

# 1. Introduction

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## 1 FOCUS AND CONTRIBUTION

The financial crisis has had asymmetrical effects on European labour markets and on different groups of workers, whereby youth have been particularly badly affected by a loss of job opportunities. The crisis changed the macroeconomic context and had an unequal impact on different European countries, regions and industries, eventually triggering labour market reforms and an expansion of labour market policies. All of these changes have affected the labour market situation of young people, their transition from education to work, their career prospects and their risk of labour market exclusion. There is great national diversity, not only concerning economic performance and its impact on job insecurity for the young, but also in terms of structural and institutional change at both the national and European levels (see Volume 1).<sup>1</sup>

The difficulties young people face in the labour market have led to fears of a 'lost generation' – a generation of young Europeans who will be left behind as the economy starts to recover and will never entirely escape the disadvantaged position in which they now find themselves. The lack of a firm foothold in the labour market during the transition from youth to adulthood may have adverse effects not only on labour market integration but also on prospects for social inclusion, family formation, well-being and independence in the short and long run. It may have harmful effects on the young generation's prospects of successfully overcoming or *negotiating* difficult parts of the path from youth to adulthood.

This book is the second of two volumes drawing on the findings of an international EU-funded research project (NEGOTIATE) on early job insecurity and labour market exclusion in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Overall the two

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<sup>1</sup> Volume 1: Hvinden B, Hyggen C, Schoyen MA, Sirovátka T (eds.) (2019) Youth Unemployment and Job Insecurity in Europe. Problems Risk Factors and Policies. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://negotiate-research.eu>.

volumes analyse the development of early job insecurity in Europe during the crisis, the factors that have shaped this development, the perceptions of early job insecurity by young people, their scope for agency, and the policies intended to alleviate early job insecurity in Europe.

The overarching aim of the two volumes is to provide new, gender-sensitive and comparative knowledge about the short- and long-term consequences of early job insecurity, taking into account how the active agency of young people has mediated such consequences and what role public policies have played in supporting them. The breadth of perspectives contributes to an improved understanding of how young people's individual resources and negotiating positions in the labour market interact with country-specific structural contexts, including institutional settings and policies.

The two volumes complement each other. The first pays particular attention to labour market outcomes at the aggregate level, factors and mechanisms causing early job insecurity, and the institutions and policies that might reduce the severity of its consequences. While the first volume takes a rather bird's-eye view of the causes and consequences of early job insecurity and related policy responses, the second volume is to a greater extent informed by a bottom-up perspective drawing on a diverse range of methodological approaches. The focus of this second volume is to provide analyses of the similarities and differences in how young people experience job insecurity in Europe. Notably, we provide new knowledge about how young women and men perceive and deal with job insecurity through active agency – for instance, by mobilizing their own, their parents' or their acquaintances' social contacts, by making direct contact with potential employers or by moving to a location with more vacant jobs – and how these actions affect their well-being.

Moreover, this volume analyses in detail the long-term adverse effects of having lived at length with difficulties in finding suitable and stable jobs in young adulthood, that is, the potential scarring effects of joblessness and precarity. One of the salient and original features of these contributions is the way we have combined a range of different and innovative methodological approaches. On the one hand, we provide an up-to-the-minute analysis of contemporary developments; on the other, we include a richly informed historical perspective of how different generations have had to negotiate the consequences of early career insecurity over their life courses, and how these experiences have been affected by the gender, ethnic and disability dimensions that have sometimes influenced individual life courses. In addition, we are able to map these developments using large-scale, internationally comparative quantitative data fleshed out by qualitative life-course interviews and innovative analysis of employers'

attitudes. In this way this volume – and the NEGOTIATE project as a whole – provides an exceptional insight into how the consequences of the crisis have played out in relation to the way different groups of young people seek to navigate these formidable obstacles to finding a foothold in the labour market and, to varying degrees, achieve stable transitions to adulthood.

While the secondary data analysis allowed us to make comparisons across all EU countries, the specific circumstances in targeted partner countries in the project allowed us to examine individuals' experiences, employers' behaviour and policy reforms in nine countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Norway, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The choice of these countries to participate in the project, which was funded by the EU Horizon 2020 research programme, was driven by the need to compare the situation in very different European societies. The broad range of socioeconomic and institutional characteristics and welfare 'regime' types represented by these partner countries allows us to capture the depth and diversity of experiences resulting from the economic crisis and to see how these consequences played out in the lives of young Europeans. In addition, the results of the research were communicated through SOLIDAR, a European network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), ensuring that our findings were not limited to academic debates but also sought to have a direct input into ongoing policy agendas at the EU, national and local levels.

The evidence from this research is organized in this volume in three main sections. First, we examine perspectives on well-being and young people's agency. Second, we take a closer look at scarring effects. Third, we focus on resilience and re-examine the concepts of active agency and negotiation over the life course, before providing a summative conclusion on the implications of these findings for policymakers.

## 2 CONCEPTS AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The NEGOTIATE project draws on four key transdisciplinary concepts – well-being, scarring, resilience and active agency – to improve our understanding of existing variations in the extent and consequences of early job insecurity and labour market exclusion within and across countries and social groups. A core objective has been to identify the individual and societal mechanisms that are conducive to fostering social resilience and capability through active agency for a generation of young people whose transitions to work have become increasingly uncertain and unstable.

## 2.1 Well-Being

A positive sense of general well-being could be considered a key marker of capability (Sen, 1993), while scarring effects influence perceptions of life satisfaction and subjective well-being. The effect of unemployment on subjective well-being appears to be strong in many developed countries (Di Tella et al., 2001). The issue is commonly addressed in psychological, sociological and, more recently, also in the economics literature (Blanchflower, 2007; Blanchflower and Oswald, 2004; Frey and Stutzer, 2001). Being without employment can have negative effects on self-esteem and lead to apathy, financial problems and poor health (Michoń, 2013). Unemployed individuals are more likely to suffer depression and to commit suicide (Argyle, 1999). Clark et al. (2001) show that life satisfaction diminishes for persons who are currently unemployed and especially for individuals with previous long spells of unemployment. However, life satisfaction decreases less for those who have been unemployed often. The authors argue that together these findings offer a psychological explanation for persistent unemployment. Clark and Oswald (1994) show that unemployment reduces psychological well-being, but also that some individuals ‘habituate’, which helps to explain hysteresis and duration dependence in unemployment.

The timing and duration of significant life events affect subjective well-being according to Clark et al. (2008), who examined the effect of significant events such as unemployment, layoff, marriage, divorce, widowhood and the birth of a child over 20 years. They found that for some events there is a rapid return to baseline levels of well-being, whereas marriage and unemployment have more lasting effects on an individual’s sense of positive or negative well-being.

For these reasons, we analyse the consequences of prolonged unemployment in young adults, including measures of habituation to unemployment, that is, whether long-term unemployment leads to an acceptance of the situation or at least to a feeling that it is no longer very unpleasant. While studying the relationship between unhappiness and unemployment, Clark and Oswald (1994) also discuss the possibility of reverse causality, in the sense that people who are unhappy may also be less likely to find employment (Clark, 2010). This argument suggests that unemployment tends to make individuals unhappy, and that unhappy individuals may find it harder to find work and convince employers of their work commitment; or they may take up compensating, ‘escape’ activities, such as resorting to drug use (Ayllón et al., Chapter 9 this volume), which reinforces their difficulties in finding stable work and deepens the scars associated with unemployment.

## 2.2 Scarring

Entering the labour market during recession and being exposed to unemployment early in a working career may not only affect the labour market status of young people temporarily and in a transitory manner but can lead to long-lasting adverse consequences for future job prospects and labour market integration. The persisting consequences of employment instability and unemployment have come to be known in the literature as scarring effects. By definition a scar is a mark left by a healed wound, sore or burn. It could also describe a lasting after-effect of trouble, especially a lasting psychological injury resulting from suffering or trauma.

Different theoretical explanations have been proposed to frame and explain the scarring effects of unemployment and employment instability. These explanations include, on the one hand, possible adverse effects of unemployment and employment instability on the individual. From this perspective, the scar is a mark of a wound that is still affecting the individual in some way. By contrast, explanations that focus on employers' recruitment practices are used to understand why previously unemployed people are disadvantaged in the labour market in terms of employment possibilities, career development or wages. From this perspective, the scar – visible to the employer – is seen as a sign of an unhealed wound and can become a form of stigma (Parsanoglou et al., Chapter 5 this volume) that may be internalized by individuals (Ayllón et al., Chapter 9 this volume; Bussi et al., Chapter 7 this volume). A range of both demand- and supply-side mechanisms are at a play in explanations of scarring.

The scarring effects of unemployment and employment instability are also affected by business cycles and institutional context. The diverse sources or mechanisms behind such scarring effects have proven difficult to disentangle. First, drawing on human capital theory (Becker, 1964), it is assumed that youth who are exposed to early job insecurity in terms of unemployment and poor labour market attachment have not had the possibility to accumulate as much job-specific human capital as young people with a smoother transition to the labour market. In addition, it is assumed that human capital may depreciate when not used (Pissarides, 1992). Young people may lose some of their work-related skills if they are not given the opportunity to use them in a job. This may affect their chances of re-entering the labour market and their career development.

Theories of discouragement (Ayllón, 2013) and habituation (Clark et al., 2001) are variations of supply-side explanations. These theories refer to a situation where individuals who are unemployed over time get used to being without paid work and are discouraged from looking for work. This discouragement and habituation may alter job-search intensity and

thus decrease people's chances of escaping unemployment, resulting in scarring.

In line with these considerations, early employment instability may affect psychological well-being and self-esteem (Goldsmith et al., 1996, 1997). This psychological impact may in turn affect future job-search behaviour and foster scarring with respect to future employment outcomes. Drawing on Erikson (1959: 94–100), a healthy psychological identity formation is thought to encompass the formation of an occupational identity, characterizing the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Following Seligman (1975), experiencing lack of control over one's situation and possibilities in the labour market may affect well-being and self-esteem negatively. The psychological implications of unemployment exposure early in one's career may thus manifest themselves in altered job-search behaviour and in making poor choices, such as resorting to drug use (Ayllón et al., Chapter 9 this volume), or in lacking the capacity or resources to take paths that could favour reintegration and career advancement (Böhler et al., Chapter 3 this volume); as a result, the experience of unemployment can leave long-term scars on young people's future trajectories (Abebe and Hyggen, Chapter 6 this volume).

In addition to the supply-side mechanisms, demand-side mechanisms are also thought to be at play in the development of scarring. In short this means that recruitment practices may disfavour young people with a history of unemployment or unstable careers. For example, economic theories of employers' recruitment strategies and wage-setting decisions based on rational profit maximizing draw on the fact that hiring is an uncertain investment for employers (Helbling et al., Chapter 4 this volume). The main challenge for employers is related to their limited knowledge of the productivity and ability of job applicants. Thus, employers assess the unknown productivity of job applicants on the basis of different and more or less easily observable characteristics that they believe can proxy productivity. Such productivity indicators then determine job offers and wage-setting decisions. Drawing on signalling theory (Spence, 1973), employers interpret a history of unemployment or gaps in employment history as signals of lower potential productivity. Employers may thus be more reluctant to hire individuals with a history of (long-term) unemployment because they believe this information signals a deterioration of human capital or because they simply assume that unemployment experience indicates less motivation and less productivity (Lockwood, 1991; Omori, 1997). Negative signalling of former unemployment may also be interpreted in terms of rational herding, which refers to the idea that employers believe that unemployed applicants must have been previously

interviewed – and if these applicants had proven to be productive, they would have already become employed (Oberholzer-Gee, 2008).

Beyond economically driven explanations of discriminatory recruitment practices, an individualistic ideology placing the blame of ‘not being a productive citizen’ on individuals further serves to legitimize the social inequality and exclusion of those not meeting these normative standards. In this context discrimination of young people who have been unemployed, may not only be explained by more or less rational recruitment practices of employers. It may also be a result of ascription of an identity to those who are unemployed if this is associated with individual characteristics such as laziness, lack of motivation and lack of ‘employability’ (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). In line with this thinking, former exposure to unemployment or gaps in work history may be considered relevant sorting criteria. In this sense one may also refer to an unemployment stigma (Ayllón, 2013; Biewen and Steffes, 2010).

Unemployment scarring is found to vary across business cycles and to be more or less prominent in different countries and institutional settings. Previous research has shown that stigmatization and scarring of the unemployed is particularly prevalent when individuals experience unemployment during periods of economic growth. Biewen and Steffes (2010), following Lockwood (1991), show that when unemployment rates rise, unemployment state dependence decreases, indicating that employers are less apprehensive towards prospective workers who experienced unemployment during periods of economic downturn. Unemployment experiences in times of high unemployment may be regarded by recruiting employers as bad luck because they know that structural job shortages existed and may have hindered the employment of job applicants independently of their productive skills. Instead employers discriminate against individuals who experience unemployment when the current unemployment rate is low. In periods of economic growth, unemployment experiences may be regarded as signalling lower productive skills and less motivation.

In a similar vein it may be assumed that in countries with generally higher unemployment rates the unemployment stigma effects are smaller and thus unemployment may be less of a negative signal regarding future re-employment prospects (Parsanoglou et al., Chapter 5 this volume). Additionally, when unemployment during the transition from school to employment is more common, it may also be socially and individually more widely accepted. This means that the psychological implications of transitory unemployment for particular groups of youth may be smaller and mediated by their family background and level of educational attainment (Abebe and Hyggen, Chapter 6 this volume). These factors

may result in some young people having a range of individual, social and institutional factors that enable them to be more resilient.

### **2.3 Resilience**

Resilience is defined as the ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration and misfortune. Resilience originates from the Latin word *resiliens*, which refers to the pliant or elastic quality of a substance (Greene, 2002). There is a vast and variegated scholarship, much of which originates outside the social sciences, on the concept of resilience and more recently on social resilience. For the purposes of the NEGOTIATE project, we suggest a basic working definition that encompasses both the individual and societal level. Our definition draws, in particular, on three concrete pieces of work that all have different purposes for addressing the notion of social resilience and come at it from somewhat different angles. In developing our definition we have tried to look for what these three discussions have in common.

First, emerging from research in the field of international comparisons of health and well-being, Hall and Lamont's (2009) examination of what constitutes 'successful societies' led on to their analysis of the concept of social resilience (Hall and Lamont, 2013). This they define as 'the capacity of groups of people bound together in an organization, class, racial group, community, or nation to sustain and advance their well-being in the face of challenges to it' (Hall and Lamont, 2013: 2). While they do not go to great lengths to explain the constituent elements of their definition, we note the collective (rather than individual) perspective and the presence of adversity. Social resilience is relevant in the context of some kind of stressor or threat.

Second, our definition is inspired by the work of Ungar (2008), who is especially interested in children's and young people's diverse experiences of resilience. His emphasis on 'navigating' and 'negotiating' resources by and for those affected by adversity informs our analytical framework through the definition of social resilience. Ungar's conception of social resilience as a process and not only a static outcome or absolute endpoint is especially interesting and important. The perspective fits well with our conception of social outcomes as situated within a dynamic model. Social resilience will have a positive impact on future capabilities.

When institutions are brought into consideration, it becomes clear that social resilience is (at least implicitly) also a political matter. The institutional setting, or changes in it, may provide resources and opportunities in a more or less universal or selective manner to support resilience. In fact, Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013: 14) argue that the way to build 'social

resilience, especially in the livelihoods of the poor and marginalized, is not only a technical, but a political issue'. This suggests that analysing the drivers of social resilience in the context of young people's integration in the labour market should also involve an attempt to understand processes of governance and the making of policies designed to help young people's transitions.

Given young adults' exposure to the risk of job insecurity and unemployment, we define social resilience at two levels: individual and societal. At the individual level we understand resilience as an opportunity to acquire a feeling of well-being, and an ability to cope with adverse circumstances and to realize valued and meaningful achievements in the short and long term. At the societal level we understand social resilience as the capacity to provide support that maintains and enhances individual capabilities in their encounter with current and future labour market uncertainties, that is, support that reaches and is valuable to individuals faced with various social risks in the form of social programmes or regulations that create training or job opportunities or enhance employment prospects (Hall and Lamont, 2013: 2; Keck and Sakdapolrak, 2013: 10–11; Ungar, 2008: 225).

Social resilience defined in this way reflects the normatively important aspiration for European societies that also young people have 'effective freedom to act and govern themselves' (Johansson and Hvinden, 2007: 39–40); that is, we consider active agency as a constitutive element of social resilience. Moreover, our definition is in line with Keck and Sakdapolrak's (2013: 10) in incorporating an extended time horizon, rather than a single point in time. We consider the capacity to draw lessons from the past and from others as relevant for individual actions as well as for collective actors operating in local communities or at national or supranational level (Lewis and Tolgensbakk, Chapter 10 this volume). Such processes of reflexivity and learning underline the need for adopting a dynamic analytical framework that allows us to capture how young people's lives develop over time, the factors that influence their life courses and the extent to which they are able to exercise active agency in the choices they make (Bussi et al., Chapter 7 this volume; Krasteva et al., Chapter 8 this volume).

## **2.4 Active Agency, Negotiation and the Life Course**

Several scholars have developed concepts of active agency from a sociological perspective. In sociological and social psychology, Anselm Strauss and others have formulated a more specific concept of negotiation to capture the emergent, more or less temporary mutual adjustments that people adopt to find workable solutions to the challenges of everyday

life and interaction (Strauss et al., 1964). Analytically we are interested in critically and cross-nationally assessing and comparing how the characteristics of the local and regional labour markets, local public and private employment services, employers and access to education or training structure young people's actual and perceived room for action and their efforts to manage and utilize this room. Stones's (2005) structuration theory – and more specifically his concept of active agency – provides an analytical framework for connecting the different levels of analysis between the micro, meso and macro levels.

Stones distinguishes between 'external structures' that hinder or facilitate conditions of action; 'internal structures' within the agent, such as dispositions or knowledge; 'active agency', where the agent draws on internal structures in practical action; and outcomes, such as change or stability in external or internal structures or the agent's position (Stones, 2005: 9). Our use of the concept has affinity to Strauss's (1978: 99) notion of 'negotiation context'. This refers to the perceived space or playing field within which social interactions take place and is closely related to actors' perception of what is potentially achievable, in other words, their sense of capability or 'effective freedom'. Linking the ideas of Strauss (1978) and Sen (2009), one might argue that the negotiation context delimits the set of obtainable capabilities. In most situations behaviour and actual choices are constrained and do not automatically correspond to a person's preferred action. It is therefore important to consider not only observed behaviour but also whether there is actual scope for choosing alternative pathways. This idea has been empirically applied by Hobson (2013: 24) in an examination of the 'agency and capabilities gap' in parents' preferred and realized work-life balance. She argues that the 'possibilities for claiming and exercising rights' vary not only in terms of different 'institutional and societal/normative contexts' between countries, but also in terms of the possibilities of the individual actors within the same societies to realize these rights, where they exist.

The passage from youth to adulthood is comprised of several key life-stage transitions, for instance from education to work, residential independence and parenthood (Anxo et al., 2010; Ayllón, 2015). Early job insecurity is likely to weaken the opportunities and scope for independent choices with regard to these transitions. Thus, in order to grasp more fully the long-term individual and societal consequences and processes of marginalization resulting from early job insecurity, a life-course perspective represents an indispensable tool (Buchmann, 1989; Buchmann and Kriesi, 2011; Hammer and Hyggen, 2013; Shanahan, 2000).

Within a life-course perspective, combining the four concepts draws attention to young people's expectations and realized transitions in

relation to work and family choices, inviting us to examine young people's sense of agency or efficacy in different societal and institutional contexts. The ability to realize these expectations is affected by the young people's subjective negotiating position, that is, their ability to actively construct and be in charge of their own pathways into adulthood. Most important in this regard are individual decisions and choices in relation to education, work, independent household formation and family formation.

Objective negotiating positions are affected by macroeconomic conditions and historical, political, institutional and cultural factors in a given country (e.g., Luetzelberger, 2012). Both the subjective and objective negotiating positions will be affected by gender in terms of the social, economic and ideological status and conventions governing roles for men and women in different societies (O'Reilly et al., 2014). Institutional and ideological factors affecting these role specifications include the 'welfare mix', that is, the range of education, employment and family care policies, the market, civil society, industrial relations and the structure of the family. Carrying out a comparative cross-national empirical analysis of these concepts integrates the research undertaken here and will enable us to bring new insights to the effectiveness of policy measures in different societal contexts.

### 3 ORIGINAL DATA FROM THE NEGOTIATE PROJECT

Original data was collected mainly using two different methodological approaches: (1) semi-structured life-course interviews with 207 individuals from seven countries who had experienced unemployment when they were young; and (2) a cross-national survey of employers' risk assessment in the hiring of young workers based on a vignette design.

#### 3.1 Life-Course Interviews

The purpose of the *life-course interviews* was to gain systematic comparative knowledge of how experiences of prolonged job insecurity as young adults have shaped women's and men's subsequent life courses across time and place (historical and territorial contexts). The interviews allowed us to examine if (and how) major institutional or economic changes within one country – alternatively, if (and how) cross-national institutional or economic differences – were reflected in patterns of life courses in those individuals who have experienced prolonged job insecurity as young adults.

As part of the NEGOTIATE project, researchers carried out 207 personal interviews in seven countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Norway, Poland and the United Kingdom. The individuals were selected because they had experienced at least four months of unemployment or precarious employment and had at most completed upper-secondary education by age 25. In most of the countries the interviewees were recruited from three different generations or cohorts (born 1950–55, 1970–75 or 1990–95). However, it was difficult to recruit respondents from the oldest cohort (1950–55) in the post-socialist countries since the specific political and economic context obliged everyone there to have a job. Table 1.1 sums up the sociodemographic characteristics of the total sample of interviewees.

Recruitment took place through a variety of means and several different channels. Each national team had some freedom to choose the recruitment channels that were most suited to their local context. We contacted organizations like trade unions, NGOs working with young unemployed, minorities or disabled people. In some cases recruitment advertisements

*Table 1.1 Sociodemographic characteristics of interviewed individuals*

| Criterion                                   | Selection criteria                  | Number |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Gender                                      | Men                                 | 107    |
|   | Women                               | 100    |
| Birth cohort                                | 1950–55                             | 39     |
|   | 1970–75                             | 84     |
|   | 1990–95                             | 84     |
| Education level when entering labour market | Lower-secondary or less             | 104    |
|   | Upper-secondary                     | 103    |
| Occupational status before the age of 25    | Precarious employment               | 49     |
|   | Long-term unemployment              | 107    |
| Ethnicity/migration status                  | Majority                            | 164    |
|   | Minority (Roma, migrant, etc.)      | 43     |
| Health status                               | Minor disabilities or health issues | 5      |
|   | Disabled or severe health issues    | 30     |
| Current occupational status                 | Unemployed or in shadow economy     | 104    |
|   | Temporary job                       | 37     |
|   | Secure job                          | 61     |
| Place of residence                          | City/capital                        | 131    |
|   | Small town or village               | 76     |

*Source:* Metadata describing original data from the NEGOTIATE project.

were posted online and in places like community notice boards and supermarkets in areas with a particularly high proportion of people who had not attended university. Some researchers used the snowball method within their personal networks. In addition, some of the research teams made use of commercial services specializing in survey recruiting in order to find interviewees with the necessary profiles from all three cohorts.

All the interviews were thematically structured according to a common topic guide initially developed through an iterative process between the national research teams. The topic guide included questions on the transition to the labour market and how unemployment affected the interviewee's life situation. We asked about opportunities for being active during unemployment and the role of potential sources of formal and informal support (from family, NGOs, the government), as well as about the activities undertaken during unemployment. Finally, there were questions designed to obtain information about individual short- and long-term consequences in relation to issues such as social mobility, social trust and life satisfaction.

Each interview lasted between one and two hours and was conducted in the local language in the period May 2016 to November 2016. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in the original language. To allow for cross-national sharing and comparative analyses of the interview data, the national NEGOTIATE research teams were responsible for making available to everyone an English-language summary of each interview. Depending on the local context and institutional practice, in some of the countries the interviewees received a modest financial incentive for taking part in the interview.

### **3.2 Employer Survey and Factorial Experiment**

The second method involved a *cross-national survey of employers' risk assessment* in the hiring of young workers. We conducted a multi-national web survey in which we embedded a factorial survey experiment. The survey was addressed to recruiters who were in charge of filling the posted job. In contrast to other forms of field experiments applied in recruiter studies (e.g., conjoint or audit studies), a factorial survey experiment facilitates the simultaneous variation of multiple applicant features. Based on a pool of hypothetical candidates – the so-called vignettes – with different combinations of individual characteristics, such as educational level and unemployment experience, this method enables measurement of both single and joint effects of such signals on how recruiters evaluate the fictional CVs.

We sampled real vacancies in Bulgaria, Greece, Norway and German-speaking Switzerland. By real vacancies we mean open job positions

advertised in the four countries between May 2016 and June 2016. The sampled job advertisements were restricted to the five occupational fields of mechanics, finance (banking and insurance), catering (service personnel), nursing and information technology. This provides us with a sample of low-, medium- and high-skill jobs, gender-mixed and gender-typed jobs, occupations that are more or less dependent on and linked to technological innovations, and jobs with higher and lower turnover rates (see Hyggen et al., 2016, for further details). To ensure a sufficient match between the requirements of the selected vacancies and the characteristics of the hypothetical job candidates in the vignettes, we applied internationally comparable sampling criteria for each occupational field. By restricting the sampling of job advertisements to a narrow selection of detailed ISCO codes (International Standard Classification of Occupations), we assured a reasonable fit between the real job profiles and the standardized vignettes designed for each occupational field.

The global response rate was 16 per cent (completed survey). The response rate was highest in Switzerland at 27 per cent and lowest in Greece at 10 per cent (Bulgaria: 17 per cent; Norway: 14 per cent). All cases with complete data on the research variables were included in the analytical sample of this chapter. This resulted in a final sample of 2885 recruiters and 27 612 curriculum vitae.

In addition to these innovative and original sources of data, we also drew on large-scale quantitative data from the European Social Survey (Buttler, Chapter 2 this volume), the Eurostat Labour Force Survey (Helbling et al., Chapter 4 this volume), the Eurobarometer (Ayllón et al., Chapter 9 this volume), and a rich national source of longitudinal data from the Young in Norway survey (Abebe and Hyggen, Chapter 6 this volume).

Together these methods allowed us to carry out an extensive examination of the effects of early job insecurity at a pan-European level, as well as integrate these findings into a fine-grained, gender-sensitive, historically informed and institutionally connected analysis.

### **3.3 The Focus of the Contributions**

The volume is organized in three parts. Part I examines well-being and perspectives on young people's agency in two different chapters. The first, by Buttler, explores the strength of the relationship between employment and well-being across Europe. The second, by Böhler et al., explores four narratives of youth unemployment.

Part II focuses on the concept of scarring and the long-term adverse effects of job insecurity. Helbling et al. compare long-term scarring effects of unemployment across five European countries. Parsanoglou et al.

pose the question as to whether active labour market policies leave scars on the young unemployed and provides an answer using data from the vignette experiment of employer's decisions on hiring youth in Greece and Norway. The third chapter, by Abebe and Hyggen, takes a closer look at moderators of unemployment and wage scarring during the transition to adulthood applying evidence from Norway.

Part III examines the concepts of resilience and well-being. Bussi et al. deploy the capabilities approach and draw on life-course interviews to identify how young people develop transformative social resilience. Krasteva et al. explore subjective experiences of migration. Ayllón et al. use both quantitative approaches and qualitative life-course interviews to explore coping strategies and the consequences of drug use. Lewis and Tolgensbakk draw on experiences of developing information, advice and guidance services from Norway and the United Kingdom to identify policies that could support young people through these difficult transitions early in their working lives. The final chapter, by the editors of the volume, summarizes the main findings and identifies recommendations for policy development.

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