

D 9.5 - Policy Synthesis and Integrative Report on Vulnerable Voices

Angie Hart, University of Brighton

Niall O'Higgins, University of Salerno and International Labour Office

Martin Seeleib-Kaiser, University of Oxford

Endre Sik, TARKI Social Research Institute

STYLE-WP9:

Vulnerable Voices and Cultural Barriers: Attitudes and Aspirations

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- ii) to engage with 'relevant communities, stakeholders and practitioners in the research with a view to supporting employment policies in Europe.' Contributions to a dialogue about these results can be made through the project website www.style-research.eu, or by following us on Twitter @STYLEEU.

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About the authors

Angie Hart

- <http://www.style-research.eu/team/angie-hart/>

Niall O'Higgins

- <http://www.style-research.eu/team/niall-ohiggins/>

Martin Seeleib-Kaiser

- <https://www.spi.ox.ac.uk/people/profile/seeleib-kaiser.html>

Endre Sik

- <http://www.style-research.eu/team/endre-sik/>

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Executive Summary

Too often the voices of young people are neglected in the analysis of youth in the labour market. This synthesis report summarises key findings and policy issues identified in Work Package 9 of the STYLE project, which focused on examining the attitudes and aspirations of young people. Our analytical tasks employed a diverse range of methodological approaches, including quantitative statistical analysis, experiments, in-depth interviews and a qualitative participative approach, to examine beliefs and attitudes of young people towards work, families and society. Specifically, we assessed values towards work, the impact of youth unemployment/labour market outsidership on social capital and political participation as well as aspirations of vulnerable young people in foster care. The report raises the following issues for policy and practice: a) attitudes between generations relating to work do not differ significantly; b) youth unemployment is an insufficient measure for the labour market condition of young people and its impact; c) institutions matter; d) co-production of research is important in understanding the labour market condition of young people more holistically.

Key words:

Attitudes, social capital, participation, labour market, youth, synthesis, policy

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Abbreviations

ESS	European Social Survey
EU-SILC	The European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
EVS	European Values Study
ISSP	International Social Survey Programme
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
UK	United Kingdom
WVS	World Values Survey
YLMO	Youth Labour Market Outsider
YPAR	Youth Participatory Action Research approach

1. Introduction

Much of the analysis of youth labour markets takes little account of the attitudes and aspirations of young people themselves. This work package employed a diverse range of methodological approaches, including quantitative statistical analysis, experiments, in-depth interviews and a qualitative participative approach, to examine beliefs and attitudes of young people towards work, families and society. Specifically, we assessed values towards work, the impact of youth unemployment and outsidership on social capital and political participation as well as aspirations of vulnerable young people in foster care.

1.1 Values towards work

Do work values differ between birth cohorts? To answer this question, we analysed pooled data from the World Values Survey/European Values Study (WVS/EVS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), and the European Social Survey (ESS) between 1980 and 2010 (N= ca. 160,000). Our analysis shows no significant differences among the birth cohorts regarding the centrality of work, employment commitment and extrinsic or intrinsic work values in evaluating a job.

There are, however, different trends in the centrality of work by age and birth cohort: while the former is close to an inverted U-shape curve (the centrality of work is higher in the middle-age groups than among the younger or older ones), the interpretation of it is rather straightforward: since younger people are not yet and older people are not anymore involved in income generating activities, it is logical to find that work is less central for them when compared to those in their active household and labour market cycles.

The U curve of the centrality of work by birth cohort means that work is less central for the birth cohort between 1940 and 1959 compared to the earlier and later born cohorts. This result may be interpreted as a minor generational effect, i.e. for those who entered the education system and the labour market in the 1960s and 1970s intrinsic values became more important than the extrinsic aspects of life. However, this change was reversed, as those who entered after the mid-1970s became again more and more extrinsic oriented. It is worth to note that the differences between cohorts are quite small.

Comparing EU15 and post-socialist countries, we found that while the general trend of the centrality of work was similar in the two groups of countries, the impact of birth cohorts was different: in post-socialist countries the U curve was much steeper than in the EU15 countries

Moreover, while there is a mild pendulum movement between ex- and intrinsic values in the EU15 countries, in the post-socialist countries there is a sharp split in the centrality of work among birth cohorts. This can be the result of disentanglement of the newly emerging wage-worker incentives from the state socialist doctrines, or the increasing fear of unemployment and/or impoverishment.

Reference: Hajdu, G. and E. Sik, (2015). *Searching for gaps: are work values of the younger generations changing?*, STYLE Working Papers, WP9.1. CROME, University of Brighton, Brighton.

1.2 Youth labour market status: an experimental approach

This task sought to identify the systematic effect of individuals' labour market status on their behavioural trust and trustworthiness. Broadly representative groups of young people were invited to participate in experimental sessions implemented in three European countries, Hungary (Budapest), Italy (Naples) and the UK (Oxford). Young people (aged 18-29) were drawn from outside the usual university background. In doing so, the task was innovative in several respects, as it is relatively unusual to undertake experiments on the general population, rather than university students. Moreover, the experiment was one of the first to look at the effects of labour market status on behaviour. The only precursor we are aware of is the experimental work reported in Fehr et al. (2003). A second treatment used in the experiment further sought to test the extent to which – and in which direction - subjects' trusting and trustworthy behaviour is affected by the information on the labour market status of their counterpart.

In order to examine our question through behavioural as opposed to the attitudinal analyses predominantly used thus far, two one-shot trust games with random and anonymous matching were implemented: in the first game, subjects received no information on the counterpart; in the second one, the labour market state of both players was common knowledge. Dictator games and individual decision problems (i.e. lottery choice) were also implemented in order to control for other motivational factors such as unconditional preferences (i.e. altruism and inequity aversion) and attitudes towards risk that might affect trusting and trustworthy behaviour. Moreover, we combined survey and behavioural data to pursue two further objectives: first, to explore whether behavioural trust and trustworthiness are systematically affected by subjects' socio-economic characteristics; second, in order to test whether subjects' answers to attitudinal questions on trust, cooperation and reciprocity are good predictors of their behavioural trust and reciprocity.

The analysis produced various interesting results as well as suggesting a number of possible avenues for further investigation. First, we found statistically significant differences in behaviour – of both senders and recipients in the trust game – across countries and across labour market states. Econometric analysis allowed us to further enrich this basic observation, and in particular demonstrated the importance of distinguishing amongst different types of NEET.

A second major finding emerging from the analysis were the deleterious effects of precariousness in employment in young people's behavioural trust. Concerns have regularly been voiced in recent years about the negative effects of the increasing prevalence of temporary employment forms on young people's early labour market experiences and the results of this experimental analysis strongly supported these concerns. Temporary employment appears to be at least as damaging to behavioural trust as unemployment, adding further support to those who would question the advisability of the ever increasing flexibilization of youth labour markets.

Reference: O'Higgins, N. and Stimolo, M. (2015) *Youth Unemployment and Social Capital: An experimental approach*, STYLE Working Papers, WP9.2. CROME, University of Brighton, Brighton.

1.3 Aspirations of vulnerable young people in foster care

This task aimed to understand the work aspirations of a group of vulnerable young people in care and the barriers they face in terms of youth unemployment. Adopting a Youth Participatory Action Research approach (YPAR) the focus was to build the capacity of fifteen young people in Greece and England, enabling them to identify the issues they faced in relation to unemployment, and to consider helpful strategies to overcome them. They acted as young researchers to further understand the nature of the issues, and were supported to develop a resource that would be useful to other young people, foster carers and practitioners. Highly illustrated resources were developed by the young people themselves.¹ The resource begins by supporting everyone to understand the concept of resilience and the benefits of adopting a resilience approach. The approach is brought to life through interactive activities that carers, young people and professionals can use in support of promoting resilience. Through their work the young people shared stories and role models that had been significant in supporting their own resilience, such as Malcolm X, and such stories are illustrated for the benefit of other young people. The resource details the young people's pathways through foster care and the resilient moves that have been important in their lives in overcoming barriers to success.

Following on from the completion of this task, members of the project team have used the resource in numerous training and conference presentations. The book was also exhibited in an art, play therapy and theatre studio in Greece. Parents and practitioners were invited to participate in experiential activities from the book. In a second phase children were asked to draw on a specific theme which was called the 'Forest of Good and Evil'. Those drawings were presented in an exhibition in the Cultural Center of Rethymno with large success. The Greek section of Play Therapy International has highlighted the One Step Forward book as a valuable resource for their membership.

In the UK context, the use of the One Step Forward Book has inspired the project team to develop further resources through the Boingboing social enterprise (www.boingboing.org.uk) with grants from the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK. Academics, practitioners and young people have worked in partnership to produce games and other activities relating to resilience. (<http://www.boingboing.org.uk/index.php/our-blog/8-static-content/265-utopia-fair>). These have all supported vulnerable young people to develop useful skills and to build their own resilience. Three young people with complex needs who were previously unemployed have gained employment with the social enterprise Boingboing to develop and market these resources. Most recently, a funding bid to set up Boingboing Blackpool has been successful. With support from the Big Lottery Fund in England as part of Boingboing Blackpool, further resources and training packages will be developed based on the resource produced in this task and on other resources subsequently innovated. A UK-based philanthropist has also pledged a donation to the cause which will enable further marketing of the tools. Hence this task has acted as valuable springboard for the development of further co-produced outputs. It has also already led to the actual employment of young people with complex needs and looks set to be a springboard for the development of even more social enterprise opportunities for young people with complex needs as well as further research into how to make this happen.

Reference: Hart, A., Stubbs, C., Plexousakis, S., Georgiadi, M., & Kourkoutas, E. (2015). *Aspirations of vulnerable young people in foster care*. STYLE Working Papers, WP9.3. CROME, University of Brighton, Brighton.

¹ The resources are available to download from: http://issuu.com/boingboingresilience/docs/one_step_forward_-_resilience/1 (UK edition) http://issuu.com/boingboingresilience/docs/one_step_forward_-_resilience_-_gre/1 (Greek edition).

1.4 Young People as Outsiders: Prevalence, composition and participation

This task took a mixed-method approach to examining Youth Labour Market Outsiderness (YLMO) in Europe. Our conceptualization of YLMO uses the standard employment relationship as a reference point (Mückenberger 1985; Standing 2009). Accordingly, a person would be considered an outsider if her employment is not full-time, or not permanent, or does not lead to financial independence. This definition broadens the employment dimension of labour market outsidership to include inactivity as well as atypical employment. We analysed data from the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) to shed light on the extent and types of YLMO in different European countries and on the complex association between YLMO and key outcome measures for young people, including housing conditions and participation in societal groups and organizations. These quantitative analyses were complemented by a review of the relevant institutional structures in Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK and by 134 semi-structured interviews with young people and experts in each of the country cases.

The prevalence and dimensions of YLMO vary considerably across Europe. Institutional arrangements can significantly impact on the prevalence of YLMO, the support available for young outsiders as well as their political and social participation. Austria and Germany have a relatively low prevalence of YLMO, largely due to their strongly institutionalized system of vocational education and training. In addition, well-coordinated welfare state institutions at the local level provide significant support services for outsiders, mitigating their situation, with the aim of facilitating labour market integration and independent living. By contrast the Southern European countries of Italy and Spain have comparatively weak vocational education and training systems as well as more highly regulated labour markets, making smooth transitions from school to insider employment relatively difficult. The weak institutionalization of effective youth policies provides little support for YLMOs in these two countries; the EU flagship policy to combat youth unemployment, the Youth Guarantee, also did not seem to have much of an impact in Italy and Spain, mainly due to a lack of institutional capacity and the sheer size of the outsider population. In the two Mediterranean countries informal networks such as the extended family support YLMOs, frequently providing cheap (often free) accommodation and support in finding work. However, this familialistic welfare arrangement limits the possibilities of young people to become fully independent and to develop their own social life outside the family boundaries. In this sense the Mediterranean cluster can be characterised as ‘family by necessity’. The UK has an intermediate level of youth outsidership, largely achieved through the capacity of a liberal labour market able to absorb young people. However, British YLMOs seem to be much less well supported through various services, if compared to their peers in Austria or Germany. As they are much more likely to live independently through the availability of social housing, they seem also to rely less on the family, compared to YLMOs in Italy and Spain.

With respect to social participation we did not find significant differences among the various groups of young people, with the exception of young people in education showing a higher level of social participation. However, we should also highlight that social participation and exchange often seems to be restricted to young people in a similar situation. Finally, we observed minor variation across countries with the exception of the UK. It seems that the weak formal and informal institutions in the UK are less able to reduce the gap with regard to participation between outsiders and insiders, than is the case in the other countries.

Turning to political participation our quantitative analysis seems to support previous research highlighting overall lower rates of formal participation by young people, with no significant differences

for YLMOs. Our qualitative analysis for Austria, Germany and the UK also supports a rather distant relationship to political participation. However, for Italy and Spain our qualitative data suggests a comparatively higher level of political participation by YLMOs. We speculate that this might be the result of youth labour market outsidership having become 'normal' or the 'standard' situation for a large part of the young population, which in turn provides the basis for a shared identity, facilitating the formation of and participation in political movements. Furthermore, it might be the case that the strong family support also provides financial and other resources enabling political participation.

Reference: Arrigoni A., Betthaeuser B., Chase E., Ferragina E., Seeleib-Kaiser M., Spreckelsen T. (2016) *Young People as Outsiders: Prevalence, composition and participation*, STYLE Working Papers, WP9.4. CROME, University of Brighton, Brighton.

2. Emerging policy lessons

2.1 Generational differences: a myth

The generational differences in relation to work attitudes often referred to in public debates and in political discourses are a myth. Therefore, EU or national policies should not fail because of generation specific cultural deviations. In other words, if we accept the findings of the literature that work values have significant impact on values in general, then the stable nature of work values generation by generation provides policy-makers firm ground to act. However, we detected differences of work values by age and period, as well as between two groups of European countries, so we should be aware that generational stability does not mean full-scale similarity.

The high level of commitment to employment in the youngest cohorts suggests that employment generating policies can be important to help the young enter into the labour market; at a later stage of the career, policies to develop alternative non-employment forms can be more useful.

2.2 Youth unemployment: an insufficient focus

A sole focus on the dimension of unemployment is insufficient to analyse the labour conditions and their impact on young people in Europe. Youth labour market outsidership and/or precarious employment can have similar effects as unemployment. The implication is that the increasing diffusion and promotion of flexible employment is likely to have long-term negative consequences for young people's labour market attachment. The negative effects of precariousness in employment will affect young people's social capital. This provides a further reason for doubting the efficacy of temporary employment forms as a means to promote the long-term stable employment of youngsters.

2.3 Institutions matter

Institutional arrangements affect the prevalence of labour market outsidership. The deleterious effects on social capital of specific unemployment and unstable employment are of more concern in some countries and contexts than others – interventions need to be targeted to suit local circumstances. Future (EU) youth policy initiatives should have a stronger element of institutional capacity building in order to facilitate their effectiveness in countries with comparatively weak institutions in the domain of school-to-work transitions and youth policy in general.

2.4 Co-production of research: implications for policy and practice

Including young people with complex needs as co-researchers should be encouraged, as it can lead to research that more readily reflects the realities of young people's lives. Policy makers and practitioners should take note that tackling youth unemployment from a resilience-based approach, that takes into consideration all aspects of the young person's life, can increase the likelihood of change. It also emphasises the importance of working at an individual and social level to tackle youth unemployment, rather than solely focusing on the individual.

Co-produced resources, such as the One Step Forward book, can be valuable tools for use in training practitioners (for example social workers, teachers, psychologists, therapists and nurses), as well as foster carers.

Good practice example:

The One Step Forward book was used in the training of over 200 support teachers (to date). This was part of their vocational training and professional development run by the Greek Ministry of Education's special education training programme.

Many support teachers work with students from foster care and they desperately need resources to help them with these relationships.

They have also used the Resilience Framework included in the resource as it contained useful ideas and basic guidelines for supporting those students.

These are new resources for the Greek context where support from central government is scarce.

The use of the book in training these teachers was evaluated very positively by the teachers involved and many suggested that it be used in the training of other professional groups.

The resources are available to download from:

http://issuu.com/boingboingresilience/docs/one_step_forward_-_resilience/1 (UK edition)

http://issuu.com/boingboingresilience/docs/one_step_forward_-_resilience_-_gre/1 (Greek edition).

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Gökşen, Yüksek, Filiztekin, Öker, Kuz, Mazzotta and Parisi (2016)

[STYLE Working Paper WP8.3 Leaving and returning to the parental home during the economic crisis](#)

WP9 ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Value system shared by young generations towards work and family

Hajdu and Sik (2015)

[STYLE Working Paper WP9.1 Searching for gaps: are work values of the younger generations changing?](#)

The impact of youth unemployment on social capital

O'Higgins and Stimolo (2015)

[STYLE Working Paper WP9.2 Youth unemployment and social capital: An experimental approach](#)

Aspirations of vulnerable young people in foster care

Hart, Stubbs, Plexousakis, Georgiadi and Kourkoutas (2015)

[STYLE Working Paper WP9.3 Aspirations of vulnerable youth in foster care](#)

WP 10 FLEXICURITY

Mapping Flexicurity Performance in the Face of the Crisis: Key Indicators and Drivers of Youth Unemployment

Eamets, Beblavý, Bheemaiah, Finn, Humal, Leschke, Maselli and Smith (2015)

[STYLE Working Paper WP10.1 Mapping flexibility and security performance in the face of the crisis](#)

Tracing the interface between numerical flexibility and income security for European youth during the economic crisis

Leschke and Finn (2016)

[STYLE Working Paper WP10.1a Tracing the interface between numerical flexibility and income security for European youth during the economic crisis](#)

Youth School-To-Work Transitions: from Entry Jobs to Career Employment

Berloffo, Matteazzi, Mazzolini, Sandor and Villa (2015)

[STYLE Working Paper WP10.2 Youth School-To-Work Transitions: from Entry Jobs to Career Employment](#)

Balancing Flexibility and Security in Europe: the Impact on Young People's Insecurity and Subjective Well-being

Russell, Leschke and Smith (2015)

[STYLE Working Paper WP10.3 Balancing Flexibility and Security in Europe: the Impact on Young People's Insecurity and Subjective Well-being](#)

Flexicurity Policies to integrate youth before and after the crisis

Smith and Villa (2016)

[STYLE Working Paper WP10.4 Flexicurity Policies to integrate youth before and after the crisis](#)

5. Research Partners

1. University of Brighton – BBS CROME – United Kingdom
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6. Advisory Groups

Consortium Advisory Network

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www.businesseurope.eu

ETUI: European Trade Union Institute

www.etui.org

European Youth Forum

www.youthforum.org

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

www.eurofound.europa.eu

ILO: International Labour Office

www.ilo.org

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

www.oecd.org

OSE: Observatoire Sociale Européen

www.ose.be

SOLIDAR: European network of NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe

www.solidar.org

EurActiv

www.euractiv.com

European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1036>

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