

# Young people's time perspectives: from youth to adulthood



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**Summarise and critically evaluate the article (Brannen, J & Nilsen, A 2002) “ young people’s time perspectives” focusing on; A) Its conceptual and theoretical framework and B) Its methodology and approach to evidence.**

The Author Brennan’s history includes her being a professor in Sociology for the University of London. She has written books and researched in on topics relating to gender and families with young people and children. She also co-edits, the International Journal of Social Research Methodology: theory and practice. The co-author history included Nilsen being a professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Bergen in Norway. She has researched in topic’s relating to women’s life course, biographical methods and time and environmental sociology. She is also the co-editor of the Journal of Psychology. The article under discussion examines three bodies of theory: individualization, the life course, and concepts of time. It cross-examines these theories with respect to the following questions: how young people speak about the future; the bearing of young people’s situations and time perspectives upon the way they envisage the transition to adulthood. Empirical data is taken from five different European countries and material from focus group discussions and interviews are conducted with young people taken from west-European countries, Britain and Norway. They analyzed variations in young peoples’ ways of thinking about their future lives, and propose, as a basis for further research, three ideal typical models.

The concepts include Nowotneys concept of “ extended present, which is the notion of planning for the future, which may be altered by the experiences of the present”. It is has been stated by Sennett 1998, that a shift from linear concept of time can mean people no longer try to predict the future and the <https://assignbuster.com/young-peoples-time-perspectives-from-youth-to-adulthood/>

notions of planning loses its meaning, Brannen and Nilsen have scrutinized all the theories and concepts mentioned.

The purpose of their article was to begin to develop a language of description (Bernstein 1996) for representing and interpreting the nuances and diversity in young people's orientation to adulthood which may be applied and modified in future research.

They aimed to look at theories of life course processes and wanted to observe how young people think and speak about the future. The cross national study " young people's orientation to the future reconciliation of employment and family life", This initial cross-national analyses focus was on young peoples view's of future in general and did not set out explicitly to examining the future in general, neither or their conceptualizations of time. There work related to another parallel study carried out with interviewing Norwegian men and women, (Nilsen, and Brannen 2002).

The study method included 12 focus groups with three different groups for interviews; they tried to make each group as alike in terms of demographics as possible, however theory did not discuss what measures of precaution they took. The groups were divided by education and training levels, by occupational level, and by those in manual or while collar jobs. Questions about merging employment and family life were for most young people at the time of interview were hypothetical. The study was not concentrating on the issues such as time perspectives and theories linking to it, thus they were not able to examine methodically the interactions of gender, age and social class to the three models thinking about the future. The explicit focus

of the study was on future reconciliation or employment and family responsibilities. Nilsen and Brannen were interested in gathering a qualitative approach. They did not however take into consideration the time scale was short and the research funding was low, there lack of planning and budgeting was thus seen. They explained further that is when the aim of when they decided to change it from a qualitative approach to an exploratory one. They employed focus groups ranging from 3-10 people. They do however agree to that fact that it is not justifiable, in which focus group methodology can generalize about young people to produce biographical material. They further stated that as well as focus groups, interviews were conducted with selected young people aged 18-30 however they did not provide evidence and document the findings in the article, which leads to questions of the purpose of such interviews.

They talked about the theoretical perspectives including in the Individualisation theory (Beck 1992, 1994; Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Giddens, 1991, 1994). This theory holds the idea that the processes remove structural separations of gender, social class and age. The assertion that individual choices become more important and the choice biography replaces the standard biography 1996. This theory has received much speculation, by Beck, Giddens 1994, Bauman 1998a, and Nowotney 1994. The “ extended present” which takes account of “ choice biography” and suggest it is untried as argued by Brannen and Nilsen that the way people pass through the transition to adulthood is prejudiced by their experiences of time. Brannen and Nilsen’s came to the conclusion of explaining there findings through proposing, three models. Brannen and Nilsen looked at three theories, 1)

Individualization, 2) The life course 3) concepts of time. The models they obtained suggested a larger range in ways of thinking and planning for the future than the individualization theories. They attempted to apply theory to empirical data. They stated they were looking for a qualitative approach which then talked above exploratory, which leads the reader feeling a bit baffled. They compared the findings from both countries of Norway and England. They have put forward three models in the conclusions, model of Deferment, the model of Adaptability and the model of Predictability. Their work carries no internal or external validity, when a test has content validity; the items on the test represent the entire range of possible items the test should cover. Individual test questions may be drawn from a large pool of items that cover a broad range of topics, however in Nilsen and Brannen study this was not the case.

Brannen and Nilsen stated that young people were chosen as young people focus on time, a feature of social experience which has been ignored in empirical research. Brannen and Nilsen have put forward three ideal typical ways that have been identified in and applied to new material. One of the models of deferment, they have presented a critical case of younger women consider adulthood in looser terms, than the women in the second group the model of adaptability. From their findings they did report that imposing a dichotomy upon people's lives in terms of either the "choice biography" is too simplistic. Brannen and Nilsen did not agree with other researchers they argued looking at their own models that a greater array of thought processes and planning for the future in comparison to Individualization thesis "choice Biography". They proposed that there are many factors affecting time

orientations; these include the opportunity structures of education and training which have influence for employment aspirations. They argue that the complex material of social, cultural and discursive resources available or not, to young people together with the way young people adjust themselves in time, lead to construction of their identities . Brannen and Nilsen focus was differing from the cross-national analyses published by Brannen et al 2002. In that study the focus was on examining the view of the future in general neither or their conceptualizations of time. This article presented draws on a separation of cases from Norwegian and British seeking to apply to theories in time . At the end of the study all participants should have been given a full debrief, it is not clear from their article if this was carried out or not. All study participants should be told about procedures and any potential risks he confidentiality must also be maintained. They explained that the life course is no longer so clearly gendered . They researched that the decline of unskilled and semi skilled jobs in Britain and Norway led to led to men holding adult responsibilities at the same time as pursuing their youth, however women expected to have a job first then go down the route of motherhood, Brannen et al 1997. They also found that youth as a period of preparation for adulthood is going through change (Furlong and Cartmet ). The sources the authors used included their own research areas and past research that they had carried out. (Brannen and Moss, Owen Wale 1997, also Brannen and Nilsen and Smithson 2002; Also from Nilsen's 1998, and 1999 studies). This article appears to be an extension of the areas of attention brought forward from past research experiments. The rhetoric and style of the article seems to be quite informal and loosely structured.

Although some areas of their experimental explanations are clear, other  
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areas are quite unclear with regard to the methodology and gathering of data. As a reader one is not convinced of their findings as they are qualitative and can not draw generalization to the wider public. Cultural issues were not considered in the countries studied carried out in, it is difficult to generalize the findings from cross-national studies, as every country to some degree has their own cultural patterns in youth to adulthood. In total they reported five countries were studies however the results qualitative that they may have been, was not mentioned. Other countries studied were not talked about a great deal nor the results discussed. Their study held no concurrent validity, construct validity or any predictive validity, as no tests were employed

The intended audience to receive the data and outcomes of this research can be interpreted as the government and large organizations, as their focus was orientations over time, this would be beneficial to know. Also Cross-national studies lead to practical implications. The observations made can lead to a comparison of the employment/ education levels along with areas that each of the countries studies . This information is useful in the knowing which country is economically developing, along with attitudes of the public.

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1