

Youth Unemployment, Identity and Getting Into Work

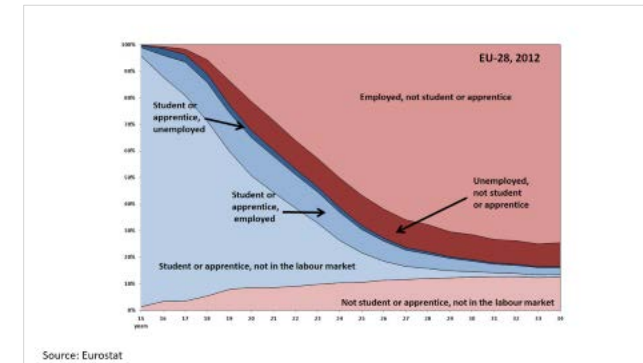
Dr Eva Selenko

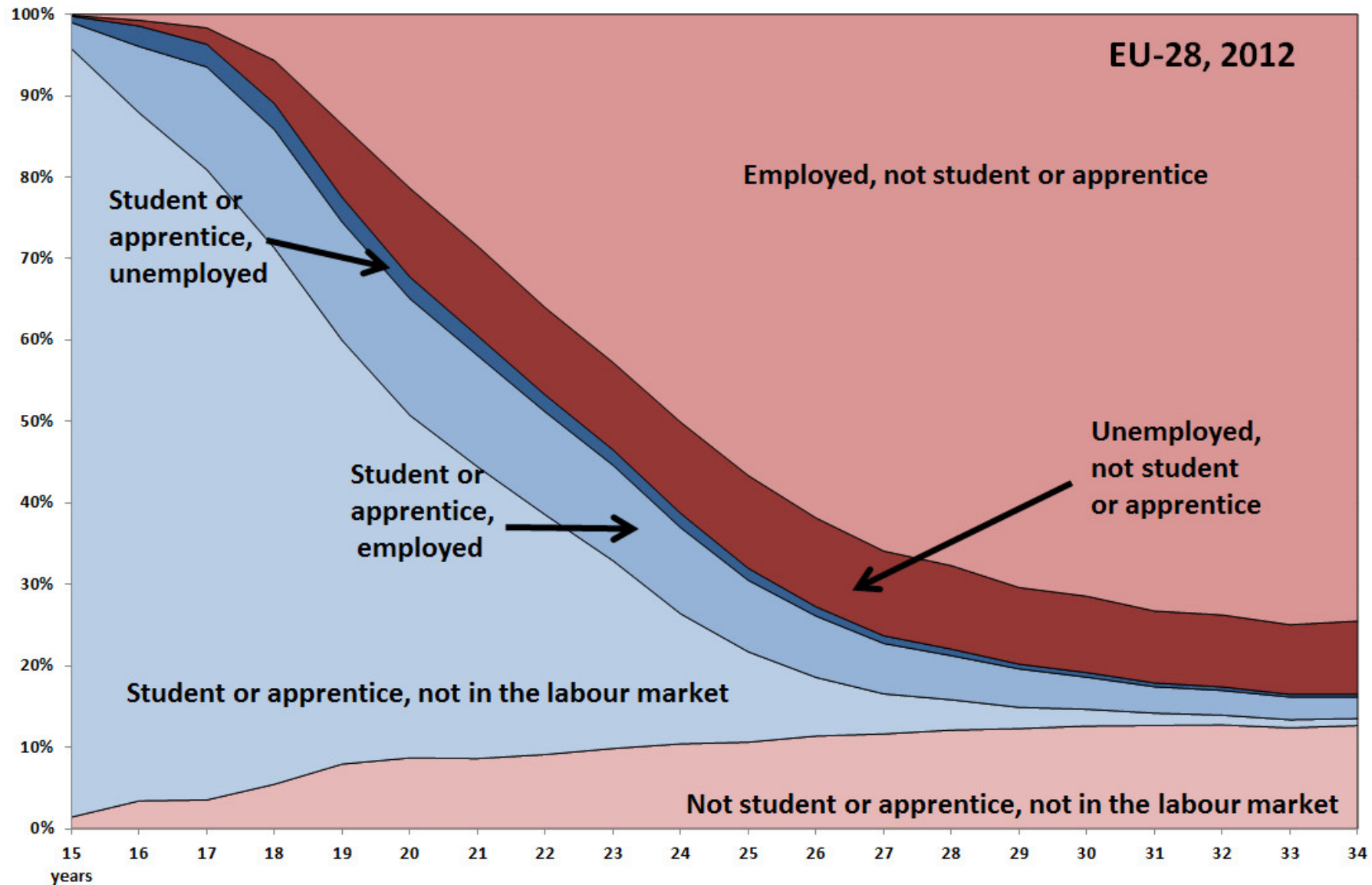
Loughborough University



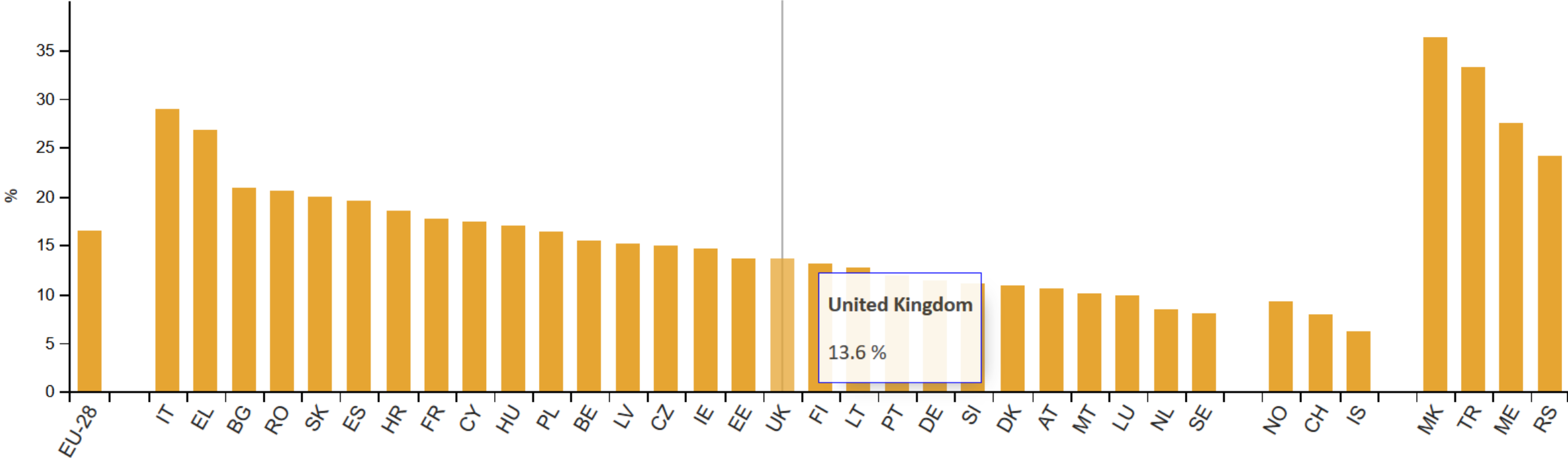
Labour-market participation among 15-24 year olds

- Student or an apprentice, not in the labour market
- Student or an apprentice, unemployed
- Student or an apprentice, employed
- Employed, not a student or an apprentice
- Unemployed, not a student or an apprentice
- Not a student or an apprentice, not in the labour market





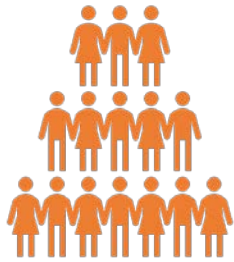
Young people (aged 20–34) neither in employment nor in education and training, 2018



Source: Eurostat

NEETs in the UK

ONS data April – June 2019



There were 792,000 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) in the UK who were not in education, employment or training (NEET);



The percentage of all young people in the UK who were NEET was 11.5%



Of all young people in the UK who were NEET, 41.6% were looking for, and available for, work and therefore classified as unemployed



Unemployment at a young age

- Deprivation of training, knowledge, skills, abilities
- Wellbeing effects: younger people suffer more (Mckee-Ryan et al 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009)
- Missed developmental goals (Heckhausen, 2010)
- Sense of self and identity

→ Will affect future career behaviour



A vicious circle

Unemployment

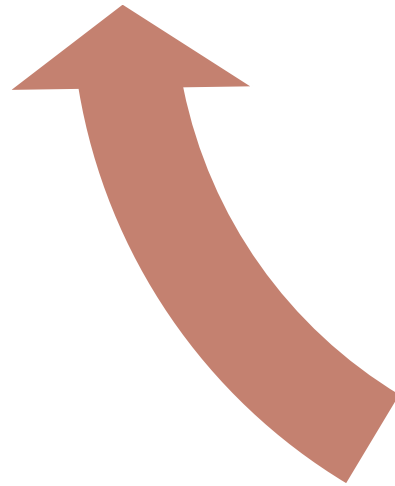


Deprivation of skills,
knowledge abilities

Well-being effects

Missed
developmental goals

Lack of professional
identity development



(Re-)employment
probability





Why does identity play a role?

Work related identity = the answer to the question “who are you” (Ashforth and Schinoff, 2016) in a work context

Work = context to develop work-related understandings of oneself (Inceoglu et al., 2019)

Identity = crucial for career behavior. Without knowing who you are – no career goals can be set



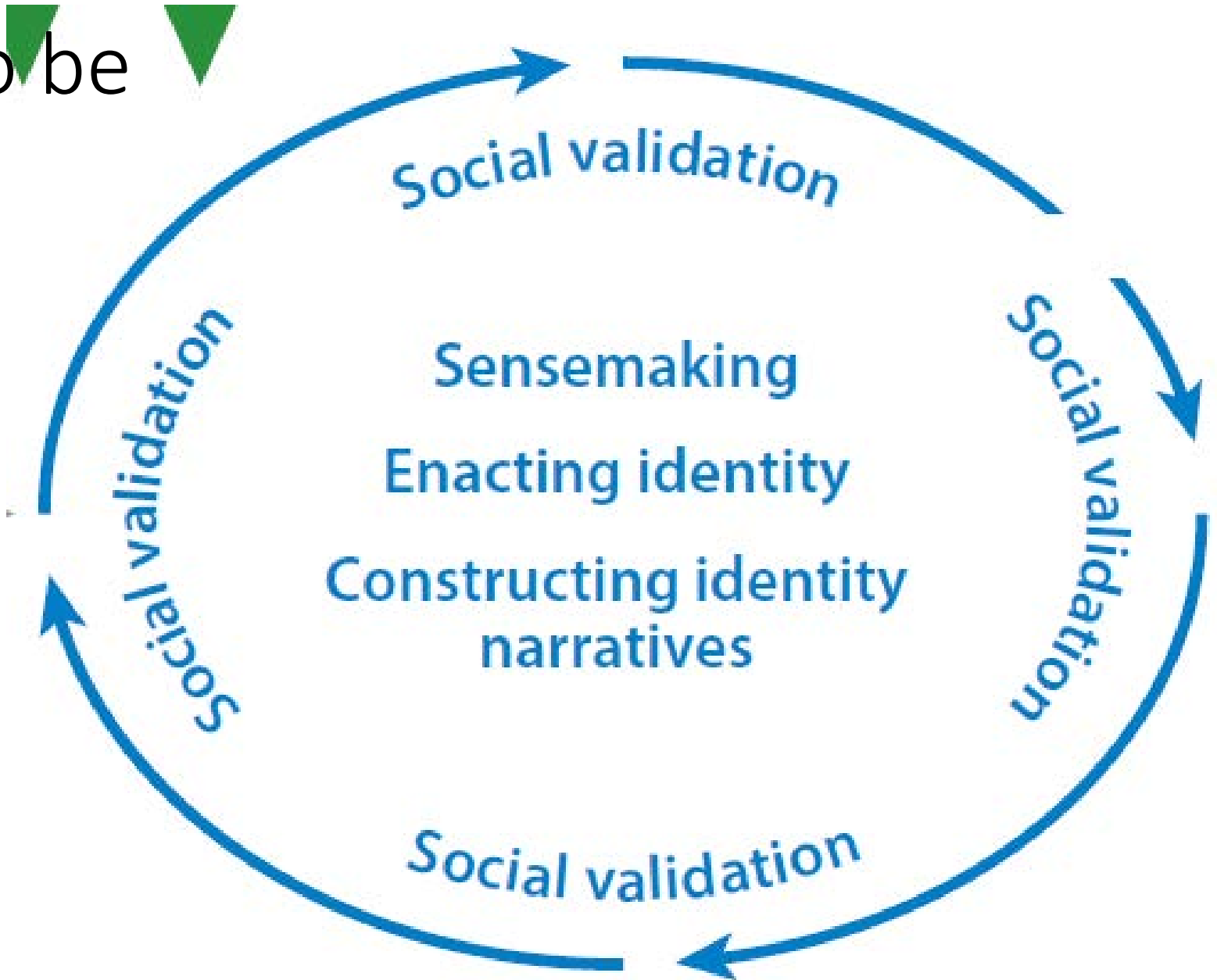
Work related identity – important for future careers of young people

Most broadly: an understanding of oneself in work-related terms

- important for well-being (Jetten et al 2017), performance (self-efficacy, Bandura, 1982) and learning (Pratt, Rockmann & Kaufmann, 2006)
- sense of belonging (Spreitzer et al 2017)
- responsible for direction (proactive career-behaviors, Strauss, Parker & Griffins, 2012)

What needs to be done?

Create the right contexts for people to develop their professional selves



Some evidence....

European Youth Guarantee (European Union)

“...gives every young person the right for a job, an apprenticeship, further training or a job combined with training if they have been out of work for **four months**“

In place in Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Spain and Sweden

Get's 62% of young people who are NEET into a job, apprenticeship or further job-training within the period of a year (Selenko & Pils, 2016)

In summary

- Unemployment or being NEET is disproportionately hard for young people
- Next to its severe well-being effects, it undermines work-related identity development, which affects future careers
- Interventions need to focus on creating socially validating contexts that allow for sensemaking experiences and positive work-related identity development

