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**The formation of long-term unemployed young adults' emotional capital during childhood: a
Bourdiesian approach to emotional harm**

Abstract

This article focuses on the long-term formation of unemployed young adults' emotional capital and the development of emotional dispositions during childhood. We use Bourdieu's work and the concept of emotional capital to draw attention to the emotional dynamics of family and peer relations during childhood. Emotional capital is related to parents' emotional involvement and investment in the child's well-being, and it encompasses emotional skills and assets that children can attain from family relations. The concept of emotional capital allows an examination of the child's family and close environment, which shape the development of actors' emotional inclinations and tendencies. Our data consists of 28 semi-structured life course interviews conducted in 2012–2013 with 28 long-term unemployed young adults aged 20–32 in central Finland. The data revealed that problems in family or peer dynamics were related to negative emotional dispositions, including a sense of not belonging or being an outsider and a lack of trust, which started to form during childhood, and which were translated and repeated in different settings in participants' life courses.

Keywords: Bourdieu, childhood, emotional capital, family field, unemployed young adults

Introduction

Our article focuses on the emotions of long-term unemployed young people in Finland by drawing attention to the formation of emotional dispositions in childhood and how these play a role during the later life course. By emotional dispositions we mean actors' unconscious and taken-for-granted affective inclinations and tendencies to feel and experience in specific ways under specific circumstances. The development of emotional dispositions in childhood is one of the keys to understanding individuals' life courses. For instance, earlier research indicates a relationship between childhood mental health and later socio-economic success (e.g. Egan, Daly and Delaney 2015; Fletcher 2013; Goodman, Joyce and Smith 2011).

Research has shown that emotional problems in childhood are related to the phenomenon of youth unemployment (e.g. Egan, Daly and Delaney 2015; Smith and Smith 2010). Here, we focus on life course interviews with long-term unemployed young people, which enable us to scrutinise how emotional anxieties arise in childhood.

We refer to Pierre Bourdieu's sociology, which provides insights into psychosocial and emotional aspects of everyday practices. There has been growing interest in the emotional dimensions of his work (Rafferty 2011; Reay 2005, 2015; Wagner and McLaughlin 2015). Much of this scholarship links emotions to specific class positions, indicating the effects of inequality on 'the psychic landscape of class' (Reay 2005: 912). Bourdieu's work – particularly his concept of habitus – captures the effects of social inequalities and power on the individual's life course and well-being through dispositions of the body (Bourdieu 1986a, 2000, 2001; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). In this case, we note the importance of emotional

capital (Allatt 1993; Froyum 2010; Gillies 2006; Nowotny 1981; Reay 2000), which has been theorised with reference to Bourdieu's work as referring to parents' affective contribution (time, care etc.) to their children's well-being. We are particularly interested in how emotional capital is formed in childhood and early youth, and in how certain emotional dispositions appear during the life course. The focus on emotional capital enables us to explore family dynamics in childhood as well as to understand emotions as resources that are built in childhood and early youth (e.g. Gillies 2006: 286).

Diminished emotional well-being of unemployed young adults

Wider structural conditions and processes, such as insecure, unstable and constantly changing labour markets and high unemployment rates, heavily influence the experiences, choices and life opportunities of young adults (e.g. Côté 2014; Furlong and Cartmel 2007; Heinz 2009). The unemployed young adults in our study share disadvantaged social positions which shape their consciousness and emotional schemes, limiting their sense of agency and experience. Previous research indicates that unemployment diminishes the emotional well-being of young adults, as it is related to many types of psychological ill such as depression, loss of confidence, or increased abuse of alcohol or drugs (e.g. Hammarström 1994; Schaufeli 1997; Strandh et al. 2014). Jahoda (1979; see also Warr 1987) stresses that the consequences of unemployment for everyday practices are related to differences in time structure (unemployment means extra time that needs to be consumed), social contact (unemployment decreases the number of contacts), goals and purpose (unemployment implies a loss of meaning and possibilities), status and identity (unemployment entails a loss of status as well a decline in social position), and activities (see Griffin 1993). Others (e.g. Kunze and Suppa 2016; Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi 2010) point to unemployment's effects on social participation and social capital, illustrating the importance of networks and interactions. Social

participation in everyday activities has an effect on the subjective well-being of the individual; unemployed individuals tend to withdraw from social activities such as going to cultural events, and increasingly replace them with activities within the private domain (Kunze and Suppa 2016) Social capital in the form of networks 'is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible' (Raffo and Reeves 2000: 151). A lack of influential networks or reciprocal social relations leads to isolated situations in which young people receive few resources from others, which in turn negatively influences their coping with everyday tasks such as finding a job (Raffo and Reeves 2000: 153).

In addition, unemployed young adults have difficulties accumulating economic, cultural and social resources within different social fields, because of wide-scale youth unemployment and precarious labour markets, which have weakened the job security of young people throughout Europe since the economic crisis of 2007. At the same time, the emergence of neoliberal policies in response to the recession led to severe cuts in child welfare and social services for families and young adults, including child welfare clinics, day care, schools, early intervention services and so forth (Paananen et al. 2012). Longitudinal research by the National Institute for Health and Welfare that covers all individuals born in 1987 shows that the 1990s recession had permanent consequences for this group's life course, and also indicates that parents' social disadvantages are transferred to their children (Paananen et al. 2012).

Risks factors in early childhood that predict the social exclusion of young adults in Finland include: parents who are in vulnerable positions and face cumulative misfortune, such as being unemployed; parents with low levels of education who receive income support; parents who were single at the time of the child's birth, particularly if the father was unknown; and

bereavement (Hilli et al. 2017; Vauhkonen, Kallio and Erola 2017). Previous research has shown that early childhood education can be effective for disadvantaged children who suffer from a lack of parental investment or good-quality parental care (e.g. Heckman 2008). Because of the cuts to social services during the early 1990s, which meant a permanent worsening of child welfare in Finland, the state is less capable of compensating and providing resources for children from vulnerable social backgrounds. This makes the resources that the childhood family can provide even more important for the child's later life course.

It is important to draw attention to the childhoods, family environments and interactions of unemployed young adults and how these aspects are related to their emotional well-being. The few studies that draw attention to childhood and youth unemployment suggest that childhood emotional distress increases the risk of unemployment in the future (Egan, Daly and Delaney 2015). Psychological research has demonstrated the link between attachment styles and adult well-being in terms of self-esteem and mental health issues (e.g. Roberts et al. 1996; Lee and Hankin 2009; Stafford 2016), and educational and work performance (O'Connor 2011; Stafford 2016, Little 2011). Specific experiences and events in childhood generate specific outcomes that can play a role in the individual's life course. Our research question focuses on how emotions and emotionally charged events in childhood appear in the context of life course interviews with unemployed young adults.

Bourdieuian theoretical framework

Social position, possession of capital, emotional habitus and the family

Bourdieu's work has generally been popular for its description of the effects of social inequality and hardship on individuals. This is because his sociology explains the

consequences of unequally distributed economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital in the social space and fields for individuals' practices, experiences, and cognitive and emotional dispositions (i.e. habitus). For Bourdieu, different social positions are structured by the volume and composition of actors' capital, which is defined as 'a set of actually usable resources and powers' (Bourdieu 1986a: 114). Actors mobilise capital and use it to produce effects in different circumstances in social world or fields. For instance, economic capital can be used to buy things and services, but it can also be used to accumulate other forms of capital, such as cultural capital (taste and lifestyle, cultural goods, and educational qualifications) or social capital (e.g. Bourdieu 1986b). Social capital comprises networks and connections that can be used to accumulate other forms of capital, such as economic or other types of privilege (e.g. Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119). The possession of a high volume of various forms of capital enables actors to successfully navigate the social world, and even to make the outside world serve their interests and vice versa: the smaller the amount of economic, cultural and symbolic capital, the more obstacles and hardships individuals encounter in their everyday lives.

Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital and habitus, which are central to his understanding of how power relations operate, draw attention to power imbalances between different actors. His concept of field is meant to generally demonstrate the ongoing struggles taking place in different social realms. Each field has its own logic and power struggles. The family too can be thought of as a field. The family field, like any other field, forms an arena of struggle within which power is unequally distributed – such as parents' power over their children – and in which parents and children 'act in certain ways toward one another', thereby generating field effects (Atkinson 2014: 227). For children, there are few possibilities to resist their parents' power in struggles over the dynamics of family relations. In the family,

certain practices are established that structure everyday life, including: the use of time and space (mealtimes etc.); mutual knowledge and expectations regarding behaviour; family-specific language and stories; and family spirit (Atkinson 2014: 227). Children's resistance lies, for instance, in their capacity to disrupt or refuse to carry out the parents' desires and to reject their authority: children are not passive targets of indoctrination, but players in the game (Atkinson 2014: 229). Negotiations and even battles within the family field have an effect on how statuses and characteristics are accepted by the players (Mayall 2015: 15).

In addition, the family is a 'real group' possessing economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital (Alanen 2011: 96), which means for example that working-class and middle-class families are differently located in social space. In this sense, the family field can be seen as 'the child's training ground for future field struggles' beyond the family, as children internalise and adopt skills, attitudes, knowledge and values (Atkinson 2014: 229; see also Alanen 2011; Bourdieu 2000: 167). Children, who do not have any capital of their own, become socialised into the capital possessed by their family and near environment during early childhood. This brings them into relationship with their parents' skills, knowledge and attitudes through family interactions. These interactions are to a certain extent related to the parents' social positions and the various forms and composition of the parents' capital, and become internalised in children's cognitive and emotional schemes, i.e. habitus (e.g. Brooker 2015: 38). In addition, families are also greatly affected by contingent and sudden events such as deaths and illness in the family, which can affect the accumulation of economic, cultural, and social capital (e.g. in terms of lost networks).

According to Bourdieu's concept of habitus, individuals are socialised into certain social circumstances (norms, language, divisions of time and space, values, attitudes etc.) which are imposed upon them and in which corresponding cognitive, corporeal and emotional

dispositions are developed (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 16, 126). Relatively stable cognitive and emotional dispositions are formed due to constant 'exposure to certain conditions' which 'instils in individuals an ensemble of durable and transposable dispositions' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 13). Habitus has a psychosocial dimension and is close to the concept of scheme in cognitive psychology, which refers to internalised cognitive, emotional and motivating structures (see Lizardo 2004). Habitus is defined as 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions' that 'generate and organise practices and representations', functioning mostly in a pre-reflective manner and indicating that personal and subjective aspects also have a collective and social nature (Bourdieu 1992: 53; see also Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 126).

All types of outside social conditions influence habitus, including contingent events such as deaths as well as disadvantaged, unpredictable social conditions such as unstable family living conditions, and insecure employment and housing. According to Bourdieu, these social conditions can be incorporated into habitus as internal contradictions and tensions (Bourdieu 1990: 116). When Bourdieu draws attention to the internal contradiction and tension, he does not refer to individualised explanations, but rather, points out the consequences of socially constituted social problems such as parental unemployment, family breakdown, and drug and alcohol misuse on habitus. For Bourdieu emotions are understood not as individual properties or subjective states of mind, but rather as arising from social relations (Emirbayer and Goldberg, 2005: 490). Actors are implicated in relations with other actors, and emotions cannot be extricated from those relations, or seen as properties of disengaged or disembedded subjectivity. Hence, Bourdieu is against individualist discourse, which means that an emphasis on individual autonomy displaces responsibility for families' or young adults' difficulties from wider societal structures onto families' and young adults' own behaviour (e.g. Colley and Hodkinson, 2001).

Concept of emotional capital and childhood

The concept of emotional capital has been developed in the Bourdieusian context in particular in terms of the family and childhood care and attention (Allatt 1993; Nowotny 1981; Reay 2000). The concept designates how emotions themselves can be thought of as a (family) resource, which can be used to transfer privilege (Allatt 1993; Gillies 2006). Nowotny (1981) developed the concept to encompass a private form of capital referring to affective bonds in the family. It includes ‘knowledge, contacts and relations as well as emotionally valued skills and assets’ in affective networks (Nowotny 1981: 148). Allatt (1993: 143) defines emotional capital as ‘emotionally valued assets and skills, love and affection, expenditure of time, attention, care and concern’.

Much of the early theorisation linked emotional capital to the accumulation of cultural capital in the family in the form of a mother’s care and investment in her child’s educational performance (Allatt 1993; Bourdieu 1986b: 54; Reay 2000, 2005). This tendency to highlight the mother’s care instead of the father’s may have underestimated the significance of the father’s role in the development of emotional capital. Subsequent research (Basuil and Casper 2012; Hove et al. 2009; Stafford et al. 2016: 334) highlighted identification with the same-gender parent, meaning that ‘boys may be more likely than girls to internalise their fathers’ caring, supporting and war attitudes in ways which improve their own interpersonal functioning and affect’ (Stafford et al. 2016: 334).

Reay (2000, 2005) and Gillies (2006) have shown that middle-class and working-class parents differ in their emotional investments in their children in terms of school and

education. Middle-class parents are able to contribute more to their children's education through care and time, which means 'greater future prospects for their children' as well as a more 'positive experience of intimacy and connection' (Gillies 2006: 292). In general, Gillies (2006: 294) prefers a broader definition of emotional capital that refers to 'emotional investment made by parents as part of their desire to promote their children's well-being and prospects'. Emotional capital in this sense encompasses the emotional attitudes, love and care that the child receives from the family and that form a backdrop against which the child's emotional resources (specific skills, inclinations and stances towards the self, others and the outside world) are developed. Emotional capital also becomes incorporated as a form of emotional disposition and habitus which influences individuals' well-being, providing them with skills and assets that they can use. Cottingham (2016: 452, 454) uses a wider conceptualisation that goes beyond family-based interactions, and sees emotional capital in terms of 'one's trans-situational, emotion-based knowledge, emotion management skills, and feeling capacities', which are closely related to power and privilege.

Gillies (2006: 285) points out that emotional capital interweaves with cultural and social capital and contributes to the specific outcomes of specific practices and decisions. As emotional capital accumulates over time within families, emotional resources are something of which children can take advantage (Reay 2000: 572). The concept of emotional capital encompasses certain forms of emotional knowledge and skill that operate in an embodied manner analogous to cultural taste (see Cottingham 2016; Froyum 2010). It also indicates the affective quality of relationships (Nowotny 1981; Reay 2000: 569). This draws attention to the character of relationships and networks, their consequences for individuals, and how the quality of those relationships becomes internalised as an aspect of habitus (e.g. the effect on individuals of an emotionally cold, unsupportive close environment versus a warm,

supportive environment during childhood and the life course). However, it is possible for children to replace the lack of emotional capital in the family field with relationships, networks and practices in other fields, such as leisure activities, that can accumulate social and cultural capital (see Holt, Bowlby and Lea 2013). These networks can include friends, classmates, friends' parents, teachers, coaches and so on.

Overall, the concept of emotional capital draws attention to 'the socialisation of emotions' during the life course (Froyum 2010: 38). Bourdieu's general idea is that the effects of inequality and power are inscribed in young adults' embodied tendencies to act, feel, perceive and think in ways that can be disadvantageous to them – for instance, generating negative experiences and emotions, orienting actions and perceptions, and influencing their valuation of things – which further can affect their life course.

Data and method

Originally the gathered data was intended to be used to scrutinise the life courses of long-term unemployed young adults in central Finland in terms of specific resources, significant events or turning points, and time and time management.¹ While scrutinising the interviews, we found that interviewees' narratives had noteworthy similarities in terms of emotional experiences, family dynamics and peer relations. The method was based on theoretical thematic analysis, which aims to identify, analyse and report patterns within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). We were motivated by the analytic interest in specific area rather than a general description of the whole data and thus focused more on "a detailed analysis of some

¹ The data was collected as part of the project 'Job-Seeking Groups and the Restructuring of Opportunities in Finland Since the 1990s', which explored the unemployed and people who had given up farming, with regard to changing opportunity structures in a changing environment.

aspect of the data”, in which we coded the data in terms of our research questions (Braun & Clarke 2006: 84).

Our data consists of 28 semi-structured life course interviews, which were conducted between May 2012 and February 2013, and which each lasted between 90 minutes and five hours. An individual is long-term unemployed if they have been continuously without work for at least 12 months. Our interviewees were long-term unemployed young adults aged between 20 and 32. This age bracket is wide, and there is a significant difference between the experiences of a 20-year-old and those of a 32-year-old. Nevertheless, our interviewees shared scattered trajectories in work and educational history, and those trajectories were characterised by similar types of emotional experience. The sample was gathered from vocational ‘back to work’ courses arranged for unemployed young adults by various organisations in central Finland’s Jyväskylä region, which had one of the highest youth unemployment rates in urban Finland at that time (Siisiäinen 2014; Ylistö 2015). We chose those who were easiest to reach (which also explains the wide age bracket). Some interviewees were recruited from networks of unemployed young adults through snowball sampling, as the majority of the young adults approached by the project rejected the invitation to participate in interviews.

The interviews were conducted in Finnish; the extracts used in this article have been translated from Finnish to English. Participants were asked about their childhood, family and peer relations, their experiences of school, and their experiences, ideas and practices with regard to education, work and political participation; they were also asked about their well-being and health. The data was coded in relation to our research questions and a theoretical framework based on Bourdieu and the concept of emotional capital – particularly with regard to his ideas about ‘family feeling’ and ‘institutionalised normality’, which resonated strongly

with the data (Bourdieu 1998: 68–70). We took into account the emotionally laden aspects of participants' experiences in their narratives concerning their childhoods. We identified disadvantaged emotional dispositions that appeared in childhood, particularly in terms of family and peers, and how these emotionally laden experiences were then repeated in narratives throughout the life course in other settings. First, we coded every emotionally remarkable event or situation in childhood related to family or peer relations. Second, we classified the data into thematic areas. Having done that, we started to generate larger groups of emotionally remarkable events and situations. We searched for emotional states that were described in the same way in different contexts by different interviewees. In this way we were able to analyse the whole group instead of treating these states as individual problems or problematic life situations. The research participants defined their circumstances and emotional experiences in similar ways, sharing the same types of emotional disposition (such as the experience of not belonging).

The problems participants encountered in their everyday lives were often further related to a low level of education, substance abuse or emotional difficulties (e.g. low self-esteem, no sense of security, or a radically lowered stress tolerance) that affected the process of looking for employment or education. Many of these young adults had no previous history with regard to labour markets or had only worked for short periods. They had all completed primary school; some had completed upper secondary school; some had gained qualifications from vocational school; those that had no history of vocational or upper secondary school were familiar with training centres. It was not uncommon for participants to have dropped out of upper secondary or vocational school. Generally, they had no experience of university or polytechnic studies. Participants all lived in rental housing. Most of them lived alone; the minority with their partners.

Approximately a quarter of the interviewees had previous or ongoing serious problems with alcohol or drugs; some of them had experienced longer periods of substance abuse, some shorter, particularly between the ages of 13 and 20. Most of the interviewees had mental health problems such as depression. The majority of them (but not all) had been socialised into environments characterised by low levels of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital at a very early age. Parental occupational status and educational levels were relatively low, and many of them had experienced unemployment and difficult work histories. In many cases, the parents encountered financial problems. Also, some of them had a serious drinking problem. A few of the participants were from relatively well-off families, and a few from families where one parent had an academic degree, although in these cases the degree was not necessarily related to the parent's financial status or career. Some participants described themselves as having spent their childhood in an emotionally impoverished environment. At the time of the interviews, they were all significantly accustomed to low levels of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital, suggesting that their emotional dispositions, such as shame and low self-esteem, might partly have reflected class-based elements of emotion (e.g. Reay 2005; Skeggs 1997).

Lack of 'family feeling': emotional involvement and support that was never received

Bourdieu (1998: 68) acknowledges the importance of 'family feeling', which generates 'devotion, generosity and solidarity'. Our data indicates that nearly all the research participants had problems with the process of accumulating emotional capital, which in most cases was related to a lack of parental care and took place at the level of intimate relationships. Lack of trust was a repeated theme in most life stories. Mistrust had started in

early childhood with regard to unstable and unpredictable everyday environments characterised by an insecure parent-child attachment: approximately three quarters of interviewees had experienced parental divorce, and nearly half had a relationship with only one parent. They often had restricted access to other close relationships such as siblings or relatives. The participants suffered from different types of problem in their families, such as alcoholism, and often they had encountered unexpected events, such as the death of a parent or parental abandonment.

Jerry, 31 years old, lived as a child with his father and three siblings, as his mother had left them when he was seven and disappeared from their lives. Jerry said that this was because his mother, who was an alcoholic, had moved far away from them to the place where she was born, and for that reason they had not stayed in touch (she lived around 60 kilometres from their original location). He compared his family with other families where the mother took care of housework such as doing laundry, washing dishes and preparing meals: Jerry and his siblings had to take care of themselves when they left for school in the morning, as his father did not have time. His father mainly bought processed food for them to prepare; the siblings also had an account at the grocery store, where they could buy something to eat. Furthermore, Jerry did not have grandparents in his life, and his other relatives lived far away. This meant that his distant father was the only adult in his close network.

In his childhood home, everyone had hobbies, but they were not connected to each other.

Interviewer: Did you do anything together in your childhood home?

Jerry: Not really. Dad left for work and we went to school, and when we came back from school, everyone left for where they were supposed to be going, my siblings

went to [sport] practice and things like that, and those who stayed home did daily chores.

Jerry received little concrete or emotional support or help in his daily life – a common feature in the data. Two of Jerry’s siblings now lived in different cities; while Jerry did not visit them, he stayed in touch on Facebook or by phone. One of his siblings still lived in the same area, and they saw each other – even too often, in Jerry’s opinion. Jerry did not say more about his siblings and their lives. Yet, Jerry had many ‘mind-liked friends’ whom he met in school and they have been part of his life ever since. He and his friend spent a lot of time together playing Nintendo, going out to play including activities such as swimming and cycling. As a teenager, he was relatively happy with getting to know girls and having his first experiences with alcohol. He had emotionally meaningful connections in his everyday life.

Most of the research participants had experienced a lack of support, guidance and care. In some cases, such as 26-year-old Anna and 24-year-old Pete, this was connected to the deep love and care they felt for their single parent. Anna’s distant father was an alcoholic and she was protective of her mother, whom she perceived as vulnerable; Pete thought he had to stay with his father after his parents’ divorce, voluntarily separating himself from his siblings, because he felt obligated to take care of his depressed father. Anna’s mother was central to her self-esteem – died when she was 15. Anna started missing school and using drugs.

Anna’s and Pete’s cases illustrate, how positive emotions do feature as part of these young people’s family histories, but positive emotional content can be lost due to the lack of safe and compensating networks.

Bourdieu (1998: 68) emphasises that ‘the family feeling’ is formed in ‘the countless ordinary and continuous exchanges of daily existence’. Absent parents and a cold emotional climate at

home entail a troubled and uneasy daily exchange between parent and child. Few of the interviewees expressed the emotional problems in their family very clearly. For instance, at the beginning of the interview, when asked about her childhood family, Tanya said that her family never discussed anything: they were never allowed to talk about feelings, and her parents never communicated with each other. According to Tanya, this was due to her mother's family history and her lack of emotional intelligence. Tanya saw that the problems in the interaction patterns within her family derived from past generations. It seemed from their narratives that nearly all the participants – only a few described no problematic features in their family relations – had problems attaining their parents' care, love and devotion, or other aspects generally related to emotional capital (Gillies 2006).

The lack of emotional capital was also manifested in patterns which began to develop in childhood in the form of constant exposure to disappointment – in needs and expectations that were not met due to the parents' lack of emotional involvement. Exposure to frequent disappointment in daily exchanges could last for long periods of time. The type of neglect described by Jerry was also present in 24-year-old Jan's experience:

Family life was this kind where mum was always working as much as she was able and did not have a good salary, and the rent was high, so she worked a lot, so my childhood was, in my opinion, kind of monotonous, so that when you always had to wait, the time went slowly, that I remember, that the waiting always felt terrible.

Jan's mother was busy and was not able to take part in her son's life, as she was a low-income single mother. Jan's father was no longer in contact with him, although his friends' fathers were friendly towards him. In primary school, he started having sudden emotional outbursts, and he did not understand why he reacted strongly to minor things. At the age of

12 Jan had periods of depression that he could not explain. He saw his childhood insecurities and anxieties as having led to his drug addiction, as he was looking for relief from his ‘bad feelings’. It seemed that Jan did not receive help from adults for his emotional problems, although his mother suspected that not everything was right with him.

Jan is one example from among many research participants whose everyday lives during childhood were marked by a lack of support or help. Previous research generally indicates that social capital plays an important role in overcoming disadvantage and hardship during youth (Furstenberg and Hughes 1995; see Siisiäinen 2014: 98). Raffo and Reeves (2000: 153) draw attention to cases where young adults are in ‘isolated situations with relatively weak individualised systems of social capital’, entailing more restricted opportunities and leading to difficulties in coping with many everyday tasks.

Being outside ‘institutionalised normality’: a sense of not belonging

Bourdieu (1998: 69, 70) defines the family as a symbolic ‘privilege instituted into a universal norm’: those who conform to the norm symbolically benefit from that normality, excluding some families from definition as legitimate. The privilege of having a legitimate family contributes to the accumulation and transmission of economic, cultural and symbolic capital, and can be extended to the accumulation and transmission of emotional capital as well (Bourdieu 1998: 69). Being outside institutionalised normality can have a disadvantageous effect on economic, cultural, social and emotional capital: for instance, working-class single-parent households are not able to mobilise capital on behalf of their children to the same extent as middle-class families. In addition, the experience of being outside institutionalised normality and legitimacy can be internalised in the emotional dispositions and habitus of individuals.

Although there were different events in research participants' life courses and their experiences differed from each other, it was a common feature of our data that nearly all had encountered events or relations that located them outside 'institutionalised normality'. This was related to unusual family circumstances, parental divorce, abandonment, the death of a parent, a parent's (mental) health problems, a parent's alcoholism, or to experiences of being bullied at school.

Twenty-year-old Sara's life course represented how a sense of not belonging could start to develop in early childhood. Sara had grown up with her violent mother, as her parents had divorced when she was about two years old and she had never seen her father afterwards. She encountered another loss and disappointment at the age of seven, when her beloved grandmother died. Around the same time she started school, where she was bullied and rejected by her peers. Many of our interviewees (eight out of 28) had experienced bullying, which is significantly linked to later mental health problems and psychological disorders (e.g. Sourander et al. 2016). For Sara, primary school meant frequent exposure to negative events which were emotionally difficult to bear and which seemed to build a relatively permanent sense of not belonging throughout her narrative.

For Sara, the feeling of being an outsider was related to circumstances in which a normatively insensitive environment forced upon her the experience of being different from others:

Sara: There [in school] it was always like on Father's Day. I was pissed off when the teacher forced us to make a card, and I was like, I don't have a dad, and the teacher said do it anyway while everyone else is doing it. [...] I was really pissed off when they did not understand that, and the teacher was like, why don't you have a dad. [...]

It was the same thing every year. [...] And when I tried to stay home, but my mum was like, you go to school, and when I knew that Father's Day is coming and we'll start to make a card and I was always like, do I have to do it or can I do something else instead. And then we learn to write 'happy Father's Day'.

This sense of being an outsider was built through everyday interactions such as at school, resulting in a feeling of being misunderstood, unrecognised and unheard. A sense of belonging generally means 'the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment' and is related to well-being, mental health and quality of life (Hagerty et al. 1992: 173). To be outside the idea of the nuclear family was a painful experience for Sara, as was evident not only on Father's Day but also throughout her narrative as she came to learn that other people had 'perfect families'. Sara's emotional content related to Father's day reveals how negative effects arise from and are typical of specific structural positions due to 'familiarization with a symbolically structured physical world and through early and prolonged experience of interactions informed by the structures of domination' (Bourdieu 1977: 214; see also Bourdieu 2000: 169).

Sara's sense of not belonging and of being an outsider was formed through a process of comparison between the self and others that started at a very young age. Through constant reflection and comparison, she was exposed to an environment where other people had access to valued things such as 'perfect families' or hobbies, and through these interactions in everyday life she internalised an experience of worthlessness, low self-esteem, inferiority and shame. These types of experience accumulated in everyday life over a long period of time. Sara was accustomed to a low level of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital from very early on. When she had to go to a children's home she experienced a culture shock,

because there was a big television and food in the refrigerator, which for her felt like being in a hotel.

Translation of emotional dispositions throughout the life course: how things feel now

According to our data, internalised emotional dispositions, such as childhood feelings of mistrust or being an outsider, were also found throughout the life courses of these young adults. This implies that emotional dispositions, as relatively permanent inclinations, can be translated in different circumstances. The majority of participants had encountered an unpredictable childhood environment that had built a sense of insecurity, and this sense of insecurity was translated from one area to another, so that mistrust caused difficulties in different areas of an individual's life course. We found that the lack of a sense of security appeared throughout the interviews. A few interviewees mentioned 'security' or 'sense of security' in several contexts, independently of the interviewer's questions or comments.

'Lack of warm feeling' and 'not being a "normal citizen"'

The dynamics of childhood family relations also affect later relationships. In particular, for a few young women, a sense of security was related to intimate relationships. For instance, Sara who had never had (or missed) a father, had difficulties trusting people.

Interviewer: So did you have anyone you could trust?

Sara: No, I didn't. I am terrible at trusting people, always have been.

Interviewer: No doubt.

Sara: Yes, well, I don't trust anyone but my partner, or I can't say really that I trust my partner 100%, because there have been so many people, especially close ones, who are definitely not worth trusting, so I don't, it is difficult for me that I don't trust, but I try at least.

A similar experience was reported by 26-year-old Anna, who said: 'I would like to have some kind of relationship, but I haven't experienced so far or seen in myself those kinds of features that I could have warm feelings towards people.' The lack of trust seemed to narrow Sara's and Anna's daily lives. Sara sought love and comfort in animals, and wanted to work with them in future. In a world where she trusts no one – not even her boyfriend completely – animals have never let her down.

However, despite such difficulties in trusting other people, authorities and employers, all the participants' narratives presented friendships and relationships as extremely important and as providing an arena for positive emotional attachment. While this can be understood in terms of Holt, Bowlby and Lea's (2013) argument that peer relations can produce emotional and social capital, the common feature in the narratives was that participants' social networks and everyday interactions were formed with other young adults and individuals who did not possess sufficient quantities of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital, narrowing their possibilities. The social bonds that were considered positive were formed with persons who were in the same type of situation or worse. Even though their friendships with other young adults were considered positive and highly meaningful to them, they were not necessarily positive in terms of the accumulation of different forms of capital. In other words, the young adults in our interviews occupied disadvantaged positions in their networks of relations and were not able to translate those networks into economic, cultural, social or symbolic privilege.

Yet, their relationships, interests (whether hobbies or love for animals and so on) offered them positive, warm and meaningful daily experiences. In addition, there were not politically passive (an overall majority of interviewees had voted in elections, despite the widespread understanding that young adults lack an interest in formal politics) and they generally showed knowledge and expertise regarding political issues, even though many of them said they were not interested in politics and disliked formal politics. The commonest political value in the data implied that nearly all of these young adults to great extent experienced empathy and ‘warm feelings’ for the ‘weak’. They were concerned about groups of people or animals that were not able to defend themselves. Interviewees generally cared for elderly people, children, animals, immigrants, mental health patients and the unemployed, and they were also concerned about the environment. Empathy for the weak and a strong sense of justice, as significant aspects of unemployed young adults’ political awareness, illustrate the unique configuration of emotional capital that these research participants develop as a response to a specific environment.

Another respect in which the lack of sense of security affected nearly all interviewees was in relation to their livelihood and economic stability. They felt uncomfortable seeking a job. The young adults in our data were mistrustful of other people’s motivations and intentions. This resembled the childhood experiences in their narratives, which were related to a lack of sense of security. Everyday life and everyday choices were extremely stressful for the research participants. Going to school or studying was regarded as highly stressful. Applying for a job caused difficulties for all participants: it was experienced as a ‘thing that you must do’, imposed from outside, and it frustrated them, as they had little chance of being hired for a proper job, as they themselves knew (Ylistö 2015). The stress arose from a constant lack of security concerning material survival, a mistrust of other people and society, and their own

personal troubles from the past. This anxiety made the normal routines of daily life more difficult.

The normative ideal of an adult with a full-time job that is highly valued in society produced feelings of being outside normal society among the research participants. A few participants described themselves as ‘belonging nowhere’ or not being ‘normal citizens’ with regard to working life. The feeling of being unable to participate as a normal adult citizen had started to lower their self-confidence, and to a large extent their trust. They had only had (short-term) temporary jobs. Some of the participants pointed out that employers did not offer them decent jobs; rather, employers were seen as taking on successive rounds of trainees due to the lower employment costs. For some participants, this type of personal work history produced the experience not only of being outside the ideal of the full-time worker, but also of being exploited and taken advantage of, leading to extreme disappointment. Occasionally in the data, these experiences led to mistrust and cynicism. They can be seen as emotional reactions that provide protection from further disappointments and hurt (Siisiäinen 2014: 108).

However, positive experiences related to active labour policies such as vocational ‘back to work’ courses, training, and subsidised jobs were very common among interviewees and brought benefits to interviewees’ lives. In general, these activities can impose a time structure on the day, imply regularly shared experiences with others, link the individual to goals and purposes, defines positive aspects of identity, and enforces overall activity in one’s life (see Jahoda, 1979: 313). For instance, Sara and Anna both enjoyed the art workshops.

Conclusion

In this article we have used semi-structured life course interviews in central Finland with long-term unemployed young adults, who are typically difficult to reach in research. By deploying Bourdieu's work and the concept of emotional capital in the analysis of unemployed young adults' narratives, this article has explored how emotionally charged inclinations are developed in childhood in terms of family and peer relations, and how these emotional inclinations become translated in different settings during the individual's life course. In our analysis, we found that the concept of emotional capital helps to identify the emotional climate of the childhood family, and how emotional inclinations start to develop in childhood and remain challenging for unemployed young adults throughout the life course. In addition, the majority of participants' narratives described aspects related to problems in family or peer dynamics. The majority of participants had experienced parental divorce in their childhood or youth, and a quarter had experienced parental rejection or other forms of neglect, such as a lack of parental attention and care, or heavy bullying (eight out of 28). In addition, the majority of these young adults had been socialised into low volumes of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital at an early age.

The harmful negative emotional dispositions that were a common feature of participants' narratives were a sense of not belonging and a lack of trust and support. These dispositions can be understood as arising from interviewees' early life histories and as subsequently being repeated in different settings in the narratives. Only a few individuals reported having no problems with family or peer relations. For most participants, the sense of not belonging and the lack of trust had emerged within family and/or peer relations either through a process of comparison – i.e. others had something that they did not – or in experiences of parental or peer neglect in which they were left behind or denied personal value, as in the case of bullying. Approximately a quarter of the participants later had problems with alcohol or

drugs which made them ‘outsiders’. The majority had experienced depression or other mental health problems which were at least partly related to their being outside the ideal of a ‘normal citizen’ with a full-time job, income and social status. Participants highly appreciated this ideal but were not able to attain it for themselves.

We consider the concept of emotional capital a necessary contribution to Bourdieu’s theorisation of capital. This might indicate that social research should more firmly take into account attachment theories in the psychological field and the role insecure parent-child attachments play in individuals’ life courses (see Stafford et al. 2015). However, sociological research pays more attention to emotions as resources. It is the formation of emotional capital in childhood and youth that accounts for the emotional resources that individuals are given understood as the assets they can command in order to make their way in later life. To emphasise the role of emotional capital is not to downplay the role of economic, cultural or social capital in individuals’ life courses, but to point out sociologically unacknowledged aspects of the ways in which the development of emotional dispositions during interviewees’ childhoods and life course influenced their habitus along with other forms of capital.

Bourdieu is generally interested in how social positions are reproduced through the use of capital. This is not to say that emotional capital laid down and accumulated (or not) in childhood becomes the defining context for these young people’s subsequent years, but rather to point out that it functions ways of which that are similar to the accumulation and reproduction of other forms of capital. Disadvantaged actors may possess forms of emotional capital that have limited currency in the middle-class dominated institutions and fields, which can play a role in class-based reproduction. For future research, the focus should be on the interrelatedness of different forms of capital, i.e. how the specific volume and configuration

of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital in different fields create a backdrop against which emotional capital is shaped.

In addition, other forms of relationship, such as peer relations, are related to the accumulation of emotional capital (Holt, Bowlby and Lea 2013). The focus on emotional capital can partly explain what types of emotional resource individuals gain during childhood and how those resources translate in different circumstances and social domains during the life course. As emotions motivate and orient action, they greatly influence an individual's life course by providing information about what can be done, what can be achieved, what should be avoided, and what feels safe and comfortable. If children have accumulated emotional capital in the form of emotional skills and assets, they have the confidence to draw upon this stock in different or new life situations. The lack of such skills and assets can influence young adults' motivations, choices and actions during transition periods.

Our interviews capture the experiences that participants themselves considered important to share in their narratives; the data cannot identify all aspects related to the process of becoming an unemployed young adult. We do, however, find that the significance of the emotional climate and dynamics of the family and peer relations during childhood is highly evident in the interviews. The data reveals the significance of the emotional climate and dynamics of the family and peer relations during the childhoods of the young unemployed people in our study, offering a valuable angle of approach for those who work with children, young people and families.

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