

# Dimensions of European diversity in non-privileged self-employment

## Preface

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In this part we present the findings of our analysis of the biographical interviews. We describe typical biographical process structures and patterns related to the biographical pathway to self-employment, as well as patterns of the impact of policy on these biographical processes.

In order to analyze the policy impact on the process of self-employment, we first reconstructed which processes emerged in the biographies of native women and male and female migrants who started self-employment or were planning to do so. Only on the basis of such structural processes could we analyze and evaluate the impact of the policy on the individual and his or her self-employment project. The theoretical frame of the in-depth analysis of each case and of the comparisons across the individual cases and the national cases was the paradigm model developed according to Grounded Theory. Through this paradigm model, the question underlying the research has been specified as: What problems and concerns do people resolve by entering self-employment? Thus, in order to investigate the process towards self-employment, we analyze *the conditions that precede* the decision to self-employment. Similarly, this applies to questions such as which problems arise out of these conditions, what strategies people develop to cope with these problems and what consequences arise out of these strategies, which are again conditions for further action. Finally, we ask how policies impact on these conditions, strategies and consequences of strategies and how policy supports their active efforts to solve problems. By the concept of „conditions“ – the basis upon which the decision to become self-employed is made – we understand the social conditions that have influenced the life course together with the responses, strategies and activities of the individual, as well as the sedimentation of these social and subjective elements in biographical experiences. This perspective takes into account the biographical experience preceding the self-employment (childhood, education, family relations, employment, etc). We search for resources and constraints that develop in the social life of the individual, in this way continuously shaping identity and biographical schemes. Resources and

constraints are not only „conditions“, i.e. aspects of the social structure the individual is confronted with, but also the outcome of interaction between individual and society.