played a vital role in the formation of new divisions of workforces and in the development of new inequalities, which is why I will now turn attention to analysing the specific case of subcontracted cleaning workers in the banking and finance industry in London.

8.3. Subcontracting as a new employment paradigm: Cleaning workers in the banking industry in the City of London and Canary Wharf

Chapter 2 showed how the shift from a Fordist to a post-Fordist regime has involved a reorganisation of corporate and organisational structures, which have in turn created new socio-economic divisions within workforces. While some authors have described such divisions as divisions of core and periphery positions within organisations (Atkinson 1984, Harvey 1989, Pellow and Park

2002, Virtanen et al. 2003), others have conceptualised these changes as an expansion of dual labour markets, which are divided into a primary and a secondary market (Barron and Norris 1976, Gordon 1972, Piore 1971, Doehringer and Piore 1971). Without discussing these concepts in more detail at this point, my analysis evidenced that the interviewed group of cleaners were certainly located in the periphery or the secondary market. This was evidenced by the fact that all of the people interviewed working as cleaners for the banking sector were not employed in-house but by specialist cleaning firms that were contracted to perform the cleaning of bank buildings for an agreed period of time.

Subcontracting as a business practice has become more widespread over the last decades, mainly as a result of measures to cut down costs of services that are not directly related to the core-activities of organisations (cf. Rees and Fielder 1992). Cleaning contracts in the banking industry are usually negotiated only for a few years and are hence re-tendered on a regular basis with newly agreed terms and conditions. Subcontracting as a business practice, however, is not new and is embedded in the wider history of changing employment relations and in particular the deregulation of employment since the 1990s, as MacKenzie argues. In line with the arguments presented in Chapter 2, MacKenzie goes on to emphasise, the organisational changes that made increasing use of subcontracting were changes that stood in opposition to the "hierarchical-bureaucratic employment structures represented in the traditional internal labour market" (MacKenzie 2000: 707-708). This shift in employment structures, as he adds, "has been paralleled by a revival of interest in the contract as the favoured mechanism for the organisation of economic activity. (...) A key feature of this restructuring of employment has been the use of subcontracting" (MacKenzie 2000: 707-708).

Furthermore, my analysis of interview data provides evidence that the use of subcontracting exposes cleaning companies to fierce competition and systematic short-termism, which had fundamental impacts on the terms and conditions of workers. This effect of subcontracting on people's conditions of work has also been noted in recent literature. Drawing on their recent research on subcontracted labour in the UK, Wills et al. (2010) note how subcontracting had

impacted on recently privatised social services, including councils, hospitals, schools and universities. While employment contracts in these services had been more favourable to workers before privatisation, becoming subcontracted to specialist private firms had usually entailed a deterioration of their conditions of work. Wills et al. describe the changes induced by conditions of subcontracting in the following manner:

> Regular re-tendering and intense competition between contractors meant that wages, conditions and staffing were kept at minimal levels, and managers no longer had the burden of responsibility for employing their staff. New workers could be taken on without the troublesome costs of annual increments, sick pay or overtime rates (Wills et al. 2010: 3).

The economic and social transformations that enabled the introduction of subcontracting must be put into the context of the rise of neo-liberalism, which gained ground in the UK from the 1980s onwards (King and Wood 1999, Prasad 2006). Neo-liberal agendas introduced subcontracting in the public as well as private sector in order to reduce cost at any price, without considering the effects on people's conditions of work. As a result of "neoliberal policy agendas" that "allowed greater market penetration in sectors like cleaning" (Wills 2008: 310), the competition among cleaning contractors has intensified.

The bidding culture among these service providers has thus triggered a downward spiral not only of prices at which they offer their services but, crucially for my concerns, of the resulting conditions of work for the cleaners, who have no real influence over the bidding and contracting process. In fact my research indicates that by subcontracting the necessary cleaning of offices and other built environs, banks keep cleaners at arm's length and they do so specifically by not providing any or only limited access to fringe benefits such as sick pay and pension schemes or by not offering incremental wages even after long service within the organisation. Permanently employed staff, by contrast, usually has easier access to these fringe benefits or increases of wages. The absence of these benefits, as my empirical data suggests, had fundamental impacts on the temporalities of working lives of cleaners and were a major factor in explaining their precarious situation. Precarisation due to subcontracting is particularly

prevalent in low-paid industries, such as cleaning, catering or security services. The incomes of workers in these industries are in many cases only slightly above the legally required national minimum wage (NMW), which, at the time of writing was set at £6.19 per hour.[82] The widespread use of subcontracting in contemporary economies makes Wills go so far to say that while "the paradigmatic form of employment during the middle years of the twentieth century was the factory (...) subcontracted capitalism is becoming paradigmatic today" (Wills 2009a: 442).

Subcontracting as an employment paradigm and hence as a major factor in determining conditions of working lives was also evidenced in my analysis. This was so in particular in regard to the discontinuities and negative impacts on conditions of work that frequently changing contractors had on the working lives of cleaners. Despite legal regulations such as the *Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Regulations* of 2006 (TUPE) – a regulation that does not allow new contractors to employ its staff at conditions and terms that are worse than the previous contractor offered - the majority of the interviewees in fact reported a deterioration of their working conditions after a new contractor had taken over.[83] However, despite such cases, there were many cleaners who reported that the TUPE regulation was a major improvement to their security of work. Peter's interview extract, illustrates this:

> So I continued with GSF because OCS lost the contract. They lost the contract last year in October. So this company took over and I continued there. That's because of the TUPE, it gives you the security that you can stay (Peter, male cleaner for GSF at State Street, 46 years).

While regulations such as TUPE, and in particular the importance workers attached to it, reflect the increasing dominance of subcontracting in the cleaning industry, my analysis of interviews suggests that subcontracting has not

---

[82] The NMW is adjusted every year. For previous and current rates see <www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>, last accessed 04.05.2013.
[83] Employees of the previous owner when the business changes hands automatically become employees of the new employer on the same terms and conditions. It's as if their employment contracts had originally been made with the new employer. Their continuity of service and any other rights are all preserved. Both old and new employers are required to inform and consult employees affected directly or indirectly by the transfer, <www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1655>, last accessed 11.08.2011.

impacted on people's conditions of work in a mono-causal or uniform way. This is so as many of the people interviewed stated a number of ways in which the frequent change of contractors impacted on their working lives. Apart from those who mention that they were being dismissed during the course of a change of contractors, one of the most commonly mentioned forms of change was an increase of workloads and hence an intensification of time. Specifically, in the context of my research, an intensification of time meant that the actual amount of time per task was reduced and time hence intensified. Agatha's account of the change of contractor from *Mitie* to *Johnson Control* and Efia's experience of having to do additional work give evidence of this process of intensification:

Excerpt 1:

> We **used to be 6 women doing the tables and the hovering and we had 4 men doing rubbish**, that makes it 10. **Now it's only 4 people doing** the hovering, the dusting, the bins and **everything**. So **now we have to do more work**. I think it also has to do with the change from Mitie to Johnson Control. I think the new contractor only thinks about the business, they don't care about the cleaners. What I can see now is that there is more work to do but less people. I think **they only want to save money** and they don't really think about us (Suzanne, female cleaner for Johnson Control at Goldmann Sachs in the City, 37 years).

Excerpt 2:

> There are also **less people now**... I don't know why they don't put anybody there. **After somebody left some time ago the manager didn't replace her** which means that **there is more to do now**. So you do the job of the other people **but you don't get paid for the additional work**. This happened recently, maybe over the last 2 years. So 2 or 3 years ago I had 20 something colleagues and now I have 17, so maybe **we are 8 or 9 persons less who actually do the same amount of work** (Efia, female cleaner for Lancaster at Merrill Lynch, 33 years).

The two interview extracts demonstrate that after a new contractor came in, fewer workers were doing the same amount of work compared to before the takeover, which meant that individuals had to work harder and increase their pace of work.

These findings add weight to Rees and Fielder's empirical study (1992) of subcontracted cleaning workers in the 1980s, in which they provide evidence for processes of time intensification in the cleaning industry, too. Processes of intensification, as Rees and Fielder argue, mainly result from the labour-intensive character of cleaning work, where increases in productivity were only attainable by "getting fewer workers do the same amount of work" (Rees and Fielder 1992: 356).[84] The authors also state that efforts to raise productivity and cut costs were accompanied by "a general deterioration of working conditions" (1992, 356). Similarly, Boulin (2001) argues that over the last decades, due to just-in-time production and a demand-oriented economy, working time has increasingly become intensified and densified, as individuals need to complete more work in the same or less amount of time. For the interviewed cleaners, time intensification increased the pressure on each individual worker and easily escaped the legal regulations of the TUPE law, as there are no clear standards as to what amount of work can or should be done within a certain time period. In particular in a current climate dominated by uncertainties about the future, repeatedly articulated by interviewed cleaners, workers accept these changes easier than it would be the case in another industry or another job where people have stronger collective representation and hence stronger bargaining power over their conditions of work.

The intensification of time and the increasing pressure to carry out more tasks within a certain time period, in some instances created a work environment where people were unable to actually perform their work up to the standard that they wished to, as Kakra explains in the following statement:

> So **if you try to do your job well then we feel more that we are behind**. You **will not catch up with the rest** because we now need to rush more to clean up the floor. It's not any more as when there were a lot of people there. **Now the standard is very low** (Kakra, female cleaner for Johnson Control at Goldmann Sachs in the City, 37 years).

---

[84] In economics productivity is usually measured in terms of the ratio between input and output.

Time intensification, however, was not the only concern cleaners had as a result of their subcontracted position within the organisation.[85] The majority of cleaners also expressed anxieties about their job security, which they thought was markedly lower compared to staff that is employed in-house. The general situation of crisis in 2008 and 2009 – the time when the interviews took place – intensified such feelings even more. As became clear throughout the interviews, cleaners experienced the crisis in a more indirect, yet not less severe way, as the next paragraph explains.

As many of the banks were laying-off large numbers of their permanent staff from autumn 2008 onwards, many of the banks searched for smaller premises or reduced their office space considerably. As a result, cleaning companies lost their contracts or required fewer workers. The fact that most of the interviewees (who were not made redundant) experienced some form of change to their working lives during this period of crisis has made them realise even more the precariousness of their subcontracted position. This was, for example, evidenced in the interview with Ajagbe, a male cleaner, working already for 6 years at *Johnson Control* and *Mitie* in the *Goldmann Sachs* building in Canary Wharf. He explained his situation by stating that "when you come to the cleaning companies... like we are working for Goldmann... our job is not safe because we are contracted" (Ajagbe, male cleaner for *Johnson Control* at *Goldmann Sachs*, 49 years). Such concerns about the security of people's jobs were expressed in several occasions, but in particular in relation to working futures.

Hence, as my analysis suggests, the positioning of cleaners in the subcontracted periphery of the organisation has had major ramifications in terms of individuals' temporalities of work. While so far, the effects of this positioning have been investigated in regard to people's work practices and the security of their employment, I will now do so by exploring how subcontracting shapes working lives at biographical level. In this context I will pay particular attention to questions of (individual) agency and narrative. The next section will address this interdependency of economic structures and individual temporalities by examining how individuals relate to their (working) pasts, especially in terms of

---

[85] On time and work intensification see also Burchell et al. (2002).

whether these pasts serve as a resource in their current working lives and if so how.

8.4. The 'invisibility' of past experiences and skills

The way in which most interviewees spoke about their (working) pasts was strongly informed by the fact that all of the cleaning workers had personal histories of migration, with a majority of them coming from Ghana and Nigeria (see also Wills et al. 2010: 61). In many cases, past experiences and educational qualifications were not acknowledged when people arrived in the UK or, in some instances, financial or temporal restrictions did not allow them to finish an educational degree in their countries of origin or in the UK. Others arrived in the UK after fleeing from their home countries for political reasons, which in a few instances resulted in personal (work) histories that could not easily be narrated, which poses questions as to which stories can be told and which stories cannot be told. More specifically, in the context of working lives it contests the assumption that everyone is able to narrate their working lives. I experienced this in interview situations where people did not always want to give details about their work histories as they could not be easily separated from their personal histories (of migration). The fact that people's working pasts could not be assembled into coherent biographical narratives hence fundamentally impinged on their possibilities in drawing on previous experiences or educational degrees as resources for their working lives (cf. Rees and Fielder 1992: 362). In other words, working pasts remained often 'unnarratable' or 'invisible', which in turn made it hard for this group of interviewees to find work adequate to their qualifications. Cleaning was therefore often considered as one of the few options to find work in a short period of time. Godwin, a male cleaner at Lloyds illustrates this:

> I have seen here in this country that **even if you bring with you a good level of education**, it is **often not acknowledged**. If you are not fully educated here and you are in the cleaning industry **you will sweat, sweat**... and when I say sweat you sweat before you can leave cleaning and say you want to get a white collar job. And that's a fact (Godwin, male cleaner for OTS/Strand at Lloyds, 58 years).

Godwin's interview extract not only shows his difficulties in finding any other work apart from cleaning (as a result of his educational degrees not being acknowledged) but it also illustrates his disillusion of any possibilities for upward mobility. The inability to view one's past work biography as a resource, was however also reported in regard to people's more immediate working pasts. Specifically, this was so when work experiences and skills, gained throughout their working life as cleaners, were neither acknowledged nor rewarded by the organisation they were working for. Richard, a male cleaner at RBS describes this point by emphasising his dissatisfaction with the fact that neither his supervisors nor his managers 'see' his capabilities or 'know' about his past work experience as a cleaner.

> There are no meetings to share ideas. When we share ideas, we learn from each other. **You have an experience**... now you are asking me about my job, I've done this job for 6 years **and nobody there can tell me he knows what I am capable of**... but I'm on the field I know how to clean, I know more than all the managers (Richard, male cleaner for Lancaster at RBS, 50 years).

Richard's past experiences and his abilities were neither being noticed nor rewarded in any way. Such feelings of dissatisfaction were shared by a large number of others that were interviewed, who similarly stated that the work experience they had gained was not appreciated, rewarded or being kept track of for potential future promotions. Performance was hence not rewarded individually but only noticed when unsatisfactory, in which case the person was informed and corrected.

The fact that individuals' past experiences and their accumulated skills remained largely 'invisible' to supervisors and managers was exacerbated by the relatively frequent turnover of the latter two. This was the case because, while supervisors and managers may have known and worked with cleaners in the past, they tended to move away with the outgoing firm. In contrast, cleaners normally stayed with the incoming contractor in the same building, as they are entitled to do so with the TUPE regulation.[86] Peter, who works at GSF in the State Street

---

[86] The TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings) regulation states that when a new contractor comes in the workers have the right to remain on the same site where they were working with the previous contractor.

Bank building in the City, explained how the volatile nature of contracting in fact 'erased' the institutional knowledge of the contractors with regards to the cleaners' performance in the past:

> And because of the changing contractors, **the next contractor does not know how you worked with the previous one**. They only chose to promote people, for example to become supervisors, who dance to the tune of their music, people in their own favour, but some supervisors don't even know their job (Peter, male cleaner for GSF at State Street, 46 years).

Hence, structures for progression into more senior or qualified roles were generally reported to be absent (cf. Rees and Fielder 1992). Even in those instances when progression into the role of a supervisor was potentially possible, most interviewees reported that in such instances supervisors were often recruited externally and not from the (existing) internal cleaning staff. Ajagbe, who works with the cleaning company Johnson Control at Goldmann Sachs, illustrates this situation in the following manner:

> They are making people **supervisors, managers** but **they don't pick them from that place**, they **bring somebody who doesn't know about it to become a head over you**. So you as a cleaner actually have to teach him or her how to do the job, so they don't actually have the knowledge and skills (Ajagbe, male cleaner for Johnson Control at Goldmann Sachs, 49 years).

Godwin, who had been working as a cleaner for more than 20 years, emphasised the fact that progression or promotion into more senior roles was not even possible to those who had already many years of experience within their field:

> Cleaning is not a job I would strongly recommend for you because **you don't get promotion** from it. As a cleaner you will be cleaning for all of your life, because they transfer managers from there to there and **even for the position as a supervisor, you don't hear**. You just see that **they brought in and introduce you a new supervisor or a manager**. Those few who are there, **no matter how many years you have been there, there is no opportunity there**. They don't say 'Let's train this man, let's see what he can do', except if you know someone who can influence and help you. If you don't, it's difficult (Godwin, male cleaner for OTS/Strand at Lloyds, 58 years).

The absence of incremental wages or structures for progression not only excludes this group of workers from any forms of upward mobility but it also does not enable them to develop any future perspectives within the organisation they are working, which has important implications in regard to questions of individual agency, as following sections will highlight in more detail.

Taken together, the empirical findings of this section therefore suggest that many of the cleaning workers were unable to make their experiences and skills visible and turn them into a resource, an assumption that features in the accounts in career portraits, for instance. Many of the cleaners could not draw on their acquired knowledge and their skills (either in the form of educational degrees or gathered work experience) and therefore often had to 'break' with their (working) pasts. As will be discussed further on, these findings not only question the idea of work biography as an individual narrative, but also point towards a direction that indicate a bracketing of individual agency in regard to work biography. While this section showed such a bracketing of agency vis-à-vis people's working pasts, the next section examines how precariousness can be understood in relation to people's working futures.

8.5. Precarious (working) lives: Stabilising the present and losing the future

In this section I suggest that the precarious working (and living) conditions of the majority of the cleaners force them to 'stabilise' their present situation, without being able to individually engage with their future working lives. In other words, precariousness can be understood as a condition that only allows for (limited) coping strategies in terms of people's present lives, without the possibility to shape the future. This temporal dimension of precariousness, in particular in terms of futurity, has been noted by several authors (Kraemer 2009, Doerre, et al. 2009, Tsianos and Papadopoulos 2006, Fantone 2007).[87] Specifically, in the

---

[87] See for example Berardi's definition of precarity: "Precarious is person who is able to know nothing about one's own future and therefore is hung by the present" (Berardi 2009, 148, see also Berardi 2005).

context of this research, one of the main factors that contributed to the precarious situation of the cleaners was low-pay. As noted earlier, most cleaners were still getting paid the National Minimum Wage, an income that forces many of the cleaners to do two and in some instances even three jobs in order to make a living. However, as I will discuss later on in more detail, despite the prevalence of the minimum wage in the cleaning industry, there is also an increasing number of cleaners whose trade union representatives were able to negotiate to pay the London Living Wage. Despite such efforts, the majority of interviewed cleaners made clear that a single job would not provide them with a sufficient income. The economic necessity to have more than one job imposed serious pressures on people's organisation of their working day. Madu illustrates these pressures when speaking about the time he was doing two jobs:

> I was working 8 hours at Compass, I started at 6am in the morning, I finished at half 2, then I would go home, I would sleep, I wake up at around 8pm, have my shower and go back to Lancaster, both of them are in Canary Wharf. At Lancaster I work from 9pm and I finish at 6am and from there I go to my money job, 8 hours, you understand? (...) So **I was working in the day with Compass and I was working in the night with Lancaster, 16 hours** (Madu, male cleaner for Lancaster at Nomura, 43 years).

The reasons for doing a second (or even third job), however, varied. Although the majority stated that they were taking on a second job do make ends meet, doing more than one job was also considered to be the only possibility of saving for the future or of providing support to other family members, either in the UK or in their countries of origin. Morowa's example illustrates this well:

> You can only save some money if you have two jobs. The **money from one job is maybe just enough to live**, but **you can't save for the future**, or often **people have relatives** in their home countries who **they want to support**; **you can only do that with a second job** (Morowa, female cleaner for OTS/Strand at JPMorgan, 40 years).

Morowa's account shows that the desire to (re)gain control over their futures, to save money or to maintain family members or relatives abroad forces many to take on a second job or, as other interviews showed, to work excessive hours. The

time constraints that such conditions of work impose, was also evidenced in terms of a 'geography of time'. This was so as living and transportation costs were considered to be very high in London and many of the cleaners mentioned that they had to commute considerable distances and thus spent a lot of time only to get to work in the City of London or in Canary Wharf, places they could never afford to live.

This situation was aggravated by the fact that many cleaners in the banking industry work at night, the time when offices are not occupied with permanent banking staff. By doing an additional job during the day, those working at night stated that they only get a few hours of sleep per day, which has also caused concerns as to how night work impacts on workers' health. Ebo, who does two cleaning jobs, one from 10pm to 6am in the City and another one in West London from 7am to 9 or 10am, spoke about the reasons for doing more than one job as well as the effects of doing night work on his health:

> **Working in the night affects your health** because in the day **you cannot sleep very well**, as you can in the night... and that's more or less a health hazard. By the time I get home, it should be around 11. (...) **with the high cost of living in the city you can't depend on only one job**. This is why people have up to three jobs. **Without that you can't survive** (Ebo, male cleaner for Johnson Control at Goldmann Sachs, 42 years).

While the discussion so far has shown how individuals, by taking on a second job, aim to regain agency in regard to their futurities, it was also illustrated that such efforts usually created high amounts of time pressures and had negative consequences on people's health.

Hence, while such time pressures due to low pay were certainly at issue, the precariousness of cleaners was also evidenced in terms of non-wage related aspects of their work. This was so mainly in terms of the contractual nature of cleaners' employment relationship, that is, in terms of their peripheral position of being employed by subcontracted cleaning firms. As previously argued, this (subcontracted) positioning on the labour market has resulted in a low standard of employment contracts, which offer only low incomes, little job security and

only the minimum of fringe benefits in the form of statutory rights. This was particularly evident in terms of sick pay and pension schemes, which were practically absent, as many of the interviews indicated. The absence of such schemes had fundamental effects on the conditions of work and life of the cleaners. Morowa, for instance, explains what it meant for her to work without being entitled to sick pay:

> We don't get sick pay. So that's why **a lot of the workers who are sick go to work**, because **they cannot afford to stay at home**. Sometimes you feel so sick, but you have to go to work. **When you stay in the house for two three days, your money is gone**... you don't have enough money. And you need the money to pay your rent and everything (Morowa, female cleaner for OTS/Strand at JPMorgan, 40 years).

Morowa's interview extract, which is in line with numerous other interviewees, shows that many of the cleaners, due to a lack of economic resources and the absence of payment during periods of sickness, cannot 'afford' to recover from illness at home, even if this would only be for a few days. Nonetheless, there were also interviewees who mentioned that (usually due to an intervention of the union) they do get a certain amount of days of sick pay per year, although at a much lower level of pay than the actual income would be.

My analysis of interviews also made clear that the precarious condition of cleaning workers was aggravated even more by the fact that subcontracted cleaning companies rarely offer occupational pension schemes to their workers.[88] Hence, subcontracting does not only result in low wages but also in very limited social protection individuals get via their employment. Abena, for instance, described her situation at work after a new contractor had taken over in the following manner:

> Well, **since we work with Lancaster there is no job security**... they just want to make money and they just work like that, **we don't have any security like that when you are old they would pay you a pension, nothing like that** (Abena, female cleaner for Lancaster at RBS, 59 years).

---

[88] For a broader discussion on how precariousness has been conceptualised and operationalised see Vosko et al. (2009), Rodgers and Rodgers (1989).

Although some of the workers would be entitled to receive a public pension if they paid contributions for a long enough period of time, these pensions would hardly suffice to make a living. For this reason, many of the cleaners I spoke with had already ideas and plans of what they would do after they retire from their (cleaning) job. Keeping in mind that all of the workers that were interviewed had personal histories of migration and were not born in the UK, some said that they would like to return to their countries of origin after they retire. This was mainly the case with cleaners who had close relatives in their home countries. Other workers spoke about the desire to open their own business or a shop after their retirement, as Ajagbe for instance stated:

> So **after you are 60, you have to plan for your coming years**. If you reach the age of 60, nobody knows… but you have to plan. If you are old you can't afford to look after yourself. So if you can get a job… **If I can look for a job with a little bit of money, I can sell my own product that would be very good**. So I would like to have my own shop (Ajagbe, male cleaner for Johnson Control at Goldmann Sachs, 49 years).

The plan to open one's own shop or business was closely related to the desire to either 'be one's own boss' or to 'do one's own thing', as some of the workers noted, which contrasted many of the cleaners' daily experiences at work, where workers had little autonomy over their work. Mira, a female cleaner with two years' service for Lancaster at Tower 42, describes her desire to work in a more independent manner in the following way: "I can't go on like that, I have to move forward. That's why I decided to do my own thing, my own dance company". In this statement, Mira expresses not only the desire to 'do her own thing' but also that 'she wants to move forward', that is, to experience some form of progression or upward mobility, which, as I described in section 8.4, is not easily possible in the cleaning industry. Individual plans to open one's own shop or business in the future, however, were not only stated in relation to desires to become more independent but, most importantly, were seen as a way to mitigate against the (financial and temporal) inability to make pension provisions for the time after reaching the official retirement age. Hence, while imaginations about people's long-term futures included different notions of change, usually in combination

with a desire to gain more control over one's life, the possibilities and impossibilities for change were also at issue in a variety of other contexts. These shall be addressed in the next section.

8.6. The (im-) possibilities of individual change

Precariousness, understood as a reworking of individual working life temporalities, was at issue in relation to the possibilities for individual agency, in particular in terms of the possibilities to change job or undertake training in order to achieve such potential change. My interviews showed that in many cases, individuals were financially not able to take the necessary time off they would need to either do some additional education or to search for another job. These economic constraints made it hard for cleaners to individually change their future. The following excerpt from Adeola's interview underscores this situation:

> You know in the case of a cleaner's job... **you just want to stay because you want to earn money**, **you don't want to lose any money**. If you find something better from there you can leave, but **people cannot afford to leave and wait to find something else without working** (Adeola, female cleaner for Johnson Control at Goldmann Sachs, 60 years).

In cases where a change of situation was nevertheless possible, decisions were usually not taken individually but were weighed against other financial and familial obligations such as children or relatives living abroad. In the interviews this was the case when cleaners aimed to do some further education or upgrade their previous education to UK standards, as Madu's interview illustrates: "There were so many things for me to do back home... because of that I could not go back to school. So I decided to continue working" (Madu, male cleaner for Lancaster at Nomura, 43 years). The only way people imagined a more individually determined working life lay beyond a distant point in the future with less commitments, as an interview excerpt with Kodwo underlines:

> **I don't have a specific plan**... **I don't have any choice now because when my children grow up** to the point that they can sort themselves out... it's

different. But as I also said I'm going back home by next month and I'm going to figure out some things there and that will tell me what my plans will do to me... to my future life. So **I can start to think of myself when I am more independent, when I can afford it** (Kodwo, male cleaner for ISS at Morgan Stanley, 49 years).

Similarly, Ajagbe describes how his plan to change to a security job could only be realised at a time when his children become financially independent from him:

To be honest, **my main aim was to raise my kids, to raise my children to a degree level so that they too can earn money**, also for us... maybe **then I can stop this job and do the security job**... **to leave the cleaning site**. (...) By September I will know who is entering university from the two girls. Then I will decide from that on. The moment they enter university, they are already mature, so they can control themselves. So **then I can go and get my licence that I need to do a security job** (Ajagbe, male cleaner for Johnson Control at Goldmann Sachs, 49 years).

Previous excerpts from interviews demonstrate that the cleaners *time* their work biographies and in particular changes to their working lives in accordance with the financial necessities and commitments they have, mainly towards members of their family. In most cases, an individually determined working life was projected into the future and was seen as something that is only possible once 'one is able to afford it', as Kodwo puts it.

However, familial relations as well as personal networks and in many instances ethnic support networks were also reported to be important resources, in particular for finding employment or affordable accommodation in London. The majority of the interviewees noted that they had found their job as cleaners with the help of a friend or relative by introducing them to the managers in their workplace. Although it was shown that personal networks provided important systems of support for cleaning workers, these networks rarely helped in terms of offering better future perspectives or opening up possibilities for progression. This is so mainly because the people who supported each other usually did not have access to personal networks in other sectors of employment. Hence, these findings show a very different picture to the group of bankers I described in

Chapter 7, who strategically build up personal networks in order to control their future careers. In contrast to the group of bankers, the networks of cleaning workers were commonly described as systems of support, that is, as something people can 'fall back on' when they lose their job or when they were searching for a job after their arrival in the UK.[89] As was already argued in section, 8.2, the vast majority of cleaning workers in London's banking industry are migrants and my interviews showed that their support networks were usually made up of people of the same ethnicity or even the same country of origin.

These findings are in line with the argument put forward by Wills et al. (2010), who, by drawing on Putnam's terminology, speak of the mobilisation of 'bonding social capital', meaning that migrant workers frequently find support from "relatives, neighbours and close friends" who are often "co-ethnics or co-nationals" (Wills et al. 2010: 132). However, despite the existence of such support networks many cleaners found themselves in a precarious situation with little possibilities for individually engaging with their future working lives. However, while the precarious condition of many cleaning workers did not allow for a more individual engagement with their working futures, it has prompted new ways of confronting the future in a collective way. The following sections draw on interview data in order to demonstrate that trade unions are one of the major resources and forms of socialisation that have enabled cleaners to imagine a future, which they are able to influence and shape.

8.7. Trade unions and the representational gap

The difficulties in becoming agents of their working lives or in improving their working futures has raised the awareness among cleaners that more fundamental changes of their conditions of work are only possible at the collective level. Therefore, many of the cleaners interviewed stated that they had joined a trade union within the last years. As already noted earlier, one of the major reasons for the precariousness of cleaners' conditions of work was the peripheral positioning

---

[89] The study of Rees and Fielder (1992) describes the recruitment practices of cleaning contractors. They argue that "emphasis is placed upon identifying potential recruits through the recommendations of existing employees (1992: 362).

within organisations, that is, their positioning in the subcontracted cleaning sector. As discussed earlier, this view is also supported in recent debates about the role of subcontracting for contemporary employment relations. In these relations, trade unions have become increasingly important for cleaning workers because, as Wills et al. note, "in a subcontracted economy, many workers have no industrial relations contact with their 'real' employer" and thus the workers themselves have no channel through which to bargain over [their] terms (Wills et al. 2010: 180) and conditions of work. By 'real employer', Wills et al. mean the companies who have subcontracted some of their services, which in the context of this research were banks.

The cleaning workers' engagement in the union and the struggle for improvements to their conditions, however, has not only focused on the contractual nature of their work but has also addressed other aspects of the employment relationship, such as being treated with respect by managers and supervisors. An interview extract with Eze, a male cleaner at Citigroup, illustrates this:

> The **union has given us some kind of strength**. So, if you are organized on the site, you have some kind of confidence, that the **managers will not treat you too bad.** As far as you are bullied... **you know your rights better than before**. Also the way they talked to us was... they talked to us as if we are nobody, **they didn't show any respect** (Eze, male cleaner for ISS at Citigroup, 36 years).

However, whilst the majority of cleaners who had joined the union reported that the union has increased their confidence in confronting managers and supervisors at work, an improvement to their economic and social conditions at work was more complicated to achieve. This was so mainly due to the fact that trade unions found themselves in a position in which they had to negotiate both with the subcontractors as well as with the 'real employers' of the cleaners, i.e. the banks. In such a context, the dilemma with subcontracted work is that a mere pressure on the contractors to "improve [the] pay and conditions of work (...) would probably price their [the cleaners'] immediate employer out of the market" (Wills et al. 2010: 180). Therefore, workers have started to organise themselves

with the help of the trade union in order to increase pressure on the 'real employers', that is, on banks.

In 2005, the cleaning workers together with the union launched a campaign for a *London Living Wage* (Wills 2009b). A *London Living Wage* as Pablo, a union organiser, put it "means a salary that the workers can live with in London, because London is one of the most expensive places around the world". The *Living Wage Campaign*, which was originally launched by *London Citizens*, the biggest community alliance in Britain, is set every year by the Greater London Authority. Although the *London Living Wage* is not legally binding but rather addresses employers on a social and ethical basis, the campaign has managed to introduce the Living Wage into a considerable number of workplaces, including subcontracted cleaning companies in the banking industry. The *London Living Wage* has been of particular importance in the context of subcontracted work, as Wills et al. illustrate: "The idea of a Living Wage campaign was developed to overcome [the] 'representational gap' between subcontracted workers and their 'real' employers by linking subcontracted workers with a broad alliance of community organisations" (Wills et al. 2010: 180). Thus, while collective efforts to raise income levels to Living Wage standards were critical to cleaners, my interview data also suggests that unionism, more generally, has provided an important resource for cleaners to imagine a better future. This point shall be discussed in the following section.

8.8. Trade unions and collective imaginations of the future

Apart from the joint efforts of unions and cleaners to improve the conditions of work by increasing the levels of pay and create a work environment where workers are respected and appreciated, my findings indicate that trade unions have become involved in negotiating other aspects of employment relations, too. These include demands to implement a decent amount of days of sick pay, so that cleaners do not feel the financial pressure to go to work in case of illness, as well as to introduce occupational pension schemes in order to cater for the cleaner's

futures beyond retirement age. Such demands have been key features when cleaners were asked about the sort of changes they wanted to achieve in the future and were evidenced throughout the interviews. Ebo's example shows this. Ebo works as a cleaner at Johnson Control in the City and is very active in the union and in organising people to improve the situation of cleaning workers. He explained how the collective ambition of the union has helped to a certain degree to improve the conditions at the site where he works and how these activities of the union have helped to imagine how change may be possible in the future:

> If you are sick you have to go to work because you cannot afford to stay at home. But **since the union is in, the situation is better** because they introduced sick pay of 10 days a year. So if you are sick for 10 days, you will be paid. But after the 10 days, if you are still sick you will not be paid. But **we achieved this only because of the activities of the union**. That's something the union fought for. Although it's still not yet fair it's better than we didn't have at all. We hope that in the future the number of days will go up. The other thing is that we are not offered any kind of pension scheme, not at all. This **is another goal for the future that we are going to fight for**. It's not for now, but in the future we will tackle this issue (Ebo, male cleaner for Johnson Control at Goldmann Sachs, 42 years).

Ebo's experience of improvement through the union, which, as my interview data suggests, is shared by many other cleaners, shows that positive change was mainly a result of collective effort and hardly possible at all individually. Hence, trade unions were widely seen as the only option to (re-)gain agency, both over practical everyday matters at work as well as over the precariousness of their employment relations. Kodwo, a male cleaner at Morgan Stanley explicitly speaks about this agency function of the union in the following manner:

> If you are a union member you are *one*. When you got a problem, I got a problem and when I get a problem you also get a problem. So **we team up all the time and fight for our right and hope we can change our future to the better. Before the union, we couldn't do much as individuals, alone you don't have the power to change anything** but as a union you do (Kodwo, male cleaner for ISS at Morgan Stanley, 49 years).

Kodwo's example shows that trade unions were not only mentioned in regard to improvements to working conditions but, as already stated in the previous

example too, also in terms of an imagination of working futures. However, despite such expressions and desires for (collective) agency in regard to working futures, the precariousness of employment conditions was most commonly articulated in terms of an absence of agency, in particular in regard to the possibilities for a more strategic orientation to the future.[90]

Hence, while the conclusion will put such questions of agency into the context of debates on work precariousness as presented in Chapter 1, it is crucial to note at this point that the relation between trade unionism and individual futurities has not always been as smooth as previous statements may suggest. Indeed, in recent decades and years the growing number of migrant workers in London's workforce has challenged trade unions as institutions that have been traditionally involved in disputes over (white) working class issues. In particular in the decades of post-War immigration to Britain, trade unions were often opposed to immigration as they tried to restrict the labour supply (Wrench and Virdee 1995) and were thus reluctant to represent migrant workers. Until the 1980s, which "saw the integration of black voices and anti-racist practice into the political mainstream" (Wills et al. 2010: 167), many migrant workers faced racism even from the side of trade unions.[91] As Wills et al. (2010) go on to say "it was only during the 1980s, and following efforts at black self-organisation within the unions, that these new members were really accepted" (2010: 167, see also Wrench and Virdee 1995). Despite the ongoing difficulties many migrant workers are facing in terms of being adequately represented by trade unions, the majority of the interviewees were, however, very positive about their experiences with the union and felt that this was the only way to improve the future conditions of their working lives.

---

[90] Wills et al. describe the relation between precariousness and futurity in the following manner: "[A]lthough migrants have considerable agency to respond to the challenges facing them, such efforts are constantly undermined by poverty, poor working conditions, state policy, and community exclusions that frustrate their ability to develop longer-term or more 'strategic' goals. Indeed, although migrants' lives may include very careful planning and budgeting, these are often aimed only at coping with the immediate exigencies of their day-to-day lives" (Wills et al. 2010: 126).

[91] The interviews showed that for those, who do not have English as their first language and who have language problems, the union has an important 'voice function' in articulating their complaints and thus maintaining their sense of autonomy. The union 'can speak for them', as a female cleaner put it in an interview.

8.9. Subcontracting as a challenge to organised labour

Aside from the changing role of unions concerning the representation of an increasing number of migrant workers, one of the biggest challenges for unions in dealing with low-paid service sector work is the mounting prevalence of subcontracting (see also sections 8.3 and 8.7). As my interviews with union organisers highlighted, the unions often have to negotiate with both the cleaning companies as well as the 'real employer', which in the case of this research are the banks. Pablo, an organiser at Unite, explained the difficulties involved in this tripartite form of negotiation as follows:

> We work with both, the cleaning companies and the banks. Usually we have meetings with the cleaning companies to establish the London Living Wage. And also if necessary we speak with the clients, the banks. In some places, like when we went to a demonstration against one of the banks, after speaking with the cleaning companies we went directly to the bank and we explained to them that we will continue embarrassing them if they don't sort this out (Pablo, Unite organiser).

Pablo's statement illustrates that while in some cases negotiations to establish the London Living Wage were successful, in other instances the union was only able to achieve this via more radical forms of unionism, including demonstrations in order to address the social costs of low-pay publicly. The interviews with union organisers hence made clear that change was only possible via such demonstrations and the potential damage to the public reputation that these demonstrations would have to banks. Nick, another organiser from Unite, additionally underlined the role the media play in this context:

> ...because cleaning companies such ISS, OCS, etc. will always say: well, it's not our problem; we are only paying what we can with the contract. So the way we go is trying to embarrass the banks, which is the main weapon we have. And the media, of course, play a very important role in that (Nick, Unite organiser).

Crucially, for my concerns, the interview data thus underscores the difficulties and challenges in having to negotiate not only with the cleaning companies, but, most importantly, also with the 'real employers'. Although this tripartite form of unionism is not entirely new, Unite organiser Nick emphasised that it has spread

with the rise of subcontracting, which as he stated, became "much, much more prevalent since Thatcher, so since the mid 80s".

Taken together, the excerpts from Pablo's and Nick's interviews demonstrate not only the role that trade unions have in terms of offering individuals the possibility of becoming agents of change but they also give account of the changing nature of the unions themselves. Changes to business practices, including the rise of subcontracting, as well as an increasingly diverse workforce have challenged the work of trade unions and have shown that union organisers need to respond to these changes. This is particularly true for a global city like London, where there is a concentration of service-sector industries such as banking, finance and insurance, and with them the number of subcontracted workers servicing these industries. Other than the challenges of organised labour in the context of a subcontracted economy, union organisation in the cleaning industry is also marked by a relatively high labour turnover, which presents an additional problem in terms of workers' organisation at plant level. My interview data also shows that many migrant workers were initially hesitant to join a union or even to speak out on their (dissatisfying) conditions of work because they feared that they might lose their job in doing so. Although there was no one from the people interviewed who actually lost their job due to such reasons, such fears were at issue throughout the interviews and were even stronger when workers faced uncertainty regarding their immigration status. Importantly for the concerns of this thesis, trade unionism was evidenced as key to understanding the relation between cleaners' socio-economic position and their orientations to time, in particular to the future, as the following conclusion outlines.

8.10. Conclusion

The interview data analysed in this chapter suggests that the erosion of 'regular' employment contracts and the rise of (employment) contracts that offer social security only at a marginal level, facilitated by practices such as subcontracting, have fundamentally contributed to present-day precariousness in the workplace and have undermined individuals' agency in terms of shaping their working

futures. As Chapter 1 discussed, these precarisation processes make it difficult for workers to individually create or shape their work biographies, a point that was confirmed in the previous discussion of the working lives of cleaners, too. This bracketing of individual agency vis-à-vis people's working futures, however, was attempted to be (re-) gained via a collective engagement at trade union level.

Hence, the temporalities of work of the group of cleaners explored in this chapter, contrasted with the group examined in the previous chapter, provide evidence for a temporal divide of these two workforces. It was shown that these workforces are not only entirely different in terms of the ways in which individuals relate to their past, present and future working lives, but, even more important for this thesis, I could identify the mechanisms behind such polarisation processes. Specifically, my analyses in Chapters 7 and 8 suggest that the identified divisions of workforces are divisions of time and temporality. Moreover, these two chapters showed that in the case of the workforces examined within this industry, such divisions are first and foremost divisions of core and periphery positions within organisations. However, it was also shown that the divisions induced by the practice of subcontracting are also migrant divisions of labour. Most crucially, in regard to the temporalities of work examined in this thesis, the divisions identified in this and the previous chapter were structuring the possibilities of individuals to engage with their working futures and in particular the possibilities to *be* agents of their futures. The following conclusion on the whole thesis will re-contextualise such divisions within the broader debates, introduced in Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

9. Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the individualisation and precarisation of working lives as well as the relation between the two from the perspective of time. By drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's understanding of time and in particular on his writings on the interdependency of temporal and economic structures, I examined the practices and attitudes through which individuals relate to their past, present and future working lives and how these practices and attitudes are embedded in specific organisational and social settings. More specifically, this thesis examined career portraits, depicted in contemporary newspapers, and two different types of workforces in the London banking industry and demonstrated how recent changes in production and organisational structures have involved a restructuring of individual practices and attitudes towards time.

By adopting a temporal perspective in regard to these settings I demonstrated how the individualisation and precarisation of working lives are processes which both operate at the level of time and narrative. Yet while the adoption of a temporal perspective enabled me to show how processes of individualisation and precarisation are not necessarily divided, what has also stood out from my analysis is the disjuncture between the two different workforces in the banking industry, particularly in terms of the differing futurities, that is, in terms of possibilities for creating and shaping the future. I will return to the issue of this disjuncture, but first I want to briefly reflect on my analysis of the career portraits, particularly in regard to what they *do* in terms of the individualisation of working lives.

Career portraits as 'individualising technique'

One of the most significant findings to emerge from my analysis of career portraits is that they serve as a technique of individualisation. I demonstrated that portraits convey a strongly individualised and personalised understanding of work and of working lives, an individualisation which is in alignment with the neoliberal values of self-determination and individual autonomy. By drawing on

Bourdieu's understanding of time and practice, I critiqued career portraits for their tendency to detemporalise practice and disembed individual practices from social and economic contexts. As my analysis in Chapter 5 demonstrated, this detemporalisation and disembedding is achieved via a rhetoric of intentionality, a rhetoric which brackets socio-structural concerns.

My analysis further demonstrated that as an instructional genre, career portraits do not merely *tell* the stories of individual working lives but invoke an 'I can do that too' attitude in the readers. As such, and as I argued in Chapter 5, career portraits have important implications in terms of the process of individualisation. While Beck and Giddens conceptualise and frame the latter as concerning a change in the relation between structure and agency, my analysis has suggested that individualisation operates to a considerable extent at the level of narrative. However, in my analysis of portraits I also showed how by omitting the habitual, non-intentional dimension of practice and conveying an understanding of practice which foregrounds conceptions of choice and (individual) decision, career portraits have contributed to the normalisation of a certain model of agency, a model which assumes that unfettered choice is universally available. By understanding the career portrait as an individualising technique my analysis has therefore contributed to sociological understandings of the ways in which notions of the unfettered individual are normalised in social practice.

My analysis of portraits was also concerned with issues of social class. I demonstrated that within such portraits, issues of social class were only relevant insofar as class is positioned as something people can *overcome*. In terms of individualisation, the de-socialised and de-temporalised understanding of agency at work here confirms Savage's and Skeggs's account of individualisation, as discussed in Chapter 1. In particular, it confirms the claim that contemporary forms of individualisation are not evidence of the decline of class, but of an increasing normalisation of middle-class conceptions of individuality. Thus, and as I argued in Chapter 5, career portraits reflect the desire and the necessity of the middle-classes to 'be agents' of their working lives and careers and to create their own career narratives.

The de-temporalisation of practice was also at issue in Chapter 6 where I demonstrated that within career portraits organisational rhythms or other kinds of external timeframes were almost entirely absent. Instead, at issue were numerous notions of *individual timing*. Thus individuals were portrayed as pursuing careers without attachment to single organisations or single careers. My analysis of career portraits therefore suggested that individualisation operates via an *internalisation* of time, that is, via a demand that individuals time their everyday working lives as well as the course of their working life biographies. One central finding from this thesis is therefore that at stake in processes of individualization are new concepts of working time such as situational time, notions of time that depart from E P Thompson's industrial time. Yet situational time was certainly not only at issue in my analysis of career portraits but also in my analysis of the two groups of workers connected to the banking industry and this was especially so for early and mid-career bankers. I now turn for one final time to these workers.

New divisions of time and temporality

My analysis in Chapters 7 and 8 demonstrated that processes of individualisation and precarisation have created new social and economic divisions, which, as I elaborated, are also divisions of time. While the differences in the working lives of the two groups examined in this thesis could hardly be more pronounced, a temporal analysis enabled me to understand the dynamics of exactly how and why such working lives are differentiated and divided. Taken at the most general level, Chapters 7 and 8 detailed how people's conditions of work and their position within an organisation had a major influence on their daily rhythm and pace of work as well as on the way they imagined their future working lives and careers.

The results of the investigation in Chapter 7 indicated that the temporalities of the working lives of the core group in banking aligned strongly with the changing nature of banking and shifts in the organisational structures of banks. Far from

following linear and organisational careers, typical of banking in the past, my research showed that the working lives of contemporary bankers are highly individualised and market-orientated. Individualisation in this context meant a shift in attitudes towards work. Thus rather than thinking their career in relation to organisations, workers in this group understood their careers in terms of (labour) market position. The findings presented in this thesis therefore suggest that the process of individualisation encompasses a shift in work and working lives whereby organisational temporalities have increasingly been replaced by the temporalities of markets, a shift which has also contributed to a redefinition of the notion career, and especially notions of career progression. In documenting this shift from organisational to market time, this thesis supports Sennett's claim discussed in Chapter 2 that individuals are increasingly less attached to organisations and instead perceive themselves and think about their future working lives in terms of their 'market value', that is, in terms of the potential opportunities that are available to them.

As discussed in Chapter 7 this highly individualised and market driven understanding of labour included a particular way in which individuals thought about the relation between past experiences and their future working lives. More specifically, for the core workers in banking, the future was imagined not as inferable from the present but instead as a field of potentialities. Therefore, individuals neither confronted their future working lives via practices of (long-term) planning nor did they rationally anticipate such futures. Instead they aimed to equip themselves with the necessary resources and skills to remain flexible and to take advantage of upcoming opportunities or situations in the future. As such, this thesis adds weight to the idea forwarded by Rosa - discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 - that the present time is situational time. In situational time individuals decide and relate to the future - or rather to several potential futures - by remaining flexible and open to change and by re-evaluating plans frequently in order to re-contextualise them depending on any given situation. However, as was demonstrated in Chapter 8 situational time only has explanatory force in specific organisational and economic settings and applies only to certain workforces. Situational time was not, for example, found to be a useful concept in

attempting to understand the temporalities of work of the cleaning workers investigated in this thesis.

The findings presented in Chapter 8 showed that for the majority of the cleaning workers the rhythm and pace of their work and changes to their working lives was primarily shaped by the immediate context of the contract cleaning industry. The competition for new contracts amongst specialist cleaning firms has imposed severe downward pressures on people's wages and non-wage benefits and the peripheral position of cleaning firms within the banking industry has put cleaners at 'arms-length' from their 'real employers', that is, from the banks for whom the cleaners are effectively working. These factors have created conditions of work in which cleaners have no real bargaining power over their conditions of employment and in which upward mobility as well as incremental wages were practically absent. The empirical findings presented in this thesis thus substantiate the claim of Wills et al. (2010) that subcontracting is one of the major causes for precariousness. The conditions of cleaning work elaborated in this thesis also account for the inability of cleaners to develop individual narratives of the future. Yet it was not only a future which was curtailed by the conditions of work but also one in which accumulated experience could not serve as a resource. Thus, and as demonstrated in Chapter 8, frequently changing managerial staff made it difficult for cleaners' experiences to be acknowledged or rewarded since knowledge of any past performances was constantly erased.

As emphasised in Chapters 7 and 8, my analyses of the two groups of workers associated with the banking industry in London is suggestive of a growing disparity and polarisation between core and periphery groups within organisations. This polarisation has important implications for theories of individualisation and precarisation of working lives. Organisational practices such as subcontracting, which are seeking to increase flexibility by externalising parts of the workforce, have introduced precarious forms of work at the heart - or rather at the periphery - of highly profitable industries, as the example of banking has illustrated. These divisions of workforces are exemplary of new inequalities, especially of inequalities between on the one hand, a highly individualistic, market oriented, CV-aware class of people that strives to remain

in control of their future careers, and, on the other, a precariously employed class facing job insecurity, having few prospects of upward mobility and/or the possibility to individually change and determine the course of their future working lives. Finally, and as discussed in Chapter 8, my research confirms previous findings suggesting that these divisions are 'migrant divisions of labour' (Wills et al. 2009a, Wills 2010), with relatively new migrants disproportionately populating the precarious class.

The disjunctures and divisions between different workforces presented in this thesis suggest that individualisation and precarisation are not all-encompassing processes equally impacting on all but are embedded in specific organisational and social contexts. These findings support and supplement Castel's theory of individualisation. In Chapter 1 I described Castel's model of two different forms of contemporary individualisation (*individus par excès* versus *individus par défaut*). According to Castel, individualisation was only possible via the establishment of collective forms of social security and legal regulations that decommodified employment relations and hence reduced the exposure of individuals to market forces. The erosion of these social and legal resources, for example via processes of subcontracting, has undermined or reversed processes of individualisation whilst furthering precariousness. In tracking this process for the case of the cleaning industry associated with banking in London the empirical findings of this thesis thus substantiate Castel's conceptualisation of polarised individualisation. This thesis therefore enhances our understanding of how the destandardisation of labour and the erosion of systems of collective forms of social protection may create new, or reinforce already existing, social and economic divisions. In terms of time these divisions are ones between those able to create their own working lives and those who are unable to do so.

Extensification and intensification of working time

The second set of findings in this thesis evidencing the connection between individualisation and precarisation concerned the nature of working time. In Chapters 7 and 8, it was shown that, despite the pronounced economic and social

divisions between the two investigated workforces, there were similarities between them in terms of an intensification and extensification of working time. Extensification of working time applied in cases where people were working hours that considerably exceeded 'standard working hours' while an intensification of working time describes the fact that people were doing more work in a given amount of time than previously or were required to increase their pace of work. As elaborated in Chapter 7 and 8, while the intensification and extensification of working time occurred in both core and the periphery groups, the logics governing these shifts varied considerably for the two. Specifically, in regard to *extended* hours, while those employed in banking did so in order to increase their chances of progressing in their career in the future, many of the cleaning workers were doing two or three jobs in parallel to 'stabilise the present' without gaining control over their future.

Apart from immediate economic necessity, there was a further motivation for cleaners to do more than one job. This was the need to mitigate the future uncertainty caused by the absence of pension schemes or sick pay, as well as to support other members of their family. Having only one job was seen as 'too risky' as neither the income nor the fringe benefits provided sufficient social security. These findings add to our understanding of the process of destandardisation of labour described by Beck (1992) in terms of working time. By paying attention to the underlying factors governing such extensions, my analysis could further show that these factors are of fundamental importance to consider if we are to understand contemporary polarisation processes in regard to individualisation and precarisation. Thus while individual career motives and (individual) performance-based promotional structures were the main drivers of extended hours behind those working in their early and mid-careers in banking, precariousness and economic necessity were key drivers for cleaning workers extending their working hours far beyond 'standard working hours'.

This thesis also documented an *intensification* of working time for both groups of workers. Chapter 8 showed that time intensification among cleaning workers was a result of the ongoing process of precarisation and the decreasing number of workers available (usually after cleaners quit or were made redundant). These

latter resulted in remaining individual workers having to do more work in the same amount of time. My empirical analysis in Chapter 7 further revealed that time intensification also emerged as an important theme among bankers, albeit in a different manner. While cleaners' working time was intensified via organisational practices that imposed higher workloads on each worker, many of those employed in banking gave account of the high pressures to keep up with the speed and the rapidly changing and intense rhythms of the financial markets. The fast-paced rhythms of work and the high pressures to compete also affected people's future perspectives. In particular, those working in front-office positions mentioned that they were not thinking of staying in the same organisation or job for more than five to ten years, which they mainly justified by the intense rhythms and long working hours necessary to perform well in their positions. Individual performance and competitiveness, usually measured in one's annual turnover, was fostered by 'up-or-out policies', meaning that people were either promoted after a number of years or were made redundant.

The results of this thesis thus suggest that while time extensification and time intensification may be common experiences across a range of occupations and forms of work, it is important to pay attention to the different causes of these processes and to the ways in which these processes relate to different perspectives on the future. As such the empirical findings of this study contribute to understanding the mechanisms and causalities at work in regard to changes to the amount and intensity of working hours. These findings add weight, for example, to the ideas of Quilgars and Abbott, presented in Chapter 1, who argue that recent changes in working lives involve both an intensification of work and an increase in the number of people working longer hours or overtime (see Quilgars and Abbott 2000). The findings also add weight to some of aspects of the European Working Conditions Survey of 2010. As outlined in Chapter 6, this survey showed an increase in the intensity of working time across European Member States, that is, a rising number of people stating that they are experiencing increased time pressures at work, in particular in terms of working to tighter deadlines. Beyond this however, this thesis has demonstrated that to fully grasp and understand such intensification processes, such findings should be contextualised in terms of broader factors such as changing organisational

structures (including incentive and promotion structures) and processes of precarisation.

Personal networks and futurity

The last major finding of this thesis that I will address in this conclusion concerns the relationship between personal and social resources and processes of individualisation and precarisation. The empirical results in Chapter 7 illustrated that among those in their early and mid-careers in banking, personal contacts and networks were crucial resources for their future working lives. As there was little attachment, trust or loyalty to single organisations, these contacts and networks were usually imagined as a way of gaining control over future working lives. The building and maintenance of personal networks was therefore an essential practice and many people in this workforce either found employment through networks in the past or expected to do so in the future. My analysis further indicated that networking as a practice undoes the work-life divide since it often takes place outside regular working hours and does not distinguish between personal and professional contacts. Both personal and professional contacts therefore served as *potential* career resources, that is, as resources for events which had not yet arrived or actualised in practice. The understanding of value at play here – that is, as something that has not yet actualised – was also shown to be at issue in terms of how individuals were increasingly required to think about non-working time. Thus, and as also elaborated in Chapter 7, bankers were increasingly asked to understand and approach their non-working time as that which potentially holds economic opportunities.

Chapter 8 illustrated that personal relationships and networks were also an important resource for the group of interviewed cleaning workers, however, in a very different way. All of the interviewed cleaners had histories of migration and none were born in the UK, with many of them coming from Nigeria or Ghana. A lack of financial resources required most of them to find work quickly after arriving in the UK, which did not leave time to gain additional qualifications or upgrade already acquired degrees to UK standards, a process which would have

facilitated job searches. Instead, the majority stated that they depended on ethnic networks or relatives when they arrived in order to find affordable accommodation and work. Chapter 8 also showed that the precariousness of their conditions and their difficulty in developing narratives of the future triggered awareness among cleaners that change and an improvement of their condition is only possible at collective level. This awareness has been translated into collective action and organisation in trade unions, which proved to be a vital resource in terms of access to rights, respect in the workplace and the possibility of improving conditions of work in the future.

The disjunctures and differing meanings of personal and social networks at issue for these different groups add to our understanding of the role of networks vis-à-vis processes of individualisation and precarisation. First, the case of bankers demonstrates that in a context of the decline of the single organisation career and the emergence of the individualised market based career, networks offer crucial resources which help to mitigate the difficulty of anticipating one's future working life. In short, in the context of individualised careers the resources offered by networks appear to be increasingly significant. Yet while on the basis of the findings from the bankers we might speculate this to be the case, my analysis of the cleaning workers demonstrated that, far from working to secure individual futures, in a context of precariousness, networks were built or joined in order to cope with the lack of social protection, reduced possibilities for progression and distinctive future uncertainties in one's job. Thus, and contrary to the group of core workers, personal networks did not open up opportunities in terms of individual future working lives but rather acted as support networks. Rather than 'investments' in the future and framed in an individualistic narrative, under conditions of precariousness networks were made and joined in attempts to secure collective futures. While, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, a number of writers have posited the increasing significance of networks in regard to contemporary working life (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005, Castells 2000, Sennett 1998, Wittel 2001), the findings of this thesis suggest that the form of this significance cannot be assumed in advance. Indeed, a pervasive background of precariousness and individualisation mean that what a network is and what networks might do cannot be taken for granted.

Limitations and further research

Taken together, the results of this study suggest that the processes of individualisation and precarisation have not only reorganised the temporalities of individual working lives but have also unfolded new economic and social divisions. By adopting a temporal perspective, that is, a perspective drawing on Bourdieu's writings on the interrelations between economic and temporal structures, this thesis has demonstrated that processes of individualisation and precarisation have involved a shift in organisational structures which have had far-reaching effects on people's attitudes towards their past, present and future working lives. However, whilst this thesis explored the interdependency of economic and temporal structures among different workforces and in different types of data (news-print media and personal interviews), a number of limitations need to be noted in regard to the research on which this study is based.

One of the most important of these limitations results from the broad range of empirical settings examined in this thesis. Due to the fact that three different datasets were analysed, the respective sample sizes (in the personal interviews) were relatively small, which makes it problematic to make inferences about other workforces within the banking industry. This, however, only applies to the two workforces in banking, where each group of workers had a sample size of slightly below 20. In particular, among the 'core workforce' in banking, which consisted of people working in different positions (and in different banks), it may be problematic to extrapolate the findings to an entire industry. In addition, this thesis was unable to do any systematic analysis of gender related issues. In fact, more research would be needed to assess the role of gender in regard to processes of individualisation and precarisation of working lives. Another limitation encountered in this study is related to the accessibility of certain groups of interviewees. While it was feasible to get in contact with people in their early and mid-careers in banking with the help of friends and colleagues, it proved to be impossible to do so for people in more senior roles. While attempts were made to access such people via Human Resources departments in banks, they were unwilling to provide me access to potential interviewees. It is also

important to note that another method of data analysis than the chosen grounded theory approach, as for instance a content analysis with predefined categories of analysis, would have come to a very different set of results. In my case, however, a grounded theory approach made possible a moving back and forth between the concepts developed in the theory chapters whilst remaining open to emerging patterns that may have not been anticipated beforehand. This method was particularly useful for identifying new orientations to time and work biography, orientations that emerged during the process of the empirical analysis.

More broadly, research is also needed to determine the significance and timeliness of the results in the context of wider changes in the economy and in the functioning of the modern state. As mentioned in the introduction, neoliberal policies that have enabled the financialisation of the economy have furthered existing social divisions. Increased pressures for labour market flexibility have (re-)introduced insecure, intermittent jobs with little social protection and few possibilities for progression at the heart of many organisations. Precariousness created by such changes has intensified and will intensify even more when social and legal entitlements are being reduced via past and current retrenchments of the welfare state. Given that these tendencies are likely to continue into the future, contemporary societies are likely to become even more divided and unequal. Critics are already warning that recent decades have witnessed the return to levels of income inequality in Britain unseen since Victorian times. In this context it is likely that secure employment offering appropriate social protection and liveable futures will be a 'good' accessible to a shrinking number of people.

Bibliography

Adam, B. (1990) *Time and social theory,* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Adam, B. (1995) *Timewatch: the social analysis of time,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Adam, B. (2003) 'Reflexive modernization temporalized', *Theory Culture & Society* 20 (2), 59-78.

Adam, B. (2004) 'Towards a new sociology of the future', <www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/futures/newsociologyofthefuture.pdf>.

Adam, B. (2006) 'Time', *Theory Culture & Society,* 23 (2-3), 119-126.

Adam, B. and Groves, C. (2007) *Future matters: action, knowledge, ethics,* Leiden: Brill.

Adams, M. (2003) 'The reflexive self and culture: a critique', *British Journal of Sociology* 54 (2), 221-238.

Adams, M. (2007) *Self and social change,* Los Angeles, London: Sage.

Adkins, L. (2003) 'Reflexivity: freedom or habit of gender?', *Theory Culture & Society* 20 (6), 21-42.

Adkins, L. (2008) 'From retroactivation to futurity: the end of the sexual contract?', *Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 16 (3), 182-201.

Adkins, L. (2009) 'Sociological futures: from clock time to event time', *Sociological Research Online* 14 (4).

Adkins, L. (2011) 'Practice as temporalisation: Bourdieu and economic crisis', in: S. Susen and B. S. Turner (eds.) *The legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: critical essays*, London, New York, Delhi: Anthem Press, pp. 347-366.

Adkins, L. and Jokinen, E. (2008) 'Introduction: Gender, living and labour in the fourth shift', *Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 16 (3), 138-149.

Adkins, L. and Skeggs, B. eds. (2004) *Feminism after Bourdieu,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Agger, B. (2011) 'iTime: labor and life in a smartphone era', *Time & Society* 20 (1) 119-136.

Aglietta, M. and Fernbach, D. (1979) *A theory of capitalist regulation: the US experience,* London: NLB.

Amin, A. ed. (1994) *Post-Fordism: a reader,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Ashiagbor, D. (2006) 'Promoting precariousness? The response of EU employment policies to precarious work', in: J. Fudge and R.J.E. Owens (eds.) *Precarious work, women and the new economy: the challenge to legal norms,* Oxford: Hart Publishing, pp. 77-97.

Atkinson, J. (1984) 'Manpower strategies for flexible organisations', *Personnel Management* 16 (8), 28-31.

Atkinson, J. and Gregory, D. (1986) 'A flexible future: Britain's dual labour force', *Marxism Today*, April, 12-17.

Atkinson, W. (2008) 'Not all that was solid has melted into air (or liquid): a critique of Bauman on individualization and class in liquid modernity', *Sociological Review* 56 (1), 1-17.

Atzert, T. and Mueller, J. E. eds. (2005) Immaterielle Arbeit und imperiale Souveränität. Analysen und Diskussionen zu Empire, Muenster: Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot.

Aulenbacher, B., Jacobsen, H., Voelker, S. and Funder, M. eds. (2007). *Arbeit und Geschlecht im Umbruch der modernen Gesellschaft,* Forschung im Dialog, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Ballard, D. I. (2007) 'Chronemics at work: Using socio-historical accounts to illuminate contemporary workplace temporality', in: B. A. Rubin (ed.) *Workplace temporalities,* Amsterdam, Oxford: Elsevier JAI, pp. 29-54.

Barker, D. L. and Allen, S. eds. (1976) *Dependence and exploitation in work and marriage,* London: Longman.

Barron, R. D. and Norris, G. M. (1976) 'Sexual divisions and the dual labour market', in: D. L. Barker and S. Allen (eds.) *Dependence and exploitation in work and marriage,* London: Longman, pp. 47-69.

Basso, P. and Donis, G. (2003) *Modern times, ancient hours: working lives in the twenty-first century,* London: Verso.

Bauman, Z. (1995) *Life in fragments: essays in postmodern morality,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Bauman, Z. (2000) *Liquid modernity,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2001) *The individualized society,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2002) *Society under siege,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society: towards a new modernity*, London: Sage.

Beck, U. (1994) 'The reinvention of politics: towards a theory of reflexive modernization', in: U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash, *Reflexive modernization: politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order,* Cambridge: Polity Press,pp. 1-55.

Beck, U. (1999) *World risk society,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, U. (2000) *The brave new world of work,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, U. (2008) „Jenseits von Klasse und Nation: Individualisierung und Transnationalisierung sozialer Ungleichheiten', *Soziale Welt* 59, 301-325.

Beck, U. and Beck -Gernsheim, E. (1995) *The normal chaos of love,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, U. and Beck -Gernsheim, E. (2001) *Individualization: institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences,* London: Sage.

Beck, U., Bonss, W. and Lau, C. (2003) 'The theory of reflexive modernization: problematic, hypotheses and research programme', *Theory Culture & Society* 20 (2)**,** 1-33.

Beck, U., Giddens, A. and Lash, S. (1994) *Reflexive modernization: politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, U. and Willms, J. (2004) *Conversations with Ulrich Beck,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beckenbach, N. and Van Treeck, W. E. (1994) *Umbrüche gesellschaftlicher Arbeit*, Göttingen: Verlag Otto Schwarz.

Berardi, F. (2005) Arbeit - Wissen – Prekarität, <eipcp.net/transversal/0704/bifo/de>.

Berardi, F. (2009a) *The soul at work: from alienation to autonomy,* Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Berardi, F. (2009b) *Precarious rhapsody: semiocapitalism and the pathologies of the post-alpha generation*, New York: Minor Compositions.

Berlant, L. G. (2011) *Cruel optimism,* Durham: Duke University Press.

Binkley, S. (2009) 'Governmentality, temporality and practice: from the individualization of risk to the "contradictory movements of the soul"', *Time & Society* 18(1), 86-105.

Blount, S. and Leroy, S. (2007) Individual temporality in the workplace: how individuals perceive and value time at work, in: B. A. Rubin (ed.) *Workplace temporalities,* Amsterdam, Oxford: Elsevier JAI, pp. 147-177.

Blyton, P., Hassard, J., Hill, S. and Starkey, K. (1989) *Time, work and organization,* London: Routledge.

Bologna, S. (2006) *Die Zerstörung der Mittelschicht. Thesen zur neuen Selbständigkeit.* Graz: Nausner & Nausner.

Boltanski, L. and Chiapello, E. (2005) *The new spirit of capitalism,* London: Verso.

Boltanski, L. and Thévenot, L. (2006) *On justification: economies of worth,* Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Boulin, J.-Y. (2001) 'Working time in the new social and economic context', *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* 7 (2), 197-210.

Bourdieu, P. (1963) 'La société traditionnelle: attitude à l'égard du temps et conduite économique', *Sociologie du travail* 1, 24-44.

Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a theory of practice,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1986) 'Illusion biographique', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 62-63, 69-72.

Bourdieu, P. (1990a) *In other words: essays towards a reflexive sociology,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990b) *The logic of practice,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1998a) *Practical reason: on the theory of action,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1998b) *Acts of resistance: against the new myths of our time,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2000a) *Die zwei Gesichter der Arbeit. Interdependenzen von Zeit- und Wirtschaftsstrukturen am Beispiel einer Ethnologie der algerischen Übergangsgesellschaft,* Konstanz: UVK.

Bourdieu, P. (2000b) 'The making of the economic habitus: Algerian workers revisited', *Ethnography* 1, 17-41.

Bourdieu, P. (2000c) *Pascalian meditations,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2000d) 'The biographic illusion', in: P. du Gay, J. Evans and P. Redman (eds.) *Identity: a reader*, London: Sage, pp. 299-305.

Bourdieu, P. (2001) *Masculine Domination*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2003) *Firing back: against the tyranny of the market 2,* New York, London: New Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2005) *The social structures of the economy,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2007) *Lohn der Angst: Flexibilisierung und Kriminalisierung in der "neuen Arbeitsgesellschaft",* Konstanz: UVK.

Bourdieu, P. (2010) *Algerische Skizzen,* Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Bourdieu, P. and Ferguson, P. P. (1999) *The weight of the world: social suffering in contemporary society,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. and Sayad, A. (1964) *Le Déracinement. La crise de l'agriculture traditionelle en Algérie*, Paris: Les éditions de minuit.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992) *An invitation to reflexive sociology,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Boyne, R. (2002) 'Bourdieu: from class to culture. In memoriam Pierre Bourdieu appreciation', *Theory Culture & Society* 19 (3), 117-128.

Brummer, A. (2009) *The crunch: how greed and incompetence sparked the credit crisis,* London: Random House Business Books.

Broeckling, U. (2007) *Das unternehmerische Selbst: Soziologie einer Subjektivierungsform,* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Buck, N., Gordon, I., Hall, P., Harloe, M. and Kleinman, M. (2002) *Working capital: life and labour in contemporary London,* London: Routledge.

Bude, H. and Willisch, A. E. (2008) *Exklusion. Die Debatte über die "Überflüssigen",* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Burchell, B., Ladipo, D. and Wilkinson, F. (2002) *Job insecurity and work intensification,* London: Routledge.

Butler, T. and Hamnett, C. (2009) 'Regenerating a Global City', in: R. Imrie, L. Lees and M. Raco (eds.) *Regenerating London: governance, sustainability and community in a global city,* London: Routledge, pp. 40-57.

Butler, T. and Savage, M. (1995) *Social change and the middle classes,* London: UCL Press.

Calhoun, C. (2006) 'Pierre Bourdieu and social transformation: lessons from Algeria', *Development and Change* 37 (6), 1403-1415.

Callewaert, S. (2006) 'Bourdieu, critic of Foucault: the case of empirical social science against double-game-philosophy', *Theory Culture & Society* 23 (6), 73-98.

Callinicos, A. (2010) *Bonfire of illusions: the twin crises of the liberal world,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Callon, M. (1997) *The laws of the markets,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Carrasco, C.and Mayordomo, M. (2005) 'Beyond employment: working time, living time', *Time & Society* 14 (2-3), 231-259.

Carrier, J. G. and Miller, D. (1998) *Virtualism: a new political economy,* Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Carvounas, D. and Ireland, C. (2008) 'Precariousness, the secured present and the sustainability of the future: learning from Koselleck and extrapolating from Elias', *Time & Society* 17 (2-3), 155-178.

Casper, S. E. (1999) *Constructing American lives: biography & culture in nineteenth-century America,* Chapel Hill, N.C.: London, University of North Carolina Press.

Castel, R. (2000) 'The roads to disaffiliation: insecure work and vulnerable relationships', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 24 (3), 519-535.

Castel, R. (2003) *From manual workers to wage laborers: transformation of the social question,* New Brunswick, N.J., London: Transaction Publishers.

Castel, R. (2008) *Die Metamorphosen der sozialen Frage: eine Chronik der Lohnarbeit,* Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft.

Castel, R. (2009) *La montée des incertitudes. Travail, protections, statut de l'individu*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Castel, R. (2010) 'Individu par excès, individu par défaut', in: P. Corcuff, Ch. Le Bart, and F. de Singly (eds.) *L'individu aujjourd'hui*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, pp. 293-305.

Castel, R. and Doerre, K. E. (2009) *Prekarität, Abstieg, Ausgrenzung. Die soziale Frage am Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts,* Frankfurt/New York:

Campus-Verlag.

Castells, M. (2000) *The rise of the network society,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Cavarero, A. (2000) *Relating narratives: storytelling and selfhood,* London: Routledge.

Clough, P. T. (2009) 'The new empiricism: affect and sociological method', *European Journal of Social Theory* 12 (1), 43-61.

Colebrook, C. (2009) 'Stratigraphic time, women's time', *Australian Feminist Studies,* 24 (59), 11-16.

Conaghan, J. (2006) 'Time to dream? Flexibility, families, and the regulation of working time', in: J. Fudge and R.J.E. Owens (eds.) *Precarious work, women and the new economy: the challenge to legal norms,* Oxford: Hart Publishing, pp. 101-129.

Cooper, M. (2008) The inequality of security: winners and losers in the risk society. *Human Relations,* 61, 1229-1258.

Corcuff, P., Le Bart, CH. and De Singly, F. (2010) *L'individu aujourd'hui*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

Crouch, C. (2011) *The strange non-death of neoliberalism,* Cambridge, Polity Press.

Crow, G. and Heath, S. (2002) *Social conceptions of time: structure and process in work and everyday life,* Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2005) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research,* Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications.

Doeringer, P. B. and Piore, M. J. (1971) *Internal labor markets and manpower analysis,* Heath Lexington Books.

Doerre, K., Lessenich, S. and Rosa, H. (2009) *Soziologie - Kapitalismus - Kritik. Eine Debatte,* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Doogan, K. (2009) *New capitalism? The transformation of work,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Du Gay, P. and Pryke, M. (2002) *Cultural economy: cultural analysis and commercial life,* London: Sage.

Duménil, G. and Lévy, D. (2005) 'Costs and benefits of neoliberalism: a class analysis', in: G. A. Epstein (ed.), *Financialization and the world economy,* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 17-45.

Dyer, S. and Humphries, M. (2002) 'Normalising workplace change through contemporary career discourse', *Advances in Mental Health* 1 (3), 158-169.

Elam, M. (1994) 'Puzzling out the Post-Fordist debate: technologies, markets and institutions', in: A. Amin (ed.) *Post-Fordism: a reader,* Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 43-70.

Elias, N. (1992) *Time: an essay,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Elliott, A. (2002) 'Beck's sociology of risk: a critical assessment', *Sociology* 36 (2), 293-315.

Epstein, G. A. 2005. *Financialization and the world economy,* Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.

Erben, M. (1993) 'The problem of other lives: social perspectives on written biography', *Sociology* 27 (1), 15-25.

Erturk, I., Froud, J., Johal, S., Leaver, A. and Williams, K. (2008) *Financialization at work: key texts and commentary,* London: Routledge.

Evans, M. (1993) 'Reading lives: how the personal might be social', *Sociology* 27 (1), 5-13.

Evans, M. (1998) *Missing persons: the impossibility of auto/biography,*

London: Routledge.

Evetts, J. (1992) 'Dimensions of career: avoiding reification in the analysis of change', *Sociology* 26 (1)**,** 1-21.

Fantone, L. (2007) 'Precarious changes: gender and generational politics in contemporary Italy', *Feminist Review* 87, 5-20.

Fine, B. (1990) *Segmented labour market theory: a critical assessment,* Thames Polytechnic, School of Social Sciences.

Fine, B. (1998) *Labour market theory: a constructive reassessment,* London: Routledge.

Fligstein, N. (2008) 'The finance conception of the firm', in: I. Erturk, J. Froud, S. Johal, A. Leaver and K. Williams (eds.) *Financialization at work: key texts and commentary,* London: Routledge, pp. 307-318.

Foster, J. B. and Magdoff, F. (2009) *The great financial crisis: causes and consequences,* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Foucault, M. (2007) *Security, territory, population: lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (2008) *The birth of biopolitics: lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fowler, B. (2000) *Reading Bourdieu on society and culture,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Fowler, B. (2004) 'Mapping the obituary: notes towards a Bourdieusian interpretation', in: L. Adkins, and B. Skeggs (eds.) *Feminism after Bourdieu,* Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 148-172.

Fowler, B. (2005) 'Collective memory and forgetting: components for a study of obituaries', *Theory Culture & Society* 22 (6)**,** 53-72.

Friedmann, J. and Wolff, G. (1982) 'World city formation: an agenda for research and action', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 6 (3), 309-344.

Fudge, J. and Owens, R.J.E. eds. (2006) *Precarious work, women and the new economy: the challenge to legal norms,* Oxford: Hart Publishing

Furlong, A. and Kelly, P. (2005) 'The Brazilianisation of youth transitions in Australia and the UK?', *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 40 (2), 207-225.

Galetto, M., Lasala, C., Magaraggia, S., Martucci, C., Onori, E. and Pozzi, F. (2007) 'A snapshot of precariousness: voices, perspectives, dialogues', *Feminist Review* 87, 104-112.

Gallie, D. (1998) *Restructuring the employment relationship,* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gamm, G., Hetzel, A. and Lilienthal, M. E. (2004) *Die Gesellschaft im 21. Jahrhundert. Perspektiven auf Arbeit, Leben, Politik*. 13. Darmstädter Gespräch. Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag.

Giddens, A. (1990) *The consequences of modernity,* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1994) 'Living in a post-traditional society', in: U. Beck, A. Giddens, and S. Lash, *Reflexive modernization: politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order,* Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 56-109.

Gill, R. and Pratt, A. (2008) 'Precarity and cultural work in the social factory? Immaterial labour, precariousness and cultural work', *Theory Culture & Society* 25 (7-8), 1-30.

Greater London Authority (GLA) London Datastore:

http://data.london.gov.uk/labour-market-indicators

Glennie, P. and Thrift, N. (1996) 'Reworking E. P. Thompson's "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism"', *Time & Society* 5 (3), 275-299.

Glorieux, I., Mestdag, I. and Minnen, J. (2008) 'The coming of the 24-hour economy? Changing work schedules in Belgium between 1966 and 1999', *Time & Society* 17 (1), 63-83.

Gordon, D. M. (1972) *Theories of poverty and underemployment,* Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books.

Gordon, D. M. (1977) *Problems in political economy: an urban perspective,* Lexington, Mass.: Heath.

Gorz, A. (1999) *Reclaiming work: beyond the wage-based society,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gottschall, K. and Voss, G. G. (2005) *Entgrenzung von Arbeit und Leben. Zum Wandel der Beziehung von Erwerbstätigkeit und Privatsphäre im Alltag,* München: Rainer Hampp Verlag.

Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci,* N.Y.: International Publishers.

Grey, C. (1994) 'Career as a project of the self and labor process discipline', *Sociology* 28 (2), 479-497.

Halford, S., Savage, M. and Witz, A. (1997) *Gender, careers and organisations : current developments in banking, nursing and local government,* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Hall, D. T. (2002) *Careers in and out of organizations,* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Hamnett, C. (2003) *Unequal city: London in the global arena,* London: Routledge.

Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2000) *Empire,* Cambridge, Mass., London, Harvard: University Press.

Harris, A. (2004) *Future girl: young women in the twenty-first century,* New York, London: Routledge.

Harvey, D. (1989) *The condition of postmodernity: an enquiry into the origins of cultural change,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Harvey, D. (2005) *A brief history of neoliberalism,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hassan, R. (2003) 'Network time and the new knowledge epoch', *Time & Society* 12 (2-3), 225-241.

Hassan, R. and Purser, R. E. (2007) *24/7: time and temporality in the network society,* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Business Books.

Hassard, J. (1989) 'Time and industrial sociology', in: P. Blyton, J. Hassard, S. Hill and K. Starkey *Time, work and organization,* London: Routledge, pp. 13-34.

Heise, U. K. (1997) *Chronoschisms: time, narrative and postmodernism,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Helleiner, E. (1994) *States and the re-emergence of global finance: from Bretton Woods to the 1990s,* Ithaca, NY, London: Cornell University Press.

Hochschild, A. R. (2003) *The managed heart: commercialization of human feeling,* Berkeley, Calif., London: University of California Press.

Hoerning, K. H., Ahrens, D. and Gerhard, A. (1997) *Zeitpraktiken: Experimentierfelder der Spätmoderne,* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Hoerning, K. H., Gerhard, A. and Michailow, M. (1998) *Zeitpioniere: flexible Arbeitszeiten, neuer Lebensstil,* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Hoffman, J. (2014) *Low pay in London*, Working paper 59, February 2014, Greater London Authority, GLA Economics.

Hudson, K. (2007) 'The new labor market segmentation: labor market dualism in the new economy', *Social Science Research* 36 (1), 286-312.

Hutton, W. (1996) *The state we're in,* London: Vintage.

Iedema, R. (2003) *Discourses of post-bureaucratic organization,* Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publisher.

Illouz, E. (2007) *Cold intimacies: the making of emotional capitalism,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Imrie, R., Lees, L. and Raco, M. (2009) *Regenerating London: governance, sustainability and community in a global city,* London: Routledge.

Jenkins, R. (2002) *Pierre Bourdieu,* London: Routledge.

Jensen, T. E. (2007) 'Witnessing the Future', *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 8 (1).

Jessop, B. (1994) 'Post-Fordism and the State', in: A. Amin, (ed.) *Post-Fordism: a reader,* Oxford: Blackwell, pp.251-279.

Jessop, B. (1995) 'The regulation approach: governance and Post-Fordism: alternative perspectives on economic and political change', *Economy and Society* 24 (3), 307-333.

Jessop, B. (2010) 'Time and space in the globalization of capital and their implications for state power', Rethinking Marxism 14 (1), 97-117.

Jessop, B. and Sum, N. (2006): *Beyond the regulation approach: putting capitalist economies in their place*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Jones, A., Abbott, D. and Quilgars, D. (2006) 'Social inequality and risk', in: P. Taylor-Gooby and J. Zinn (eds.) Risk in Social Science, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 228-249.

King, D. and Wood, S. (1999) 'The political economy of neoliberalism: Britain and the United States in the 1980s', in: H. Kitschelt, (ed.) *Continuity and change in contemporary capitalism,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 371-397.

King, V. (2009) *Zeitgewinn und Selbstverlust. Folgen und Grenzen der Beschleunigung,* Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag.

Kitschelt, H. (1999) *Continuity and change in contemporary capitalism,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Knorr-Cetina, K. and Bruegger, U. (2002) 'Traders' engagement with markets: a postsocial relationship', *Theory Culture & Society* 19 (5-6), 161-185.

Koselleck, R. (1989) *Vergangene Zukunft: zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten,* Frankfurt, Main: Suhrkamp.

Kraemer, K. (2009) 'Prekarisierung: Jenseits von Stand und Klasse?', in: R. Castel and K. E. Doerre (eds.) *Prekarität, Abstieg, Ausgrenzung. Die soziale Frage am Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts,* Frankfurt/New York: Campus-Verlag, pp. 241-252.

Kratzer, N. and Sauer, D. E. (2007) 'Entgrenzte Arbeit - gefährdete Reproduktion. Genderfragen in der Arbeitsforschung', in: B. Aulenbacher, H. Jacobsen, S. Voelker, and M. Funder, (eds.) *Arbeit und Geschlecht im Umbruch der modernen Gesellschaft,* Forschung im Dialog, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 235-249.

Krippner, G. R. (2005) 'The financialization of the American economy', *Socio-Economic Review* 3 (2), 173-208.

Kumar, K. (2005) *From post-industrial to post-modern society: new theories of the contemporary world,* Malden, Mass., Oxford: Blackwell.

Lapointe, K. (2010) 'Narrating career, positioning identity: career identity as a narrative practice', *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 77 (1), 1-9.

Lash, S. (1993) 'Reflexive modernization: the aesthetic dimension', *Theory Culture & Society* 10 (1), 1-23.

Lash, S. (1994) 'Reflexivity and its doubles: structure, aesthetics, community', in: U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash, *Reflexive modernization: politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order,* Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 110-173.

Lash, S. (2003) 'Reflexivity as non-linearity', *Theory Culture & Society* 20 (2), 49-57.

Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1987) *The end of organized capitalism,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lash, S. and Urry, J. (1994) *Economies of signs and space,* London: Sage.

Lawler, S. (2002) 'Narrative in social research', in: T. May (ed.) *Qualitative research in action,* London: Sage, pp. 242-258.

Lazonick, W. and O'Sullivan, M. (2008) 'Shareholder value and corporate governance', in: I. Erturk, J. Froud, S. Johal, A. Leaver and K. Williams (eds.) *Financialization at work: key texts and commentary,* London: Routledge, pp. 319-329.

Lazzarato, M. *Immaterial Labour*, <www.generation-online.org/c/fcimmateriallabour3.htm>.

Lazzarato, M. (2004) 'From capital-labour to capital-life', *Ephemera* 4 (3), 187-208.

Leccardi, C. (2005) 'Facing uncertainty: temporality and biographies in the new century', *Nordic Journal of Youth Research* 13 (2), 123-146.

Lipietz, A. (1995) 'Post-Fordism and democracy', in: A. Amin, (ed.) *Post-Fordism: a reader,* Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 338-357.

London's Poverty Profile: http://www.londonspovertyprofile.org.uk/, created by Trust for London and the New Policy Institute.

Lupton, D. (1999) *Risk,* London: Routledge.

Lupton, D. and Tulloch, J. (2003) *Risk and everyday life*, London, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Mackenzie, R. (2000) 'Subcontracting and the reregulation of the employment relationship: a case study from the telecommunications industry', *Work Employment and Society* 14 (4), 707-726.

Macpherson, C. B. (2011) *The political theory of possessive individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, Don Mills, Ont., Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marazzi, C. (2008) *Capital and language: from the new economy to the war economy,* Cambridge, Mass, London: Semiotext(e).

Marazzi, C. (2011) *Capital and affects: the politics of the language economy*, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Marcus, L. (1994) *Auto/biographical discourses: theory, criticism, practice,* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Marshall, T. H. and Bottomore, T. B. (1992) *Citizenship and social class,* London: Pluto Press.

Martin, R. (2002) *Financialization of daily life,* Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press.

Mascuch, M. (1997) *Origins of the individualist self: autobiography and self-identity in England, 1591-1791,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Massey, D. (2007) *World city,* Cambridge: Polity.

May, T. (2002) *Qualitative research in action,* London: Sage.

Mayhew, C., Quinlan, M. and Ferris, R. (1997) 'The effects of subcontracting/outsourcing on occupational health and safety: survey evidence from four Australian industries', *Safety Science* 25 (1-3), 163-178.

McLuhan, M. and Fiore, Q. (2008) *The medium is the massage,* London: Penguin.

McNay, L. (2000) *Gender and agency: reconfiguring the subject in feminist and social theory,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

McNay, L. (2008) 'The trouble with recognition: subjectivity, suffering, and agency', *Sociological Theory* 26 (3), 271-296.

Miller, N. and Morgan, D. (1993) 'Called to account: the CV as an autobiographical practice', *Sociology* 27 (1), 133-143.

Mitropoulos, A. (2005) *Precari-Us?,* <www.republicart.net/disc/precariat/mitropoulos01_en.htm>.

Morini, C. (2007) 'The feminization of labour in cognitive capitalism', *Feminist Review* 87, 40-59.

Mouzelis, N. (2007) 'Habitus and reflexivity: restructuring Bourdieu's theory of practice', *Sociological Research Online* 12 (6).

Mythen, G. (2004) *Ulrich Beck: a critical introduction to the risk society,* London: Pluto Press.

Mythen, G. (2005) 'Employment, individualization and insecurity: rethinking the risk society perspective', *Sociological Review* 53 (1), 129-149.

Nesvetailova, A. (2007) *Fragile finance: debt, speculation and crisis in the age of global credit,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nisbet, P. (1997) 'Dualism, flexibility and self-employment in the UK construction industry', *Work Employment and Society* 11 (3), 459-479.

Nowotny, H. (1994) *Time: the modern and postmodern experience,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

O'Carroll, A. (2008) 'Fuzzy holes and intangible time: time in a knowledge industry', *Time & Society* 17 (2-3), 179-193.

Odih, P. (2003) 'Gender, work and organization in the time/space economy of "just-in-time" labour', *Time & Society* 12 (2-3) 293-314.

Odih, P. (2007) *Gender and work in capitalist economies,* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Offe, C. and Keane, J. (1985) *Disorganized capitalism: contemporary transformations of work and politics,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

ONS Statistics (2012)

ONS Statistics (2013) Labour market indicators, at http://data.london.gov.uk/labour-market-indicators

Pai, H. H. (2004) 'The invisibles: migrant cleaners at Canary Wharf', *Feminist Review* 78, 164-174.

Paoli, P. and Merllie, D. (2001) *Third European survey on working conditions 2000,* Loughlinstown: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Paugam, S. (2000) *Le salarié de la précarité: les nouvelles formes de l'intégration professionnelle,* Paris: P.U.F.

Pellow, D. N. and Park, L. S.-H. (2002) *The Silicon Valley of dreams: environmental injustice, immigrant workers, and the high-tech global economy,* New York, London: New York University Press.

Perfect, David (2012) *Gender pay gaps 2012,* Briefing paper 6, Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Perrons, D., Fagan, C., McDowell, L., Ray, K. and Ward, K. (2005) 'Work, life and

time in the new economy: an introduction', *Time & Society* 14 (1), 51-64.

Perrucci, R. and Macdermid, S. (2007) 'Time and control in a 24/7 environment: clock time, work time, family time', in: B. A. Rubin (ed.) *Workplace temporalities,* Amsterdam, Oxford: Elsevier JAI, pp. 343-368.

Peterson, C. (1994) 'Narrative skills and social class', *Canadian Journal of Education* 19 (3), 251-269.

Pilario, D. (2005) *Back to the rough grounds of praxis.* Leuven Unitersity Press.

Piore, M. J. (1971) 'The dual labor market: theory and implications', in: D. M. Gordon (ed.) *Problems in political economy: an urban perspective,* Lexington, Mass.: Heath.

Piore, M. J. and Sabel, C. F. (1984) *The second industrial divide: possibilities for prosperity,* New York: Basic Books.

Plummer, K. (2001) *Documents of life 2: an invitation to a critical humanism,* London: Sage.

Polanyi, K. (2001) *The great transformation: the political and economic origins of our time,* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Poster, W. (2007) 'Saying "Good Morning" in the night: the reversal of work time in global ICT service work', in: B. A. Rubin (ed.) *Workplace temporalities,* Amsterdam, Oxford: Elsevier JAI, pp. 55-112.

Prasad, M. (2006) *The politics of free markets: the rise of neoliberal economic policies in Britain, France, Germany, and the United States,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Quilgars, D. A. and Abbott, D. (2000) 'Working in the risk society: families perceptions of, and responses to, flexible labour markets and the restructuring of welfare', *Community, Work and Family* 3 (1), 15-36.

Rees, G. and Fielder, S. (1992) 'The services economy, subcontracting and the new employment relations: contract catering and cleaning', *Work Employment and Society* 6 (3), 347-368.

Reiter, H. (2003) 'Past, present, future: biographical time structuring of disadvantaged young people', *Nordic Journal of Youth Research* 11 (3), 253-279.

Ricoeur, P. (1980) 'Narrative time', *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1), 169-190.

Ricoeur, P. (1984) *Time and narrative,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1991a) *From text to action: essays in hermeneutics II,* London: Athlone.

Ricoeur, P. (1991b) 'Life: a story in search of a narrator', in: M. J. Valdes (ed.) *A Ricoeur reader: reflection and imagination,* New York, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp. 425-437.

Ricoeur, P. (1991c) 'The human experience of time and narrative', in: M. J. Valdes (ed.) *A Ricoeur reader: reflection and imagination,* New York, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp. 99-116.

Ricoeur, P. (1991d) 'Narrative identity', *Philosophy Today* 35 (1), 73-81.

Ricoeur, P. (1992) *Oneself as another,* Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press.

Roberts, B. (2002) *Biographical research,* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Roberts, R. (2008) *The City: a guide to London's global financial centre,* London: Profile.

Rodgers, G. and Rodgers, J. (1989) *Precarious jobs in labour market regulation: the growth of atypical employment in Western Europe. Seminar on precarious and vulnerable forms of work: selected papers,* Geneva, Switzerland, International Institute for Labour Studies: Free University of

Brussels.

Rosa, H. (2003) 'Social acceleration: ethical and political consequences of a desynchronized high-speed society', *Constellations* 10 (1), 3-33.

Rosa, H. (2005) *Beschleunigung: die Veränderung der Zeitstrukturen in der Moderne,* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Rosa, H. and Scheuerman, W. E. (2009) *High-speed society: social acceleration, power, and modernity,* University Park, Pa., Pennsylvania: State University Press.

Rose, N. (1990) *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self*, London, New York: Routledge.

Rose, N. (1996) *Inventing our selves: psychology, power, and personhood,* Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, N. S. and Miller, P. (2008) *Governing the present: administering economic, social and personal life,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ross, A. (2008) 'The new geography of work: power to the precarious? *Theory Culture & Society* 25 (7-8), 31-49.

Rotenberg, R. (1992) 'The power to time and time to power', in: H. J. Rutz (ed.) *The politics of time,* Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association.

Rubin, B. A. E. (2007) *Workplace temporalities,* Amsterdam, Oxford: Elsevier JAI.

Rutz, H. J. (1992) *The politics of time,* Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association.

Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*, Harmondsworth, Penguin.

Sassen, S. (1996) 'New employment regimes in cities: the impact on immigrant workers', *New community* 22 (4), 579-594.

Sassen, S. (2001) *The global city: New York, London, Tokyo,* Princeton, N.J., Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Savage, M. (2000) *Class analysis and social transformation,* Buckingham: Open University.

Sennett, R. (1998) *The corrosion of character: the personal consequences of work in the new capitalism,* New York, London: Norton.

Sennett, R. (2006) *The culture of the new capitalism,* New Haven, Conn., London: Yale University Press.

Sennett, R. (2008a) *The craftsman,* London: Allen Lane.

Sennett, R. (2008b) *Labours of Love,* www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/feb/02/featuresreviews.guardianreview14.

Shelley, T. (2007) *Exploited: migrant labour in the new global economy,* London: Zed Books.

Skeggs, B. (1997) *Formations of class and gender: becoming respectable,* London: Sage.

Skeggs, B. (2004a) *Class, self, culture,* London: Routledge.

Skeggs, B. (2004b) 'Exchange, value and affect: Bourdieu and the "self"', in: L. Adkins, and B. Skeggs (eds.) *Feminism after Bourdieu,* Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 75-95.

Smollan, R. K., Sayers, J. G. and Matheny, J. A. (2010) 'Emotional responses to the speed, frequency and timing of organizational change', *Time & Society* 19 (1), 28-53.

Soysal, Y. N. L. (1994) *Limits of citizenship: migrants and postnational membership in Europe,* Chicago, Ill., London: University of Chicago Press.

Standing, G. (2011) *The precariat: the new dangerous class,* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Stanley, L. (1992) *The auto/biographical I: the theory and practice of feminist auto/biography,* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Stanley, L. (1993) 'On auto biography in sociology', *Sociology* 27 (1), 41-52.

Storey, J., Cressey, P., Morris, T. and Wilkinson, A. (1997) 'Changing employment practices in UK banking: case studies', *Personnel Review,* 26 (1-2), 24-42.

Susen, S.and Turner, B. S. (2011) *The legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: critical essays,* London: Anthem.

Sweetman, P. (2003) 'Twenty-first century dis-ease? Habitual reflexivity or the reflexive habitus', *Sociological Review* 51 (4), 528-549.

Tabboni, S. (2001) 'The idea of social time in Norbert Elias', *Time & Society,* 10 (1), 5-27.

Tallon, A. (2010) *Urban regeneration in the UK,* London: Routledge.

Taylor, S. and Tyler, M. (2000) 'Emotional labour and sexual difference in the airline industry', *Work Employment and Society* 14 (1), 77-95.

Taylor-Gooby, P. (2001) 'Risk, contingency and the Third Way: evidence from the BHPS and qualitative studies', *Social Policy & Administration* 35 (2), 195-211.

Taylor-Gooby, P., Dean, H., Munro, M. and Parker, G. (1999) 'Risk and the welfare state', *British Journal of Sociology* 50 (2), 177-194.

Taylor-Gooby, P. and Zinn, J. (2006) *Risk in social science,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Terranova, T. (2004) *Network culture: politics for the information age,* London: Pluto Press.

Thompson, E. P. (1967) 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past & Present* 38, 56-97.

Thrift, N. (2000) 'Performing cultures in the new economy' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90 (4), 674-692.

Thrift, N. (2001) '"It's the romance, not the finance, that makes the business worth pursuing": disclosing a new market culture', *Economy and Society* 30 (4), 412-432.

Thrift, N. J. (2005) *Knowing capitalism,* London: Sage.

Tonkiss, F. (2006) *Contemporary economic sociology: globalization, production, inequality,* London: Routledge.

Toolan, M. J. (2001) *Narrative: a critical linguistic introduction,* London: Routledge.

Toulouse, C. (1992) 'Thatcherism, class politics, and urban development in London', *Critical Sociology* 18 (1), 55-76.

Truc, G. (2005) 'Une disillusion narrative? De Bourdieu à Ricoeur en sociologie*', Tracés. Revue des Sciences humaine* 8, 47-67.

Tsianos, V. and Papadopoulos, D. (2006) *Precarity: a savage journey to the heart of embodied capitalism,* <eipcp.net/transversal/1106/tsianospapadopoulos/en>.

Tulloch, J. and Lupton, D. (2005) *Risk and everyday life,* London: Sage.

Urry, J. (2002) 'Time, complexity and the global', in: G. Crow and S. Heath (eds.) Social *conceptions of time: structure and process in work,* Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp. 11-23.

Valdes, M. J. Ed. (1991) *A Ricoeur reader: reflection and imagination,* New York, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Virno, P. and Hardt, M. (1996) *Radical thought in Italy: a potential politics,* Minneapolis, Minn., London: University of Minnesota Press.

Virtanen, P., Luikkonen, V., Vahtera, J., Kivimaki, M. and Koskenvuo, M. (2003) 'Health inequalities in the workforce: the labour market core-periphery structure', *International Journal of Epidemiology* 32 (6), 1015-1021.

Volker, S. (2008) 'Uncertain circumstances: (im)practicable care', *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 18 (2), 282-306.

Vosko, L. F., MacDonald, M. and Campbell, I. (2009) *Gender and the contours of precarious employment,* London: Routledge.

Voss, G. (1994) 'Das Ende der Teilung von Arbeit und Leben? An der Schwelle zu einem neuen gesellschaftlichen Verhältnis von Betriebs- und Lebensführung', in: N. Beckenbach and W. E. Van Treeck (eds.) *Umbrüche gesellschaftlicher Arbeit*, Göttingen: Verlag Otto Schwarz, pp. 269-294.

Voss, G. (2004) 'Werden Arbeitskräfte zu Unternehmern ihrer selbst? Thesen zu Arbeit, Lebensführung und Gesellschaft im 21. Jahrhundert', in: G. Gamm, A. Hetzel, and M. E. Lilienthal, (eds.) *Die Gesellschaft im 21. Jahrhundert. Perspektiven auf Arbeit, Leben, Politik*. 13. Darmstädter Gespräch. Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, pp. 135-155.

Voelker, S. (2008) 'Entsicherte Verhältnisse: (Un)Möglichkeiten fürsorglicher Praxis', Berliner Journal für Soziologie 18 (2), 282-306.

Weber, M. (2002) *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism,* Los Angeles, Calif., Oxford: Blackwell.

Welch, R. and Leighton, P. (1996) 'Individualizing employee relations: the myth of the personal contract', *Personnel Review* 25 (5), 37-50.

West, S. (2004) *Portraiture,* Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Westenholz, A. (2006) 'Identity, times and work', *Time & Society* 15 (1), 33-55.

Wigfield, A. (2001) *Post-Fordism, gender and work,* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Wills, J. (2008) 'Making class politics possible: organizing contract cleaners in London', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32 (2), 305-323.

Wills, J. (2009a) 'Subcontracted employment and its challenge to labor', *Labor Studies Journal* 34 (4), 441-460.

Wills, J. (2009b) 'The Living Wage', *Soundings Journal* 42, 33-46.

Wills, J., Datta, K., Evans, Y., Herbert, J., May, J. and McIlwaine, C. (2010) *Global cities at work: new migrant divisions of labour,* London: Pluto.

Wills, J., May, J., Datta, K., Evans, Y., Herbert, J. and McIlwaine, C. (2009) 'London's migrant division of labour', *European Urban and Regional Studies* 16 (3), 257-271.

Wittel, A. (2001) 'Toward a network sociality', *Theory Culture & Society* 18 (6), 51-76.

Woodall, J. (1997) *Portraiture: facing the subject,* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Wrench, J. and Satnam Virdee (1995) 'Organising the unorganised: "race", poor work and trade unions', *Research Paper in Ethnic Relations* No. 21, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviews with authors (journalists) and editors of career portraits

Date of interview	Name	Role / Job	Gender	Newspaper
11.03.2009	Karin Bauer	Editor	Female	Der Standard
10.03.2009	Johanna Zugmann	Editor	Female	Die Presse
17.08.2009	Rachel Bridge	Journalist	Female	The Times
31.08.2009	Kathy Foley	Journalist	Female	The Times
28.08.2009	Rose Costello	Journalist	Female	The Times (Irish Times)
11.11.2008	Leo Benedictus	Journalist	Male	The Guardian
03.12.2008	Ian Wylie	Editor	Male	The Guardian
03.12.2008	Graham Snowdown	Journalist	Male	The Guardian
06.03.2009	Chris Arnot	Journalist	Male	The Guardian
21.09.2009	Mike Southon	Journalist	Male	The Financial Times
30.09.2009	Jonathan Moules	Journalist	Male	The Financial Times
28.08.2009	Andrew Bolger	Journalist	Male	The Financial Times
14.09.2009	Tom Standage	Journalist	Male	The Economist
09.10.2009	Matthew Bishop	Journalist	Male	The Economist

Appendix 2: Characteristics of analysed individuals in career portraits

Austrian newspaper No 1: *Der Standard*

Date of publication	Gender	Age	Education	Industry	Position / Role
03/02/07	female	48	university	tax consultancy	management
10/02/07	male	not mentioned	university	energy	business manager
24/02/07	female	38	not mentioned	aviation	management
03/03/07	male	30	university	career services	management
10/03/07	male	not mentioned	apprenticeship	banking	management
17/03/07	female	26	university	food/drink	management
07/04/07	male	63	university	technical sciences	university professor
28/04/07	couple	n/a	university	energy	business manager
05/05/07	female	not mentioned	not mentioned	construction	management
12/05/07	male	not mentioned	university	food/drink	management
07/07/07	male	28	university	music	business manager
01/09/07	male	37	university	food/drink	management
08/09/07	male	37	not mentioned	media/communication	business manager
15/09/07	female	47	not mentioned	tourism	business manager
13/10/07	female	not mentioned	university	pharma/biotech	management
03/11/07	male	33	not mentioned	aviation	management
10/11/07	male	42	not mentioned	transport	management
01/12/07	female	not mentioned	university	food/drink	business manager
07/12/07	male	40	university	diplomacy	diplomat
12/12/07	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	food/drink	management
02/02/08	female	not mentioned	university	construction	management
09/02/08	female	39	university	cleaning	management
16/02/08	female	39	university	entertainment	management
01/03/08	couple	n/a	university	wine	business manager
08/03/08	male	not mentioned	university	public policy	business manager
22/03/08	male	35	university	banking	management
05/04/08	female	45	secondary school	media/communication	management
12/04/08	female	49	not mentioned	arts	business manager
07/02/09	male	not mentioned	university	electronics	chief executive
18/04/09	female	33	university	public policy	management

Austrian newspaper No 2: *Die Presse*

Date of publication	Gender	Age	Education	Industry	Position / Role
08/02/08	male	39	university	pharma/biotech	board of directors
02/05/08	male	44	not mentioned	entertainment	management
16/05/08	male	54	university	health services	business manager
06/06/08	male	52	university	IT	chief executive
13/06/08	male	36	other course	wine	management
11/07/08	male	55	not mentioned	pharma/biotech	business manager
01/08/08	male	55	university	food/drink	board of directors
01/08/08	female	59	not mentioned	food/drink	business manager
08/08/08	female	46	university	arts	management
15/08/08	male	41	secondary school	energy	business manager
15/08/08	male	51	university	energy	business manager
29/08/08	female	34	university	fashion, jewellery, perfumes	business manager
05/09/08	male	36	university	banking	management
05/09/08	male	45	not mentioned	banking	business manager
12/09/08	male	36	university	arts	management
12/09/08	male	46	university	art industry	management
19/09/08	female	39	not mentioned	cars	business manager
19/09/08	male	33	apprenticeship	cars	management
03/10/08	female	37	university	research administration	business manager
17/10/08	female	33	university	electronics	management
17/10/08	male	51	university	furniture	board of directors
07/11/08	male	35	secondary school	tourism	management
07/11/08	female	28	university	fashion, jewellery, perfumes	management
05/12/08	female	38	university	health services	management
05/12/08	female	44	university	health services	management
12/12/08	male	42	university	banking	board of directors
12/12/08	female	51	secondary school	banking	management
26/12/08	female	not mentioned	secondary school	tourism	management
09/01/09	male	74	not mentioned	construction	business manager
09/01/09	male	29	university	fashion, jewellery, perfumes	business manager

British newspaper No 1: *The Economist*

Date of publication	Gender	Age	Education	Industry	Position / Role
23/06/07	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	education/training	business manager
06/10/07	female	not mentioned	university	media/communication	management
03/11/07	male	43	university	textile	chairman
24/11/07	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	politics	politician
22/12/07	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	IT industry	chief executive
22/12/07	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	media/communication	business manager
12/01/08	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	oil	chief executive
16/02/08	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	steel	chief executive
15/03/08	female	42	university	steel	chief executive
22/03/08	male	not mentioned	university	media/communication	chief executive
05/04/08	male	not mentioned	secondary school	banking	chairman
10/05/08	male	32	university	car industry	chief executive
07/06/08	male	62	not mentioned	media/communication	business manager
19/07/08	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	aviation	chief executive
09/08/08	male	60	not mentioned	media/communication	chief executive
25/10/08	male	63	not mentioned	politics	commissioner
29/11/08	male	59	not mentioned	food/drink	chief executive
13/12/08	male	55	not mentioned	steel	chief executive
31/01/09	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	banking	chairman
14/02/09	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	public policy	trade union organiser
05/03/09	male	64	not mentioned	electronics	business manager
21/03/09	male	44	university	aviation	business manager
28/03/09	female	not mentioned	university	media/communication	chief executive
11/04/09	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	food/drink	chief executive
25/04/09	male	not mentioned	university	cars	chief executive
09/05/09	female	not mentioned	university	energy	business manager
23/05/09	female	not mentioned	not mentioned	international aid	business manager
27/06/09	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	military	chief executive
11/07/09	male	not mentioned	university	IT	chief executive
06/02/10	male	not mentioned	university	IT	chief executive

British newspaper No 2: *The Financial Times*

Date of publication	Gender	Age	Education	Industry	Position / Role
04/04/09	male	not mentioned	university	veterinary	business manager
14/04/09	male	47	not mentioned	clocks	managing director
18/05/09	female	not mentioned	university	furniture	business manager
16/06/09	male	52	apprenticeship	engineering	chief executive
29/06/09	female	not mentioned	not mentioned	home equipment	business manager
30/06/09	male	not mentioned	university	music	business manager
30/06/09	female	47	not mentioned	food/drink	chief executive
05/08/09	female	38	secondary school	wellness	business manager
12/08/09	male	not mentioned	no formal education	oil	management
30/11/09	male	61	not mentioned	pharma/biotech	chief executive
07/12/09	male	52	not mentioned	steel	chief executive
18/01/10	male	54	university	fashion, jewellery, perfumes	chief executive
25/01/10	male	71	apprenticeship	fashion, jewellery, perfumes	chairman
15/02/10	male	62	secondary school	IT	chief executive
01/03/10	male	82	university	toys	chairman
08/03/10	male	65	university	IT	chief executive
10/03/10	female	37	university	food/drink	managing director
22/03/10	male	56	university	food/drink	chief executive
29/03/10	male	45	university	aviation	chief executive
05/04/10	male	53	university	food/drink	chief executive
19/04/10	male	35	university	fashion, jewellery, perfumes	executive board
17/05/10	male	53	university	banking	chief executive
24/05/10	male	62	university	IT	chief executive
31/05/10	male	55	university	construction	chief executive
14/06/10	male	57	university	cars	chief executive
28/06/10	male	50	university	media/communication	chief executive
05/07/10	male	66	university	IT	chairman
12/07/10	male	59	university	banking	chief executive
01/08/10	male	48	not mentioned	chemical	chief executive
16/08/10	male	47	university	banking	managing partner

British newspaper No 3: *The Guardian*

Date of publication	Gender	Age	Education	Industry	Position / Role
21/04/07	female	31	secondary school	gastronomy	cafe owner
30/06/07	male	39	apprenticeship	construction	stonemason
14/07/07	male	56	apprenticeship	construction	site manager
18/08/07	male	not mentioned	university	media/communication	media reporter
25/08/07	male	50	university	diplomacy	honorary consul
01/12/07	male	61	not mentioned	forestery	community forester
12/01/08	female	44	other course	wellness	masseuse
26/01/08	female	25	university	public relations	publicist
09/02/08	male	29	university	architecture	architect
03/05/08	male	40	not mentioned	film	stuntman
21/06/08	female	29	university	consultancy	financial consultant
05/07/08	female	not mentioned	not mentioned	social work	social worker
12/07/08	male	47	not mentioned	postal services	postman
30/08/08	male	not mentioned	no formal education	comedy	stand up comedian
06/09/08	female	40	university	health services	dentist
04/10/08	male	34	secondary school	sport	personal trainer
22/11/08	male	56	university	health services	public health manager
29/11/08	female	not mentioned	university	sciences	forensic scientist
10/01/09	female	not mentioned	university	fashion, jewellery, perfumes	fashion designer
17/01/09	male	60	university	postal services	courier
31/01/09	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	security	relief officer
07/02/09	male	not mentioned	secondary school	books	literary agent
21/02/09	male	57	secondary school	exploration	explorer
28/02/09	male	not mentioned	no formal education	food/drink	head chef
07/03/09	female	29	university	books	librarian
30/05/09	male	59	university	fishing	fisherman
13/06/09	male	46	not mentioned	health services	plastic surgeon
17/10/09	male	not mentioned	apprenticeship	plumbing	plumber
24/10/09	female	not mentioned	no formal education	cleaning	refuse collector
31/10/09	male	42	not mentioned	cleaning	window cleaner

British newspaper No 4: *The Times*

Date of publication	Gender	Age	Education	Industry	Position / Role
29/02/04	female	45	secondary school	fashion, jewellery, perfumes	business manager
29/02/04	male	51	not mentioned	media/communication	business manager
30/05/04	male	28	university	fishing	business manager
31/07/05	female	42	not mentioned	food/drink	business manager
29/01/06	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	media/communication	business manager
23/07/06	male	21	secondary school	media/communication	business manager
30/07/06	male	36	apprenticeship	shipbuilding	business manager
06/08/06	male	32	no formal education	retailing	business manager
27/08/06	female	not mentioned	not mentioned	textile	business manager
29/10/06	male	53	university	wine	business manager
05/08/07	male	53	university	food/drink	business manager
25/11/07	female	40	secondary school	food/drink	business manager
27/01/08	male	not mentioned	university	furniture	business manager
30/03/08	male	26	university	sport	business manager
20/04/08	male	44	secondary school	recruitment	business manager
27/04/08	male	44	university	tourism	business manager
25/05/08	female	40	secondary school	food/drink	business manager
29/06/08	female	not mentioned	university	media/communication	business manager
20/07/08	male	61	not mentioned	transport	business manager
27/07/08	male	48	not mentioned	eco farming	business manager
24/08/08	male	29	not mentioned	veterinary	business manager
28/09/08	male	36	university	security	business manager
26/10/08	male	54	not mentioned	energy	business manager
28/12/08	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	food/drink	business manager
04/01/09	male	not mentioned	not mentioned	tourism	business manager
18/01/09	male	not mentioned	secondary school	arts	business manager
01/02/09	female	39	university	security	business manager
15/02/09	male	38	university	waste/recycle	business manager
22/02/09	male	35	secondary school	furniture	business manager
01/03/09	female	not mentioned	not mentioned	media/communication	business manager

Appendix 3: Example Career Portraits

Example Career Portrait No. 1: *The Guardian*, 07.02.2009

Booked up
He may receive 100 novels a week but, literary agent Anthony Harwood tells Leo Benedictus, nothing beats discovering a bestselling author ... except maybe a good lunch

By Leo Benedictus
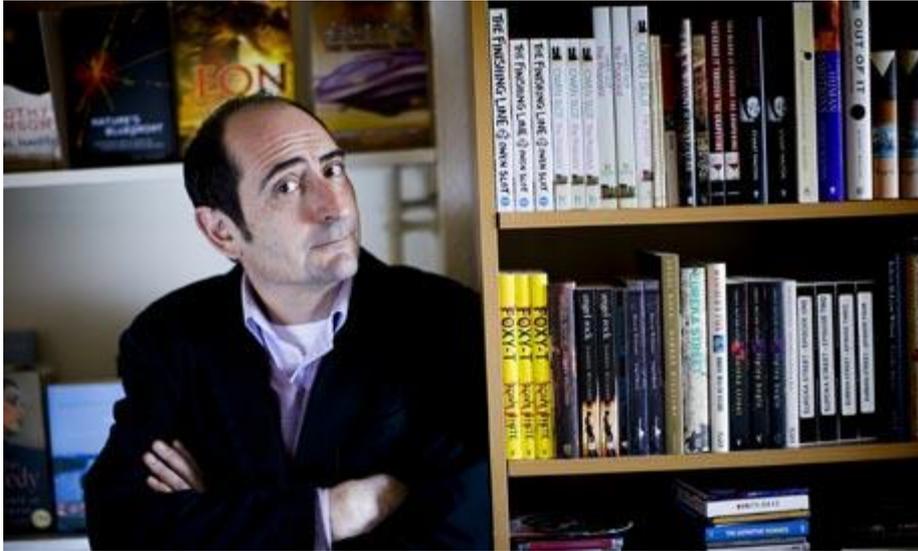
Anthony Harwood: "We look at every script. None of them are any good!" Photograph: Felix Clay

Among the gastro-caffs and new delis of west Oxford, on an anonymous door beside a hairdressers, there is a buzzer. I press it, and within seconds Antony Harwood has bounded down the stairs through a hail of dog barks. "Welcome," he quips, "to our salubrious and luxurious office." You'd never guess he was a literary agent.

And though there is little luxury on show, the premises of the Antony Harwood Literary Agency are certainly salubrious enough. In his room, the bookcases are covered with his clients' novels, shop-fresh and impeccably displayed. Behind them is his desk, and it too is large and neat and clean. Even his own appearance - immaculate in jeans, jumper and shirt - emits that soigne nonchalance which speaks of success. Or is intended to. But in Harwood's case definitely does. Because from this tidy little attic, he haggles out publishing, film and other deals for a Booker winner (Alan Hollinghurst), a Costa winner (AL Kennedy), and many profitable others. But profit, he insists, and insists again, is only a by-product of what he really looks for.

"The joy of this job is doing whatever you like," he says with obvious enthusiasm. "My taste is my criteria. That's all that matters when I'm looking at something: do I like it?"

Very nice. But does that really make him money? He is nodding wildly before I have finished the question. "If you make the decision thinking you're making a commercial decision then you're absolutely going to get it wrong. And of course publishers get it wrong all the time. I always think the money follows your instincts, if you've got the right instincts. And if you haven't you're in the wrong job. You can only really fight for, and commit to, stuff you believe in."

And if anybody knows how much stuff there is out there to choose from, it is a literary agent. In modern publishing it is people like Harwood, and not the publishers themselves, that have

become the first port of call for aspiring writers. As a result, he receives more than 100 novels for his consideration every week. That's about 15 a day, every single day.

Surely most of them must enter the bin unread? "No, we look at everything," he insists, stubbing his finger hard into the desk. And how many are any good? "None of them!" he cries. "None of them are any good! But you still look just in case." And, though most of Harwood's 50 or so clients came to his attention through some other route, his conscientiousness in dredging through the slush pile does occasionally pay off.

One early experience, in particular, still lingers in his memory. "I read the submission letter and thought, good professional letter, no timewasting," he recalls. "I read the first two paragraphs, walked in to see a colleague who sat in the next office and said, 'I might retire on this.' Because I just knew that this guy was absolutely the business." And indeed he was, because that author, Peter F Hamilton, is now Britain's bestselling science fiction writer.

Ironically, it was by writing hopeful letters of his own that Harwood's career in the book world began. Describing himself as "lazy, probably a little arrogant, and really only interested in guitars and girls", he was not a success at school, leaving aged 18 with one A-level. Though he himself had no desire to write, books were his one respectable passion, so he wrote to every publisher he could find, asking for any work they could spare. Two months later, he arrived for his first day as a junior production clerk at the Dickensian offices of Chatto & Windus.

"It was spectacularly old-fashioned," he remembers gleefully. "I had to put written permission in to wear jeans, because the ledgers were dusty and I was just ruining my suit. And it wasn't just that most people there had been to Oxbridge, they'd been to one of two or three colleges. But it was kind of fantastic ... Two days into the job I thought, this is just the most exciting, fantastic, brilliant thing!" His eyes are wide as ink wells. I can just imagine how many susceptible publishers must have been swept away by such infectious hyperbole.

The young Harwood worked hard, and rose fast. He moved up into the publicity department, then led it, and finally he became an editor. "Which is what I really wanted to be," he says, "because that's the key job in publishing." After nearly seven years, however, he felt it was time to move on somewhere new. Although he had no idea where. "So I went to see a very distinguished agent, Gillon Aitken, thinking he might have heard of jobs coming up," he continues. "Then the next day he rang up and said, 'I'm sorry. It didn't occur to me until after you left, but I'm setting up an agency. Why don't you come and start off as an agent?' And I just thought, yeah, sounds interesting. Why not?"

That was 24 years ago, since when Harwood has twice changed agencies before deciding, in 2000, that it was time to set up his own. "I was getting increasingly unhappy in the last few years of my job," he recalls. "Then the thought of setting up on my own seized me one day and the unhappiness evaporated instantly." The decision to move from London to Oxford came three years later. "Neither [I nor my colleague James Macdonald Lockhart] have any connections with the city," Harwood chuckles. "But a literary agent in Oxford: everybody goes, 'Oh yes, of course.' A literary agent in Swindon: they go, 'Really?' It's snobbery."

However, in the way it charges its clients, most of whom are novelists, Antony Harwood Ltd is entirely conventional. From sales of UK rights, Harwood takes the standard commission of 15%, rising to 20% on American and translation sales. "Unless you were a client of mine before I put my rates up," he points out, "when you're still on 10%. Isn't that nice of me?" No doubt it is. But with some deals totalling £100,000 or higher, these are still not trifling sums.

To earn his cut, therefore, Harwood takes on many duties. He offers support and opinions, when his clients need it. Then he drives the sale price up, of course, by using his knowledge of the industry to find at least two publishers who are willing to compete for a book - and pitching it to them in the best possible way. "Timing," he insists, "is a really important thing."

Besides this, he needs a smattering of publishing law, in order to understand the contracts he works with. And - though he serves his clients' interests only, and detests the label "middle-man"

- he can also act as mediator, maintaining amicable relationships over artistic or other issues that might otherwise get out of hand. "If you have trouble with your editor or publisher," he explains, "it's easier for me to say, 'He really minds about this.'"

None of this would be possible, of course, if Harwood did not keep up his contacts within the book trade - often, as the industry stereotype has it, over a meal and a glass or two of wine. "People joke about the publishing lunch, but it's incredibly important," he says. "It really is, joking aside. You could sit in their office and have a cup of coffee, but if you want to get to know someone you need them to relax ... And it's one of the few perks of the job, a good lunch now and again."

With everything else he has to get through, therefore, the one thing he does very little of up here is reading. This he saves for evenings and weekends. And he gave up using stacks of paper long ago. "I don't like handling them if I crash out on the sofa," he explains, "or in bed at home, where a lot of the reading is done." Instead, he uses the gadget on his desk.

"Have you seen these?" Harwood asks, sliding it forward excitedly, like a child with a new Christmas present. "It's quite good. Marks out of 10, I think probably six-and-a-half." On the leather-bound screen he hands me is a page of fairly legible grey-on-grey typescript, eerily unlit, with a button for turning the page. It is impressive, I agree, but could be more so.

And the one thing it will never do, of course, is get him to the end any faster. "I am a painfully slow reader," he admits. "Which is a struggle, because there's a lot to read ... And the better the book, the slower I go. If I'm enjoying something I just slow down more and more. And - I hope not sounding too precious - if there's a great line, I want to read that again." The writer in me is nodding furiously. "It's like ..." Harwood splutters, looking for the right words. "Like ... ahh!" He abandons the search, and releases a little exhalation of delight.

Curriculum vitae

Pay "Six figures plus, per annum. I'm very lucky."

Hours "Civilised. 10am-6pm weekdays, give or take. And I'm guessing an additional 16 hours of reading and other stuff on top of that each week, minimum."

Work-life balance "Fantastic. It's perfect for me. There are many other things I enjoy doing and I can do them because I am my own boss. If I'm going to bunk off and do something else one morning, I can make up for it later on."

Best thing "Working with some extraordinarily talented people. It's really exciting."

Worst thing "All the others."

Example Career Portrait No. 2: *Financial Times*, 04.08.2009

From hair flair to spa star

By Rebecca Knight

As a teenager, Gretchen Monahan (above) worked part-time at Yolanda's, a busy women's boutique and salon in the Boston suburb of Waltham. She steamed dresses, answered the phone, sewed labels, and waited tables in the café.

The almost magical way in which a manicure or a new frock could make a woman feel better about life made a deep impression. "I loved that place," says Ms Monahan, who was raised by her extended family and grew up in modest circumstances. "It was a head-to-toe woman's haven where women networked, pampered and renewed."

For Ms Monahan, whose glossy good looks and lively personality belie her shrewd business sense, Yolanda's offered a model of what was possible. "In high school, I was never going to be an A student," she says over lunch at the fashionable Boston restaurant Radius. "I wanted to get out and get a job. But I needed to find a way to take what I was passionate about and link it with an actual career."

Now, 20 years later, Ms Monahan is the founder and head of Gretta Enterprises, which includes Grettacole, a chain of high-end salons and spas, Gretta Luxe, a set of designer boutiques, and Gretta Style Studio in New York city, a by-appointment-only fashion consulting business. This year, Gretta Enterprises, her beauty and fashion empire**,** is expected to take in sales of more than $15m, according to industry sources. She appears regularly on national television to advise on fashion and trends.

Ostentatious mega-spas and splashy salons have become popular, but Grettacole spas are smaller, more intimate affairs. They target a sophisticated client with speciality services such as peppermint pedicures, hot-stone massages and custom facials.

But success came after many stumbles along the way.

At 19, Ms Monahan left the Fashion Institute of Technology after one year because she ran out of money. At 20, after graduating from beauty school, she had a stint managing a family-run salon in which she upset the other hair stylists so badly that they all walked out.

"I didn't know I was being a pain," she says. "The walk-out was key because I realised I needed to learn how to teach and motivate people."

Ms Monahan was so sought-after that she was the salon's highest earner. But after the walk-out she made training new stylists a priority. "For every client that was on the waiting list for me, I needed to get a young person up to speed," she says.

With the salon's fortunes restored, she wanted to expand beyond haircuts to hair colour, nails and skincare services, an innovative idea at that time. "I wanted to start a luxury boutique, but it had been a family mom-and-pop business for so long. It wasn't the owner's vision."

With help from her family and her then business partner, Nicole Leone, Ms Monahan took out a bank loan of $23,000. Ms Leone's parents lent $50,000, and Ms Monahan, by now aged 24, ran up $10,000 in credit card debt to get a salon operating. It opened in 1995 in Wellesley, an upmarket town west of Boston. She called it Trillium, the name of a wild flower, because she was "too embarrassed to use my name in the business in case it failed". Trillium's prices were steep, but the salon offered a luxurious shampoo, and head and neck massages with each haircut and high-end haircare products.

At first, prospective clients were put off by the premium prices. "It was: 'If you're not in the city, you must not be any good'," she recalls. But eventually, Ms Monahan's talent and the luxury on offer won a loyal following and in the first year she paid off her loans and turned a profit.

One client had connections to an upmarket mall and suggested she lease a bigger space there. Ms Monahan says many of her business ventures have started with conversations with clients. This is a perk of working in small but high-powered and well-connected Boston. "Doing hair in this town is like getting my MBA," she says, adding that she has often been able to tap into clients' networks for referrals. The Atrium Mall – home to such shops as Tiffany's and Henri Bendel – represented a swanky address. "I was finally realising the whole dream," she says.

The spa opened in 1998 and was packed from the start. Ms Monahan was working 15 hours a day, six days a week splitting her time between her two salons, both called Grettacole – a combination of Ms Monahan's and her business partner's nicknames. Ms Leone is still a master stylist at Grettacole, after selling her half of the business to Ms Monahan.

In the first year, Grettacole operated at a loss. The second year, it broke even before making a small profit the next year. After that, profits rose 18 to 20 per cent in those early years.

Ms Monahan – who earned an executive MBA from Harvard – has now opened several spas and branched out into clothing. She has a presenting job as a style guru for the Rachael Ray Show and Bravo's Tim Gunn Guide to Style, and she has a line of shoes sold on QVC, the shopping network. Last year, she opened a flagship spa at Foxwoods Resort and Casino in Connecticut. Ms Monahan would like eventually to expand her brand by linking with a hotel group or other larger company. She says the downturn in the global economy and the dramatic fall in equities present an opportunity for this type of partnership. "Private equity is looking for a place to invest, and boutique, human brands are well positioned as an attractive investment opportunity in this economy."

Such a deal would require external management with expertise in finance, real estate and human resources to step in, but she has no plans to leave the business. "I want to stay involved," she says. "My strengths are culture, style, vision and creative. To scale the stores effectively and maintain brand integrity, we would have to grow big while feeling small."

Example Career Portrait No. 3: *Der Standard*, 17.03.2007

Einmal Osteuropa und retour: die nunmehr rechte Hand des Kelly-Geschäftsführers in Österreich, Irene Havran.

Foto: Hendrich

Mit Mut zum Neustart

Irene Havran sah sich an der gläsernen Decke angelangt und startete noch einmal „von vorne" und in Richtung Osteuropa. Es hat sich gelohnt.

Monika Bachhofer

So wie sie Schlagzeug, Gitarre und Flöte spielt, so vielseitig ging es Irene Havran auch in ihrer Berufslaufbahn an. Eigentlich ist die Mittzwanzigerin ja studierte Erzieherin mit dem Schwerpunkt Frühförderung, hat aber auch die Businesskundschaft der Austrian Airlines als Teamleiterin betreut.

Nach einem rasanten Start und drei Jahren im AUA-Vielfliegerbereich waren dort aber keine baldigen weiteren Karriere-Höhenflüge zu erwarten, was ihr trotz hohen Sozialprestiges und eines gesicherten Angestelltenjobs zu wenig war.

„Ich bin einfach an die sprichwörtliche gläserne Decke gestoßen", stellt Havran im Rückblick ohne großes Bedauern fest. Sie wollte nämlich sowieso etwas „mit mehr wirtschaftlichem Touch" machen, ging deshalb ein Jahr brav auf die Wirtschaftsuni und jobbte parallel dazu als Seminarassistentin.

Gerade einmal eine Woche ohne Job, stieß Havran auf einen Kurs der ÖSB Consulting, die Lehrgänge für Osteuropa-Experten anbot, welche neben Sprach- und EDV-Modulen auch Know-how über die derzeit noch sehr unterschiedlichen rechtlichen und fiskalpolitischen Rahmenbedin-

KARRIERE der Woche

gungen offerierten. Im Fokus: vor allem die Tschechische Republik und Ungarn.

Da habe es bei ihr „so richtig Klick gemacht", erinnert sich Havran. An Osteuropa interessiert war sie, arbeitslos auch. Letzteres aber „leider zu kurz", um so eine Qualifizierung genehmigt zu bekommen", wie man ihr beim Arbeitsmarktservice bedauernd mitteilte.

Faktisch „mutwillig arbeitslos sein" ging Havran aber gegen den Strich, und sie blieb „hartnäckig" genug, um in das vorausgehende Ausleseverfahren mit 70 Arbeitssuchenden, in der Überzahl Akademiker, aufgenommen zu werden. Unter den zwanzig, die es schlussendlich schafften: die damals 24-Jährige. Es folgten monatelanges intensives Tschechisch-Büffeln in den Bereichen Wirtschaft, Recht, Kommunikation, Präsentation sowie Projekt- und interkulturelles Management.

Gelohnt hat sich der Mut zum Neustart: Mit dem „Glück der Fleißigen" präsentierte Havran im Rahmen eines Unternehmenspraktikums beim Snackhersteller Kelly ihre Marktanalysen so überzeugend, dass sie von Kelly-Chef Wolfgang Hötschl auf der Stelle für das Exportgeschäft im Osten angeheuert wurde. Ein Dreivierteljahr hieß es dann in Tschechien und der Slowakei Kunden akquirieren, Offerte legen und Analysen erstellen.

Mittlerweile ist Havran wieder zurück nach Österreich geholt worden und noch eine Stufe weiter auf der Karriereleiter gekommen. Sie hält von Wien aus den Kontakt zur Fabrik in Bosnien und lässt es als „rechte Hand der Kelly-Geschäftsleitung" ordentlich knistern.

Appendix 4: Interviews with core and periphery workforce in London's banking industry

A) Core workforce: Group of bankers

Date of Interview	Name*	Job	Gender	Age	Bank	Ethnic origin
20/08/2009	Larry	Financial analyst	male	26	Citibank	Indian
06/10/2009	Brian	Trader	male	32	Citibank	White British
30/10/2009	Lorna	Risk analyst	female	28	Commerzbank	White European
05/11/2009	Margret	Compliance officer	female	29	Citibank	Indian
05/11/2009	Dora	Internal auditor	female	34	Citibank	White European
17/11/2009	Nicolas	Trader	male	30	Merrill Lynch	White European
17/11/2009	Andrew	Technology officer	male	32	Deutsche Bank	White British
24/11/2009	Sue	Risk analyst	female	26	Barclays	White European
08/12/2009	Nigel	Risk analyst	male	39	Commerzbank	White Other (New Zealand)
10/12/2009	Daniel	Compliance officer	male	40	Citibank	White British
04/02/2010	Philip	Business analyst	male	25	Barclays	White Other (New Zealand)
05/02/2010	Norman	Solution architect	male	26	Commerzbank	White British
19/02/2010	Raymond	Compliance officer	male	25	Citibank	White British
03/03/2010	David	Risk manager	male	31	Commerzbank	White Other (US)
08/06/2010	Paul	Investment banker	male	40	JP Morgan	White European
10/06/2010	Cecilia	Risk analyst	female	28	Not given	White European

*the names of the interview participants have been altered in order to guarantee anonymity

B) Periphery workforce: Group of cleaning workers

Date of Interview	Name*	Job	Gender	Age	Bank	Ethnic origin
03/10/2009	Afolabi	Cleaning worker	male	34	KPMG	Black Portuguese
03/10/2009	Godwin	Cleaning worker	male	58	Lloyds	Black African
04/10/2009	Eze	Cleaning worker	male	36	Citibank	Black African
06/10/2009	Adenike	Cleaning worker	female	62	Merrill Lynch	Black African
08/10/2009	Darren	Cleaning worker	male	Not given	Citibank	Black African
12/10/2009	Ebo	Cleaning worker	male	42	Goldmann Sachs	Black African
21/10/2009	Morowa	Cleaning worker	female	40	JP Morgan	Black African
30/10/2009	Madu	Cleaning worker	male	43	Nomura	Black African
14/11/2009	Efia	Cleaning worker	female	33	Merrill Lynch	Black African
16/11/2009	Peter	Cleaning worker	male	46	State Street	Black African
18/11/2009	Kakra	Cleaning worker	female	37	Goldmann Sachs	Black African
25/11/2009	Oni	Cleaning worker	female	59	JP Morgan	Black African
26/11/2009	Adeola	Cleaning worker	female	60	Goldmann Sachs	Black African
04/02/2010	Mira	Cleaning worker	female	55	Tower 42	Black African
06/02/2010	Beatrix	Cleaning worker	female	59	Morgan Stanley	Black African
12/02/2010	Kodwo	Cleaning worker	male	49	Morgan Stanley	Black African
01/03/2010	Ajagbe	Cleaning worker	male	49	Goldmann Sachs	Black African
06/03/2010	Richard	Cleaning worker	male	50	Royal Bank of Scotland	Black African
12/03/2010	Abena	Cleaning worker	female	59	Royal Bank of Scotland	Black African

*the names of the interview participants have been altered in order to guarantee anonymity

Endnotes

[i] Own translation of: "...ils ont en eux-mêmes, ou croient avoir en eux-mêmes, les supports nécessaires pour assurer leur indépendence sociale" (Castel 2009: 431).

[ii] Own translation of: "J'appelle précisement 'individus par défaut' ceux auxquels manquent les ressources nécessaires pour assumer positivement leur liberté d'individus" (Castel 2009: 436).

[iii] Own translation of: "[Verzeitlichung der Zeit meint, dass] über Dauer, Sequenz, Rhythmus und Tempo von Handlungen, Ereignissen und Bindungen erst im Vollzug, und das heißt: in der Zeit selbst entschieden wird, sie folgen keinem vordefinierten Zeitplan mehr" (Rosa 2005: 365).

[iv] Own translation of: "An diesem Umschlagpunkt ändert sich zugleich die Qualität der (biografischen und historischen) Zeit selbst: Individuelle wie kollektive Zeitmuster und –perspektiven werden situativ und kontextabhängig mit dem Fluss der Zeit immer wieder neu bestimmt ('verzeitlicht')"(Rosa 2005: 50).

[v] Own translation of: "Tatsächlich ist der vorkapitalistischen Wirtschaft nichts fremder als die Vorstellung von einer Zukunft als einem Feld des Möglichen, dessen Erforschung und Beherrschung dem Kalkül anheimgestellt ware" (Bourdieu 2000a: 32).

[vi] Own translation of: "Die Idee ist es, darzustellen welche Berufswege Menschen haben, welche Antreiber sie haben und wie eigentlich ihr Karrierebegriff ist. Es muss ja nicht jeder Mensch den Karrierebegriff haben: „ich werde Chef". Wir porträtieren auch irrsinnig viele Menschen die sagen: ,ich möchte meiner Leidenschaft folgen', das ist mein Karrierebegriff" (Interview with Karin Bauer from *Der Standard,* March 2009).

[vii] Own translation of: "Die Porträts sind als role models, als Ermutigung, als Beispiel wie man es schaffen kann gedacht, weil ich denke dass es immer Mut macht von jemandem zu lesen der etwas geschafft hat" (Interview with Johanna Zugmann from *Die Presse,* March 2009).

[viii] Own translation of: "Also ich war damals beim Standard, von Gründung an bis zum Jahr 2004, wo ich dann im Dezember zur Presse gewechselt hab und 2005 hat die Presse mit diesem neuen Karriereteil noch einmal eine starke Offensive gestartet und das auch stark beworben und somit wurde er zum dritten Player auf dem Markt" (Interview with Johanna Zugmann from *Die Presse,* March 2009).

[ix] Own translation of: "Der Schwerpunkt liegt im Bereich Wirtschaft aber es kommt auch immer wieder mal vor, dass man einen Künstler, einen Designer, einen Kulturmanager porträtiert" (Interview with Karin Bauer from *Der Standard,* March 2009).

[x] Own translation of: "Im Zuge einer Privatisierung übernimmt er ein mikrobiologisches Labor in Linz, das er in kürzester Zeit zu einem führenden heimischen Anbieter für hochwertige mikrobiologische Analyse verwandelt" (Career portrait from *Die Presse*, 11.07.08).

[xi] Own translation of: "Wir hatten uns bereits über Jahre auf diesen Tag vorbereitet." Der frühere Monopolist führte marktwirtschaftliche Unternehmensstrukturen ein, behandelte seine Abnehmer wie Kunden, sprich Könige" (Career portrait from *Die Presse*, 15.08.08).

[xii] Own translation of: "Nach einem rasanten Start und drei Jahren im AUA-Vielfliegerbereich waren dort aber keine baldigen weiteren Karriere-Höhenflüge zu erwarten, was ihr trotz hohen Sozialprestiges und eines gesicherten Angestelltenjobs zu wenig war" (Career portrait from *Der Standard*, 17.03.07).

[xiii] Own translation of: "Wir haben das Unternehmen zuerst einmal vier Jahre zu dritt geführt und sehr unterschiedliche Auffassungen darüber gehabt, wie das zu geschehen habe. Mein Vater war einem sehr konservativen, fast autoritären Führungsstil verhaftet. Mein Bruder und ich hingegen wollten neue Ideen umsetzen" (Career portrait from *Der Standard*, 28.04.07).

[xiv] Own translation of: "Einige Tage nach einem Wien-Wochenende im Jänner – ein Weihnachtsgeschenk an seine Freundin – erhielt der gebürtige Römer von einem Headhunter das Jobangebot, die Abteilung ,Financial Institutions International Sales' der RZB zu leiten. Ein Zufall zur rechten Zeit, denn bis dato stand Österreich nicht gerade auf seiner beruflichen Wunschliste" (Career portrait from *Die Presse*, 05.09.2008).

[xv] Own translation of: "Nach dem Studium wollte der westliche Freigeist eigentlich ins Ausland, verschickte weltweit Bewerbungen und wurde immerhin zweimal auf Kosten von Headhuntern zu Bewerbungsgesprächen nach Frankfurt geladen. Es wurde dann aber doch ein heimisches

Unternehmen, als Key Account Manager landete er bei der Ersten Österreichischen Spar-Casse, was alles andere als geplant war" (Career portrait from *Die Presse*, 10.08.2008).

xvi Own translation of: "Im Februar 2005 kam dann wieder einmal ein schicksalsschwerer Anruf. Der damalige Vizerektor Georg Eichler meinte, er sei an einem heißen Projekt dran, ob sie nicht am nächsten Tag kommen könne. Freilich, wohin? Nach Kuala Lumpur. Am nächsten Vormittag saß ich im Flugzeug" (Career portrait from *Die Presse*, 05.12.2008).

xvii Own translation of: "Von Karriereplänen hält sie aber ohnehin wenig: Es hat sich einfach immer ein Thema aufgetan. Dann heißt es, mobil im Kopf sein und die Chance ergreifen" (Career portrait from *Die Presse*, 03.10.2008).