1. Introduction

**Bjørn Hvinden, Jacqueline O'Reilly,
Tomáš Sirovátka and Mi Ah Schoyen**

1 INTRODUCTION

The financial crisis had an immediate and disproportionately adverse effect on-the-job prospects of young people. As these effects rolled out in the decade that followed, there were patchy signs of improvement across Europe. In some regions youth were barely touched, whilst in others the scars of the crisis marked a generation (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011, 2013; O'Reilly et al., 2017, 2018). But even in regions that were less harshly affected there were still deep pockets of youth whose chances of labour market integration and of establishing stable trajectories were impaired. Poor labour market prospects for youth have forced new entrants to be less selective in terms of the types of jobs they apply for (Filandri et al., 2018; ILO, 2013). Young people are increasingly likely to find work in temporary, part-time, low-paid and precarious forms of employment (Eurofound, 2013; Grotti et al., 2018; Karamessini et al., Chapter 2 this volume). It is not just the difficulties of finding work, but also the likelihood that this work will be of low *quality* and more *insecure*, that has increased the risks youth face. In these circumstances, policy interventions are imperative to address the long-term negative effects of such experiences.

This is the first of two volumes presenting the main findings from a European research project (NEGOTIATE) that has examined the consequences of early job insecurity and labour market exclusion for young Europeans.¹ With this shared focus, each volume makes a distinctive contribution. While this first volume maps out the causes and consequences of early job insecurity and related national and European policy responses, the second illustrates more subjective experiences (Gallie et al., 2017; Green et al., 2016).² In the latter volume, life-course interviews

¹ See <https://negotiate-research.eu>.

² Volume 2: Hvinden B, O'Reilly J, Schoyen MA and Hyggen C (eds) (2019) *Negotiating Early Job Insecurity. Well-being, Scarring and Resilience of European Youth*. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing

describe effects of scarring, levels of well-being, and resilience and agency in attempts to overcome early job insecurity. The interviews illustrate the effects of particularly adverse circumstances in relation to the use of drugs and patterns of migration and the consequences of these experiences over the life course. They also pinpoint the roles of individuals' active agency, and the help or hindrance provided by their families, significant others, or policy guidance and advice institutions.

The first volume presented here has a much stronger emphasis on policy dimensions, while the second volume focuses on how young adults have actually coped with adverse circumstances. The shared questions examined in these volumes are as follows:

- What factors lead to high and differentiated levels of job insecurity amongst young Europeans? (Volume 1)
- What are the short- and long-term consequences of early career insecurity? (Volumes 1 and 2)
- How does the design of European and national public policies for preventing or reducing early job insecurity impact on youth unemployment? (Volume 1)
- How have young adults coped with the risks, experience or consequences of job insecurity, and through what action of their own have they negotiated or overcome these challenges? (Volume 2)

Using a mixed-methods approach, both volumes draw on a range of different empirical evidence. Some of this includes analyses of a rich set of existing statistical or survey data. Extensive qualitative approaches include primary data collection through over 200 life-course interviews with women and men from three birth cohorts in seven EU countries. A particularly innovative approach to examining employers' attitudes is provided by an employer survey including a 'vignette experiment'. In addition, a series of expert policy interviews were conducted with key respondents involved in implementing and evaluating current policies and practices across Europe.

This first volume pays particular attention to labour market outcomes at the aggregate level. It identifies factors and mechanisms causing early job insecurity and the institutions and policies that might reduce the severity of its consequences. These chapters highlight the significance of institutional variation across labour market regimes and take seriously the role of the actors themselves: young people, employers and policy-makers. This volume also assesses the role of key policy measures coming from European and national institutions and related to educational reform, active labour market policies (ALMPs), and employment and

unemployment protection in shaping young people's ability to overcome the barriers they face in entering the labour market. Finally, the volume presents new empirical findings and consequent recommendations on how to improve policies and systems of multi-level governance.

In addition, our analysis integrates a wide range of multi-method evidence to consider how the active agency of young people has mediated these consequences and the role of public policies in supporting young people. The breadth of analysis provided here 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. These contexts include institutional settings and policies (Hora et al., Chapters 7 and 8 this volume), as well as European-funded initiatives such as the European Social Fund (Bussi et al., Chapter 10 this volume) and the Youth Guarantee (Dingeldey et al., Chapter 9 this volume).

Having created a rich, mixed-methods source of comparable cross-national data, the authors of these two volumes can maintain the voice of the young person in relation to their specific societal context and the impact of policies on their trajectories. In this sense the two volumes provide a unique contribution to debates in this field. The wealth of this mixed-methods approach not only tells us about the recent experiences of young people since the economic crisis of 2008, it also provides a longer-term perspective to understand how deeply rooted some of these problems are, and how the past decade of austerity has exacerbated them for particular sections of the youth population.

The two volumes do not aim to analyse in detail all the macro-level factors that have interacted with or generated different crisis impacts. Our focus is on the institutional or contextual factors that may help to reinforce or alleviate the effects of macroeconomic factors. Such institutional factors include a country's education system, its employment protection legislation (EPL), minimum wages (if any), unemployment income protection and ALMPs for young people (see Hora et al., Chapters 7 and 8 this volume). We also analyse aspects of European policy efforts to enhance the labour market integration of young people (see Dingeldey et al., Chapter 9 this volume; Bussi et al., Chapter 10 this volume).

Together the two volumes provide a systematic and nuanced understanding of the mechanisms behind differentiated outcomes for young people in relation to gender, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, skills, occupation and geographical location. Understanding these mechanisms can inform policy solutions, enabling timely and measured interventions for vulnerable groups and the well-founded allocation of public resources.

In this introductory chapter we outline the key notions informing our analysis, drawing on the concepts of *resilience*, *capability*, *active agency*

and *multi-level governance*. We also outline the analytical framework we have developed in the course of the analysis and the interaction between different theoretical approaches and a diverse array of empirical evidence, with particular reference to the concepts of social resilience and active agency. Using this approach, we identify how policy and different forms of multi-level governance can promote the active agency of young people dealing with early job insecurity.

2 KEY CONCEPTS AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE BOOK

Both volumes develop the concepts of *resilience*, *capability*, *active agency* and *multi-level governance* as tools for analysing data and translating findings into policy options and recommendations. The authors seek to move beyond the existing scholarship by investigating how the strength of linkages across macro, meso and micro levels may be mechanisms influencing differences in the prevalence of youth unemployment, precarity and labour market exclusion in and between European countries.

At the individual level, factors such as low or incomplete education, poor health or disability, ethnicity, or a family background of unemployment are likely to influence a young person's labour market attachment. However, the structural traits of the relevant labour market and of a country's political economy more generally shape the individual's scope for making choices. The way employers assess young jobseekers' resources and the risks associated with hiring them also have an important effect. Thus, at the macro and meso levels, economic conditions and institutional and organizational factors combine to produce cross-country variation in the prevalence and consequences of early job insecurity (see Imdorf et al., Chapter 5 this volume; Karamessini et al., Chapters 2 and 3 this volume; Michoń, Chapter 4 this volume).

The meso- and macro-level circumstances in interaction with the diverse ways in which individuals use their scope for action contribute to further variation. An understanding of the dynamics at and between the three levels is necessary to be able to design effective policies. The linking of micro, meso and macro perspectives provides new knowledge about these key issues:

- the ways in which policies at local, national and EU levels influence (hinder or facilitate) young people's scope for active agency, strategies, capabilities and resilience as responses to job insecurity, and

- the options of decision makers for strengthening such policies – and the links between them – to support young people's own efforts to find sustainable and satisfactory jobs.

3 ECONOMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS FOR THE ANALYSES

The backdrop of our analysis is the Great Recession in Europe beginning in 2008. This crisis affected the employment prospects of young adults more severely than the prospects of somewhat older groups. However, the effects of the crisis also interacted with and reinforced the impact of longer-term structural changes in the labour markets of most European countries. Prominent aspects of such structural changes were a reduction in the share of people working in the agricultural, extractive and manufacturing sectors, and an expansion of employment in the services or tertiary sectors in a broad sense. A related increase in the share of jobs requiring middle to higher education and training has penalized young people with incomplete or low levels of education and training.

At the same time, most European countries have seen a weakening of the regulation of labour markets, driven in part by a liberalization of EPL and/or a reduction in the coverage of collective agreements, particularly in sectors that traditionally had high trade union membership. In addition, the expansion of fixed-term, part-time and temporary jobs became more important in youth labour markets (Grotti et al., 2018). As a result, young entrants to the labour market in the 2000s were likely to have a less coordinated and more flexible working life than entrants in the final decades of the twentieth century.

The downturn of labour markets in several Western economies in the early 1990s triggered a shift to 'activation' policies, first through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Jobs Strategy and then, from 1997, through the European Employment Strategy. Core ideas behind activation were that too many people were staying too long on unemployment benefits (whether from social insurance, means-tested social assistance or a mixed system) and that benefits were too generous, that is, they created 'disincentives' to quick re-entry to employment. There was a widespread belief that benefit periods needed to be shorter and benefit levels lower, and that public authorities had to put pressure on unemployed people to return to work more quickly (or, if deemed necessary, to take part in training to enable such a return) using threats of sanctioning (e.g., reduction or termination of benefit payments) (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005).

Governments put such measures into practice under the slogan ‘from passive to active’, albeit with varying force, consistency and success across Europe (Goetschy, 2003; Hvinden et al., 2001). Whereas some European countries had a history of ALMPs to build on, others tried to introduce such policies for the first time. Overall, this meant that the discursive justification for tightening benefits, qualification rules and activity requirements was often in place before the Great Recession forced many governments subsequent to 2008 to reduce budget deficits and adopt austerity measures.

In sum, we analyse how macro-level factors play together with meso- and micro-level factors in determining the differences of early job insecurity within and across countries. *Meso-level factors* refer to aspects of regional or local communities and the public agencies and civil society (voluntary sector) found in these, as well as the practices of employers operating in these territories. By *micro-level factors* we mean the characteristics of the young person (in terms of gender, education, health, etc.) and his or her immediate surroundings (family, social networks, etc.). For instance, we are interested in seeing how institutional meso- and macro-level factors constrain or facilitate the agency, capabilities and resilience of young people in the face of increasing job insecurity (see Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova, Chapter 6 this volume; Hvinden et al., Chapter 11 this volume).

4 MACRO-LEVEL DETERMINANTS OF EARLY JOB INSECURITY

Existing research on the macroeconomic factors behind youth unemployment has identified a decline in aggregate demand (and labour demand leading to a shortage of jobs) as the key overall issue (e.g., Bell and Blanchflower, 2011; Clark and Summers, 1982; O’Higgins, 2001, 2015; Ryan, 2001; Scarpetta et al., 2010). This research has pointed to a high volatility of labour demand or a cyclical sensitivity of young people’s unemployment to recession. According to Scarpetta et al. (2010), the ratio of the youth unemployment rate to the unemployment rate of adults was 1.79 during the recent crisis. These authors proposed the following summary of reasons for why young people have been particularly affected: Young people have less specific human capital, and it is easier for firms to lay off young people because they have no statutory entitlement to redundancy payments. Young people are less effective in job search because they have less social capital and weaker job-search skills, and they are exposed to the ‘experience trap’, that is, employers do not hire

them because they lack job experience. Young people tend to have fewer financial commitments and are frequently reliant on financial support from their parents. Finally, jobs for young people are often concentrated in sectors that are more vulnerable to recession, such as construction or non-standard employment.

Studies emphasizing macro-level factors suggest that variations in the ratio between youth unemployment and adult unemployment rates depend not only on differences in demand and supply for labour but also on institutional and policy differences, given that policies significantly mediate the effects of the business cycle (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011; Eichhorst et al., 2016; Gallie, 2013). Some authors have claimed that countries with stronger equality-promoting institutions (EPL, bargaining coverage, ALMPs, welfare-state redistribution) experience less employment reduction during economic slowdowns (Tåhlin, 2013). These policies also prevent the negative effect of minimum or youth wages on unemployment (e.g., Bell and Blanchflower, 2011; O'Higgins, 2012, 2015). However, the evidence is not clear: several evaluation studies have found mixed or ambivalent effects of ALMPs on youth unemployment (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011; Calmfors et al., 2002; Card et al., 2010; Grubb and Ryan, 1999; Heckman et al., 1999). The most recent studies (Caliendo and Schmidl, 2016; Kluve, 2010, 2014; Maibom et al., 2014) have given the most ambiguous assessment of the effects of ALMPs. In addition, these effects have proven to be weaker in the case of youth than in the case of adult unemployed.

We acknowledge what some researchers have identified as a substantial deadweight of ALMP measures for youth. Nonetheless, we assume that redistribution of jobs towards young people is a meaningful policy goal, given that the long-term costs of youth unemployment, in particular in the form of *scarring*, are so high (e.g., Bell and Blanchflower, 2011).

A central concern of this book is to gain better knowledge about the synergies between education systems, EPL, unemployment income protection, ALMPs and social inclusion policies that are available for young people. We see these synergies as a complex institutional set-up, partly mediating significant labour supply/demand interactions, partly (or potentially) alleviating the negative impacts of youth unemployment or early job insecurity. Admittedly, it is difficult to measure the overall effects of such complex policy systems. The focus of this book will therefore be on the ways in which policy packages respond (or not) to situations of early job insecurity in terms of their coverage, coordination, targeting and adequacy relative to the needs of young people, or hinder or enable young people's scope for active agency (see, in particular, Hora et al., Chapters 7 and 8 this volume).

5 EARLY JOB INSECURITY

In Europe today the notion of early job insecurity not only refers to how young people feel uncertain about their possibilities of finding an appropriate job when they leave school or higher education. According to reports from the International Labour Organization, the ongoing financial crisis, in addition to reducing the opportunities for employment, also forced new entrants to be less selective in terms of types of jobs, and employment and working conditions (ILO, 2013). While this situation does not fully exclude young people from the labour market, they still face considerable uncertainty. There is a growing concern about a further polarization of the labour market into ‘good jobs and bad jobs’ (Filandri et al., 2018; Kalleberg, 2013). While in many cases immigrants and young adults, especially those with low education, are left with limited access to the ‘good jobs’ and increasingly end up in precarious working conditions (the ‘bad jobs’; see Ross, 2009; Standing, 2011), some second-generation ethnic groups are experiencing more success, although it often takes them longer to secure a good foothold in employment, especially if they are Muslim women (Zuccotti and O’Reilly, 2018). The distribution of risk in the labour market is changing, especially for different groups of young people, with an increasing individualization of risk having a negative impact on more vulnerable groups (Breen, 1997).

In this book we adopt a multi-dimensional understanding of the notion of early job insecurity that includes both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the uncertainty in question (Dahl et al., 2009; Gallie et al., 2017; Jansen, 2011). The quantitative dimension is associated with job-tenure issues or job security (having a job or not), and the risk of losing one’s job or of not finding a job. The qualitative dimension is associated with the possibilities for achieving certain valued job features or characteristics, job status or job quality. This includes the ability to use skills, work effort or intensity, autonomy and control/discretion on work tasks, pay and fringe benefits, task interest and intrinsic job rewards, personal treatment by supervisor and job satisfaction (Dahl et al., 2009; Gallie et al., 2017; Green, 2006).

Parallel to the distinction between objective and subjective job insecurity, one may adopt both objective and subjective measures to capture the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of uncertainty. We apply both kinds of measures in the two volumes. Some chapters cover the quantitative dimension through a broader set of objective measures, others focus on some features of the qualitative dimension with the help of self-reported subjective measures, which may be significant both for the strategies used by young people and for the risk assessment and hiring decisions of employers.

Most EU countries have deregulated components of their employment law, allowing employers to more easily hire workers on atypical contracts. In several countries such deregulation has reinforced the division between skilled and protected versus unskilled and deregulated workers, that is, it has contributed to the creation of a more segmented workforce (Emmenegger et al., 2012; Gallie, 2013; O'Reilly et al., 2015). Overall, young people and other labour market newcomers are more likely to be given a fixed-term contract. Temporary employees are subject to lower pay, a higher risk of job loss, subsequent spells of precarious employment and poorer opportunities for job-related training (Inanc, 2010). Women are likely to start their careers in a doubly vulnerable position characterized by part-time, temporary employment (Plantenga et al., 2013). Part-time work also tends to involve poorer employment quality and career prospects in terms of pay, job security, training and promotion (Scarpetta et al., 2010). The crisis has accentuated concerns of a deepening labour market dualism between those on a standard employment contract and those on atypical contracts.

However, low-wage employment is prevalent also for full-time employees in many female-dominated professions (Eichhorst and Marx, 2009). Additionally, the expansion of part-time employment reflects a modernized breadwinner model of the family (Dingeldey, 2014).

A prevalent argument has been that labour market flexibilization and more use of temporary or part-time employment contracts diminish employers' risk in hiring, and that this improves the employment chances of immigrants and young adults with low or no formal skills. The empirical evidence for this proposition is weak and contested. A counter-argument has been that flexibilization puts vulnerable labour market groups in a state of 'permanent temporality' or precarity. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that temporary work can serve as a stepping stone out of unemployment (Korpi and Levin, 2001), especially for new entrants and young adults who have been left behind (Engebretsen et al., 2012; Von Simson, 2012).

Together the two volumes analyse how *structural conditions*, *institutions*, *active agency* and *individual capabilities* interact to shape differential outcomes of early job insecurity across European countries. For this purpose, a multi-dimensional concept of early job insecurity is fitting because the qualitative dimension of such insecurity is closely associated with the capability, resilience and agency of young people, with potentially diverse consequences for the quantitative dimension. A key concern is therefore the extent to which young people, employers and relevant public institutions consider – and act on – both the quantitative and qualitative dimension of early job insecurity. To

examine this question, we adopt a dynamic framework that enables us to understand the processes and interactions taking place between agents and structures.

6 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In both volumes our interest is to identify the factors that promote ‘*social resilience*’, conceived as operating at both the societal and individual levels. We are interested in examining young people’s agency in relation to job insecurity and how public policies may constrain or enable this agency. Moreover, our framework includes the impact of structural and institutional differences – across and within countries – in shaping the consequences of early job insecurity at the individual and societal levels. The concepts of *capability* and *social resilience* help us to understand the mechanisms underlying the consequences of early job insecurity. Both concepts require attention to interactions between structures and individual agency.

Our framework is partly inspired by the capability approach associated with Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum and links this approach to the concept of social resilience. More specifically, our framework highlights the mechanisms shaping individuals’ room for (*active*) agency or degree of agency freedom when negotiating or navigating key transitions in the early stages of their working lives. The linking of these concepts enables us to conceptualize how youth-to-adulthood transition pathways influence individuals’ subsequent life courses in a non-deterministic manner. Following Hobson (2013) and Fahlén (2013), we assume that important agency and capability gaps exist and that these differ not only across social classes or groups, but also across institutional, cultural and economic contexts. We aim to map and explain the extent of this variation.

We are interested in what the notion of *capability* means in the context of transitions from youth into adulthood, of which labour market entry is a key marker. In Sen’s (1993) version of the capability approach, *conversion factors* play an important role. Sen has underlined that even if the volume and nature of a person’s *means* (commodities, goods, resources broadly defined, etc.) influence his or her capability set, these means do not determine this capability set in a uniform or definitive way. According to Sen, diverse characteristics or circumstances of a person affect his or her possibilities for translating means into a capability set (and, in the next instance, into desired functionings). In our context we find it useful to distinguish between conversion factors operating, respectively, at the *micro*, *meso* and *macro* levels (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Examples of initial conditions and/or conversion factors at different societal levels of relevance for young people's efforts to improve their job chances

At the micro level	At the meso level	At the macro level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gender and age ● Intelligence ● Level and type of skills ● Work experience ● Own (or family's) resources & networks ● Self-perception & confidence ● Dispositions (habitus) ● Ethnicity (command of language of host society) ● Health status ● Place of residence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regional/local institutional arrangements (sub-national administrative institutions, public employment services) ● Employers' perceptions & practices ● Family resources & networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supranational (EU) institutional arrangements (market regulations, specific redistributive & regulatory provisions aimed at youth) ● National institutional arrangements (education and training systems, income transfers & regulations, in-kind social provisions, statutory social rights) ● Industrial relations, employment legislation

Note: Whether a specific item in the table has the role of being part of certain initial conditions or serves as a conversion factor depends on the perspective or model one adopts in an analysis (see Hvinden and Halvorsen, 2017).

Source: Author's interpretation.

Hence, our emphasis and terminology differ from Robeyns's (2005) categorization into *individual*, *societal* and *environmental* conversion factors. Other scholars have distinguished only between *individual*, on the one hand, and *external* or *social* conversion factors, on the other (Bonvin and Orton, 2009; Egdell and McQuaid, 2018; Hollywood et al., 2012a; several contributions in Otto, 2015). We see a differentiation between conversion factors at different levels as an important tool for sensitizing us to the possible interactions between factors at different levels. Moreover, this differentiation is needed to operationalize the capability approach for measurement purposes in empirical studies (Comim, 2008; Hollywood et al., 2012b).

We are particularly interested in how the micro-level/individual initial conditions or conversion factors interact with meso- and macro-level factors

in shaping the capabilities and functionings of young people who are experiencing early job insecurity. Since individuals' initial conditions or inputs differ along many dimensions, there will be great variation in their ability to convert means into a capability set. Given that it is a category of relevance in most national contexts, the significance of gendered patterns in the conversion process from inputs into capability sets is of special interest to us.

Following the capability approach, we are also keen to know how institutional actors (most prominently the state) centre their activities on the interactions between initial conditions and conversion factors in order to enhance capabilities or the realization of opportunities (Bonvin and Orton, 2009: 567), and we want to identify the outcomes of such interventions. In our framework, *institutions* (conceived as rules, norms and formal, structuring arrangements) belong both to the meso and macro levels. Sub-national administrative institutions such as public employment services are examples of actors that operate at the meso level. The broader institutional arrangements (e.g., the design of the education system, national systems of industrial relations, EPL or parental leave rights) involve decisions taken at the national and sometimes even the supranational level.

We situate our analytical framework within a research strand that sees the capability approach as a useful basis and methodological tool for the assessment of labour market activation and social integration policies for vulnerable young people (as illustrated by the contributions of Bartelheimer et al., 2012; Bonvin and Moachon, 2008; Egdell and McQuaid, 2016; Lindsay and McQuaid, 2010; Otto, 2015).

7 RESILIENCE

The second key analytical element is *social resilience*. We argue that social resilience provides a useful lens for comparing – across and within countries – the consequences that early job insecurity and unemployment have for different groups of young people, and how they face up to these challenges. The way we define them, we see the concepts of capability and social resilience as being underpinned by similar logics. Therefore, in our framework the two concepts are complementary, and they both draw attention to individual agency. The benefit of linking capability and social resilience is that the latter is more suited as an analytical lens through which we can interpret our main dependent variable – the (social) outcomes located on the right-hand side of our model.

More specifically, we can conceive of the range of consequences associated with young people's risk of job insecurity or unemployment in terms

of social resilience. For instance, we can examine how young people adapt to the stigmatizing and scarring effects of unemployment through the conceptual lens of social resilience. This concept draws attention to the extent to which young women and men are able to negotiate these conditions and potentially avoid the most adverse consequences of such insecurity.

There is a vast and varied scholarship, much of which originates outside the social sciences, on the concept of *resilience* and more recently on *social resilience*. For the purpose of the analyses in this book, we suggest a basic working definition that encompasses both the individual and societal levels (see Table 1.2). Our definition draws, in particular, on three concrete pieces of work that all have different purposes in addressing the notion of social resilience and thus come at it from somewhat different angles. In developing our definition, we have tried to look for what such 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 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 Hall and Lamont 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 a context of some kind of stressor or threat.

Table 1.2 Definition of social resilience in the context of early job insecurity

Level	Given young adults' exposure to the risk of job insecurity and unemployment, social resilience has the following meaning on different levels:
Individual	Opportunity to acquire a feeling of well-being, ability to cope with adverse circumstances and realize valued and meaningful achievements in the short and long term.
Societal	Capacity to provide support that maintains and enhances individual capabilities in their encounter with current and future labour market uncertainties, i.e., support that reaches and is valuable to individuals faced with various social risks, social programmes or regulations that create training or job opportunities or enhance employment prospects.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Ungar (2008: 225), Hall and Lamont (2013: 2), and Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013: 10–11).

Second, our approach is inspired by the work of Ungar (2008), who is especially interested in children 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. That is, we suggest structuring the analysis of social outcomes at point t_1 around the notion of social resilience. At the same time, we expect that outcomes at t_1 feed into initial conditions or serve as capability inputs in the future (which we may denote as t_{1+n}). So social resilience will have a positive impact on future capabilities. To connect back to the capability approach, it promotes what Nussbaum (2011: 43) refers to as 'capability security', meaning that a given capability can be counted on for the future (for an application of the capability approach and the concept of social resilience in the same analysis, see Bussi et al., Chapter 7 Volume 2).

When we bring institutions into the discussion, it becomes clear that social resilience is (at least implicitly) also a political matter. The institutional setting, or changes to 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 ways of building '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 employment prospects may serve as a basis for identifying processes of governance and policies for enabling young people's transitions.

Social resilience defined in this way reflects the normatively important aspiration of 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 as opposed to a single point in time. We consider the capacity to draw lessons from the past and from others as being relevant for individual actions as well as for collective actors operating in local communities or at national or supranational level. Such processes of reflexivity and learning underline the need for adopting a dynamic analytical framework (and, next, for choosing methodological designs that allow us to capture how young people's lives develop over time and what factors influence their life courses).

8 ACTIVE AGENCY OF YOUNG PEOPLE – AND POLICIES PROMOTING IT

The contributions to this volume identify areas of intervention and social innovation where institutions and policy solutions can help Europeans faced with *early job insecurity* to exercise *active agency* for improving their *employability* over the *life course* within a system of *multi-level governance*. We analyse empirical data in the context of a set of key perspectives and concepts with the aim of achieving a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms and causal relationships that can serve as a basis for proposals for institutional innovation and more effective policies.

Within social science and normative political theory, several scholars have developed concepts of *active agency*. Given the constraints imposed on public resources by macroeconomic conditions and contemporary fiscal policy, we aim to identify and critically assess potential sources of social resilience. In this regard our centre of attention are policies, practices, institutional configurations and modes of coordination that enable groups such as young adults to ‘sustain their well-being’ (Hall and Lamont, 2013: 22). We investigate where these institutions and policies fail and why. Analytically we are interested in critically assessing and comparing cross-nationally how the characteristics of the meso level (i.e., local and regional labour markets, local public and private employment services, employers, access to education or training) structure young people’s actual and perceived room for action and their efforts to manage and utilize this room.

The challenge of preventing and responding to youth unemployment and job insecurity in contemporary Europe belongs to a broader class of complex policy challenges or ‘wicked problems’ requiring a combination of:

- well-integrated, interlinked and mutually supporting public policies,
- networks or horizontal collaboration between relevant actors and stakeholders, and
- vertical coordination across different territorial levels (supranational, national, regional and local).

Social researchers have for a few decades framed the appropriate ways to handle such policy challenges as multi-level governance (e.g., Bache and Flinders, 2004; Berthet, 2015; Blanpain et al., 2009; Enderlein et al., 2011; Halvorsen and Hvinden, 2016; Jordana and Levi-Faur, 2004; Jessop, 2004; Kazepov, 2010; Stephenson, 2013; Van Berkel et al., 2011; also see Dingeldey et al., Chapter 9 this volume).

The underlying idea behind the concepts of multi-level and network governance is that in complex systems of decision-making like those we find in contemporary Europe, no particular level of government – not even the nation state – is sovereign and fully able to oversee and control what happens in its territory. Greater complexity of issues and institutional patterns means that decision-making becomes more dispersed.

First, at each territorial level public authorities establish various forms of networks, agreements or alliances with non-public actors at the same level. While a public authority may be dominant in a network, it still needs the participation, resources, and legitimacy of others to ensure or improve its capacity to achieve significant goals.

Second, public authorities are not only dependent on other actors at the same territorial level, but also influenced and constrained by authorities and actors at other levels (e.g., supranational, national, regional, local or individual, as the case may be). Conversely, public authorities at one level are in their turn seeking to influence and constrain the actions of authorities and actors at the other levels. These efforts create a web of negotiation, alliance-building and mutual adjustment between actors (Halvorsen and Hvinden, 2016). We use these concepts to provide a better understanding of the conditions under which policy efforts to prevent or reduce prolonged youth unemployment will be successful.

While the national and sub-national governments' and other actors' pursuit of policies for promoting the labour market integration of young people is not new, the importance of the EU in policy development and governance has grown markedly since the second half of the 1990s (Ashiagbor, 2005; Blanpain et al., 2009). Especially through the gradual development of the European Employment Strategy, the EU has sought to gain a role in the area of employment and labour market policy (Goetschy, 1999; Pochet, 2005; Visser, 2009). In recent years supranational efforts to promote cross-country policy learning and coordination of national employment policy and to monitor performance have stepped up, becoming even more visible through the central position of employment (and education) in the Europe 2020 strategy. The ambition to implement the Youth Guarantee as a measure to tackle the problem of youth unemployment has received much attention across Europe (Dingeldey et al., Chapter 9 this volume).

However, even though the European dimension has become more visible as the EU plays a growing role in developing policy, EU member states are still far away from full harmonization of employment and labour market policy (as is illustrated, for instance, in Bussi et al., Chapter 10 this volume, on the European Social Fund). Policymakers at the *national* level typically decide on the exact design of the programmes and actions to equip people

with job-related skills and to help them find employment, often in collaboration with the social partners. In some countries, *regional* authorities also have a role in policy development. The concrete implementation of policy typically takes place at the *regional* or *local* level. Finally, the concrete encounter between individuals and policies takes place at the *local* level. We need to consider these aspects of multi-level and network governance when analysing factors of significance for young adults' scope for agency and their risk of experiencing the more adverse consequences of prolonged unemployment and job insecurity.

National institutional differences regarding EPL and the vocational specificity of the education system affect cross-national differences in labour market entry patterns (Julkunen, 2009). More generally, the emergent pattern of policy efforts to integrate young adults in the labour market largely follows the contours of the diverse welfare policy models in Europe. Different combinations of education policies, ALMPs, EPL and unemployment income protection policies establish complex institutional constellations affecting young people's transitions into the labour market.

One way to conceptualize these constellations is the notion of *youth transition regimes* (focusing on the interactions between education, training and labour market entry), while the broader concept of (*youth*) *employment regimes* also includes employment policies, employment legislation and unemployment income protection. Such modelling constructs regimes as different combinations of cultural and institutional structures in which main clusters include the universalistic/inclusive regime (e.g., Scandinavian countries), liberal regime (e.g., the United Kingdom), employment-centred regime (e.g., Germany), sub-protective regime (e.g., Mediterranean countries) and other complex regime models characteristic of transitional/post-socialist societies (Walther et al., 2006). By including countries that represent all the above types in our study, we can compare how these regimes affect the entry of young people into the labour market (see Hora et al., Chapters 7 and 8 this volume).

9 SUMMARY

In this chapter we have introduced the reader to two complementary volumes on early job insecurity in Europe. This first volume mainly deals with institutional factors of significance for the prevalence of job insecurity amongst young people and the ways in which young people seek to cope with such insecurity. We ask how well institutional factors at different levels of governance are linked with each other today and how one might improve both the capacity and the coordination of institutional

arrangements and policies to provide young people with better protection against long-term job insecurity, unemployment or precarity.

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