

Abstract:

In the last decades, we have witnessed changes in society that can be in some respects individually both beneficial and demanding for young people. The situation of young people seems dependent on their initial position and economic situation during their crucial transition from school to work. Part of young people is unable to tackle their situation, and they find themselves in an insecure position. I want to know what happens to young people and how they reflect these processes in their life stories – how young people themselves perceive their situation. The book's goal is to get insight into the critical moments and places in the life stories of young people so that an understanding of how (if at all) their behaviour in interactions with structural conditions allowed them to live a preferred kind of life. Following stories by more than 70 young people is the way to reach this goal. I address the following questions reading these stories:

- What strategies young people used to tackle their situation?
- What key aspects were in the concrete cases relevant for their situation?
- How key institutions (including education, employment protection, unemployment protection, and active labour market policy) play a role in the life situation of young people?

The presented mostly qualitative study is limited to one single country (the Czech Republic). The book is rooted in the work done during my participation on EU projects CYTISPYCE (7th framework) and NEGOTIATE (Horizon 2020). In these projects, the team members investigated the life situation of young people who lived in deprived neighbourhoods or who perceived their lives to be insecure. To follow the aforementioned goal and questions I use an approach inspired by cultural studies (Saukko 2003, 2005) in combination with the narrative approach and structural reflection of key aspects.