

## **BOOK REVIEW**

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### **THE YOUTH EXPERIENCE GAP EXPLAINING NATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION**

by **FRANCESCO PASTORE**,  
Springer Cham Heidelberg, New York, London,  
61 pp., 2015. ISBN 978-3-319-10195-8;  
ISSN 2191-5512 (electronic).

It is a known fact that for any young person, entering the labor market and finding a first job is a major milestone. However, this school-to-work transition is not an easy task, proving to be for most quite a hurdle. Looking at this from a different outside perspective, one can easily see that youth unemployment has been for some time an actual phenomenon, with severe consequences. In his book *“The Youth Experience Gap. Explaining National Differences in the School-to-Work Transition”* Francesco Pastore addresses this issue, offering an exhaustive study on the causes, approaches and national differences concerning this phenomenon.

Francesco Pastore is qualified as Full Professor of Economic Policy and his main research interests are in labor and education economics. In this context, he presents in this book several aspects about youth unemployment in a way that is more eclectic than systematic (Dietrich Hans, 2015, Book Review: The Youth Experience Gap. Explaining National Differences in the School-to-Work Transition, European Review of Labour and Research:385-386).

The main idea of this work is that the relatively higher unemployment rate between young people (the so called youth unemployment rate, or in short YUR) to the adult unemployment rate (AUR) is due to the lack of professional experience of the first. The author states that there is a relative disadvantage of youth to adults, which is not mainly caused or even influenced by macroeconomic factors, since these have similar effect on both YUR and AUR. Instead, he introduces what he calls “the youth experience gap” between adults and youth, which works at the disadvantage of the latter.

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The book is structured on seven chapters, offering both an in depth analysis and a holistic image on the phenomenon. Starting by an empirical analysis of youth unemployment in several countries around the world in the first chapter – **Some Stylized Facts** – the author quickly introduces the main argument of his work in a very short chapter two – **The Youth Experience Gap**. Chapter three searches for causes of youth unemployment in what the author calls “**The Mainstream Approach**” or the liberalist approach, for which he then presents a series of weaknesses in the next chapter four, called “Weaknesses of the Mainstream Approach”. The next chapter – **The Interventionist Approach** – presents another set of causes for the youth experience gap. In chapter six – **A Classification of School-to-Work Transition Regimes** – the author includes a second study, this time a qualitative one, comparing the youth labor market penetration processes in different regions across Europe. The book ends with a set of conclusions and discussions.

While the value of the research is undisputable, it is highly theoretic. The author himself states in the conclusions that “this book has attempted to provide a theoretical framework to think of the youth unemployment problem.” However, since the study is based almost exclusively on “hard facts and figures”, one does not lose the feeling, that something is missing. Indeed, the book remains addressed mostly to scholars, only partially trying to reach those, who can actually influence this phenomenon.

This being said, the research itself is valuable, presenting the author’s long term preoccupation spanning 15 years of study with this phenomenon. The book is very well documented presenting not only the newest theories regarding the subject at hand, but describing the evolution of thought in the field. The author’s own ideas are well corroborated with and supported by existing literature; the style is pleasant and the logical path of the work is flawless. In all, we have before us an interesting, fair, and well-argued study, characterized by scientific rigorousness. It has a great practical character, addressing an issue with an increased relevance for European labor markets. The information presented is well structured, offering for any attentive and careful reader good insights into the phenomenon of youth unemployment.