

# **TAKING CONTROL?**

## **AGENCY IN YOUNG ADULT TRANSITIONS IN ENGLAND AND THE NEW GERMANY**

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#### **BACKGROUND**

This research builds on our previous Anglo-German and UK studies<sup>1</sup>, which have contrasted the regulated German and unregulated British approaches to transitions into the labour market. In this new study the ways in which social changes have impacted on the lives of individuals are central to the rationale. The Eastern and Western parts of Germany shared a common culture but operated totally different socio-economic systems during communism. West Germany and Britain had different versions of the same socio-economic system, but different cultural histories. Britain and Eastern Germany have experienced, from different starting points, strong effects of market forces and deregulation of previous systems. Government policy in both countries is now focused on 'people taking control of their own lives'.

This project has explored comparatively the life experiences of 900 young adults in the under-researched 18-25 age group. The sample, drawn from the three cities of Derby (D), Hannover(H) and Leipzig (L), consisted of 300 students in higher education (HE), 300 unemployed (U) and 300 employed (E) young people. In answering the question posed in the title, the research has shown these young adults to be struggling to take control of their lives, while the effects of those struggles are bounded in important ways by wider societal features as well as social background and institutional environments. Through a range of empirical encounters with young adults in the chosen 'terrains' we have developed the concept of *bounded agency* to explore and explain experiences of control and personal agency of 18-25 year olds in the settings of higher education, employment, unemployment and in their personal lives.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives were met as follows:

1. To develop a conceptual scheme for investigation of the individualisation 'thesis' in the context of theories which explain structure and agency in different ways, we have taken the work of Beck (1992, 1998) and Baethge (1989) as theoretical sketches to be explored, contested and developed. We have expanded the continuum set out in the original proposal and located these and other theoretical stances within the dimensions of structure-agency, internal-external control, social reproduction-conversion, as shown in Figure 1. This has provided the basis for our conceptual scheme. The metaphor which portrays the research participants as 'actors in the social landscape' has been used as an heuristic device in exploring the meanings of the data.
2. In collecting a unique body of new evidence, a high level of cross-institutional and international collaboration has produced valuable data sets including very detailed

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<sup>1</sup> Published as Bynner and Roberts (1991); Evans and Heinz (1994); Evans, Behrens and Kaluza (2000)

quantitative survey findings from the total sample of 900, together with a rich collection of group interview transcripts.

3. In deepening knowledge of the relationships between structural features and feelings of control, we used questionnaire and group interview data to compare the experiences and orientations of young adults in the matrix of nine institutional settings and localities which structure experience and action in different ways, focusing on the 'social regularities'. We also investigated gender and social class differences in feelings of control and indicators of agency.
4. To develop an improved understanding of the factors involved in becoming socially defined as independent and personally effective or (conversely) marginalised in different settings, our analyses of the interview transcripts were triangulated with the questionnaire data. We also drew on case history and key informants' data from the earlier projects identified in the proposal<sup>2</sup>, using these to inform the interpretations of our new data.
5. To involve researchers and users (young people, policy makers, practitioners) in debate about the most effective ways to support transitional processes from the earliest stages, we produced an initial pamphlet on emerging findings and secured support<sup>3</sup> for 3 international seminars and workshops for researchers and users. These were held in Hannover, Leipzig and Derby respectively. Our dissemination programme is linking with planned Programme events to the end of the Programme in 2003 as well as engaging a wide range of users through presentations and web-site communications.

## METHODS

The research was carried out in line with the plan presented in the original proposal, taking the comments of our referees into account. The rationale for the design is discussed more fully in our second nominated publication 'Reconstructing Fate as Choice'.

There were three overlapping 'layers' of research, as follows.

- Information gathering--documentary analysis and the gathering of as much information about the young people, their colleges, workplaces and their contexts as possible.
- Structured questionnaires-administered to samples of approximately 100 respondents in each of the settings, producing mainly quantitative data.
- Group interviews-with sub-samples drawn from the questionnaire respondents in each of the settings, producing mainly qualitative data.

The methodological stages outlined above were used to work a way into young people's subjective perspectives on transitions and status passages in work, education and their personal lives. The use of both structured and unstructured techniques meant that several different viewpoints (e.g. official, unofficial, institutional, group, individual) were represented and triangulation of methods and of data sources strengthened the validity of the study's findings. Our aim has not been to draw conclusions about the wider populations of England and Germany,

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<sup>2</sup> Particularly our analysis of transition behaviours and career outcomes (Evans & Heinz 1994, Evans et al 1999)

<sup>3</sup> The Hannover workshop was held at EXPO (World Exhibition) 2000 with the support of the UK pavilion; the Leipzig and Derby workshops were funded by the Anglo-German Foundation.

but to uncover commonalities and differences in the experiences of samples of 18-25 year olds matched by institutional setting in three cities, with nation providing part of the socio-political and structural environment which affects experience in significant ways. Our extended analysis of the socio-political environments has been published in Evans, Behrens and Kaluza (2000)<sup>4</sup>.

With the co-operation of the College and University Principals, their Heads of Department and the subject tutors, Chambers of Commerce, Labour Administrations and a range of voluntary and community organisations, broadly representative samples were obtained for each type of 'institutional setting' in each locality. Close liaison between the team members allowed adjustments to be made to ensure that the social categories of age, gender, occupational /educational level were adequately represented, as well as broad fields of employment and study, as appropriate. Nine hundred questionnaires were completed. The interview samples were selected from questionnaire respondents who had agreed to be part of the group interviews, with the aim of maximising comparability of the groups. The aim was to conduct 18 group interviews: two in each of the three settings in each of the cities, involving in total at least 108 of the survey participants. In practice, 21 interviews were carried out involving 136 participants<sup>5</sup>.

The project is contributing to the reconceptualisation of agency as a process (Emirbayer and Mische 1999) in which past habits and routines are contextualised and future possibilities envisaged within the contingencies of the present moment. Accordingly, the questionnaire was structured to capture features of past lives, current experiences and orientations, and future perspectives of our research participants. The German and English versions of the questionnaires and group interview frameworks were developed together and piloted.

The referees' comments usefully pointed out that the differences in meanings would have to be addressed. As with all international studies, particular issues arise over comparability of educational level and occupational level. Our approach, informed by previous work (Bynner and Roberts 1991, Evans & Heinz 1993, Evans et al 2000), ensured that these differences in meaning were taken into account from the outset and were borne centrally in mind in the analysis and interpretation of the data. The analysis, statistically, utilised cross tabulations, factor analysis, index construction and correlations including some multivariate work. The qualitative interview transcripts were fully transcribed, coded and analysed with the aid of Nvivo. The aim throughout was to link the three layers of qualitative, quantitative and documentary data to gain a full understanding of the positions of our respondents in their 'social landscapes'.

## **RESULTS**

Our starting point was to analyse the data for each of the three groups (HE, E, U) separately, comparing the findings for each of the groups across and between the three localities (D, H, L). Our first nominated publication, which concentrates on unemployed young adults in the three cities, illustrates how we then set our initial analyses in context, combining sources of data to

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<sup>4</sup> This book, published by Macmillan in 2000 is not identified as nominated publication despite its high impact, as it combines analysis carried out under both the Anglo-German Foundation funded study and the present ESRC study.

<sup>5</sup> The further interviews were undertaken where it was considered desirable to have additional interview material available because of differences in balance and emphasis and in the conduct of the interviews.

arrive at an initial understanding of the position of each group. Our next stage of analysis extended to 3x3 comparisons across groups and cities, first exploring questions of structure and agency (as represented in our second nominated publication) and then focusing on the initial research questions set out in our proposal. A factor analysis carried out on the full quantitative data set identified twelve factors of importance in the analysis of agency and control. Twelve viable CONTROL, AGENCY and FUTURE factors have been identified through an initial factor analysis (see Appendix 2) and scaled into indices. A further analysis identified 6 SELF factors:

S (1) sociable/confident	SELF(1) general self confidence
C(1) fulfilled work life	SELF(2) social self confidence
C(2) fulfilled personal life	SELF(3) personal strengths
C(3) believes opportunities open to all	SELF(4) work strengths
C(4) believes own weaknesses matter	SELF(5) achievement barriers
C(5) planning not chance	SELF(6) career/course choice
C(6) believes ability not rewarded	
A(1) active career seeking	
A(2) unlikely to move - also F(1)	
A(3) politically active (group)	
A(4) helping/people career oriented	
F(2) negative view of the future	

Subsequent analysis used the full set of qualitative, quantitative and documentary evidence to explore the emerging findings further, with reference to our conceptual scheme, related research and national contexts.

### **Actors in the social landscape**

One of the most striking findings has been the almost universal recognition of the importance of qualifications. The achievement of qualifications has the status of a universalised goal. The means for achieving these goals have diversified in both countries, but more in England than in Germany, and our respondents in the two German cities were more aware of the effects of ascribed characteristics of gender, ethnicity and social class than their counterparts in the English city (Table 1). More respondents in Derby considered that qualifications override other social characteristics in shaping life chances.

To provide insights into the experiences and orientations of young people differently positioned within the social and institutional ‘landscapes’ in our three chosen localities, the following three sections compare the experiences of each group in turn across the three cities, as a precursor to thematic analysis across the full matrix.

### **Comparing unemployed young adults across the three cities**

*Profile:* The composition of the sample of unemployed young adults reflected the qualification levels and social backgrounds of the local population of unemployed 18-25 year olds.

In the 18-25 year age band, experience becomes differentiated, pathways diverge and the composition of the populations support the contention of Whitty et al (1998) and Sennett (1998) that interruptions and setbacks in middle class careers are now not unusual in the English setting. At least one-quarter of the unemployed sample in Derby came from professional or technical/managerial backgrounds<sup>6</sup>.

*Context:* Because of the timing of introduction of New Deal and Jump specifically for this age group, most of the respondents were involved currently or recently in these government programmes. Unemployed young adults in England are faced with expectations of higher levels of educational attainment and with changed recruitment practices. In Germany the long-standing crisis of the training system continues and unemployed young adults are denied flexible forms of access to the highly structured labour market. In Leipzig this is compounded by the collapse of many of the previous industries and large-scale employers.

In all three cities, the respondents in this group *believed in the importance of acquired attributes such as education and qualifications in influencing life chances (although they voiced some doubts about meritocracy).*

Tables 2.05 and 2.06 summarise findings from the questionnaire items designed to explore self, agency, control, views of the future for this group in the three localities. The charts depict the relative profiles of respondents on the selected factors<sup>7</sup> Unemployed respondents in all three cities scored relatively low on the measure which combined the ratings given for how much career relies on interest, long-term goals, choice and planning. *Overall, the respondents in this group scored lower than their counterparts in higher education and employment on most control and agency measures.* The combined data indicated little sense of control over their present situation. The least degree of control was experienced by the Leipzig respondents. Structures and feelings of control influence the agency behaviour of young adults. The Leipzig group placed great weight on external factors which influence an individual's opportunities, but their individualisation of failure, their sense of lack of control, and their disbelief in equality of opportunities meant that respondents in this group was least likely to take individual action to remedy their situation. In Hannover, individualisation of failure was less manifest compared with the other two localities. This group of unemployed young people stated clearly and consistently in both questionnaire and group interview responses, that external influences are important for an individual's opportunities. They had a critical view of the equality of opportunities and did not believe that ability will be always be rewarded. They also scored relatively low on individual agency factors (A2,A1,A4). The Derby group differed from the Leipzig group in ascribing failure to the individual even more and in the strong belief that opportunities are open to everybody (C3). They scored highest on the agency factors A1 and A4.

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<sup>6</sup> In Leipzig all would have been defined as working class under the previous political system which also had very high levels of professional and academic qualification. The relevant figure here is that at least 18 % of the unemployed group in Leipzig recorded their fathers' occupation as being professional, technical or managerial in level. In common with Hannover and Derby, there was a high level of non-response to the parental occupation questions..

<sup>7</sup> derived from factor analysis and scaled to produce measures (or factor scores) whose means can be compared by area within institutional setting and by setting within area. They have been divided into those measured in a negative or positive direction.

Those with initial vocational qualifications or in the process of achieving them felt more strongly that their fate was in their own hands. This was more often the case in Derby and Hannover where the proportion of 'newly unemployed' was higher. By contrast, those who experienced long spells of unemployment still saw a good education as the foundation for successful integration into the labour market, but to a greater extent held structural influences responsible for their situation. This applied particularly in parts of the Derby sample and in Leipzig. *The results supported the thesis that highly structured environments are associated, in people's minds, with the idea of reduced chances for the individual, since opportunities are only open for those following clearly described routes, and it is those same structural factors that are held responsible by individuals for their 'failure'.* This is the case in the two German towns. *The Derby data demonstrated that one of the consequences of an environment which fosters a belief that 'opportunities are open to all' is the individual attribution of failure. In the highly structured German system external factors can more easily be held responsible for failure, and young people in this group consequently have a greater chance to develop a positive sense of self.* From our data, it is remarkable that while this was true for unemployed young people in Leipzig, they also thought of failure as an individual attribute. Although structural factors clearly account for many of the problems these young people face, the difference could be explained by the greater uncertainty of the changing environment and the more strongly polarised labour market in the East.

The nominated publication 'Taking Control' (Behrens & Evans, 2000) shows more fully how the different types of data were combined to produce an initial analysis of the position of the unemployed group in the three cities.

### **Comparing employed young adults across the three cities**

*Profile:* The samples were representative of occupational levels and the broad sectors of manufacturing and service industries in the three cities. Because of the different timing of transitions, young adults in professional occupations are represented within the Derby sample but are largely absent in the Hannover and Leipzig samples<sup>8</sup>.

*Context:* Multiple entry points to the labour market for English samples. Entry points regulated through the dual system in Germany

*The overall picture presented by our data from young employed adults is one of optimism.* The large majority attributed their present circumstances to their own plans (average 62%) and interests (average 76%). The Leipzig sample contained the largest number (although a minority) of people who were dissatisfied with their current situation and prospects, and felt trapped in unsatisfactory jobs. Their more pessimistic views of the future were reflected in reduced confidence and tempered ambitions. In relation to 'positive' measures of agency and control, young employees in Hannover and Leipzig scored remarkably similarly and at odds with the

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<sup>8</sup> In England, people aged under 25 have often left higher education and entered professional jobs, whereas people geared towards professional careers in Germany are usually still students. Also, some professions which are entered via HE in England are entered via the dual system in Germany. As close a match as possible between our samples and the make-up of the population of employed young adults in each area was obtained.

Derby scores (Table 2.03, 2.04). The German groups scored more highly on 'fulfilled' experiences in their personal lives, sociability and confidence as well as on degrees of political activity, particularly collective forms (A3). In contrast, young employees in Derby were more 'individualised' in their attitudes and more labour market oriented. Young Derby employees reported higher levels of responsibility at work and were more active in career seeking (A1) than their German counterparts. They were also more inclined to believe that 'opportunities are open to all' (C3). The stability in the working lives of young Germans was in marked contrast to the experiences of those in England. In Derby, *the greater room for manoeuvre and scope for recovery was accompanied by a greater reliance on chance opportunities and trial and error in the search for work. The evidence supports the view that this more insecure and flexible system, which is negotiated by young people holding individual attributions of success and failure, necessitates the greater proactivity and the maintenance of the positive approach to 'opportunities' identified in the data.*

The only factor in which the German scores deviated substantially was 'planned not chance' (C5). Here it was found that *young adults from Hannover were much more likely to feel that their current career situation was related to their long-term goals and interests, as opposed to chance or having no other option.* The scores for the Leipzig and Derby groups were lower and closer together. More of the young adult employees in Hannover had been able to realise their plans, which could be explained both by greater opportunity and clear structures in place.

There were some aspects of this group's working lives which they felt were outside their control in all three cities. Pressure to be at their best in order to face stiff competition, to take on heavy work-loads and to constantly keep up to date in knowledge and qualifications were generally seen as unavoidable and symptomatic of modern times. Respondents in this group often felt more 'fulfilled' in their personal lives than in their lives at work.

### **Comparing young adults engaged in higher education in the three cities:**

*Profile:* the samples were representative of broad subject groupings and of students attending their local university<sup>9</sup>.

*Context:* in the upper 22-25 age range, German students are conventional entrants, while the Derby student population includes more access students and people entering after a period in employment<sup>10</sup>.

*Findings:* English and German respondents reported equally positive experiences of achievement, self-organisation and responsibility in their higher education. English respondents reported fewer positive experiences of these kinds in their free time (see also Participation, Social Life and Politics section). Correspondingly, the English respondents' assessments of their own social abilities, their self-confidence and their abilities to make decisions was a little lower

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<sup>9</sup> In line with the 'area-study' nature of the research, we sampled those from the local area and labour market setting who had entered higher education. It was not our intention to obtain a sample representative of the HE populations nationally, if indeed this is possible

<sup>10</sup> The University of Derby is one of the 'new' universities in England, with a strong orientation to the community and commitment to widening participation.

than that of the German respondents. There were striking differences in the judgements concerning the importance of structural and individual factors in chances for success in life. In common with the other settings, family background, region, sex, ethnicity and social class were of great importance in the views of the East German respondents. In contrast, *students in Derby believed more strongly that opportunities are open to everyone (Tables 2.01 and 2.02). They ascribed less influence to structural factors and more to their own capabilities and actions (C3). Leipzig respondents' feelings of control appeared to be associated with stronger alignment of their present lives with long-term aims and personal interests.* Another indicator of feelings of control is the belief in how important individual disposition and talent are in success and advancement. The German respondents in both cities were more strongly of the opinion that successful people do not necessarily deserve their success (C6). Looking at C3 and C6 together as an assessment of life chances and success in projection of the own self, *the English students displayed a stronger sense that people are in control of their own lives.*

In comparing views and expectations of the future, more of the respondents in the two German cities doubted that they 'would find the job they really wanted' in comparison with their English counterparts (44 % D compared to 33 % H and 22 % L believed they would get the job they really wanted). More English respondents had definite plans for the future. Looking at F2 together with the group interview transcripts, we can conclude that *young adults in the higher education setting have an optimistic view of the future which is neither euphoric nor complacent, which reflects an awareness of the expectation that they can continue actively to develop themselves after graduating.* Turning to agency variables, A2 is an indicator of active behaviours in the training and labour markets. German respondents generally had fewer experiences of the labour market compared with the English respondents. Few of the respondents in the German cities had held a part-time or full-time job (Derby 54%, Hannover 18% and Leipzig 7%) and few had experienced unemployment (for comparison Derby 20%, Hannover 2%, Leipzig 0%). There were only minimal differences in how the students fit their own aims into a social context. Looking at what the students 'want most from work' in all three cities, only a few students consider 'relationships with a wider circle of people' or contribution to society through own or group effort as important (compared with the importance given to 'good job security', 'good pay' or 'good career prospects'. (see also Participation, Politics and Social Life section).

Overall, the most striking finding in the higher education group was the frequency of correspondences between the Hannover and Leipzig groups. This is consistent with the findings of German Youth Institute surveys (Gille and Kruger 2000), that young people from *Eastern and Western Germany have moved closer but confirms that, in this most highly educated group, the east Germans are less ready to accept that opportunities are equally open to all.* (Hubner- Funk and du Bois-Reymond, 1999)

### **Comparing across settings and cities: the four research questions**

The four initial research questions outlined in our original proposal concentrated on comparisons across areas and settings. This section discusses our findings for each question in turn.

#### **Feelings of dependency and control**

Our *first research question* asked whether delayed entry to the labour market has created extended periods of dependence in the experience of 18-25 year olds and whether the extended, more institutionalised transitions of Germany were reflected in greater feelings of dependence and lack of control in the German groups. Our results showed that feeling of partial dependence on parents *in all respects except the financial*, was felt by most, more than 60 per cent in all settings and cities. Age only affected financial independence substantially in the employed group, with three quarters of 22-25 year olds in employment reporting complete financial independence in Derby and Leipzig, slightly fewer in Hannover. Turning to other forms of parental help and support, a minority of between one fifth and two fifths considered themselves completely independent of those forms of support in the three cities in each setting. The rest saw themselves as partially independent.

*In summary* these findings run counter to the hypothesis that extended transitions in education and training have elongated feelings and experiences of 'dependency' on family in negative ways. If this were the case, there would be marked differences in feelings of dependence on parents between the group which has made full transitions into employment and the two groups experiencing extended transitions in education, training or schemes. Our results showed that *all groups feel partially dependent for emotional and wider forms of support, the differences between the employed group and young people in the other two groups being confined to the financial forms of dependence*. Here, the higher education group felt most financially dependent, irrespective of age, and the financial pressures experienced by the Derby group were apparent in the interviews. The fact that half of the unemployed respondents in Derby reported themselves to be financially independent probably reflects the lack of family/parental resources available to support them. (Christie et al 2000). There is also evidence of dependency on state support and of financial hardship, stress, conflict with parents and experiences of exclusion in the unemployed group. It is true however, that many more young people than previously (pre 1990) are entering higher education after the completion of schooling and initial further education. The phenomenon of youth unemployment extending into the third decade of life and affecting more 20-25 year olds means extension of high levels of insecurity rather than extended dependence on family for many young adults, particularly in Derby where welfare and grants eligibility has reduced most. For most young adults, leaving home and setting up separate living arrangements remains the primary indicator of independence. The most striking finding was that the *English groups scored higher than their German counterparts on most measures of control and individual agency in all three groups*. This was consistent with the German groups' greater awareness of the influences of external structures on life chances and supports the hypothesis that the institutionalised German framework is associated with lower feelings of control. 'Dependence' on family is not, however, always negatively experienced.

### **Common experiences of gender, 'race' and social class**

The *second research question* asked how far our respondents shared common experiences of gender, race and social class. The group interviews proved a particularly powerful vehicle for exploring these issues, while providing data which was invaluable in interpretation of questionnaire results. Our design also enabled us to make comparisons by gender and social

class, to explore some of the structural foundations of variations in control and agency exhibited by the respondents<sup>11</sup>.

## **Gender**

The majority of group interview participants saw the effects of gender in life chances as outweighed in importance by the effects of educational qualifications, effort and performance. In this respect the qualitative evidence was consistent with the questionnaire response patterns. Despite this, there was awareness that particular sectors of the labour market remain biased towards one or other sex. Beyond this, more subtle forms of sexism were seen to be operating, such as people being stereotyped by the way they look and women having to perform better than men in order to gain an equal degree of respect. *There were frequent references to 'competence' overriding other factors, but within an overall awareness that there are differentials in the levels and status achieved by females and males in employment and the economy.*

More generally, the interview transcripts revealed awareness of gender alongside the individual attribution of success, with a sense of acceptance by young women of the need to prove oneself more as a female. While there were quite powerful discourses around gender in many of the groups, there were differences in emphasis in the perceptions of scope and limits for choice and equality of treatment. Even the English groups appear more differentiated than Arnot (2000) has suggested. The demands of childbearing and childrearing were at the forefront of the thoughts of our German female respondents.

In the German interviews, although women were generally seen as having the same chances as men at work, the view was often expressed that women must at some point 'choose between work and family'. In the questionnaire responses, many more women than men gave priority to 'child-rearing possibilities' as something they wanted from work in all areas, but more in Germany than in Derby. However the largest proportion in any group who considered this a priority was 50 per cent (Leipzig females in higher education). There is little evidence of the emergence of the 'new man' who pays close attention to family considerations.

*Differences in male and female views of equality in society as measured by the factor 'believes opportunities are open to all' were found only in Leipzig, where females generally believed less that equality existed. This was the case irrespective of their situation in education, employment or unemployment.*<sup>12</sup>

Across all areas, males had more experience of being unemployed on more than one occasion. In Hannover and Leipzig, males from working class backgrounds were most likely to experience this<sup>13</sup>. In Derby the number of male respondents experiencing multiple employment was only

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<sup>11</sup> while the samples reflected the ethnic composition of the population in each of three settings in each locality, the numbers were insufficient for conclusions to be drawn.

<sup>12</sup> The greater visibility and general awareness of social inequalities in Leipzig, compared with Derby and Hannover, is disproportionately attributed to female perception in the area. This is not surprising in the light of evidence (Diewald 2000) that women were among the most downwardly mobile groups in the East of Germany following reunification.

<sup>13</sup> a multivariate analysis showed that 'having a greater number of periods of unemployment longer than four weeks was related to preception of 'chance', political inactivity, being male, older and having had more thanone type of setback.

slightly higher than females across the social spectrum. Males in Hannover and Leipzig were also found to have been significantly more active in searching for work( A1). *These findings together appear to confirm that males are having a tougher time in penetrating the labour market and finding stable employment, and that this is the case particularly for males of working class origin in Hannover and Leipzig.* In Derby, female respondents were found to view their futures significantly more positively than males (Table 3).

There was evidence of females behaving with a higher degree of agency than males, at least in some respects. For example, *females tended to leave the parental home earlier than males , and were more open to the possibility of moving away from the area they currently lived in. These are examples of agency at an individual level. They also exhibited higher levels of collective agency in that they were found to be more politically active* (Table 4). This difference was apparent in the most difficult environments. A possible explanation is that females are more resilient, becoming disengaged less easily than males. Remarkably consistent differences emerged across the three areas between males and females in higher education which appeared to reflect greater agency on the part of the female respondents.

### **'Race' ethnicity and nationality**

The findings shown in Table 1 mask the fact that 53% of ethnic minority respondents in Derby thought that race had a considerable effect in shaping life chances (compared to 17% non-minority) and 30% thought that gender had a considerable effect (compared to 18%). In group interview responses, the groups had rather less to say on the topic of race than gender, and gave fewer examples, except in Leipzig, where responses reflected the high proportions who perceived 'race' as important in life chances. Issues of 'nationality' aroused strong feelings and reflected concerns about the 'xenophobia' reported in recent press coverage of developments in the Eastern part of Germany. That is not to say that the attitudes were themselves primarily xenophobic. The attitudes expressed recognised that non-Germans suffer particular forms of overt discrimination and that this fundamentally affects life chances. Similarly, discussion of social background is influenced by different meanings in Germany, particularly in Leipzig where class pride (for manual workers and farmers) in the GDR was replaced by class-based disadvantage for the former at least. The interview approach aimed to get insights into this in various ways, through the questions which asked about influences of family background, obstacles, both material and social, through open questions about the factors which affect and influence occupational destinations and 'career'. Ethnicity of the respondents reflected the distribution in the local population in each institutional setting, as far as possible, but the differences in the nature of the population groups and the numbers were insufficient for statistical analysis to be meaningful.<sup>14</sup>

### **Social class**

Social class awareness is shown to be mixed in with family and gender dimensions in complex ways, with much reference throughout the interviews to the importance of 'social connections' and the invisible social factors, beyond qualification and competence, which affect success.

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<sup>14</sup> Derby has a significant black population, Hannover a Turkish population and Leipzig has an incoming population from Russia and some of the other Eastern European countries.

English respondents were more likely than their German peers to change their job expectations, usually (but not always) in an upwards direction. English respondents were also more independent of their parents in all groups (Table 4). *Social class was perceived to be more important in Germany (Leipzig 56% stating this has considerable effect, Hannover 45%) than in England (Derby 28%).* In the group interviews, a minority of participants were willing to talk about their life experiences directly within a social class perspective, but many respondents, especially students in Germany, were aware of the influences and benefits of their parents' occupational background. The effects of 'framing' in limiting what might be seen from any particular social position (Bloomer 1999) came through strongly in the interview transcripts, but equally there were many indicators that forms of social capital were seen as being convertible and expandable through qualifications, making new connections and taking chances. This came through in the views, expectations and experiences of the respondents in all groups, particularly in the group interviews. However, class-based limits are recognised by the majority in all three localities and most disbelieve that 'talent always rises to the top'. Only one quarter of the Derby respondents felt that social class/status does not affect your chances in life' although this is higher than the very small minorities of the Germans who were prepared to agree with this statement.

*Relatively few of the items and measures designed to identify the dimensions of agency and control in their lives were significantly associated with the respondents' social class, where this was measured by father's occupation<sup>15</sup>.* There were many more significant associations with their present setting. One variable which is of particular significance in this research, is the orientation towards long term planning, as reflected in (C5)<sup>16</sup>. As well as being an indicator of proactivity and of some forms of agency and control, theoretically this variable is of great interest given the central place given to people becoming the 'planning office for their biographies' in the theoretical perspectives which emphasise human agency most strongly<sup>17</sup>. This was one of the few variables which was significantly associated with the social class origins of the respondents. The profile of the area samples on this index is represented in Table 6<sup>18</sup>. *Life chances may have become more determined by their abilities to be proactive but this finding suggests that this is the very characteristic which has structural foundations in social class<sup>19</sup>.* This finding, which we have treated with caution given problems of self report of father's occupation, merits further investigation through the large scale data sets of the panel and longitudinal studies available, preferably comparing the findings on the 'old' categories of the Registrar-General's scale with the new NSEC categories.

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<sup>15</sup> After exploring NSEC, we decided to use Registrar-General's scale for coding of Social Class, which has in-built problems of comparability because of different definitions of skill level. Because of difficulties of comparing skill level within the manual occupations, (combined with a high level of non-response to this question), a five fold classification has been used for the purpose of analysis: Professional, Managerial, other Non-Managerial, Manual and Never Worked.

<sup>16</sup> composite of items including goal orientation and alignment of career with personal interests.

<sup>17</sup> See Beck (1992), Bandura (1995), Ziehe (1996), Baethge (1989)

<sup>18</sup> bivariate correlation analyses showed that a planning orientation was related to being of managerial class, not being of manual class, having had no major setbacks, leaving full-time education later, being employed and believing that you might move to another area at some point in your career.

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted, however, that the chart masks important differences by setting. In the higher education group for example, it was the skilled non manual which scored highest in the Derby sample.

### **Comparing feelings of control: views of the self and feelings of control in different settings.**

Our *third research question* asked whether educational settings foster stronger feelings of control than the employment and unemployment settings in which people experience the full realities of the operations of the labour market..<sup>20</sup> This question, together with our questions about optimism, stemmed from our earlier work with 16-19s in full-time education which showed high levels of optimism, positive expectations and feelings of control even in depressed labour market conditions.

The pattern of responses is strongly indicative of greater feelings of control and agency among those in employment settings than among those in the environments of Higher Education and unemployment (which are both more 'uncertain' but in different ways). The items and factor scores which discriminated most between groups were related to *self-confidence*, reflecting self-trust and feelings of capability to deal with circumstances as they are (see Table 2.13).

Views on the importance of individual effort, ability and luck in shaping life chances showed a higher belief in ability and effort in the English groups, with higher proportions identifying with the statements 'that getting a job depends on ability' (D 83%, H 65% L 54%), and that 'people deserve their success' (D 61% H 40% L29%). Although the proportions holding this belief decrease from the HE to the employed group, and from the employed to the unemployed, the majority in all three groups agreed with these statements. Smaller majorities in Germany agreed that getting jobs depends on ability (consistent with the earlier findings) but a minority in both Germany cities held the view that people usually deserve their success<sup>21</sup>. *The statement 'Talent always finds its way to the top' produced much higher agreement from the Derby higher education and employed groups than from their Leipzig counterparts.* About one-fifth disagreed in all cities; many of the German respondents recorded that they didn't know. While these responses from the Derby group suggest a strong belief in individual effort and ability, this does not mean that they are blind to the effects of social status and class in affecting life chances.

### **Optimism and views of the future: do confidence and optimism increase or decrease with age and greater experience in the labour market?**

The English respondents' belief in the importance of individual effort was found, in previous work, to be accompanied by a degree of optimism, whatever the state of their local labour market (Rudd and Evans 1998, Bynner and Roberts 1991). We asked whether optimism would decline in older age ranges as the realities of the labour market and other constraints were experienced more directly, and compared mean factor scores for the F2 'negative views of the future'. There were no significant differences by age, between the younger (18-21s) and older (22-25s) in any

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<sup>20</sup>We have reviewed the importance of control beliefs with reference to Bandura (1995). In the research we have explored these alongside related self evaluations and views of the self, and carried out analyses to identify the main factors. The expanded SELF factors are given in Tables 2.13-2.18.

<sup>21</sup> These differences were further tested through comparisons of the factor score means, which confirmed that the German sample have stronger feelings than their Derby peers, that individual ability goes unrewarded, irrespective of setting when compared with their Derby peers.

of the settings or areas. Further analysis, however, has produced a more differentiated account, when analysed between settings. *Respondents in the employed and higher education groups reflected the relatively high levels of optimism shown by our previous full-time education and apprenticeship-based groups.* Small differences between respondents with higher and lower occupational status were not statistically significant. The responses of the unemployed groups showed individual attribution of failure to greater or lesser degrees irrespective of age. In comparisons between areas the results suggest that negative views of prospects do begin to bite in the more economically depressed areas, in the 18-25 age range, as people come up against the realities of the labour market.

*Contradictory responses suggested that respondents the UK groups feel 'forced' into unemployment schemes and therefore not 'in control' while at the same time feeling individually responsible for their predicament.* They believed it was down to them to get out of their situation, despite the negative environment. They experienced stress in dealing with their situation, and emphasised 'being realistic' about what they can achieve. *There was little fatalism expressed in any of the interview responses, which were suggestive of frustrated agency rather than lack of agentic abilities or attitudes.* This is consistent with the individual attribution of failure and suggests that compulsion in schemes may be counterproductive, particularly in the UK environment.<sup>22</sup> The responses from the West German samples show that these see the unemployment schemes, which seek to 'imitate' the apprenticeship, as the way back to a 'standardised' career, while in Eastern Germany the schemes are seen as a kind of state-created labour market.

### **Participation, social life and politics**

Post-school learning environments may be pivotal for future patterns of learning, social participation and the exercise of citizenship in later life, yet most attention is given to preparation for work and careers. We asked how far 18-25 year olds are active agents in their lives outside work and training, and how this compared with their 'institutionalised' lives and work values. Table 7 compares fulfilment in work/study, and personal lives<sup>23</sup>. *Respondents in the two German cities reported more fulfilling experiences in their personal lives.* This was borne out in group interviews, which revealed a cultural norm and expectation that one *ought* to make constructive use of personal time and that not to do so is wasteful.

Our findings have shown that individualised market-oriented behaviours are shown most strongly in the setting in which markets have been deregulated and individualised behaviours have been most strongly encouraged or enforced-that of the English labour market. *While the German groups from both Hannover and Leipzig were less proactive in relation to the labour market (Table 8), they showed higher levels of politically active group behaviours involving activities such as participation in political events and engagement in political discussions (Table 4).* This was underlined when voting intentions and levels of political interest declared by the respondents were examined. Answers to the 'would you vote...?' question suggested quite an important international difference. 73% in the combined Leipzig sample and 78% in the

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<sup>22</sup> See also findings of parallel project in the Youth Citizenship and Social Change Programme , C.Harris et al

<sup>23</sup> factors based on experiences of challenge, achievement, initiative and responsibility in work or study settings and in personal lives.

Hannover sample said they would vote, compared to 61% in Derby. These figures mask important differences between groups, with more in the unemployed groups stating that they would not vote. This was not just apathy on the part of the English respondents. 37% did answer the question but said 'no', they wouldn't vote. They seem to be making a conscious decision *not* to do something, as the group interview transcripts confirmed. The German group interview data also suggested a stronger interest and critical engagement in formal politics and political issues than is found in the English groups, although all are highly critical of politics and politicians. *Political activity and engagement also increased with age in all of the groups, a finding which confirms that this is not a phenomenon of young German retaining student identities longer in the more highly institutionalised German environment but a feature of German society as Gille and Kruger (2000) have also shown.* In England, Wilkinson and Mulgan (1995) found that people under 25 years of age were four times less likely to be politically active than any other age group, and claimed that women were 'disconnected from politics.' Our female respondents, like those in Whitty et al's 1998 study, showed more active political engagement than the males (see Gender Section and Table 4).

There were only small differences between groups in how the respondents fitted their own aims into a social context. Looking at what the respondents 'want most from work' in all three cities (Table 9), only a few consider 'relationships with a wider circle of people' or to 'contribute to society through own or group effort' as important (compared with the importance given to 'good job security', 'good pay' or 'good career prospects'). In this respect, individual action can primarily be seen in the context of one's own need and interests and could be expected to correspond with the extent of individualisation in the social systems. While money rather than security comes out on top for the English respondents, what is of interest is that differences do not emerge more clearly between the English and German groups, in any of the settings. *This suggests another area of universality in the goals and aspirations of young adults, alongside the universal acceptance of the importance of qualifications.*

### **Bounded Agency**

The analysis presented in the foregoing section has demonstrated the interfusion of agency and structural influences and that contradictions are some-times apparent in the respondents' positions and views. Dualistic treatments of structure and agency quickly become problematic. In a short report it has been possible only to convey some themes or 'motifs' emerging from the group interviews, and we cannot do justice to these rich engagements which illuminated many aspects of our analysis. Our combined data showed that, despite feelings of lack of control in the least advantaged groups and disbelief in some of the principles of individualism and meritocracy, most research participants attached considerable importance to individual effort and expressed the belief that if people worked hard and achieved suitable qualifications then they should be able to follow their own independent pathway in adult life. Social connections, forging them and 'making them work for you' as well as the importance of image and self-presentation were much emphasised. They are certainly not blind to the influences of economic and social structures, but the least advantaged emphasised that they have to be 'realistic' in their individual aspirations and goals. It was striking that there was little sense of fatalism in any of the interview encounters, with only three interactions out of hundreds coded as displaying fatalistic attitudes. Frustrated agency and struggle characterised the day-to-day experiences of many of the young people who were in disadvantaged situations. In explaining the individual attributions of success and failure

within socially structured environments and the almost universal recognition of the importance of 'qualifications', we have looked through the lens of agency as a socially situated process, shaped by the experiences of the past, the chances present in the current moment and the perceptions of possible futures, to find the concept of *bounded agency*. These young adults are undoubtedly manifesting a sense of agency, but there are a number of boundaries or barriers which circumscribe and sometimes prevent the expression of agency. The findings also further challenge the simplistic application of the concept of 'individualisation' in differing socio-economic and cultural environments, in ways which imply or assume uni-linear trends within undifferentiated contexts of 'modernisation'

### **Theoretical implications**

One of our starting points (Rudd and Evans 1998) was to argue that many studies of youth transitions have underestimated the degree of choice or agency evident in transitional processes. While the 'individualisation' thesis places agency centre stage, accounts of individualisation and structuration, as Gudmundsson (2000) has pointed out, are no more than theoretical sketches, which can be developed and contested in 'empirical encounters'. The present research, together with the English and Anglo-German studies which preceded it, offer an accumulating set of empirical encounters through which the limits and possibilities of theoretical and analytical approaches can be considered<sup>24</sup>. Our evidence (Evans, Behrens and Kaluza 2000) suggests that agency operates in differentiated and complex ways in relation to the individual's subjectively perceived frames for action and decision. Thus a person's frame has boundaries and limits which can change over time, but which have structural foundations in ascribed characteristics such as gender and social/educational inheritance, in acquired characteristics of education and qualification and in the segments of the labour market into which these lead. In this and other respects, the hypothesis that a 'structured individualisation' process<sup>25</sup> is apparent in the experience, values and behaviour of young people is supported. While structured individualisation accounts for the variety of experiences and incidences of interrupted or broken transitions in all social groups as well as for the class-based and gender-based linkages in planning orientations and horizons, it shifts the attention back onto the operation of structures rather than understanding agency and the agency-structure interfusion. Goldthorpe's (1998) answer to the agency problem is that a calculation of costs and benefit is involved, while accepting that rationality operates within individuals' horizons and social norms and calling for more cross-cultural studies to illuminate this. Our cross-cultural study did not set out to study the rationality, objective or subjective of our respondents' decision-making, but they revealed the apparent rationality of our respondents' perceptions and actions in relation to the features of the three labour markets involved and their positions in the 'social landscape'. However, these are as well explained by the individually perceived need to maximise their options and minimise social risk as they are by any calculation of 'cost and benefit'. Furthermore, our findings support the arguments that social divisions are becoming obscured by a universalised belief in competence and that this is most advanced in market oriented environments.<sup>26</sup> Our group interview transcripts demonstrated how social differences are perceived and collectively experienced but

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<sup>24</sup> Our full treatment of this is in preparation for publication as a sequel to 'From socialisation to post-modernity' (Rudd 1997)..

<sup>25</sup> see eg Heinz (1999) and Roberts (1995)

<sup>26</sup> see, for example, Ball, Macrae and Maguire (2000)

how, in discussion, questions of 'competence, will and moral resolve' permeated and often dominated the discourse. This was particularly marked in extended discussions of gender differences<sup>27</sup>.

Our further analysis is considering whether our research participants may be converting social and cultural inheritance into action in new but socially differentiated and bounded ways. The apparent differences in orientations to 'life project planning' may be explained in part by interactions between the generations, and the extent to which parents are able to secure the prospect of 'better lives and opportunities' for their children. The changing but bounded aspirations and expressions of agency may also be explained by socio-cultural influences experienced in their peer groups and institutional settings, as well as by the contingencies inherent in life transitions. There are some important indicators of 'collectivities' in perceptions of the social landscape and common experiences which were well articulated (and may therefore be surmised to be well internalised). Socially bounded agency means that roles and social relations may be redefined as part of the strategy to "take control of their lives", and these redefinitions may have collective and cultural features which extend beyond the scope of the present research.

### **Conclusions and policy implications**

The evidence supports the view that the more insecure and flexible system (represented by the English labour market of Derby) necessitates greater proactivity and the maintenance of the positive approach to 'opportunities'. This arises out of individual attributions of success and failure, which are themselves linked with beliefs that 'opportunities are open to all.' For young adults in Eastern Germany, our previous findings<sup>28</sup> showed that market signals were picked up quickly and, in our 1996-98 case studies behaviours in the Eastern city were aligning with those of our English counterparts as unregulated ways into the labour market opened up. The subsequent reassertion of the Dual System and the introduction of programmes to stabilise and regulate 'broken' transitions into the labour market for 18-25 year olds is similarly reflected in their orientations and expectations. For young adults in the case studies carried out in 1996-1998, agency and active behaviours created chances for some of those in the most precarious situations, to gain newly appearing footholds in the labour market. Our current respondents show, by comparison, less short term proactivity and renewed hopes of ways back to standardised careers through a government created labour market. This is associated with a longer term planning orientation, a different kind of proactivity. But as actors move in these social landscapes, spaces open up for action which is not wholly reducible to the effects of social reproduction or underlying structural features. The concept of 'bounded agency' provides a focus for further consideration of policy issues. Young adults do manifest agentic beliefs in relation to work and their social environment, but encounter frustrations in expressing or acting upon them. There are obviously some constraints in a 'social landscape' that will be very difficult to move or remove, but others might be reduced through new policy initiatives or foci. This point is relevant to a range of services including, for example, teachers, university staff, careers advisers, mentors, employers, health workers and social workers and the research has attracted interest from all of these groups.

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<sup>27</sup> Initial findings on gender were presented in American Educational Research Association Conference 2000 and have been elaborated in a chapter and journal article in preparation for publication.

<sup>28</sup> See Evans, Behrens and Kaluza (2000)

Over the last decade the German post-school education and training has come under considerable pressure, particularly the highly regulated and institutionalised dual system. The data concerning future prospects showed that the research participants were quite aware of the limited vocational mobility a vocational training in the dual system offers. In Germany, it would be an advance for the structure of employment and vocational training to be regarded as a system consisting of basic vocational training, higher education and continuing education. The historically grown sectors of the education and training system need systematic links in order to remove 'cul-de-sacs' and barriers. In contrast to the young people in the dual system the students at German universities are given greater responsibility in order to organise the contents of their studies, but students seldom have systematic contact with the labour market. Stronger links between higher education and companies are required and careers guidance/services need to be extended.

*A pluralisation of the training in the dual system would mean core and optional modules to choose from rather than the requirement to follow a standardised programme. Young adults need to play a part in creating their own learning biographies and the concept of 'Beruf' would become more open. But in any moves of this kind in Germany, particularly in the eastern Länder, attention needs to be given to ways in which fair and equal access to opportunities can be guaranteed and to how the negative effects of individual attributions of failure be countered. In England, policies have been over-concentrated on the 'deficits and lacks' of young people in the most precarious positions. Policies have to ensure that the greatest demands to 'take control of their lives' do not fall on those who are the least powerfully placed in the 'landscape'. This is the main policy implication for England, which means that agencies working with young people need to emphasise brokerage and advocacy as a primary aim and function, to the extent that young adults perceive and experience this to be as real as the emphasis which is currently placed on their 'deficits'. The findings also show that learning is life-wide and much of this takes place in the non-institutionalised spaces of life with evidence of greater fulfilment and constructive use of personal time in the German groups. The non-institutionalised spaces need to be protected, but policy makers should consider whether there enough non-commercial spaces which allow for creativity and collective expressions of agency and whether those which offer positive support for mutual learning and democratic engagement in society could be better supported. The findings raise longer term issues for those who are concerned with the social fabric and long-term well being of democratic society in both countries, but particularly in England, and have been selected for publication in a new edited collection by Bernard Crick.*

## **Activities**

We have engaged actively with users and researchers through full participation in Programme events and through our own national and international networks. Young people have been engaged throughout, both as research participants and through youth representative bodies such as British Youth Council, student unions in HE/FE, youth parliament members in Germany. The area-based nature of the study has also ensured that networks of agencies and other users in the three cities have been actively engaged with us. The 'highlight' activities have been the 3 international seminars. These have brought together national and local users of research, including British Youth Council, DfEE, Voluntary Organisations, (eg Centre for Education and Industry), employers and Connexions providers in UK, with representatives from industry,

Chambers of commerce, providers of youth programmes (eg JUMP, Arbeiten und Lernen) in Germany , for discussion and contextualisation of the project findings. The seminar at EXPO 2000 was hosted by the UK Pavilion and funded by the Foreign Office. The Anglo-German Foundation sponsored the seminars held in Derby and Leipzig. There has also been considerable interest from international youth research networks, particularly from the Nordic countries, in France, in Australia and in North America. Our participation in future policy oriented Programme workshops supported by Institute of Personnel and Development, DfEE and Learning and Skills Development Agency and Foyer Federation has also been agreed.

## **Outputs**

The data sets of qualitative and quantitative data have been deposited in the Essex Archive. Conference papers have been presented in international symposia at American Educational Research Association , the Nordic Youth Research International Symposium, British Educational Research Association, International Conference on Vocational and Occupational Education and Training, Gottingen, European Council of Social Research and at IRESCO, sponsored by CRNS<sup>29</sup>.

Early project findings have been published in the book 'Learning and Work in the Risk Society ' Macmillan 2000, in book chapters (Jessica Kingsley, Kogan Page 2000 Leske and Budrich in press 2001), in international journals (Journal of World Studies in Education (in press 2001, carries a methodological paper, Japanese Journal of Adult and Continuing education (in press 2001) These early publications were informed by the preliminary work carried out in the three labour markets. The later publications contain the initial empirical findings and have been invited for publication: chapters in two German books, chapter for Political Quarterly (ed B Crick) and two international journals to date. Programme outputs include Evans as designated co-editor with Catan for an edited volume, contributor to 3 proposed programme volumes and author of a practitioner oriented Youthwork Press booklet Other publicly available output includes summary versions of the findings developed for websites of the YCSC programme, The National Foundation for Educational Research and the Institute of Education. The NFER and IoE websites attract many user communities both nationally and internationally, and are complementary in their coverage.

## **Impacts**

[UK]: Active expressions of interest in using the findings, from: DfEE, Connexions, British Youth Council, Centre for Education and Industry, Providers in the Derby area. The citizenship and participation findings have had a particular impact, invited for further dissemination through Political Quarterly and DfEE Centre for the Wider Benefits of Learning

[Germany]:\_Users of the findings include Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Leipzig; Hannover and Leipzig City Councils, Statistics Departments; Federal Institute for Employment Resaerch Nürnberg, Berufsschule Wirtschaftswissenschaften Hannover/ University of Lüneburg, ;University of Konstanz, Wirtschaftspädagogik, Labour Administration

Internationally, the take-up in international publications is indicative of a wider impact we expect to grow.

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<sup>29</sup> for further conference papers – see Report Form

**Longer term impacts (as in proposal):**

The research has already made headway in bringing together the theoretical perspectives of British Youth Research with perspectives from continental Europe, extending these to important insights from the Nordic countries which have often previously been ignored. A European context programme workshop is planned. New and experienced youth researchers have been engaged in the project, have extended their skills, and are continuing with doctoral/post-doctoral work in the field. The findings have filled important gaps in understanding which open up between adult and 16-19 policy preoccupations, and are proving relevant to a variety of policy issues in lifelong learning.

**Future Research Priorities**

**Data sets and longitudinal studies:** Links with UK Cohort Studies and panel studies in Germany have been established. These national data sets and panel studies can be further harnessed to test and develop insights into generational and intergenerational learning and structural foundations of values and orientations suggested by our data. This would be particularly valuable if accompanied by biographical case studies.

**Comparative:** The methodology is extendable to comparative study of other age bands and/or other countries. A comparative study with 18-25s in a Southern European country, or an Anglo-German study of 25-35 year olds would further test the propositions of ‘bounded agency’ and its relationships with socio-economic environments and cultural influences.

**Theoretical:** Further development of the ‘middle ground’ theory depicted in Figure 1, aimed at better understandings of the interactions between social change and reproduction.

**Ethics**

The British Educational Research Association Code of Practice was adhered to in this project.

**Acknowledgement**

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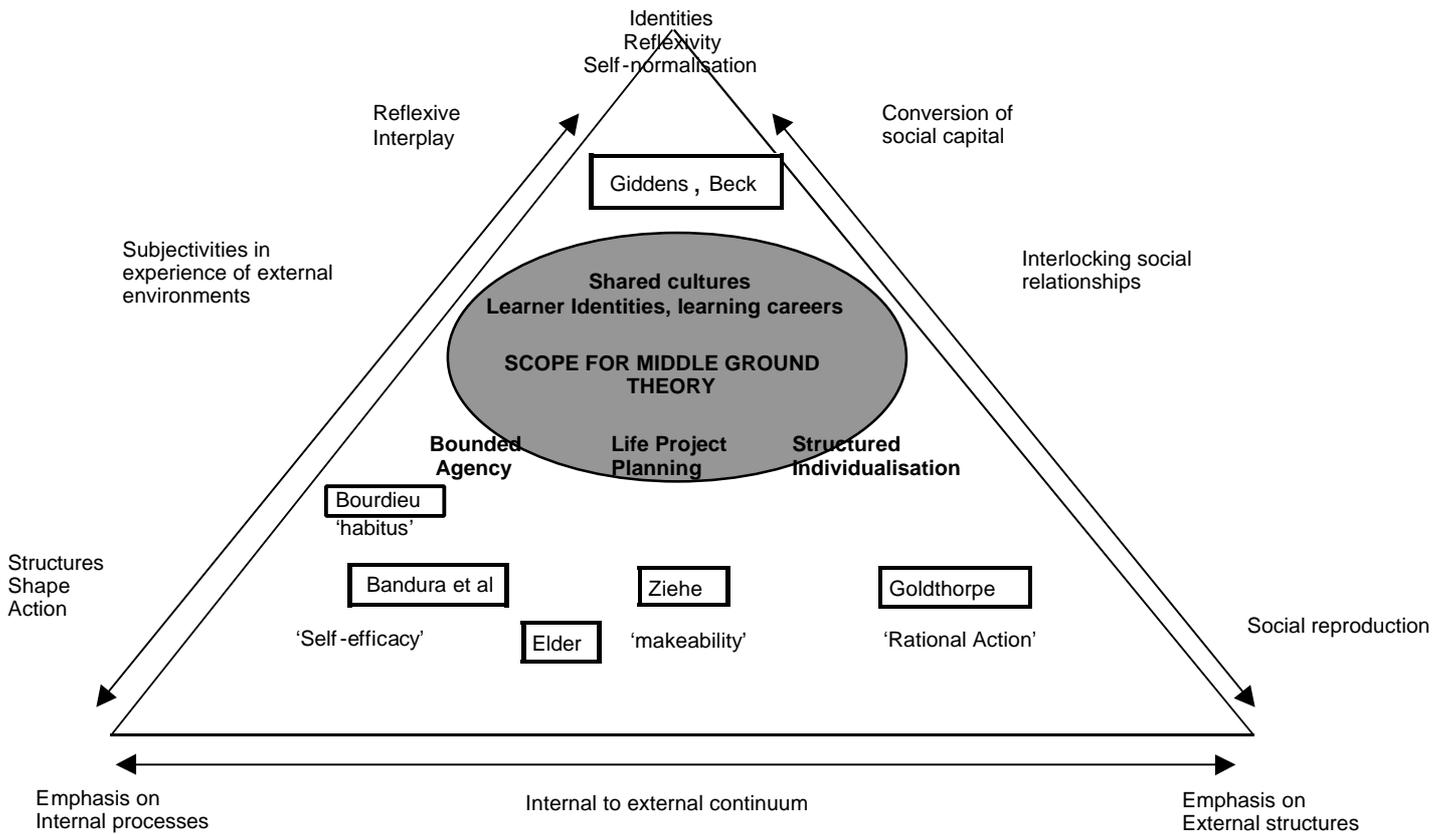
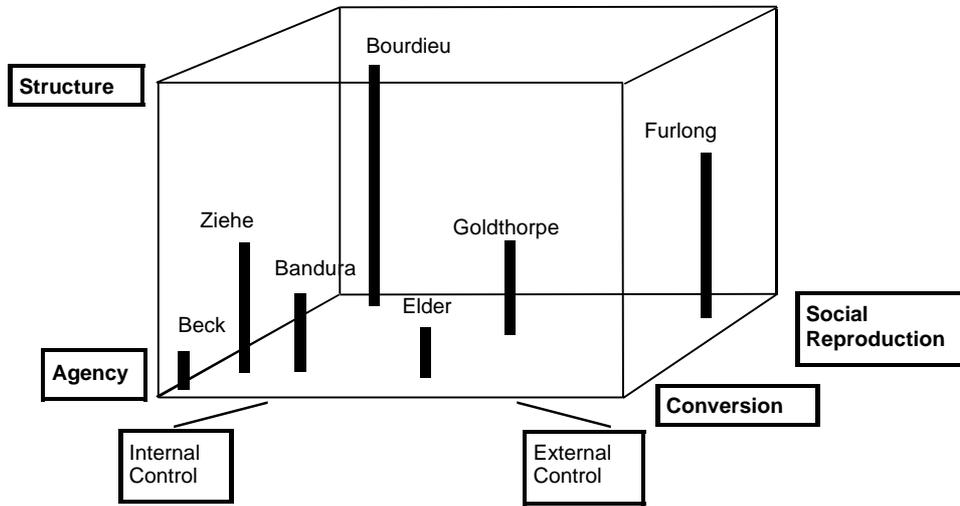
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**FIGURES AND TABLES REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT**

**Figure 1: Conceptual Schema for Structure-Agency**



**Table 1: Respondents' opinions on the importance of a variety of social characteristics in affecting a person's opportunities in life (numbers and percentages)**

<b>Respondents' opinions on the importance of social characteristics in affecting a person's opportunities in life (n=300 in each city). Numbers responding 'of considerable importance'</b>					
	<b>Sex/gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Social class</b>	<b>Family background</b>	<b>Education Qualification</b>
<b>Derby</b>					
1.Higher Ed	20	24	32	28	87
2.Employed	13	13	21	22	80
3.unemployed	26	29	32	21	77
Total	59	66	85	71	244
%	19.7	22.0	28.3	23.7	81.3
<b>Hannover</b>					
1.Higher Ed	26	45	46	31	97
2.Employed	39	58	42	36	94
3.unemployed	29	52	46	25	90
Total	94	155	134	92	281
%	31.3	51.7	44.7	30.7	93.7
<b>Leipzig</b>					
1.Higher Ed	46	80	58	37	96
2.Employed	37	71	53	25	95
3.unemployed	35	67	57	28	81
Total	118	218	168	90	272
%	39.3	72.7	56.0	30.0	90.7

**Numbers viewing each factor as having a 'considerable' effect on a person's opportunities**

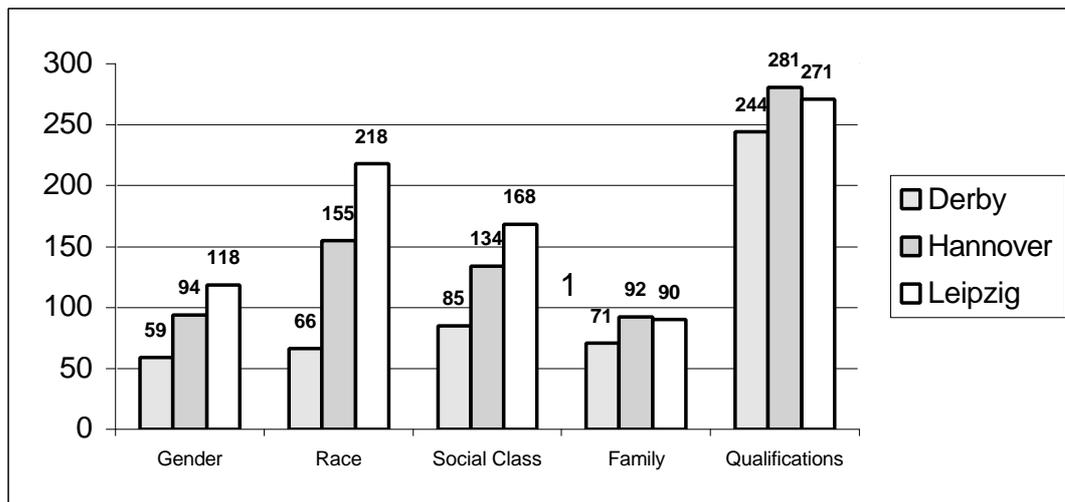




Table 2.07: Derby: Positive factors

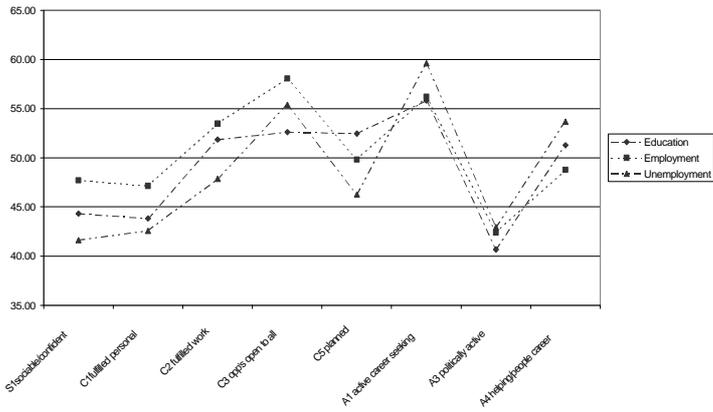


Table 2.08: Derby: Negative factors

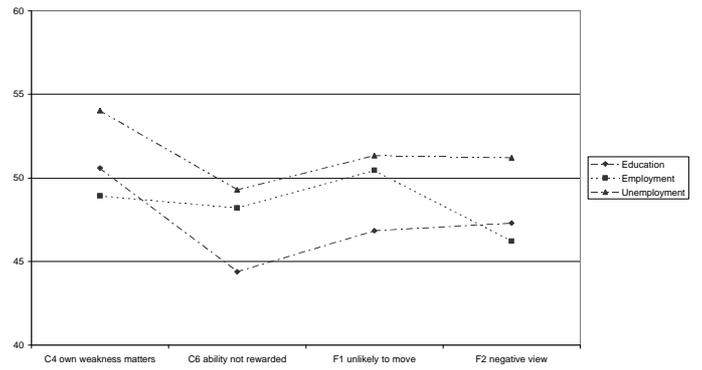


Table 2.09: Hannover: Positive factors

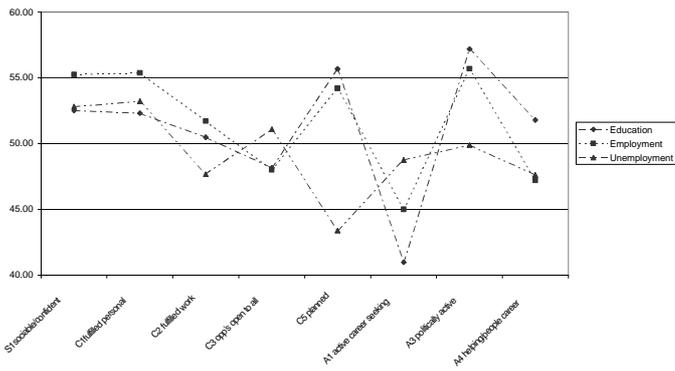


Table 2.10: Hannover: Negative factors

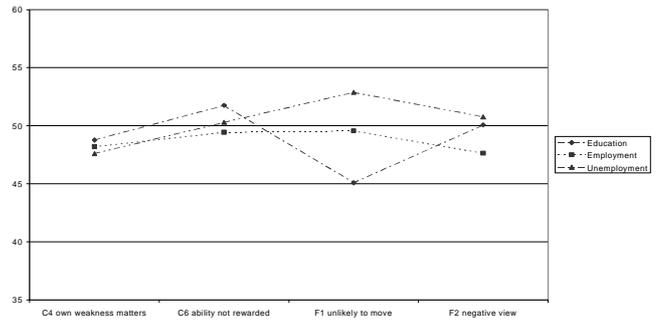


Table 2.11: Leipzig: Positive factors

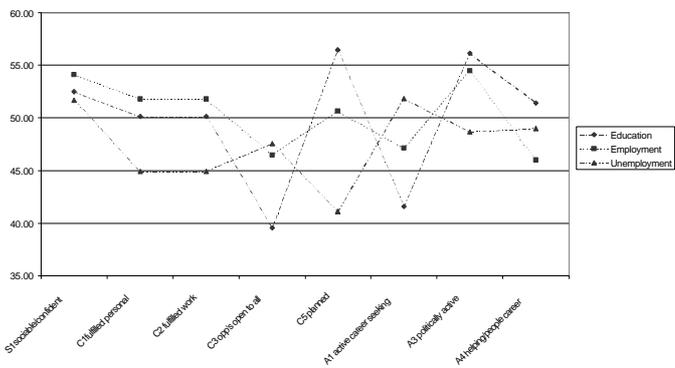


Table 2.12: Leipzig: Negative factors

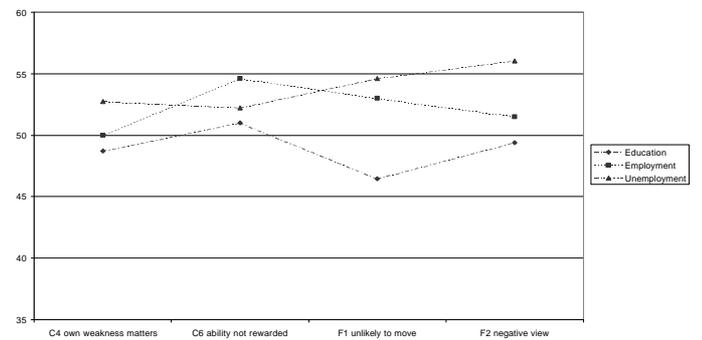


Table 2.13: Derby Self factor

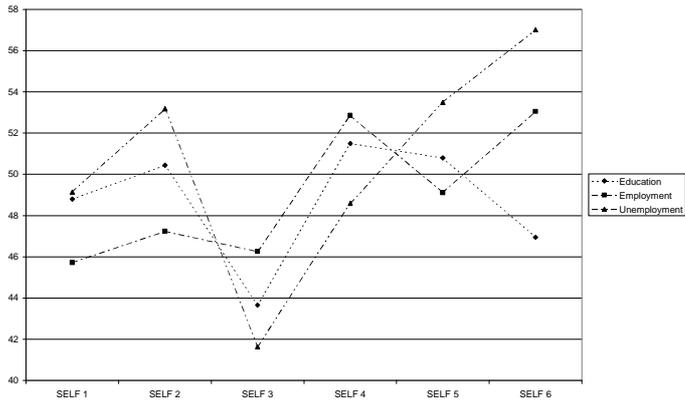


Table 2.14: Hannover

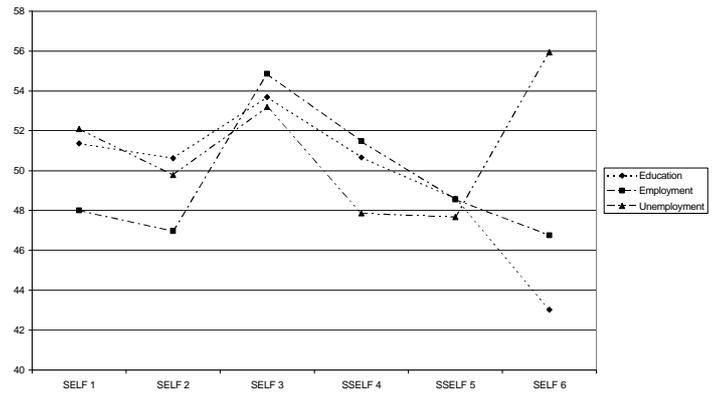


Table 2.15: Leipzig

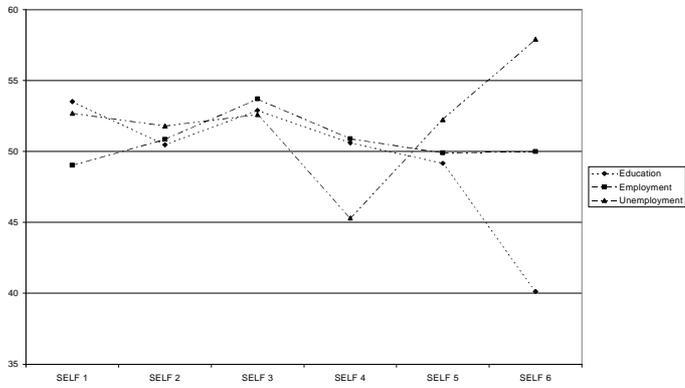


Table 2.16: Education

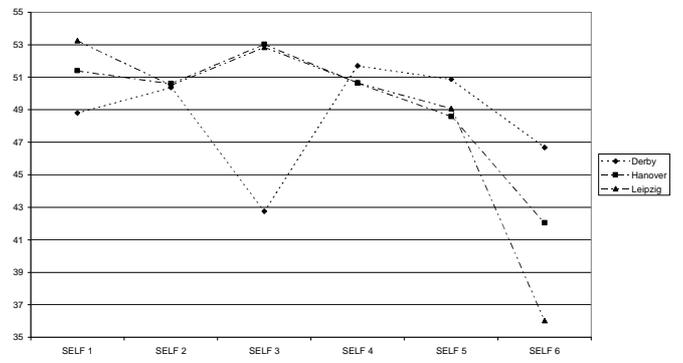


Table 2.17: Employment

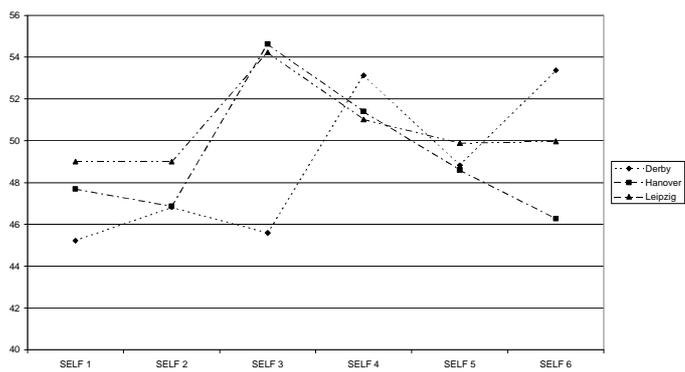
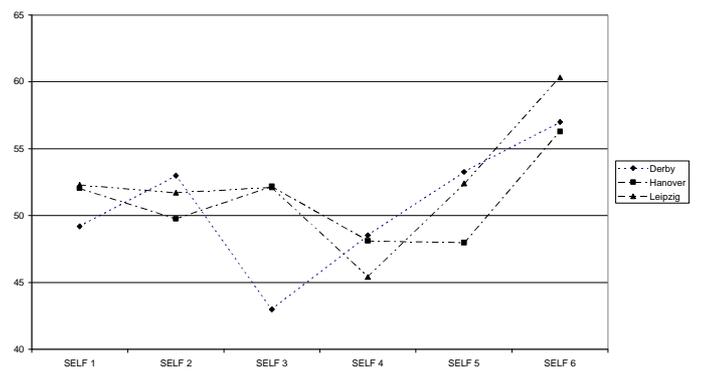
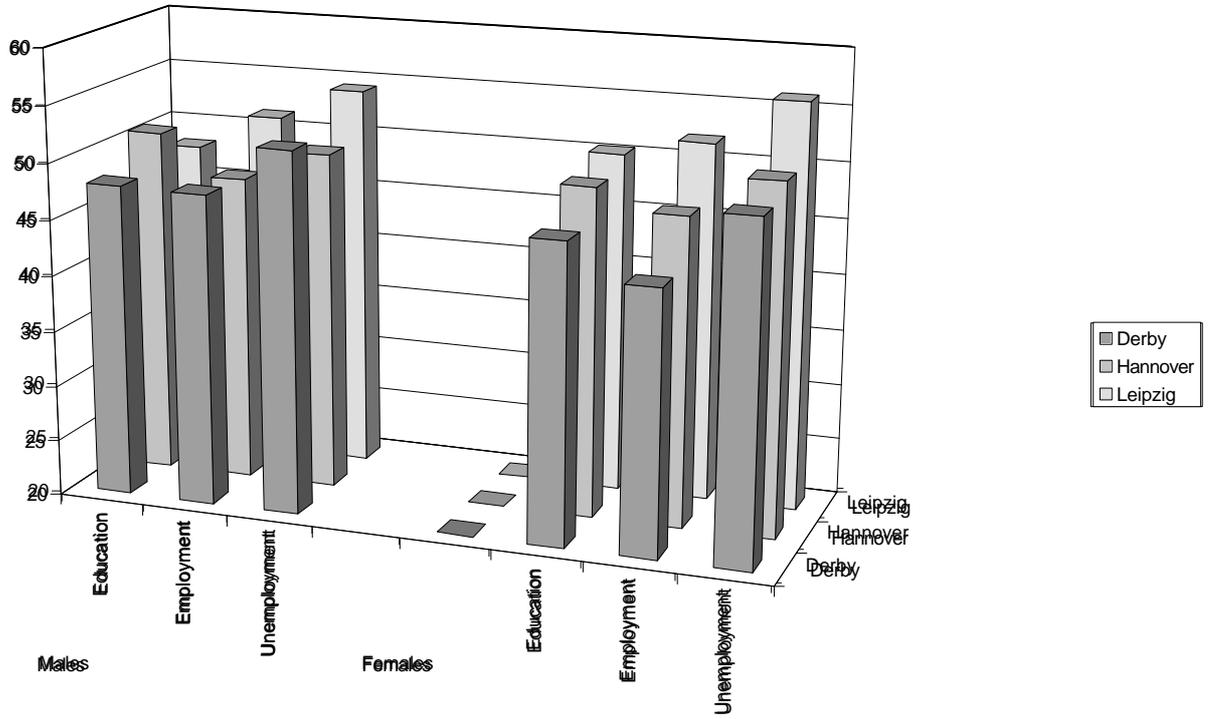


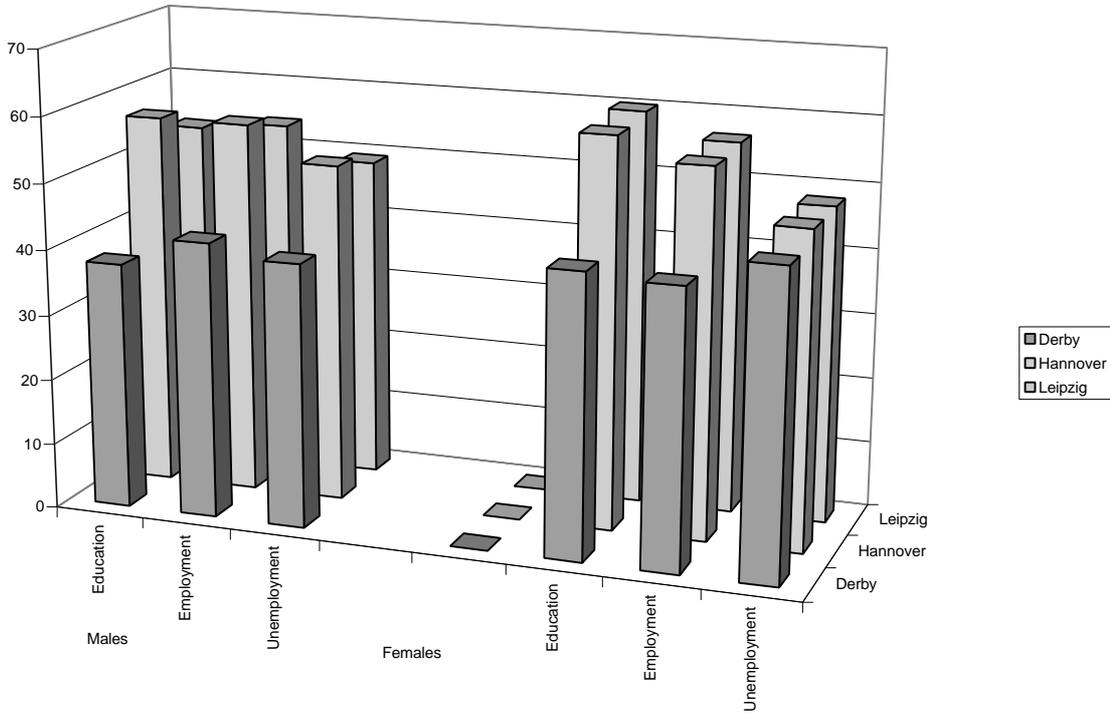
Table 2.18: Unemployment



**Table 3: Negative view of future prospects (future 2)**



**Table 4: Politically active group behaviours (agency 3)**



**Table 5: Feelings of Dependency and Independence**

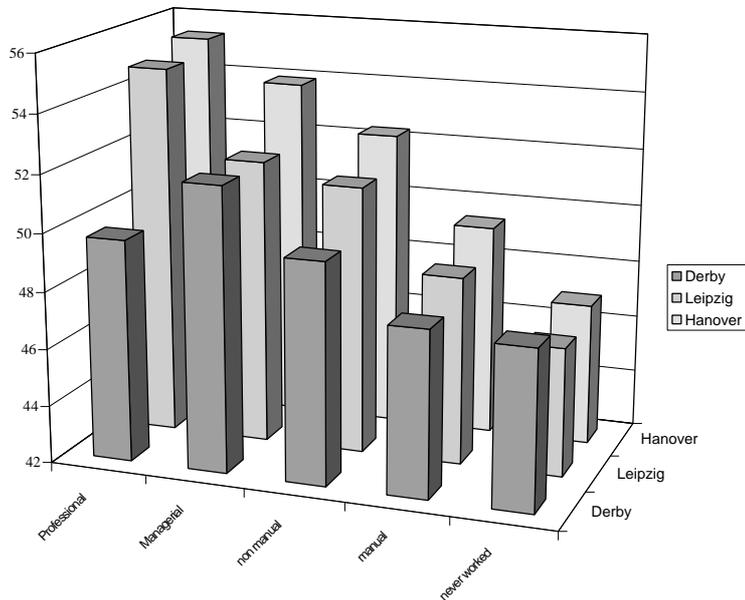
Percentages of 18-25s reporting complete independence from parents (percentage for 22-25s in brackets)

(N=900, 100 in each setting in each city)

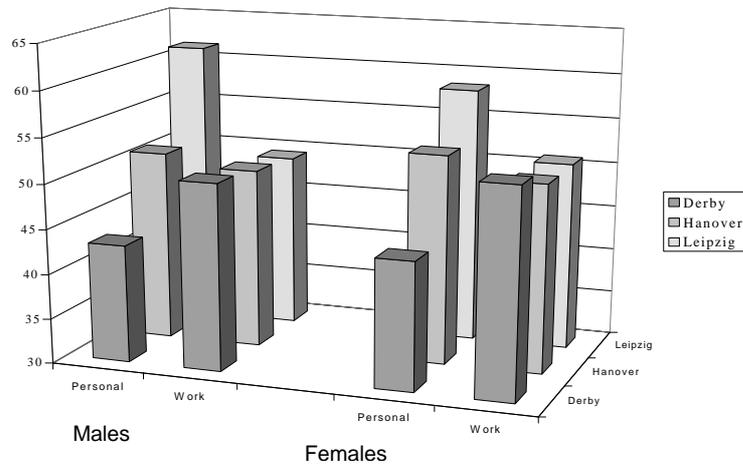
		HE	E	U
<b>A. Financial Independence</b>	<b>Derby</b>	<b>24 (29)</b>	<b>62 (75)</b>	<b>51 (53)</b>
	<b>Hannover</b>	<b>16 (21)</b>	<b>48 (61)</b>	<b>39 (44)</b>
	<b>Leipzig</b>	<b>8 (8)</b>	<b>60 (76)</b>	<b>35 (43)</b>
<b>B. Independence of other forms of help and support</b>	<b>Derby</b>	<b>20 (27)</b>	<b>24 (30)</b>	<b>32 (36)</b>
	<b>Hannover</b>	<b>36 (40)</b>	<b>32 (28)</b>	<b>35 (42)</b>
	<b>Leipzig</b>	<b>21 (28)</b>	<b>34 (44)</b>	<b>25 (28)</b>

Tables 6, 7 & 8 are based on comparisons of factor score means

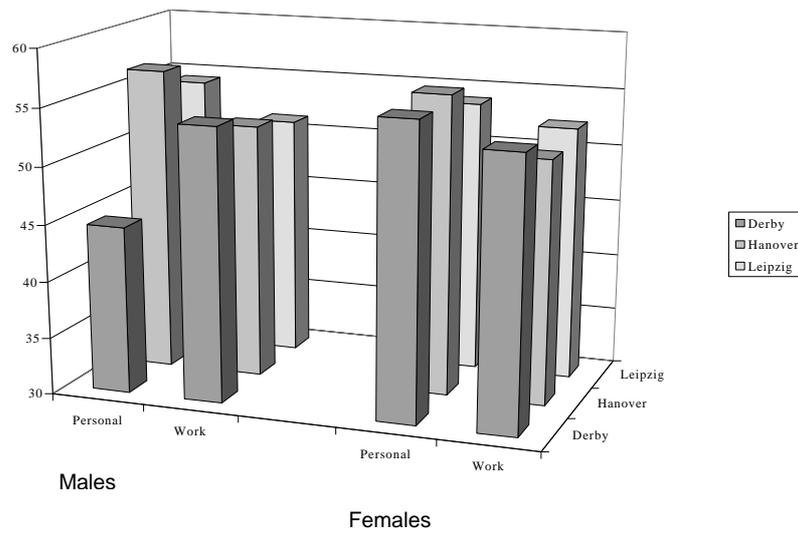
**Table 6: Factor ‘Planned not chance’ by social class within areas (control 5)**



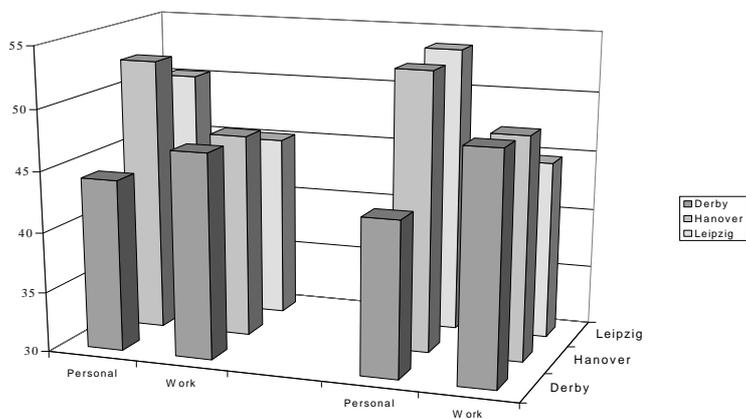
**Table 7.1: Students' experiences in work and personal lives**

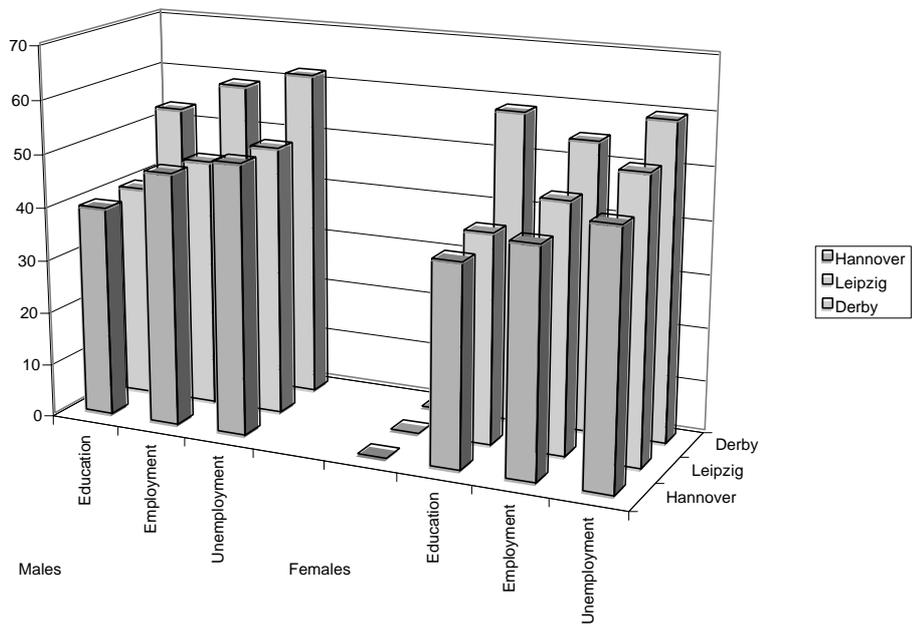


**Table 7.2: Young employees' experiences in work and personal lives**

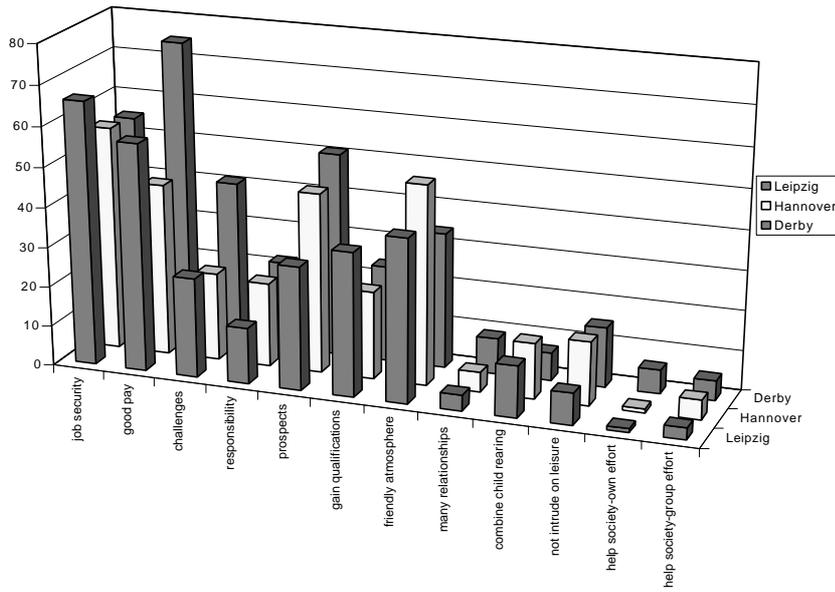


**Table 7.3: Unemployed young persons' experiences in training, etc and personal lives**  
**Table 8: Market oriented behaviours**

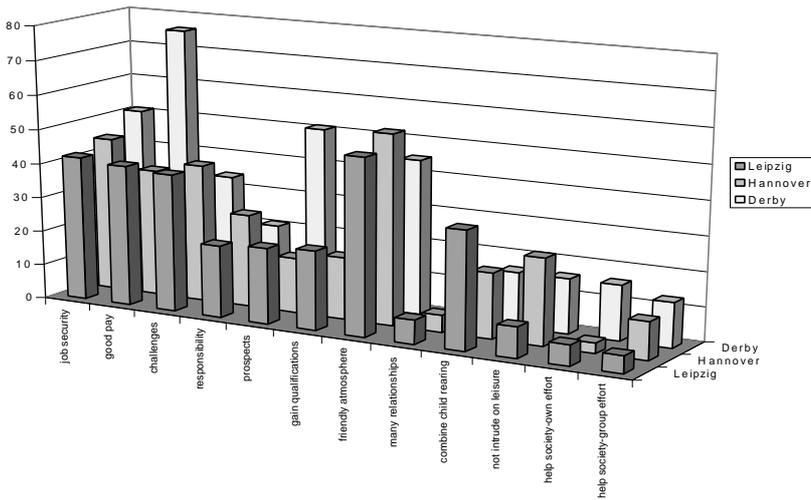




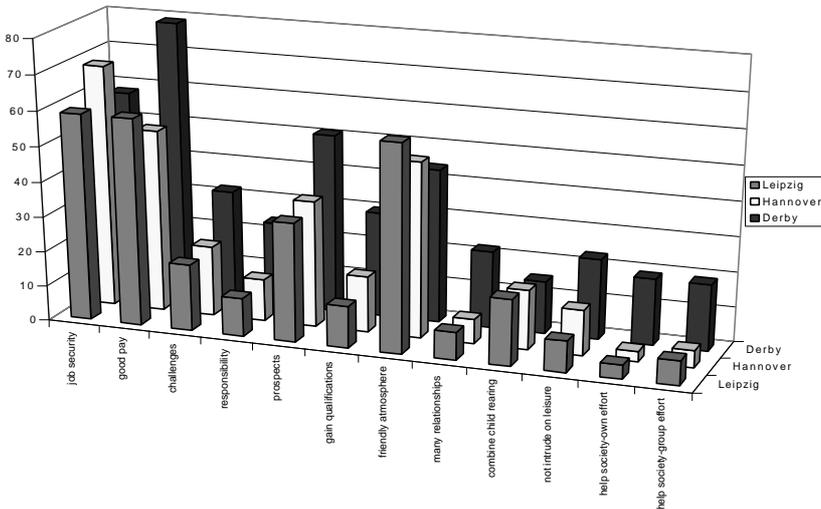
**Table 9.1: Work values in employment context (%)**



**Table 9.2: Work values in Higher Education (%)**



**Table 8.3: Work values in unemployment context (%)**



## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX ONE

#### Initial Checklist for Questionnaire

<p><b>1. Structural Variables</b></p> <p><b>Ascribed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender</li><li>• Age</li><li>• Ethnicity</li><li>• Labour Market /</li><li>• Neighbourhood</li><li>• Social Class</li></ul> <p><b>2. Indicators of Agency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Reflexivity</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- self-reflexivity; ability to recognise strengths and weaknesses, e.g. courses/jobs; flexibility; valuing independence; facing uncertainty with relative ease.</li></ul></li><li>• <i>Dependability and effectiveness</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- self-regulatory ability in social settings</li><li>- perseverance</li><li>- initiative</li><li>- responsibility</li></ul></li><li>• <i>Self-confidence</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- level of self-trust/self-doubt</li><li>- feelings of security, especially in social settings</li><li>- feelings of capability to deal with circumstances as they arise</li><li>- social settings and others seen as resources</li></ul></li><li>• <i>Collective efficacy</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- political participation</li><li>- belief in ability of groups to effect social change</li><li>- group orientation`</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>3. Control Beliefs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal and external constraints: perceptions of ability, effort, luck</li><li>• Decisions: who makes and influences these in different domains</li><li>• Control over options and choices</li><li>• Dependence and independence.</li></ul>	<p><b>Acquired</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education and Training</li><li>• Qualifications</li></ul>
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## APPENDIX TWO:

### TECHNICAL NOTES:

#### (A) REPRESENTATIVES OF SAMPLES

We acquired samples which were representative of respective populations *within setting within area*. This being the case it is valid to compare any of the nine samples with each other and to view the differences as being indicative of differences in the respective populations.

We have no reason to believe that any systematic bias will have been introduced, from the way the samples were drawn within areas within settings, and hence the expected values of statistics in these samples should be the same as their corresponding population values. We also have no reason to believe that the variance of these statistics in the samples will be systematically different from their variance in the corresponding populations, and hence we can estimate the population variance from the sample variance and hence the sampling distribution of any of these statistics under random sampling. Since extreme results are no more likely to arise from using our sampling strategy than from using simple random sampling, then a result which is found to be significant using standard statistical tests can (as usual) be interpreted as indicating that there are real differences in the respective populations. All differences referred to in the text were initially identified as significant at least at the  $p < 0.05$  level, as a basis for further inquiry and analysis using the full set of data sources.

Occasionally, the setting samples have been combined within area. This is valid for comparative purposes, where the aim is to identify relative response differences which may be attributed to the external features of the labour market or national differences, but the composite samples must not be taken as representative of the city populations.

#### (B) FACTOR ANALYSIS

For the factor analysis, we used the classical factor analytical model, in which variables in the analysis have both common variance (communality) and unique variance and in which the first estimate of communality is derived from the squared multiple correlation. In other words, we used principal axis factoring for the factor extraction. We then wanted to rotate these initial factors to give factors which could be easily labelled. To achieve this, we chose orthogonal rather than correlated factors (to make the respective factors distinct) and chose a method of rotation (VARIMAX) which minimises the number of variables having a high loading on a factor. Factor scales used in the analysis had reliabilities (alphas) ranging between 0.6 and 0.9. The comparisons of factor score means were used principally to identify areas for further analysis using the full set of data sources.