

"Vulnerabilities and justification ideologies among adolescents and young adults in different social contexts"

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1. Theoretical background

Life-span model of motivation (Salmela-Aro, 2009) For young people, finding one's place in the society is a transition taking place at different individual and collective levels. Nevertheless, the « channelling » elements of the life course must be taken in account. Indeed, social contexts and social positions are a main component of the life-span.

Vulnerability. Seen as a lack of social integration, it can be studied through its external (ex.: social status, gender) and internal components. We differentiate three dimensions of internal vulnerability that highlight its relational nature :

- **Personal worries** Material (ex. financial needs) and relational (ex. afraid of loneliness, of violence)
- **Anomy** Composed of uncertainty about life and onself, lack of acceptance of external rules and feeling of non-contributing to the society.
- **Weak social bond** Two aspects: social support by pairs and recognition by pairs.

Ideologies. Justification ideologies, like the Belief in a Just World, can have a palliative function on negative outputs concerning the self-evaluation for lower status persons (Jost & Hunyady, 2000; Hafer & Choma, 2009)

2. Methodology

Three samples (N=713) Different social status and different stages in professional integration: pre- and apprentices in a professional school (COFOP) (n=146), apprentices and employees of the city of Lausanne (VDL) (n=227) and high-school (maturity) students (n=340).

Participants are aged between 15 and 30 (M = 20.2). 46.9 % are female (n = 354)

Data. Primary data collection by our own survey « Projet Expériences »

3. Vulnerabilities and social contexts

Vulnerability among different social contexts.

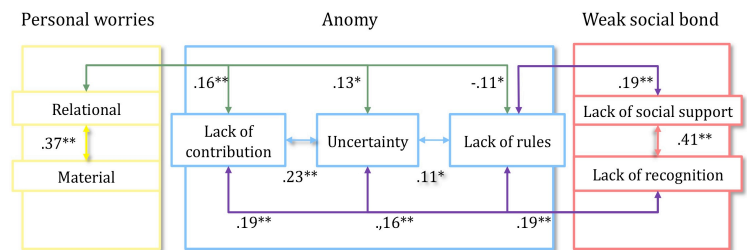
The three samples have been more precisely classified by social status. 6-points scales of personal worries.

	Material worries	Worry about being lonely	Worry about being attacked
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Pre-apprentices COFOP (n=58)	2.23 (.87)	2.00 (1.15)	1.78 (1.11)
Apprentices COFOP (n=79)	2.44 (.78)	2.13 (1.12)	1.88 (.98)
Apprentices VDL (n=55)	2.34 (.85)	2.37 (1.18)	1.96 (.98)
Employees w/o maturity VDL (n=91)	2.33 (.87)	2.25 (1.10)	1.89 (.90)
Maturity students (n=340)	1.99 (.87)	2.18 (1.16)	1.89 (.94)
Employees w. maturity VDL (n=83)	1.94 (.72)	2.12 (1.04)	2.05 (.88)
Total	2.12 (.85)	2.17 (1.13)	1.90 (.95)
R ²	.18**	.02	.04

Conceptualizing vulnerabilities

Focusing on the different dimensions of internal vulnerability. Exploratory factor analyses for each subset of vulnerability dimensions yields the expected dimensions.

(Population: maturity students)



Links which are not shown in this figure are not significant.

Personal worries are relatively low in our samples.

Social context has only a limited impact on levels of vulnerability: Apprentices show higher material vulnerability than pre-university students and graduate employees.

Relational components of internal vulnerability are linked to all three dimensions of anomy: The higher the relational worries, the more participants feel uncertain and like they have nothing to contribute. Besides, the more they consider rule following unnecessary, the less they have relational worries.

Moreover, the three anomy dimensions are associated with weak social bonds.

4. Gender, vulnerabilities and justification ideology

Gender and vulnerabilities. Women feel more worried about relations than men, and like contributing less to society. Men perceive less external rules and feel less social support from pairs.

It corresponds to social gender roles. Female vulnerabilities show a predominance of the private sphere. Male vulnerability is related to the individualistic male norms.

Has the Belief in a Just World a palliative function on vulnerability?

According to justification system theory, a high belief in a just world can diminish negative effects of a negative social identity. We tested whether ideological beliefs are differentially related to male and female vulnerability, but no significant interaction effects between gender and ideological beliefs emerged.

However, direct palliative effects were found for BJW on lack of recognition $F(7, 326) = 5.60, p=.000$ and on lack of contribution $F(7, 326) = 4.34, p=.000$.

		Female	Male	F
Personal worries	Material worries	2.03	1.92	1.21
	Relational worries	2.31	1.95	17.56***
Anomy	Lack of contribution	3.40	2.95	13.04 ***
	Uncertainty	4.30	4.05	1.96
	Lack of rules	2.73	3.22	16.66 ***
Weak social bond	Lack of social support	2.04	2.36	18.10 ***
	Lack of recognition	1.91	2.03	4.73

5. Conclusion

- Analysis shows the pertinence of considering internal vulnerability multidimensionally. Relational and anomical components of vulnerability are central.
- Effect of social status and context is not clear yet. Less educated and professionally integrated people are more worried about material issues. Gender is the only social status variable that clearly organises levels of vulnerability. Here, female and male norms play an important role.
- Analysis did not show the expected palliative role of justification ideologies. Nevertheless, the link between perception of social situations, transitions, choices etc, and ideologies is for sure a pertinent and challenging field to explore.

6. Further developments

Thematical. Explore links between all the dimensions of internal vulnerability. Understand the processes underlying the relation between social status and vulnerability (develop a dynamical approach). Understand better the role of ideologies in regulation of life-course transitions.

Empirical. Longitudinal approach: 2nd wave

Mixed-method approach: 5 interviews done. Make more interviews and begin analysis.

Bibliography

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