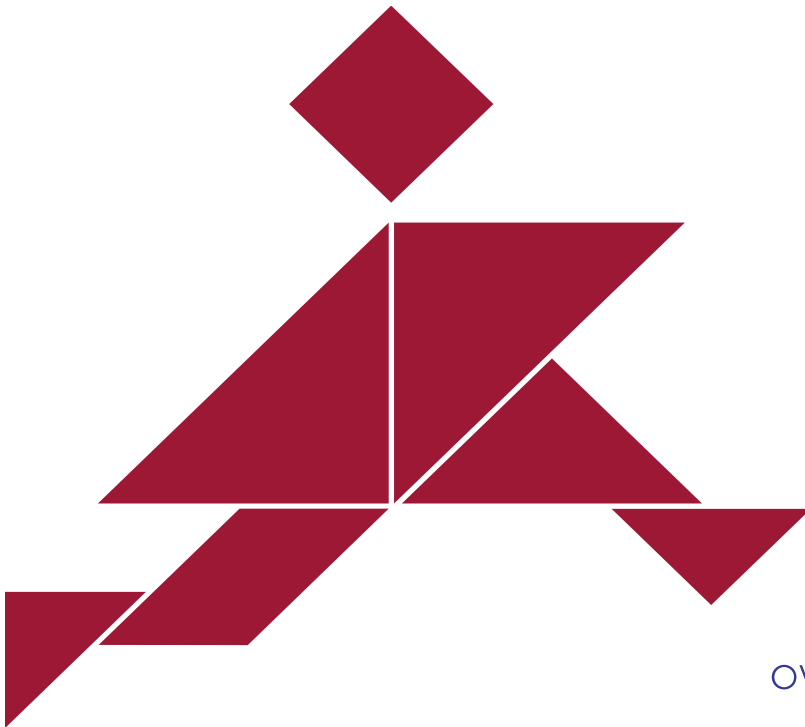

SCHOOL TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING & LABOR MARKET TRANSITIONS: A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO LIFE PROJECTS

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OVERCOMING VULNERABILITY: LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVES

GOALS OF STUDY

- Explore the projects of young adults
 - their domain
 - their appraisal
- As a function of different types of vulnerability
- And as a function of regulation

INTRODUCTION

- People direct their development by defining projects (Brandstädter, 1989; Nurmi & Salmela-Aro, 2002).
 - Young adults are faced with different developmental tasks and institutional transitions (e.g., school to work).
 - Their success or failure in dealing with transitions may influence their future projects (Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995; Nurmi, 1993).
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LIFE-SPAN MODEL OF MOTIVATION (SALMELA-ARO, 2009)

Four processes:

1. Channeling

People define goals based on the challenges, demands, and opportunities they encounter.

2. Choices

Personal goals influence people's choices and the direction of their development.

3. Co-agency / Co-regulation

People regulate their development by co-agency.

4. Compensation

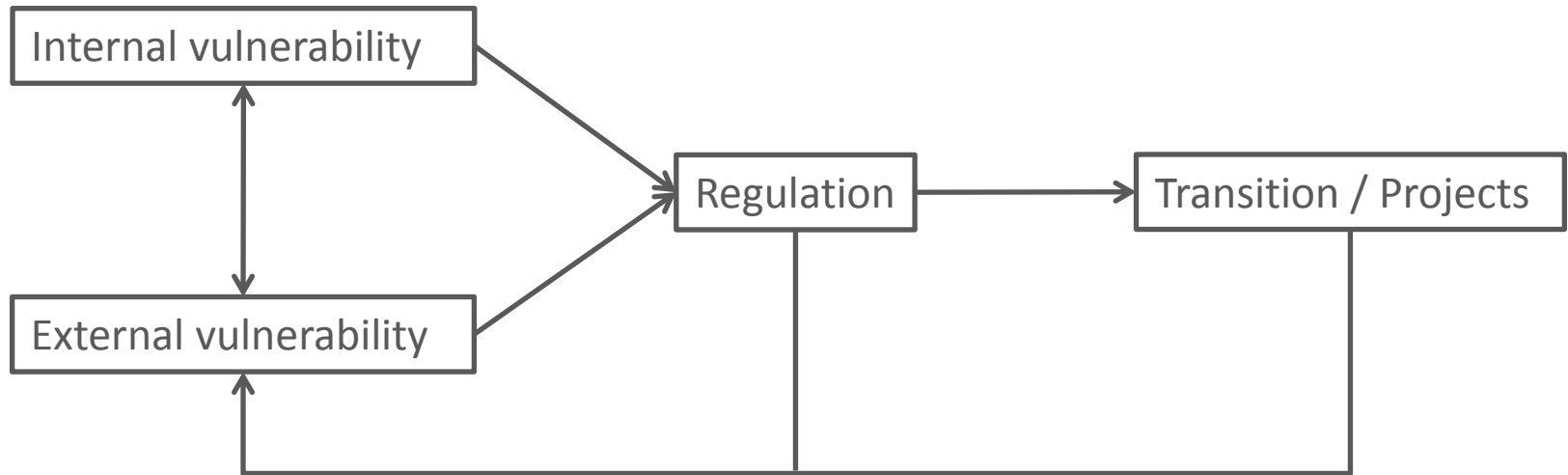
People compensate for failure experiences by adjusting their personal goals on the basis of previous developmental transitions and life events

TYPES OF VULNERABILITY

- Objective / external vulnerability
 - material vulnerability (e.g., salary)
 - relational vulnerability (e.g., social network)
 - social position (e.g., gender, nationality)

 - Subjective / internal vulnerability
 - perceived material vulnerability (e.g., perceived deprivation)
 - perceived relational vulnerability (e.g., lack of social support)
 - physical vulnerability (e.g., health)
 - psychological vulnerability (e.g., lack of control, self-esteem)
 - categorical vulnerability (e.g., perceived discrimination)
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VULNERABILITY-REGULATION MODEL OF LIFE COURSE TRANSITIONS



RESEARCH QUESTION

- Are project domains and appraisals influenced by different types of vulnerability and regulation?
 - external vulnerability: social position
 - internal vulnerability: psychological, material, categorical
 - group-based regulation: collective identification

METHOD – PARTICIPANTS

	Pre-apprentices COFOP	Apprentices COFOP	Apprentices VDL	Employees VDL
Sample size	58	79	55	174
Age: M (SD)	16.7 (0.9)	19.4 (1.8)	19.1 (2.9)	26.4 (2.4)
Women	22 (38 %)	31 (39 %)	20 (36 %)	92 (53 %)
Swiss nationality	25 (44 %)	41 (53 %)	43 (78 %)	155 (89 %)

METHOD – PROJECTS

- Personal Project Analysis (Little, 1983)
 - We would like to know about your projects for the future. What are the projects that you would like to realize in the coming years?
 - List of 3 projects → Please put a circle around the project that is the most important to you.
 - While thinking about this project, please tell us to which extent you agree with the following statements.
 - Project appraisal
 - Achievement (2 items, $\alpha = .70$)
 - Negative thoughts (2 items, $\alpha = .66$)
 - Barriers (1 item)
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METHOD – VULNERABILITY AND REGULATION

■ Vulnerability

- Psychological vulnerability: Self-esteem (5 items, $\alpha = .80$)
- Psychological vulnerability: Lack of control (1 item)
- Perceived material vulnerability (2 items, $\alpha = .65$)
- Perceived relational vulnerability (2 items, $\alpha = .64$)
- Categorical vulnerability: Perceived discrimination (1 item, yes/no)

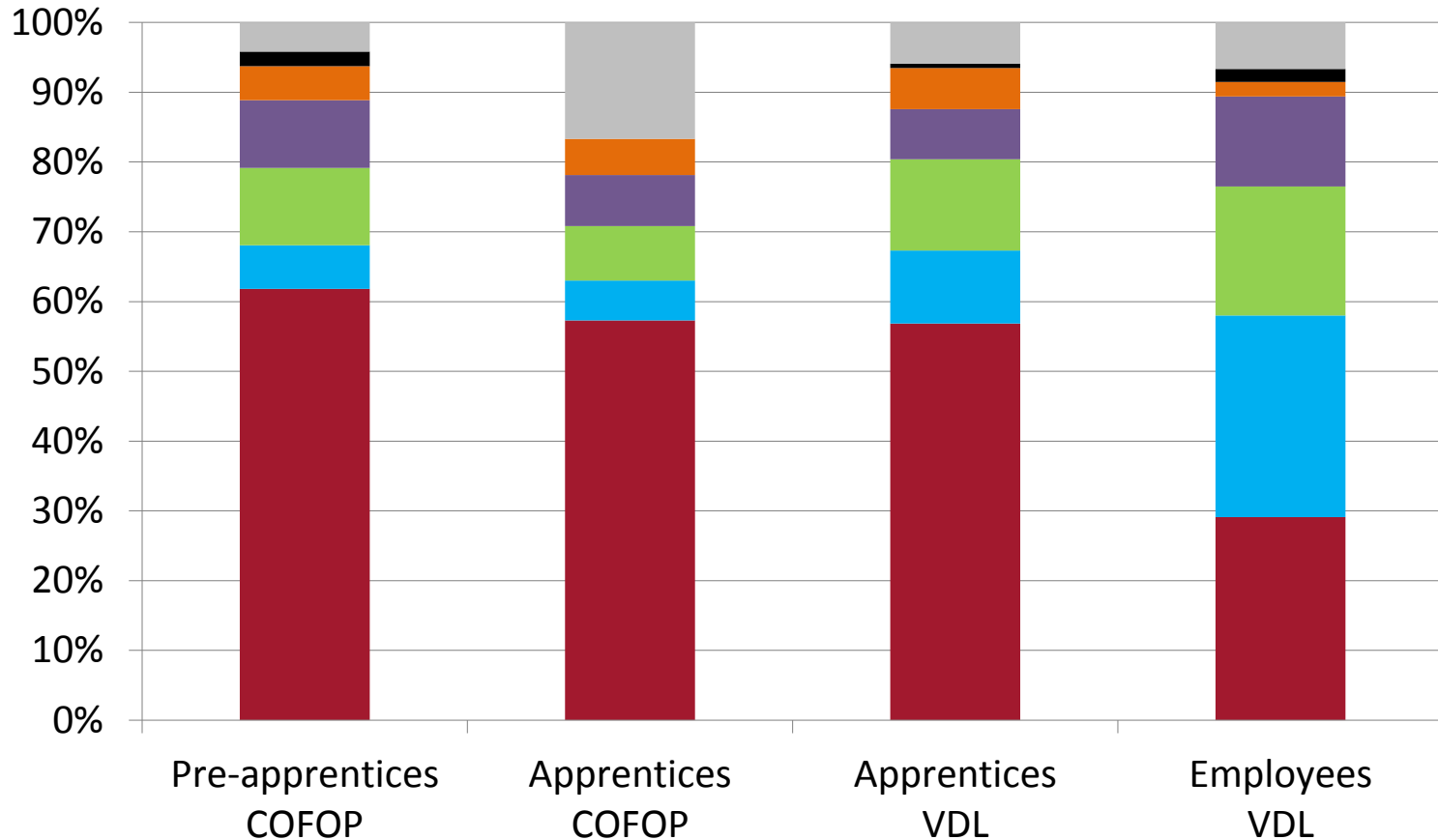
■ Regulation

- Group-based regulation: Collective identification (2 items, $\alpha = .88$)
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DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS FOR PROJECT DOMAINS

Domain	Project	Person	Examples
Profession/Education	426 (44 %)	301 (82 %)	finish my apprenticeship, have a nice salary, open my own company
Family/Relations	175 (18 %)	159 (43 %)	have children, make my mother proud of me, move in together
Leisure/Spare time	140 (14 %)	120 (33 %)	travels, volunteer work, meet people
Place to live	101 (10 %)	101 (28 %)	get an apartment, leave Switzerland, go back to my country of origin
Competences	36 (4 %)	36 (10 %)	learn languages, get driver's permit, do military service
Health	13 (1 %)	12 (3 %)	stop smoking, lose weight, have better mental health
Other	79 (8 %)		be a millionaire, get Swiss nationality, have more time for myself
Total	970	366	

PROJECT DOMAINS BY WORK STABILITY



PREDICTING PROJECT DOMAIN – ODDS RATIOS

°	Variables	Profession	Relations	Leisure	Place to live
Social position	Swiss nationality	0.91	1.50	0.90	1.12
	Work status: Appr. COFOP	0.67	0.72	1.00	0.55
	Work status: Appr. VDL	1.34	1.44	1.59	0.72
	Work status: Empl. VDL	0.40	5.50*	4.50*	0.97
Internal vuln.	Psy vuln: Self-esteem	1.12	0.95	0.97	0.99
	Psy vuln: Lack of control	0.84	0.98	0.98	1.02
	Material vulnerability	1.23	0.67*	0.84	0.88
	Relational vulnerability	1.09	1.49*	0.93	0.95
	Categorical vulnerability	1.25	0.90	0.98	1.32
Regulation	Collective identification	1.16	1.09	1.03	1.28

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Coefficients smaller than 1 are negatively associated with project domain.

° controlled for age and gender

PREDICTING PROJECT DOMAIN

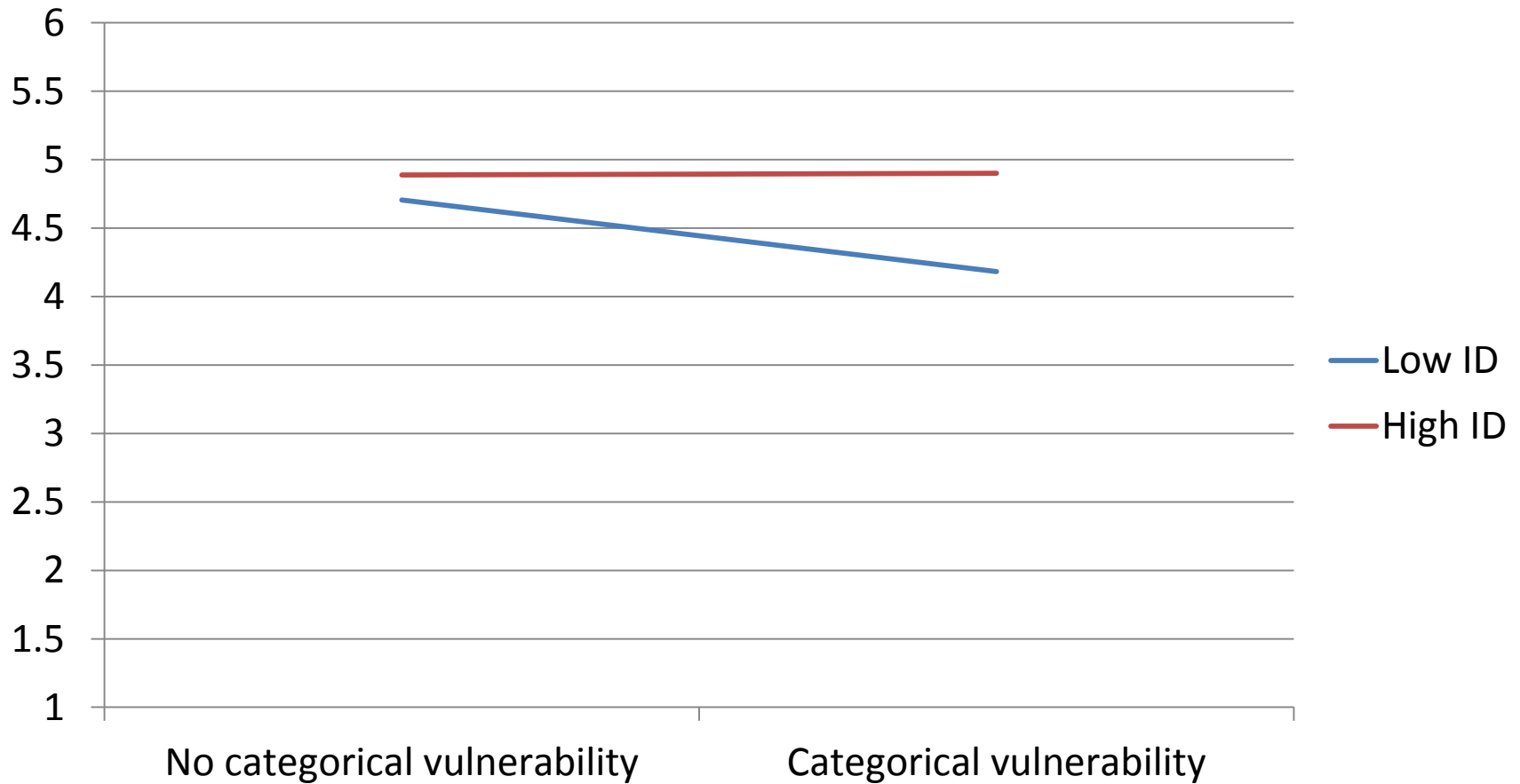
- Social position (i.e., work status) is more influential in the definition of projects than internal vulnerability
- Projects related to relations are made by
 - those who “can afford it” (less material vulnerability, more stable work status)
 - those who “need it” (more relational vulnerability)

PREDICTING PROJECT APPRAISAL

°	Variables	Achievement	
		Model 1	Model 2
Social position	Swiss nationality	.05	.05
	Work status: Appr. COFOP	.11	.11
	Work status: Appr. VDL	.10	.09
	Work status: Empl. VDL	.14	.16
Internal vuln.	Psy vuln: Self-esteem	.12+	.14*
	Psy vuln: Lack of control	-.16**	-.15*
	Material vulnerability	-.08	-.08
	Relational vulnerability	.03	.03
	Categorical vulnerability	-.11*	-.13*
Regulation	Collective identification	.16**	.10+
	Categ vuln. X Collective ID		.13*
R²		.12***	.13*

° controlled for age and gender

INTERACTION FOR PROJECT ACHIEVEMENT



PREDICTING PROJECT APPRAISAL

°	Variables	Achievement		Negative thoughts	
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Social position	Swiss nationality	.05	.05	-.07	-.07
	Work status: Appr. COFOP	.11	.11	-.08	-.08
	Work status: Appr. VDL	.10	.09	-.04	-.04
	Work status: Empl. VDL	.14	.16	-.08	-.08
Internal vuln.	Psy vuln: Self-esteem	.12+	.14*	-.05	-.05
	Psy vuln: Lack of control	-.16**	-.15*	.20**	.21**
	Material vulnerability	-.08	-.08	.16*	.16**
	Relational vulnerability	.03	.03	-.02	-.01
	Categorical vulnerability	-.11*	-.13*	.17**	.17**
Regulation	Collective identification	.16**	.10+	.06	.04
	Categ vuln. X Collective ID		.13*		.04
R²		.12***	.13*	.14***	.13

° controlled for age and gender

PREDICTING PROJECT APPRAISAL

°	Variables	Achievement		Negative thoughts		Barriers	
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Social position	Swiss nationality	.05	.05	-.07	-.07	-.18**	-.18**
	Work status: Appr. COFOP	.11	.11	-.08	-.08	-.08	-.08
	Work status: Appr. VDL	.10	.09	-.04	-.04	-.16*	-.16*
	Work status: Empl. VDL	.14	.16	-.08	-.08	-.04	-.04
Internal vuln.	Psy vuln: Self-esteem	.12+	.14*	-.05	-.05	-.17**	-.18**
	Psy vuln: Lack of control	-.16**	-.15*	.20**	.21**	.24***	.24***
	Material vulnerability	-.08	-.08	.16*	.16**	.16**	.15**
	Relational vulnerability	.03	.03	-.02	-.01	-.04	-.04
	Categorical vulnerability	-.11*	-.13*	.17**	.17**	.16**	.17**
Regulation	Collective identification	.16**	.10+	.06	.04	.02	.03
	Categ vuln. X Collective ID		.13*		.04		-.03
R²		.12***	.13*	.14***	.13	.25***	.25

° controlled for age and gender

PREDICTING PROJECT APPRAISAL

- Internal vulnerability more influential in appraisal of projects than social position
 - Material and categorical vulnerability have strongest impact on negative appraisal
 - Psychological vulnerability has impact on all appraisals (both positive and negative)
 - Group-based regulation enhances sense of capability and achievement
 - Collective identification compensates the negative impact of perceived discrimination on sense of achievement
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DISCUSSION

- Project domains are influenced by social position (external vulnerability) and less so by internal vulnerability
 - Project definition is influenced by situation in life

- Project appraisals are influenced by internal vulnerability and less so by social position
 - Project appraisal is influenced by internalized vulnerability

DISCUSSION

- Group-based regulation influences sense of achievement positively and eliminates negative impact of categorical vulnerability
 - Successful regulation through collective identification

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Differential impact on project appraisal by
 - Different project domains?
 - Different group identities?
 - Further explore projects
 - Institutionalized vs. individual projects
 - Inclusiveness of projects
 - Longitudinally: success or failure of projects?
 - Who and why?
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ATTENTION

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METHOD – CODING OF PROJECT DOMAINS

■ Procedure

1. Construction of categories based on questionnaires
2. First coding on 10% of projects
3. Discussion of categories
4. Second coding on 10% of projects $\rightarrow \kappa = .96, p < .001$
5. Final coding of all projects by one person