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Generation in transition: Youth transitions among native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey

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8: Transitions After School:

Trajectories after Leaving Education

1. Introduction

The previous chapters have pursued a retrospective approach to understand youth transitions. Our analysis showed that transitions are to some extent pre-conditioned by educational stratification, whereby young people develop distinct compositions and volumes of capital in distinct institutional settings and exposed to divergent structures. Their transitions may be further shaped by early exposure to the labour market through various combinations of work and study. The previous chapter introduced the idea of social trajectories, during which young people develop different forms and volumes of capital crucial for their transitions. The comparative analysis showed differences across settings; in Amsterdam, young people who were able to develop different forms of capital during their vocational or academic tracks relied on these resources during their transitions, while, in Strasbourg, those who were unable to develop such resources had to resort to low-skilled jobs, even if they had a diploma.

The current chapter will take the investigation one step further by analysing the TIES data to see how the trajectories of native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey developed after they left education. The most common way to study school to transitions is usually looking at the pace to enter to the first job. The analysis of the TIES Survey by Lessard et al.(2012) showed that in Strasbourg the average months to find the first job for native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey is 3.56 months while the comparison group took 3.38 months. In Amsterdam for the descendants of Turkish immigrants the mean months were 2.10 versus 1.70 for the comparison group. They found education level to be the main determinant of the pace to enter the first job; tertiary education increasing the likelihood of a smooth transitions. Hence in the current chapter rather than concentrating on the transition to first job, the emphasis will be put on how the transitions of the respondents turned out up until the time of the TIES Survey and the qualitative interviews. In doing so all the job history of the respondents will be taken into account focusing on the stability achieved in the current job. Since most

of our respondents were in their 20s and early 30s, this means their transitions were still open to change, so the findings of the current chapter should be taken as reflecting only they had accomplished so far.

In looking at how respondents' labour market transitions had (or had not) developed, we will concentrate only on the respondents who had left school and exclude those who were still studying. First we will utilize the TIES data to map different labour market trajectories, using a technique called latent class analysis. This quantitative method explores clusters in the data set in a descriptive way. We will then unfold the mechanisms behind these clusters referring to the qualitative interviews. This will highlight the various complex structural and individual factors that interact to shape the transitions of native born descendants of immigrants in both of the cities.

2. Typologies of Transitions in Previous Studies

An ongoing debate among youth sociologists is whether transition processes still take the form of traditional sequences or divert from conventional patterns. Traditional transitions are generally described as smooth processes where young people follow institutionally predictable, linear pathways from school to work (Evans and Heinz, 1994). In other forms of transitions, young people might divert from linear trajectories by falling into cyclical unemployment, by shifting between different statuses of employment or by conducting an unexpected move out of their expected biographies.

Prior to building new typologies, it is helpful to consider some examples from the previous literature. A few significant studies have developed typologies of transition patterns in order to understand the changing nature of youth transitions today. Evans and Heinz (1994) based their typology on a comparative analysis of Germany and the UK. This typology was later modified and developed by Plug and du-Bois Reymond (1996) as an extension of the YOYO project, a comparative study of youth policy and participation in nine European countries including the Netherlands. In so-called yo-yo transitions, transition types were created based on the "complexity" of the transition pattern as well as the "length and direction of transition period" (p. 108). YOYO research used qualitative data collected from young people who had signed up in youth centres to get their transitions back on track. Using biographical interviews, the researchers came up with 6 typologies: the first is "smooth" transitions, in which young people made a smooth transition into the labour market following the institutional logic, while in "stagnant", "downward" and "institutionally repaired" transitions, they experienced unemployment, instability and even social exclusion (in the case of stagnant transitions). Yet the authors also acknowledge a positive type in "alternative" transitions where young people go outside of institutional logic but into upward mobility, applying active choices and strategies. Du-Bois Reymond had already termed such young people as "trendsetters", (du Bois-Reymond, 1998) who "aim

to incorporate their personal lifestyles into their working lives” (p. 67). The idea of trendsetters and choice biographies thus underscores Ulrich Beck’s theory of the “individualization of risks”, where the increasing risks and insecurities embedded in today’s transitions force young people to embrace a more active role and navigate their own biographies, in turn creating a shift from traditional forms of school to work transition (Atkinson, 2007).

In another recent study of youth transitions in Bristol (UK), Bradley and Devadason (2008) have developed typologies for the early labour market careers of young people to determine whether youth transitions have become “de-standardized”. Using qualitative interviews, the authors analyse whether young people now experience unstable careers which shift them between statuses of employment, unemployment and inactivity, or whether their career path simply stabilizes gradually after graduation. They devised a typology of four different types: the first, “stickers”, refer to those who had a certain career objective soon after leaving education. Stickers are not young people who are stuck in a job, but as those who stick at a job and settle in a career after shifting between a few jobs or statuses. In that sense, stickers are similar to the smooth transitions defined by the YOYO study. Bradley and Devadason’s next category are “shifTERS”, young people who make various cyclical movements between employment, training, unemployment, part-time jobs, and travel and have not settled into a long term career or job. The authors underline that shifTERS might “actively make choices rather than reactively respond to labour market conditions” (p. 123). Yet being a shifter also has a negative connotation as young people may not be able to settle to a career not only due to their own choices but also due to labour market conditions, and these transitions can be perceived similarly to downward or stagnant transitions in the YOYO study. In order to incorporate the “choice” or agency element in the typologies, the Bristol study proposed two other types; “settlers” and “switchers”. These are those who make a conscious decision to settle down in a career by either building a family (settlers) or by going back into further training, traveling or starting a new occupation (switchers). The switcher category is thus closest to the description of “alternative” transitions in the YOYO study. Bradley and Devadason conclude that their typology embraces the complexity embedded in young people’s transitions today, underlining the variety of transition experiences they observed in Bristol. Neither the role of agency nor the influence of structure is overemphasized in their research. They agree with previous studies that emphasize the emergence of choice biographies, but they also highlight that traditional, institutionally driven biographies still predominate.

The studies mentioned thus interpret divergence from traditional or linear trajectories as both a negative and a positive outcome. This suggests why some young people experience shifts and non-traditional transitions while others don't, and how the structural settings as well as individual motivations configure the transition trajectories.

Santelli (2012) proposes a transition typology focusing on the descendants of Algerian immigrants in Lyon (France). However, she is not concerned with shifts from traditional to non-traditional biographies, as were the above-mentioned studies. However, her typology does evoke similar pathways, including “stable employed”, “socially excluded”, “insecure moving towards emancipation”, “invisible proletarians” and “insecure graduates” (Santelli, 2012). Santelli’s typology is original since she focuses on descendants of immigrants but also scrutinizes the influence of parents and neighbourhood characteristics as significant explanatory factors in transition patterns. Santelli’s sample was almost equally distributed among the five typologies she had reported, yet only two fifths had achieved stable careers; those in stable transitions and the invisible proletariat, who reproduced the same conditions as their fathers through clinging on to their labour market careers.

Yet Santelli’s study is rather unusual in directly addressing the transitions of descendants of Algerian immigrants. The other studies mentioned often struggled to theorize the experience of immigrants or their descendants in terms of the typologies they proposed. Bradley and Devadason did analyse the representation of “ethnic minority youth” in their typologies and highlighted that these young people were more likely to present shifter-type careers, though the researchers emphasized that the numbers in their sample were too small to be reliable. In the YOYO study, Plug and Du-Bois developed an additional category called “other” transitions in order to categorize cases which were unclear or had not yet developed. It was in this category that they placed a group of Roma girls, from Portugal, who were “difficult to classify” because “they were subject to norms and structures that were fundamentally different from the standard model of youth transitions” (p. 121). The authors experienced difficulty classifying these girls’ transitions since they seem to be well integrated within their “ethnic” community but experience exclusion from “normal” modern educational and occupational careers as they get married very early, dropping out of education and the labour market. However, in an early comparative study, Evans and Heinz (1994) show that, in the UK, for some young women from a working class background, having a child and settling down was an active strategy for transition to adulthood in the case of stagnant careers, unemployment, or educational drop-out (Wallace, 1987).

From this brief survey, it can be concluded that the majority of these youth studies did not focus specifically on the descendants of immigrants or make a systematic analysis of the social class background of immigrant parents as is more usual in second generation research or social stratification research. The current chapter aims to develop a typology for the native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey, taking into account both the institutional and social structures that shape their transitions. In fact, the perception of what is an acceptable transition appears to differ according to an individual’s social milieu, habitus, different access to forms of capital, and, most especially, the structural and institutional settings in which the transitions are situated.

Comparative studies of national contexts highlight that, while the effect of microstructures such as neighbourhoods and cities should be taken into account, macrostructures such as institutional differences as well as employment regimes have a significant impact on divergences in youth transition patterns (Devadason, 2008, Walther, 2006). Thus while finding a job after 6 months of searching in Strasbourg might be discerned as an acceptable or a smooth transition, in Amsterdam this might be interpreted as a stagnant transition experience. Factors such as the length of job search or an offer of a permanent contract differ across settings for all young people. Furthermore, in the times of economic crisis, these conditions deteriorate; primarily for new entrants into the labour market.

In order to emphasize the importance of comparative structural differences, this chapter will first explore transition patterns across both city settings among both the subject and comparison groups in the survey data. The qualitative interviews will then focus on the experiences of native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey.

3. A New Transition Typology from the TIES Survey

Choice of Indicators

To explore the different patterns of transitions in Amsterdam and Strasbourg, the TIES survey was analysed using latent class analysis (LCA). Latent class analysis is an exploratory method that avoids the imposition of an arbitrary typology (See Appendix for IV for details of the LCA Analysis). It classifies respondents into different clusters based on similarities of behavioural patterns or experiences, depending on their answers to selected categorical variables (McCuthcheon, 1987). LCA was thus applied to the TIES data to derive empirical clusters. First, a number of categorical variables were selected; those which provided detailed information on the job histories of the respondents. The sample was then limited to those who had left education including both the native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey and the comparison group. Separate analyses were conducted for currently active and inactive respondents and for those in Amsterdam and in Strasbourg (see Table 23 in Appendix IV).

The same set of variables was selected from Amsterdam and Strasbourg TIES datasets to predict the latent class variables. Based on the literature review, we can talk about two principal pathways; one is following smooth or traditional transitions and the other is shifting between different statuses. Both of these pathways might result from personal motivations or structural conditions. In the qualitative interviews, the majority of respondents highlighted that they wanted to achieve stable working arrangements, while not all of them were able to do so. Therefore, the analysis of those who were active included variables that would inform the typology with regards to stability achieved in the current job. Previously, Fenton and Dermott (Fenton and Dermott, 2006) have analysed the number of jobs young people had since they left school to explore labour market stability,

controlling for years of schooling, job characteristics and education level to understand the nature of job switching. The analysis in this study, takes the number of full-time jobs since leaving school, number of years since schooling and time in current job as proxies for frequency of job change. It also includes whether respondents were offered permanent contracts or promotions as measures of job stability. Finally, it also includes subjective appraisal and future plan variables, such as whether respondents were content with how their careers had turned out or what they planned to do in the future to assess career pathway satisfaction.

The analysis among inactive respondents includes both the unemployed and those who were not seeking work. The variables for this group were chosen to help understand the nature of their status and if their unemployment was long-term, including whether the inactive respondents had been away from school for more or less than 5 years, whether they have been unemployed for more or less than 12 months, whether they had ever been employed before, and whether they were also taking care of household tasks. An additional variable inquired after their future orientations; whether they were planning on entering the labour market, studying or staying inactive. This variable assessed whether respondents were satisfied with their inactive status at the time of the interview and whether their future orientations were distinct.

Once these variables were put into the models, latent class analysis classified the respondents into different clusters. A model postulating three latent classes fits the data adequately for all four analyses (see Table 24 in Appendix IV). This decision was based on both best model fit statistics (AIC, BIC, and chi-square significance levels) and the most sensible and substantive interpretation. Even though we do not initially know the actual size and nature of these classes, latent class analysis facilitates the inference of such clustering based on the similarities in the responses (McCutcheon, 1987). Furthermore, the analysis enables estimation of the proportion of cases in each class, the probability of membership of a certain class for each individual, and the most prevalent classes. In the following section, we will elaborate on the results of our modelling.

Tables 16 and 17 illustrate the final distribution of clusters in both cities together with the prevalence of each class in the sample and the values of the variables estimating the clusters. The left hand side lists the categorical variables used to predict the latent class variable. Next to each categorical variable are the estimated probabilities of having these conditions, which are conditional on latent class. Immediately below the latent classes, we see the estimated relative size of each latent class.

3.1. Active Transition Trajectories*Table 16: Conditional probabilities of transition trajectories: active*

		Amsterdam			Strasbourg		
		Latent Classes: Active			Latent Classes: Active		
Categorical variables used to predict the latent classes:		1. Early Stable	2. Stable	3. Shifting	1. Early Stable	2. Stable	3. Shifting
	%	28%	55.3%	16.7%	27%	36%	37%
	N	72	142	43	56	75	77
More than 5 years since leaving school		0.42	0.64	0.47	0.08	1.00	0.59
Working in current job for more than 3 years		0.52	0.58	0.39	0.29	1.00	0.12
Had other full-time jobs before current job		0.00	0.88	0.85	0.00	0.34	0.73
Unemployed for longer than 3 months		0.27	0.27	0.57	0.25	0.35	0.58
Has fixed contract in current job		0.56	0.61	0.46	0.67	0.93	0.51
Has been promoted in current job		0.39	0.42	0.21	0.26	0.38	0.08
Feels job matches education level		0.79	0.93	0.39	0.73	0.78	0.82
Feels career turned out worse than expected		0.26	0.00	0.76	0.29	0.50	0.39
Future Plans:							
Continue current job		0.41	0.34	0.06	0.32	0.33	0.30
Amsterdam: promotion, better job or start own business /Strasbourg: promotion or better job		0.03	0.17	0.30	0.32	0.36	0.28
Amsterdam: work less hours or part-time /Strasbourg: start own business		0.33	0.33	0.48	0.19	0.06	0.26
Further training		0.13	0.08	0.12	0.17	0.18	0.11
Other		0.10	0.10	0.05	0.00	0.07	0.05

Source: TIES Survey 2008

The analysis was run separately for Amsterdam and Strasbourg, using almost identical variables. Similar (but not identical) clusters emerged, with distinct distributions in each city. The most prevalent class of active respondents in Amsterdam is latent class two (stable transitions), while in Strasbourg both latent class one (shifting transitions) and latent class two (stable transitions) have similar proportions.

Active Latent Class 1: Early Stable Transitions: Most respondents in the “early stable” category were still working in their first jobs and had already managed to achieve some stability. In Amsterdam, they had a higher probability of having been out of school for more than five years than in Strasbourg. In both cities, the members of this latent cluster had high estimated probability of wanting to continue in their current jobs. The transitions of respondents in this cluster most closely resemble the “traditional biographies” identified in previous studies (Evans and Heinz, 1994), in which young people follow institutionally designed pathways from school to work and then stay in their first jobs.

Active Latent Class 2: Stable Transitions: Though respondents in the “stable” cluster had changed through a few jobs since leaving school, they had achieved the most stable positions. In both settings, they had the highest likelihood of being employed on a permanent contract, of having worked in the same job more than three years and having been offered a promotion. The major contrast between the two settings was the satisfaction rates; while those in Amsterdam are almost exclusively satisfied with their careers, those in Strasbourg have highest estimated probability of being dissatisfied. This finding is hard to interpret based on the quantitative research alone, and will be further explored through the qualitative interviews. This latent class is similar to the “stable transitions” defined by Bradley and Devadason (2008) and to the “smooth” transitions defined by the YOYO study (Walther et al., 2006), in which young people follow a career pathway through a few jobs then settle in one.

Active Latent Class 3: Shifting Transitions: Members of the “shifting” cluster had the lowest likelihood of having achieved permanent job contracts. They also had a high estimated probability of having left school more than 5 years ago. Again, there was a discrepancy between settings with regard to satisfaction rates, and the qualitative interviews will help to interpret the mechanisms and motivations behind these shifting transitions. The estimated probability being dissatisfied was higher in Amsterdam compared to Strasbourg. This latent class resonates with the “shifter” identified by Bradley and Devadason (2008); those young people who had not been able to pursue a stable pathway in their labour market careers.

3.2. Inactive Transition Trajectories

The inactive respondents were grouped according to the duration of their unemployment and future orientations towards work (see Table 17).

Table 17: Conditional probabilities of transition trajectories: inactive

		Amsterdam			Strasbourg		
		Latent Classes - Inactive			Latent Classes - Inactive		
		1. Inactive	2. Stagnant	3. In- transition	1. Inactive	2. Stagnant	3. In- transition
	%	40%	44%	16%	33.3%	29.7%	37%
	N	30	33	12	28	25	31
Had a paid job before		0.87	1	0.69	0.4	0.92	0.78
More than 5 years since leaving school		0.73	0.6	0.46	0.49	0.95	0.33
Unemployed less than 12 months		0.33	0.35	1	0.82	0.25	0.75
Homemaker		0.60	0.34	0	0.20	0.66	0
Future Plans:							
Start working		0	1	1	0	0.77	1
Further study		0.53	0	0	0.6	0.05	0.07

Source: TIES Survey 2008

Inactive Latent Class 1: Inactive: The members of the “inactive” cluster had little motivation to start working in the future. In Amsterdam, this group had a high probability of having been out of school longer than 4 years and unemployed longer than 12 months. Also in Amsterdam, the members of this cluster had a higher estimated likelihood of being homemakers compared to Strasbourg. These inactive respondents most closely resemble what Plug and du Bois (2006) called “unknown/other” transitions, in which young people dropped out of labour market after getting married. Especially in Amsterdam, these young people had a high estimated probability of being homemakers.

Inactive Latent Class 2: Stagnant: Members of the “stagnant” cluster had a high estimated probability of having been unemployed longer than 12 months while

actively seeking work. Young people in this cluster had a high likelihood of having worked before. The distinction between the two settings was that those in Strasbourg also had a high estimated probability of being homemakers. Previous studies have defined stagnation as shifting between unemployment, employment, and training without no overall improvement in career stability (Evans and Heinz, 1994, Plug and Bois-Reymond, 2006). However, such a judgement cannot be made for this cluster on the basis of the quantitative findings alone. These respondents' transitions were termed stagnant due to extended periods of unemployment despite willingness to work, and the mechanisms and motivations behind this will be explored through the qualitative profiles.

Inactive Latent Class 3: In-transition: The “in-transition” group was characterized by short-term unemployment, and the majority had a high estimated probability of being unemployed less than 12 month. This group had no probability of being homemakers and all were willing to work. The members of this class were new entrants to the labour market and those between jobs at the time of the interview. The transitions of this group could equally well be described as “shifting” or “stable”, as they may have been just changing jobs to forward their careers. This cluster will be better understood by examining the qualitative interviews, which will reveal whether they had extended or persistent periods of unemployment.

3.3. Distributions of the Latent Classes by Immigrant Background, Gender, Education Level, Age and Job Status

Tables 16 and 17 illustrated the estimated number of respondents from both the focus and control groups falling under the identified latent classes. They also showed that early stable and stable transitions were more prevalent in Amsterdam than Strasbourg. Table 18 shows that, among the active trajectories, the native-born descendants of Turkish immigrants have a greater presence in shifting transitions both in Amsterdam and in Strasbourg, though to varying degrees; in Amsterdam, 24% had shifting transitions compared to 13% in the comparison group, while, in Strasbourg, these figures were 45% and 27% respectively.

Table 18 also shows the distribution of the latent classes by gender. Female native-born descendants of immigrants are more likely to show inactive trajectories. However, those females active in the labour market are more likely to have stable and early stable transitions than males, who have the highest incidence of shifting transitions.

Table 18: Active and inactive trajectories by sample group and gender

	Amsterdam						Strasbourg						
	Native-born Descendants of TR Immigrants (TR)		Comparison Group (CG)		TR+CG	Total	Native-born Descendants of TR Immigrants (TR)		Comparison Group (CG)		TR+CG	Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
<u>Active Classes:</u>													
Early stable	25%	36%	30%	29%	25%	27%	28%	31%	20%	32%	27%	29%	27%
Stable	46%	45%	46%	56%	65%	60%	55%	24%	36%	47%	41%	44%	36%
Shifting	29%	19%	24%	15%	10%	13%	17%	45%	44%	21%	31%	27%	37%
Total	48	42	90	87	80	167	257	58	61	38	51	89	208
<u>Inactive Classes:</u>													
Inactive	20%	48%	41%	50%	33%	38%	40%	21%	35%	42%	33%	37%	33%
Stagnant	60%	36%	42%	50%	50%	50%	44%	21%	35%	8%	40%	26%	30%
In-Transition (Unemployed)	20%	16%	17%	0%	17%	13%	16%	57%	30%	50%	27%	37%	37%
Total	15	44	59	4	12	16	75	14	43	12	15	27	84

Source: TIES Survey 2008

A crucial covariate which could also be instrumental in understanding group differences is the distribution of education level across the latent classes. Previous studies have highlighted that instability is not limited to less-educated groups but is also increasingly experienced by those with higher education diplomas (Bradley and Devadason, 2008, Fenton and Dermott, 2006). Table 19 illustrates the distribution of educational attainment across our latent classes and all respondents. Of those in shifting transitions, 30% in Amsterdam and 34% in Strasbourg have tertiary degrees. However, in both settings, the majority of those in stable or early stable transitions hold tertiary degrees, and those in inactive and stagnant transitions predominantly hold lower qualifications.

Table 19: Education level by latent class

Amsterdam						
	Early stable	Stable	Shifting	Inactive	Stagnant	In-Transition
Lower Sec.Voc. (VMBO)	17%	12%	28%	50%	39%	25%
Post-Secondary (HAVO/VWO/MBO)	28%	32%	42%	47%	30%	25%
Tertiary Edu (HBO/Uni.)	56%	56%	30%	3%	30%	50%
Total	72	142	43	30	33	12
Strasbourg						
	Early stable	Stable	Shifting	Inactive	Stagnant	In-Transition
LowerSec. (College)	11%	9%	14%	36%	40%	32%
Vocational Post. Sec.(CAP/BEP)	16%	27%	26%	7%	44%	23%
Academic Post Sec.(BAC)	18%	19%	26%	29%	12%	26%
Tertiary Edu (BTS/Uni/CPG)	55%	45%	34%	29%	4%	19%
Total	56	75	77	28	25	31

Source: TIES Survey 2008

Another approach to this is to check the distribution of latent classes across education levels. Table 25 in Appendix IV shows that the majority of tertiary degree holders were in either early stable or stable transitions in both settings. However, the distributions were different in each setting; while 84% of tertiary degree holders in Amsterdam achieved either stable or early stable transitions, this figure was only 51% in Strasbourg. In Amsterdam, the majority of those with a vocational diploma achieved stable transitions (36%) while those who dropped out of VMBO had the highest rates of inactive or stagnant transitions, compared to other diploma holders. This descriptive comparison shows that, when compared by education level, young people in Strasbourg had less stable transitions compared to those in Amsterdam.

Finally, the distribution of the latent classes across age groups show that in all age groups (18-22, 23-29, 30-+), respondents in Amsterdam were more likely to experience either early stable or stable transitions (See Table 26 in Appendix IV). However, in Strasbourg, there were no young people between 18 and 22 with stable transitions, but a significant proportion in early stable transitions. Hence, when compared by age group, young people in Amsterdam were more present in stable transitions³⁰.

This quantitative analysis will conclude by illustrating the jobs that these latent classes of transitions refer to. In social stratification research, job titles and occupational status are considered the primary measures of social position (Ganzeboom, 1996). The ISCO-08 codes are based on the skills needed for an occupation and the sector of employment. The TIES dataset provides detailed job descriptions by respondents about tasks performed in their current and previous jobs and also the ISCO codes attached to these jobs. The ISCO codes are not a hierarchical occupational status scheme such as EGP codes or ISEI. However, they provide a nice descriptive tool to illustrate the different positions the young people had held at work³¹.

³⁰ The descriptive trends were also checked with multivariate analysis. Binary logit models were used to estimate group membership for each cluster relative to being in other two clusters. The aim was to see whether being in one cluster is determined by having immigrant parents, gender, age, education level or parents' education level. A few trends were observed. In the final models, age turned out to be the most significant determinant of being in a stable career both in Amsterdam and in Strasbourg; as age increased the likelihood being in a stable career increased. In Amsterdam having higher education degree (compared to lower secondary degree or less) was significantly negatively associated for having a shifter transition versus having an early stable or stable transition. Nevertheless due to small case numbers these models are not presented in the current analysis. An analysis with larger data set could provide more robust analysis with the latent class variables.

³¹ ISCO-08 categories are managers (chief executives, senior officials, administrative/ commercial/ services/ production/ retail managers) excluding small shop owners and entrepreneurs in ISCO-08), professionals (science Professionals (science ,engineering,health, teaching, business, administration, IT and legal, social and cultural professionals), technicians and associate professionals (technicians and a science ,engineering,health, teaching, business, administration, IT and legal, social and cultural associate professionals), clerical support workers (general ,keyboard, customer, numerical clerks and other clerical support workers), service and sales workers ((personal service, sales, care, protective services workers), craft and related trades workers Building and related trades workers, excluding electricians, Metal, machinery and related trades workers, Handicraft and printing workers,electricians, food processing and garment, craft and related trades workers), plant and machine operators, and assemblers (machine and plant operators, assemblers, drivers and mobile operators), elementary

In order to highlight what kind of jobs we are talking about when referring to stable or early stable careers, the latent class variable is cross-tabbed with the ISCO codes. According to Table 27 (Appendix IV) among those with stable transitions in Amsterdam, only 5% of native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey worked in managerial positions compared to 15% of the comparison group. Of the other descendants of immigrants from Turkey in stable transitions, 24% were technicians and associate professionals, 24% were clerical workers, and 20% as workers in service sector (including small shop owners and entrepreneurs). According to Table 28 (Appendix IV) in Strasbourg, among the native-born descendants of Turkish immigrants, only early stable transition holders reported having occupations as managers by 7% compared to 8% of the comparison group. Again, among the native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey, the largest group with stable transitions were plant and machine operators in the manufacturing sector (31%). Among the comparison group, 13% of stable transition holders held managerial jobs and 46% were in professional occupations³². This occupational status scheme illustrates that achieving stability doesn't necessarily mean that young people work in managerial or professional positions. As we will see in the qualitative interviews, some respondents were in dead-end jobs with no opportunity for promotion, which motivated them to either abandon their positions or persevere in them.

4. Refining the Transition Typologies: Qualitative Profiles

This section will focus on how our respondents narrated their transitions in the qualitative interviews. This data will help to unravel the mechanisms behind the transition processes and add flesh to the bones of the transition typologies described by quantitative analysis.

Each of the qualitative interviews has been analysed to explain how it corresponds to the typology. Clearly, the qualitative interviews generated deeper insights about respondents' employment trajectories and their subjective evaluations of their experience. Respondents explained in detail why they considered or refrained from changing their jobs, why they were or were not satisfied with how their careers turned out, how they evaluated the labour market conditions and its influence on their transitions, how much they embraced flexibility and what they made of it. Considering these reflections alongside the typology of latent classes, profiles from the qualitative interviews are provided in Table 20 below.

occupations (cleaners and helpers as well as unskilled agricultural workers, street workers)(<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/docs/resol08.doc>).

³² The inactive transition trajectories were not presented due to high number of missing cases as the activity level among the respondents is low. For those who were active in the stagnant careers majority of descendants of immigrants from Turkey worked in the service sector or in sales in Amsterdam, while, in Strasbourg, they were employed in elementary occupations.

Table 20: Qualitative Profiles by transition trajectories

	Amsterdam	Strasbourg
Early stable	7	5
Stable	3	3
Shifting	3	5
Inactive	2	4
Stagnant	1	1
In-transition	3	2
Still Studying	6	5

First, the early stable and stable transition types will be defined. Since these two clusters exhibit a strong correspondence, their differences will be unravelled and their similarities highlighted by considering how they interact with distinct structures across settings. Secondly, shifting transitions will be presented. Since the qualitative interviews provided rich information on labour market experiences and orientations, those who experienced “in-transition” careers are also considered as exhibiting shifting careers. Next, shifting transitions will be compared with “stagnant” careers. Finally, we will concentrate separately on inactive careers; mostly young women who had become homemakers and withdrew from labour market activity.

4.1. Early Stable and Stable Transitions

Our quantitative analysis categorized respondents’ as demonstrating early stable transitions if they had remained in their first job after leaving school, and as having stable transitions if they had changed through a few jobs (but not many) before settling in one. In our qualitative interviews, we categorized our respondents as having early stable or stable transitions based on their employment history and their motivation to remain in their jobs.

These two transition typologies are reminiscent of the smooth and traditional transitions defined in the literature (Evans and Heinz, 1994, Plug and Bois-Reymond, 2006). In that sense these young people followed institutionally defined pathways of going from school to work and especially in Amsterdam in the area of their studies. The former group were those who continued on in their internships after graduation or found a job via the contacts they established during their studies. In contrast, those in stable transitions had taken longer to find a job or changed through a few jobs before they finally got a permanent work arrangement.

The interviews revealed that the motivation of these students to stay in their jobs were based on fear of unemployment due to the economic crisis, but also on responsibilities such as being married and taking care of kids or a mortgage payment. Those in stable transitions also tried to remain in their jobs due their previously shifting careers and a desire to settle at their careers.

Below we will review two profiles that best illustrate the salient details of these forms of transitions; the first is Tülin from Amsterdam, who experienced an early stable transition, and the other is Deniz from Strasbourg, who was in a stable transition.

Early Stable Transitions: Tülin, 25, Doctor's Assistant in a GP's Office, Amsterdam

Tülin was born and raised in Amsterdam. At the time of our interview she was residing in the north of the city together with her husband and her 6 month old baby boy. Tülin's grandfather had come as a guest worker to the Netherlands and her father arrived in the Netherlands with him at the age of 17. Tülin's father already had a primary school diploma from Turkey, and, after his arrival, he acquired some proficiency in Dutch and did all sorts of unskilled jobs, such as cleaning and newspaper delivery. At the time of the interview, he was working as a taxi driver along with many of her other relatives. Her mother came to the Netherlands to marry her father and she had never worked outside of the house. Tülin was their oldest daughter and had two younger brothers.

Tülin talked positively about her education. She was a well-behaved student who got on well with teachers and achieved average grades. However, during her primary school years her mother was quite sick and she couldn't concentrate on her studies. She received a low CITO score at the end of primary school and followed a vocational track. She wanted to attend the general academic track, but her grades were insufficient. Her teachers tried to comfort her by saying she could always prolong her studies in the future.

Gender roles manifested themselves most in Tülin's choice of vocational subject (Gaskell, 1992). She had always dreamed of becoming either a flight attendant or a nurse and had always enjoyed the atmosphere in airports and in hospitals. Unsure of which to study, she attended career information days where she found out that working as a flight attendant required learning many foreign languages as well as long and irregular working hours. She then decided that this transition would be too difficult and would be hard to combine with family life. As a result, she pursued the health track in vocational school and upper secondary education to become an assistant to a general practitioner (GP).

Tülin defines the role of her parents during her education as "not getting involved", but nevertheless standing by her decisions. Nobody else in her family had entered these professions; her mother had neither worked nor become

proficient in Dutch. Her father had not been very involved in guiding her so she had to steer her own course. Her parents supported her decision to become a doctor's assistant rather than a stewardess, seeing this profession more suitable for a woman.

During her post-secondary training in MBO N-4, she conducted two internships which were instrumental in her future career choices. The first was in a hospital where she worked in the administrative office, answering telephones and recording patient information. The second was in a GP's office as a doctor's assistant, where, in addition to administrative duties, she also performed minor nursing tasks like taking blood samples and vaccination. She enjoyed this internship much more as she felt she was using skills she had been trained in at school. Both internships provided Tülin with cultural capital; both insider information about labour market expectations and occupation-specific tasks.

After Tülin finished her training, she opted for an extra year of study on an MBO N-4 diploma, which provided access to vocational tertiary education (HBO). In terms of financial capital, Tülin's father was able to support her education with his income, and she did not have to take many student jobs and was in fact able to stop working to concentrate on her studies. She eventually decided to pursue her long-delayed aim of entering higher education. With a close friend, she visited open days organized by higher education institutions to promote their training programs, and they both enrolled in the social-work training program (*maatschappelijke werk*). However, the program did not fulfil Tülin's expectations, and she abandoned it after only two months to avoid paying back her student loan.

As she was not happy with her experience in the hospital, she then started looking for a job as a GP's assistant in Amsterdam. After about two months, she found a post in the paper, applied, and was called in for interview. She was up against other Dutch women, who were older and more experienced, but thinks she got the job because she was younger and looked more open to learning and adjusting to the work sphere. She had been working in the same job for 3.5 years and had secured a permanent contract. The year after she started working, she got married to her husband; a Turkish immigrant who had arrived in the Netherlands at the age of 15 and was working nights as a taxi driver with her father. They found an apartment in a social housing complex in the North of Amsterdam, and she became pregnant the next year.³³ After her son's birth she was working part-time while he adjusted to daycare.

³³ All of my second generation respondents registered in the municipality to obtain social housing however the social housing market is getting increasingly tight in Amsterdam so not everyone could acquire a house when they wanted. The waiting list goes up to 6 years or more. In Tülin's case her preference to live in north of Amsterdam eased the process as this is a less popular area compared to North or East of Amsterdam. However at the time of the interview Tülin highlighted that even North of Amsterdam has

Tülin was quite satisfied with her job. She was pleased about the work environment and found the doctors and most of her colleagues friendly. Nevertheless, she did experience distressing incidents, especially when she announced her decision to wear a headscarf at work. Tülin had not been wearing a headscarf when she applied for the job. The first time she had decided to wear it was when she was in lower secondary school (VMBO) at the age of 14. However, when she was 18 she took off her headscarf because she didn't feel ready to wear it. Then she decided to wear it again one year after she started working. She underlined that her workplace was open to such practices as her Moroccan colleague already wore a headscarf. Nevertheless, once she made up her mind, she informed her colleagues beforehand to avoid potential reactions and surprise when they saw her with a headscarf the next day.

TÜLIN: Where I work, they really value one's physical appearance and how one looks. I have long, black, curly hair and you know it is different from short blond hair, so they really like that and they would always compliment me. Back then everything was pleasant and happy... until I decided to wear a headscarf.

INTERVIEWER: Is there anyone else wearing a headscarf in the workplace?

TÜLIN: Yes, yes there is one; a Moroccan girl. She also decided to wear a headscarf after she started working and she has been (working) there for over 10 years now. I mean, they think that we put on the headscarf when we are about to get married or after we get married because our husbands want us to. They have this stuck in their brains. Anyways, once I had decided, I started telling them, "I am considering wearing a headscarf," so they wouldn't get a shock the next day when they saw me wearing it and wouldn't react badly. Because, you know, I have this thing; I just can't keep my thoughts to myself; if I am confronted with something I react very harshly. But I also didn't want to experience this or any kind of confrontation at work. Then I was ready; I went with the headscarf. My close friends from work [the Moroccan lady and another Dutch colleague] already knew.

However, other people's reactions were not as easy-going as she had hoped. She had to deal with mockery of some doctors and the questioning of others. One doctor confronted her during the weekly workplace meeting, but later apologized for her behaviour. Eventually, her colleagues got used to her new look.

Tülin was willing to continue in her position. The job did not provide any prospects for promotion but this was not something that Tülin prioritised. She enjoyed the work environment, the work itself, and the flexible working hours since becoming a mother. However, she did feel that she wouldn't have been offered the job if she had worn a headscarf to the interview. Considering the difficulties she already had in getting her headscarf accepted in a work environment where they already liked and trusted her made her question her options if she

become a difficult area to attain social housing.

decided to leave the job. Hence, Tülin's unwillingness to risk a change of job was more due to considerations of stability and the desire to maintain her position in the face of negative past experience. According to Bourdieu, this past experience informs young people's decisions about their present as well as future occupations (Bourdieu, 1977).

Tülin also explained that the conflict over her headscarf was an issue of physical appearance rather than of religiosity. In fact, she reported her colleagues as regretting that she had covered "such beautiful hair," to which she replied "I hadn't shaved my head; I was just covering it, and it was not their business what I do with my hair!" The importance of physical appearance in the workplace was brought up repeatedly by many respondents. Many realized after they entered the workforce that their looks were crucial in gaining acceptance in the workplace. Not only in the Netherlands but also in France, young people talked about the importance of their names and looks in the labour market.

Stable Transition: Deniz, 28, Administrative Worker in a Notary, Strasbourg

Deniz was born and raised in Strasbourg. Her father was a labour migrant who later worked as a house painter on construction sites. Her mother was a homemaker and had never worked. Deniz had one older sister and a younger brother and sister. The family lived in a social housing complex situated in a majority-minority neighbourhood (*quartier*) of Strasbourg.

Deniz had to repeat one year during primary school. This event was the turning point in her education career as she started working very hard to avoid future failure. Her perseverance was noted by some of her teachers. However, the class council still advised her to attend a vocational track, despite her excellent grades. Her history teacher repeatedly intervened so that she could attend a prestigious academic lyceum in the centre of Strasbourg. This was the first time Deniz had left her neighbourhood alone, and she entered a new world in which she had to work much harder to stay the course. She had recourse to private tutors in order to obtain good grades. This created financial difficulties, and she had to combine her studies with part-time work. Her parents were fully supportive of her effort to access higher education. Even though they did not possess the cultural or social capital to provide her with instrumental guidance or contacts, they did create an emotionally supportive environment (Reay, 2004).

However, after lyceum, she decided to study in vocational colleges (BTS) rather than accessing (non-selective) universities. The prestigious universities (*grandes écoles*) did not even cross her mind. Vocational colleges required only two years of training and Deniz felt that they provided clear occupational trajectories and better job opportunities, while university would last four years and seemed more demanding and also uncertain pathway into the labour market. She thus didn't feel

confident enough to take the risk of university. She chose administration and secretarial studies as her major as providing the greatest flexibility and range of job possibilities.

After graduating, Deniz started a determined job search by all available means. Since her family had no computer at home, she signed up in employment agencies and would go there every day to ensure she was the first person called for an opening. After six months, she found a four-month administrative position in a high school as a replacement for someone on maternity leave. Even though this post required a two-hour commute by bus every day, she took the offer as an opportunity to build some work experience.

After four months Deniz, was back in the job market, visiting the employment agencies and also her best friend's house to use her computer and internet access. Her friend's parents were immigrants from Morocco. On one occasion, her friend's older sister, who was a law student in Strasbourg University, informed her about a position in a notary's office that she had heard about through a French classmate. This experience is reminiscent of the strength of weak ties postulation (Granovetter, 2005), which argues that weak connections with distant groups provide more resources in labour markets than the strong ties in the closer circle. This job was not advertised in the paper or in the employment agencies, but rather spread through word of the mouth among some law students. That night, Deniz phoned the Notary to make an appointment first thing Monday morning. At the interview, she was told that this was again a temporary position for four months, replacing an employee on maternity leave. Nevertheless, Deniz immediately volunteered for the position.

This was a much more challenging position compared to her previous post. As a notary's secretary, she had to acquaint herself with a lot of new rules and regulations. Furthermore, she found herself in a very stressful and demanding working environment with colleagues who were neither friendly nor helpful. In her first months at work, her colleagues asked her to do all sorts of errands and legwork outside of her job description. However, Deniz again showed her perseverance and willingness to fulfil her tasks. Her determination did not go unnoticed, and, two months later, her boss made her an offer of a full-time position, and a permanent position (*embouché*) one year after that. Nevertheless, she still felt challenged by the role, describing herself as having been learning the tricks of the trade since day one. For example, soon after she started working she realized that physical appearance was a crucial component of success in the workplace. After some nasty comments from her bosses, she has adjusted her looks and clothing.

Her experience in the notary convinced Deniz that not everybody had equal access to opportunities in the labour market, contrary to what she was encouraged to believe in school.

DENIZ: You know, I never cared about discrimination; my mind wasn't busy with it. I thought it didn't exist—at least before I started working here or entered the labour market. Our teachers always told that us that if you want to go high and make it in the labour market, the key to success is your diplomas. But my labour market experience proved that even if you have a diploma, it's not enough ... My boss told me this; I heard it with my own ears. Why do you think I sit in the back desk? He asked me, "Why do you think I placed you in the back desk and not in the front desk?" This was three weeks after I started working here. First I cried a lot and I couldn't reply, you know, I couldn't say anything. And then he said "I am not racist, but you have to understand I cannot take the risk of my clients seeing you when they come here." I mean you see where my room is? It is located exactly opposite the lift. So what diploma? I mean I was still lucky that they gave me a job, but would you be surprised if they took someone French instead?

Deniz had been working in the same job for 4 years and had secured a permanent contract. Her job continued to be very stressful and demanding. She was still having a hard time getting herself accepted by her colleagues, but her permanent contract meant she had stopped caring so much. In time, her bosses had begun to invite her to social events, though selectively. However, she still felt out of place in instances such as dinners with customers or parties where people drank alcohol and she didn't. Yet she also felt more equipped to "manage" these instances. Her ambition was to get promoted to the position of *clerc de notaire*, the highest-ranking secretary to a notary. She feared that she wouldn't get this position because of her lack of legal training, but she also had confidence in her potential and capacity. She was handling the sale of a €30 million property, showing her boss's confidence in her.

In order to work her way up through the company, Deniz had had to be extremely dedicated and hardworking, always being sure to avoid mistakes. In terms of wages, she started off earning the minimum wage (*bruto SMIC*) of around €1,400, but had gained increases to around €1,800 net. She was quite happy with her current salary, and was planning on buying an apartment with her savings. In the initial interview, Deniz's main concern was marriage, as she was 27 and still single. The marriage age was quiet low in Strasbourg and most of her friends were already married with kids. She described this postponement as the greatest price she had paid for her successful career, and worried she would not now be able to start a family. In the follow-up interview, she told me that she had been passed over for promotion to *clerc de notaire* for another colleague with a law diploma. She was very disappointed and felt betrayed, as one of her bosses had promised her the position. She did not plan on changing her job, but had rather modified her behaviour, exerting herself less at work. She said she was working only during working hours and leaving at 17:00 like the other employees, and making no extraordinary effort to prove herself anymore.

These two profiles are revealing in terms of attitudes towards stability and transition. Tülin's case can be taken as a typical example of a smooth or traditional transition (Evans and Heinz, 1994), leading to a stable labour market outcome as well as a smooth entry into matrimony and building a family. Even though she sought to try her options in vocational tertiary education, it is hard to describe this as shifting or a form of risk taking, as this is becoming a mainstream option for many vocational track students. Moreover, after her brief attempt at higher education, Tülin soon settled back into her institutionally designated pathway.

The juxtaposition of Deniz's and Tülin's cases also illustrates the role that the possibility of promotion plays in young people's orientations. For those with vocational degrees, low occupational status and meagre promotion prospects, a permanent contract remains a desirable end result. The only other option would be to start a company themselves. Deniz also had additional motivations to stay in her job: First of all, it had taken her nearly two years to find a full-time position. This was largely due to the major differences in labour market conditions between Amsterdam and Strasbourg. Even though Tülin only had a vocational diploma, she was able to make a much smoother entry into labour market than Deniz, who held a tertiary vocational education degree. Such difficulties were also faced by many other respondents in Strasbourg. This suggests that one significant difference between early stable and stable transitions is the effect of prior, negative labour market experience of those in stable transitions as an additional motivation to remain in their jobs. Deniz's motivation to achieve stability was not only bound up with her marital status but also with the precarious conditions of her employment and the harsh labour market conditions in Strasbourg.

One other point we would like to underline is the potential influence of workplace experience. Both Deniz and Tülin were confronted with unpleasant instances and were forced to justify their religion or physical appearance. Tülin had to manage the effects of her choice to wear a headscarf on her relations with her colleagues, ultimately discouraging her from venturing into different opportunities. Despite the fact that her workplace was in west Amsterdam and had a majority-minority clientele among whom Islamic dress codes were common, she doubted that she would have been employed if she had entered the job interview with a headscarf. In that sense, the kinds of job opportunities that are awaiting Tülin if she changes her occupation should be scrutinized. In a similar vein, Deniz's experience of being hidden away in the notary's office taught her about the problem of prejudice in the labour market, discouraging her from endeavouring to find a position in another notary, despite her hopes of promotion having vanished.

4.2. Shifting Vs. In-Transition and Stagnant Transitions: "It's easy to find a job; it's hard to find a good job"

Those in shifting transitions experienced frequent job shifts and unemployment, and hence had not been able to acquire stable working arrangements. In this section we will compare three profiles across settings; two active and one unemployed. However, even though the unemployed respondents were not working at the time of our encounter, they had previously been shifting between jobs and statuses.

*Shifting Transition: Cengiz, 28, Plumber, Strasbourg*³⁴

Cengiz's father migrated to Strasbourg as a guest-worker and was later joined by his family. His father had less than primary education and worked in construction. His mother had no education at all and was a housewife. The couple had five children. Along with his younger brother, he was born and raised in France. His older sisters stopped studying because of the headscarf ban in France. Cengiz had been married for 6 years and had two daughters. His wife was from his parents' village and migrated to Strasbourg when they got married. They were living in a social housing block in one of the majority-minority neighbourhoods of Strasbourg.

Cengiz was a good student in school, and was particularly able at mathematics. Despite his high grades, his father advised him to take up plumbing to gain a trade after observing that plumbers in the construction business were never out of work. Cengiz wanted to become a mechanic, but his mother opposed his decision, saying she wouldn't want him to come home with oily clothes. Following his family's wishes, he chose to study plumbing at vocational college. Cengiz's choice was thus both gendered and family-driven. His parents, who were first generation immigrants, steered him towards vocational training in a trade rather than pursuing his studies into an academic track (Lehmann, 2007), though he did this voluntarily. Vocational training was not challenging for Cengiz, and he achieved very good grades without effort (he actually found the course less challenging than secondary education). During this period, his family opened their own supermarket and Cengiz started working in the family business in his spare time.

At the end of Cengiz's vocational training, his grades were so exceptional that his teachers advised him to pursue his studies into lyceum. He did enrol at professional lyceum but, since the studies were much more demanding compared to vocational training, had trouble combining his studies with his hours in the family business and playing football in the semi-professional league. In the end, he decided to drop out of school for good, thinking he had already gained a trade. However, his vocational training in plumbing had included only very meagre periods of internship through a customer at the family supermarket, and most of his actual work experience was in the supermarket itself.

³⁴ We discussed Cengiz's case in Chapter 6 as an example of work and study practices leading to dropping out. Here we embed this experience in his transitions in general and emphasize how his career turned out later.

Cengiz did not seek job opportunities in his chosen profession as soon as he left school. Instead, he signed up in the employment agencies and worked for whatever unskilled job came along. First, he worked in an automobile factory in the assembly line for two years on an employment agency contract that was renewed every few months. During that period, he got married and he and his wife continued to work in the family business alongside his job in the factory. He enjoyed working with machinery in the automobile factory, but had to stop work for a month when the family went on a long vacation to Turkey, and his position was not available when he returned. He then found work as a deliveryman for a courier company, and enjoyed the driving and mobility. However, he received so many traffic tickets that in the end he was about to lose his driver's license so he quit. He then returned to the employment agency, this time finally getting a job as a plumber in a large plumbing company of 150 employees that served the construction industry in Strasbourg. At the time of our interview, he had been working in this company for three and a half years but had still not been offered a permanent contract. He was still contracted through the employment agency, which renewed his contract at periodic intervals.

Since leaving education, Cengiz had been registered in an employment agency (*interim*) providing access to various unskilled or low skilled jobs. He was contracted by the agency and outsourced to employers. Over the last eight years, he had never once been offered a permanent contract. His contracts were automatically renewed every one or two months because a six month contract would oblige the employer to offer him a permanent contract (*embouché*) in his next arrangement. Cengiz didn't express any resentment about having a temporary contract, as a permanent contract wouldn't generate a drastic change in his income, which was €1,400 a month, or slightly above the minimum wage (SMIC). His current job required him to work under very difficult conditions and was physically very demanding. Nevertheless, he planned on pursuing it since he did not want to fall into unemployment during an economic crisis, even though he had never had difficulty accessing employment before. He mentioned he might consider starting his own company, but was in no hurry. The family business also proved to be very burdensome to him, as he and his wife had to work weekends and holidays in the supermarket.

Cengiz had thus shifted between various jobs, mostly low-skilled, and had not yet achieved stability in one job or career. He also had no clear plan about what to do next. One striking factor in the precarious nature of Cengiz's jobs was the role played by employment agencies. The arrangements provided by these agencies allow employers to transfer almost all the risk of hiring people to the employee themselves, who could technically be fired every other month. Furthermore, Cengiz felt entirely responsible for taking care of his family, as his wife was not employed, and always tried to avoid unemployment by accepting any job that came along.

Stagnant / in-transition / Shifting transition: Emre, 25, unemployed, Amsterdam

Emre's grandfather came to the Netherlands as a guest-worker and his father arrived with him at the age of 15. Hence Emre's father spoke Dutch and he worked as a driver for 20 years but had by then been on sick leave for five years. Emre's mother arrived in the Netherlands after she married his father. She had obtained a vocational degree in Turkey and worked as a Turkish language instructor in primary and secondary schools in Amsterdam for many years, but then became unemployed due to the removal of Turkish language teaching from the official curriculum. Emre's mother was the most educated mother in the qualitative sample. Emre had an older sister who had recently graduated from HBO after vocational training.

Emre grew up in the east of Amsterdam, where he also went to school. He got a low-test score at the end of primary school and was advised to attend the vocational track. He had good grades in mathematics but had problems with Dutch language proficiency. He also claimed that neither he nor his parents were informed about the implications of the CITO tests in primary school. He was also very critical of the early stratification in the Dutch education system.

In vocational training, Emre first enrolled in information and communications technology. However, one year later he switched to sales and commerce (*handel*). Like most of his peers in the Netherlands, Emre began working in part-time jobs when he was seventeen. He switched between cleaning planes, working in the airport baggage section, and stacking shelves in supermarkets. While these jobs provided him with financial security, they also affected his studies, though he successfully graduated from vocational school at the age of 21. He then registered in the tertiary vocational college (HBO) to study social work (*maatschappelijke werk*). Six months later he decided this was not the profession for him and he dropped out. In the meantime, he continued with his part-time jobs and arranged his working hours around his studies, switching between full- and part-time working hours.

After he dropped out of tertiary education, he looked for another job in the area of his studies; sales and commerce. He applied to some stores and got a job in H&M in one of the busiest shopping streets in Amsterdam. However, he didn't like the job because the store was hectic and he found the work too hard, quitting four months later. He said if he had persisted he could have become a store manager, but he didn't like the job. He then decided to return once more to education. This time he attended a tertiary course at an HBO in business administration and economics, which he thought would be a suitable extension of his vocational major. However, this program was much more challenging than he expected, and he again quit before the end of his first semester. In the meantime, he continued to work in all sorts of service jobs to secure an income and resided with his parents.

At the time of our interview, Emre was back from his holidays in Turkey, but was unemployed and had just applied for unemployment benefit since he couldn't manage to find a job in which he would like to work. His previous job was in a supermarket, which he also quit after couple of months because he was leaving on vacation. He was also actively seeking work and was hoping to hear from a friend who had promised to arrange him a sales assistant position in a mobile phone store.

EMRE: Having an MBO diploma didn't really give me an advantage. But maybe if I had tried harder it [having an MBO diploma] could have [helped]. For example, I worked in a clothing store. But I didn't like it. It was so busy and you constantly have to tidy and fold stuff. Maybe if I had persisted I could become a floor manager or something. But I didn't. It was so tiring. Now I am thinking of working in a phone store. I am not sure. Or maybe I will go back to school. I am thinking of starting in February.

INTERVIEWER: Did you decide on what to study?

EMRE: I am thinking of the HVA (Hoghschool van Amsterdam) I have studied there before. I also want to study, but, you know, it depends. I also want this phone business to come through.

Emre was quite disappointed about how his transition had turned out. He complained that he had applied to many jobs but that it had been impossible for him to find a decent position, saying, "It's easy to find a job; it's hard to find a good job". Furthermore he emphasized how hard it had been to find low-skilled jobs since the economic crisis began. He was still willing to venture into tertiary training for a third time; this time in international commerce, while also hoping to hear about the sales assistant position in the phone company.

Emre had been unemployed for three to four months and could thus be subsumed under the in-transition latent class. However it had been more than four years since he had left school and he had still not achieved any stability in his career, so he could also be defined as in a stagnant transition. Not only had he not achieved any stability in his career in the last six years, he had constantly been drifting between periods of employment, training and unemployment with no certain direction, and there was dissatisfaction and hopelessness about his position. He did have a vocational degree, but this didn't seem to grant him any stability, as he did not know how to use that degree to get a job that he would enjoy doing. His attempts to access vocational tertiary education also lacked clear direction. His situation seemed to have persisted due to a combination of motivational and structural disparities. Furthermore if we had caught him during when he was working, then he would also qualify as a shifter since he has been shifting between statuses.

Emre's case is an interesting example in the Dutch context, as his vocational training did not lead to a significant development of cultural or social capital in the area of his studies. During his training in commerce, Emre conducted an internship in the supermarket where he was working on a part-time basis, and his networks and resources thus developed from his involvement in student jobs. However, Emre's training and occupational motivations were mismatched, not only for vocational training, but also in his attempts at higher education. Lehmann argues that occupation-specific vocational training lacks the flexibility that comprehensive systems provide; if you do not want to work in the area of your diploma or you do not possess the resources and the cultural capital with regards to your occupation, you risk falling into a loophole (Lehmann, 2007). Occupational specific training also provides the environment for many young people to extend their networks and begin to learn the tricks of their trade as well as gain information about what's awaiting them in their future jobs. Emre lacked this form of social and informational capital, but he did gain other resources through his work contacts that he hoped would provide him with jobs.

Previous studies have defined stagnant transitions as those in which young people drift between different statuses of employment and unemployment with no improvement in stability (Plug and Bois-Reymond, 2006). Bradley and Devadason's (2006) shifters drifted between jobs, unemployment and training; either through their own choice or due to structural conditions. According to the latent class analysis, those with stagnant transitions had a high estimated likelihood of having been unemployed for a period longer than twelve months. In Amsterdam, none of the inactive interviewees had been unemployed for longer than twelve months. However, in Strasbourg, some female respondents who had never worked though wanting to enter the labour market fitted these profiles. Since the qualitative data provided more detailed information about past employment experience and motivations, it is possible to reorganize the typology rather than trying to strictly match the latent classes. In both settings, those who were unemployed usually switched between different jobs and statuses, as did Cengiz and Emre. While Emre's case suggests a lack of direction, others didn't have the luxury to choose between jobs or career pathways, but tried instead just to stay employed and, if possible, acquire a contract. As a result, those classed as stagnant or in-transition should be subsumed under the shifting category as lacking a stable transition. This is also more optimistic than terming their transitions stagnant, as their transitions are potentially open to change.

4.3. Inactive Transition Trajectories

According to our latent class analysis, those whose transitions lead to inactivity had a high estimated probability of not being interested in entering the labour market. 60% of this class were made up of homemakers in Amsterdam compared 22% in Strasbourg. Even though many respondents were not active during the qualitative

interviews, it is hard to cluster them in this category since they were motivated to work and some of them wanted to study. In order to grasp the motivations behind “not wanting to enter labour market”, this section will present one of such trajectories that of Kader’s.

Inactive: Kader, 26, homemaker, Strasbourg

Kader had a broken family story. Her father was a guest worker who arrived in France in 1970s, and was soon joined by Kader’s mother and disabled older brother. Tragically, Kader’s mother died while giving birth to her. Left with two small children, her father remarried to someone from his village in Turkey. Kader grew up with her stepmother and four younger step-sisters in a difficult family environment.

In school, she took refuge from home and was a good student. She put all her energy into her studies and did quite well in mathematics and French. Her education career looked bright until a confrontation over her Islamic practices with a secondary school teacher, who would bully her for wearing a headscarf or fasting during Ramadan. This was reflected in her grades³⁵ and she eventually lost interest in studying. At the end of college, she was advised to attend the vocational track, and she didn’t see much point in the academic track or university. She was happy to learn a trade and start working, and she chose textiles and sewing. However, learning textiles and sewing didn’t prove beneficial for Kader; it was a dead-end job and the textile industry existed only far away, in outlying regions of Alsace, and her father would not allow her to commute to work. Then with the advice of her teachers, she continued into professional lyceum. As a result, she dropped out of professional lyceum before obtaining her *baccalauréat* diploma. She was already 18 and it was time for her to get married as the eldest girl in the home. Kader was given a “choice” of partner between two cousins; one from her father’s side and the other from her step-mother’s side. She chose to marry the latter in the hope of avoiding the birth-defect caused by inbreeding that had resulted in her brother’s disability (her biological parents were also cousins).

Once the couple were married, they had to work hard to stand on their own feet. Kader took a job in a sales store but was too shy to talk to customers and was soon fired. She then took cleaning jobs with her husband, and they would clean big schools, businesses, factories and stores. She continued working in these jobs until she fell pregnant with her first child. She then took a break from working but went back to work after she gave birth to her second child. She and her husband were working shifts and, since she did not receive any childcare support from their family, the children were alone in the house for one hour while Kader was

³⁵ During the interview, she showed her grade report cards and the teacher’s comments. In one year her grades fell from 17 to 12.

travelling home but her husband had left for work. They bought a phone with a screen so she could constantly talk to the kids until she got home.

At the time of the interview, Kader had four children; the third pregnancy had turned out to be twins. The family were living in a two bedroom apartment in a neighbourhood stigmatized for poverty and crime. Kader was at home taking care of the children and had no interest in working as her only options were cleaning or other unskilled jobs. She didn't have social networks that could connect her to better jobs. Their relations with their family remained meagre and they wanted it to stay this way. Her husband was working in the assembly line on the border of Strasbourg and he was biking 40 minutes to get there every morning. Her biggest hope was that her husband would get a stable job.

Kader's case was extreme, but her story raises fundamental questions about what chances education systems or labour market conditions provide for young people who have no support mechanisms at home. Kader did seek refuge in school, but couldn't find peace or self-esteem there either. The working conditions that the labour market provided, despite her vocational degree, were shoddy and unpleasant. For Kader, working was drudgery; an obligation she would rather avoid.

Compared to Deniz, who had strong support emotional and financial capital at home, and Tülin, whose vocational educational trajectory built the required cultural and informational capital to enter the labour market, Kader found neither parental nor institutional support. Furthermore, as in the cases of Emre, Cengiz and Kader, Kader's family lacked the necessary cultural capital to advise her into the right training or occupation. While most respondents tried to navigate their pathways into the labour market, these routes were heavily shaped by the interaction of various structures, including family, the labour market, marriage and the housing market.

5. Conclusion: Creativity and Choice in Youth Transitions

Almost all the respondents in this study were motivated to seek stability in the labour market. This is of course no surprise considering the current economic climate with its high unemployment, which is known to hit young people harder. Young people already fear not finding a job when they leave school, and neoliberal trends towards more precarious work arrangements, irregular working hours and insecure contracts further erode their expectations about their chances in the labour market.

Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses showed that young people experienced similar transitions patterns across settings though to different extents. The respondents in Amsterdam acquired stability at an earlier edge compared to Strasbourg. Internship and student employment practices were instrumental in

achieving stability in both settings, and it was thus significant that such practices were less common in Strasbourg than Amsterdam. With regard to lack of stability, while the latent class analysis identified stagnant and in-transition types of transition, the qualitative interviews suggested that both categories be subsumed under the shifting type, since all these young people suffered from similar conditions, shifting between employment, unemployment and training. Among the most important factors in the creation of unstable transitions were the precarious labour market conditions, employment agencies fostering easy access to jobs but lack of security and a lack of personal direction in relation to these structures. Furthermore, among the inactive respondents, marriage patterns and building a family often helped sustain some sort of stability in their lives. These profiles also showed that the choice not to work stemmed from both a lack of training opportunities and unpleasant working arrangements. Rather than shifting between statuses, some young women preferred to stay at home and take care of their children; or at least they did at the time of the interview.

Overall, these trends force us to make a clear distinction between young people's motivations and their structural conditions. The idea of individualized transitions has dominated the theoretical discussion of youth transitions research since Beck sparked discussion of the individualization of risks. Nevertheless, even though young people clearly make choices and navigate their own transitions, what needs to be studied are the conditions under which these "choices" are made and whether the young people are in fact given any other option. Young people also experience these conditions to different extents in different settings. The comparison of Strasbourg and Amsterdam illustrated that the understanding of youth transitions differed across settings, and stability was only acquired in Strasbourg as a result of longer periods of job searching and shifting beforehand. Nevertheless, those defined as shifters in Strasbourg had been in the labour market for considerable periods (a minimum of over 3 years and up to 10 years in the interview profiles) and still had not acquired a permanent contract.

The qualitative profiles identified certain experiences specific to the descendants of immigrants. These were the experiences of exclusion in the workplace and this could influence young people's motivations to stability or shifting. These past experiences of a difficulty of acceptance fed into the perceptions of the young people about the conditions in the labour market that awaited them if they decided to shift or stay.

Previous chapters have shown how both parental resources and the different forms and degrees of capital built over individual trajectories are instrumental in the transitions of young people. Following young people after they leave school, we saw that those young people who were able to accumulate cultural and social capital through family, community or work experience contacts benefited by accessing stable working arrangements. In a shifting transition like Emre's, not

having built symbolic or cultural capital or identified a clear direction in the labour market resulted in unstable conditions despite institutional opportunities. This showed that structures do not necessarily guarantee smooth transitions, but the interaction between the individual efforts and the structure is crucial in facilitating smooth transitions. Even though Amsterdam provided more opportunities for stable transitions and at earlier age, in cases where the person lacked the necessary education or cultural capital, the transitions turned out to be precarious, leading to shifting transitions.