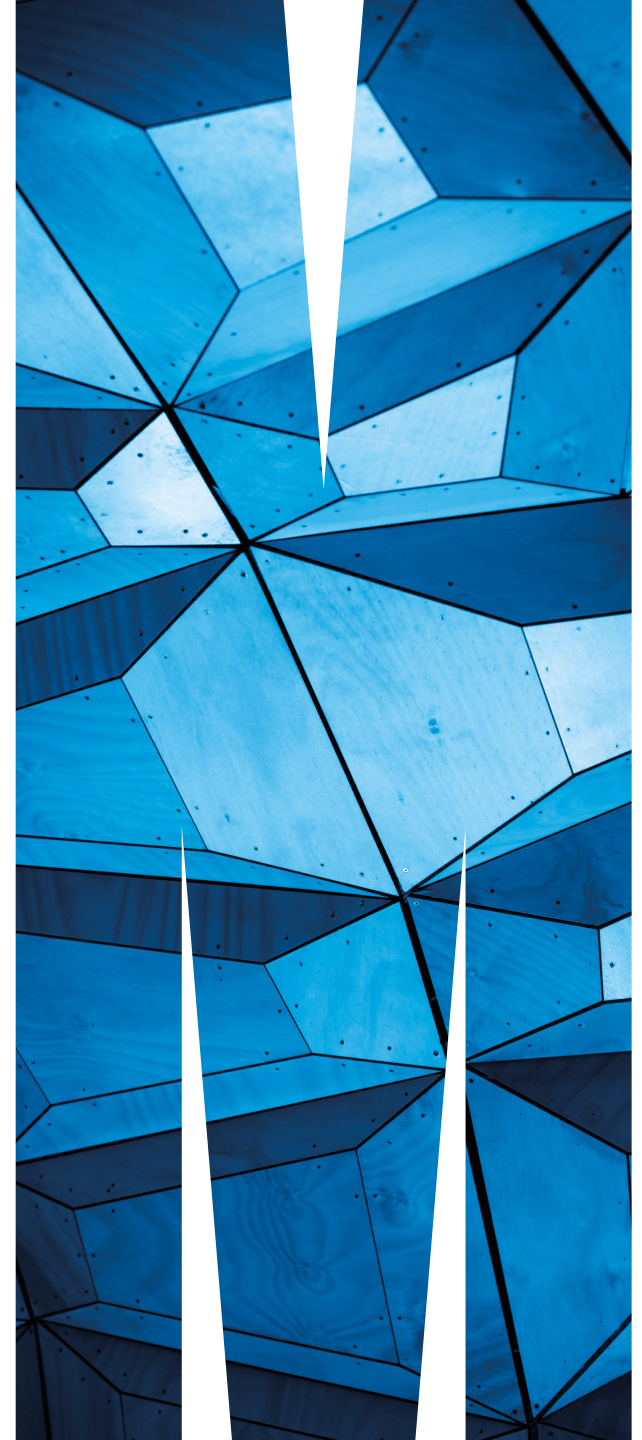


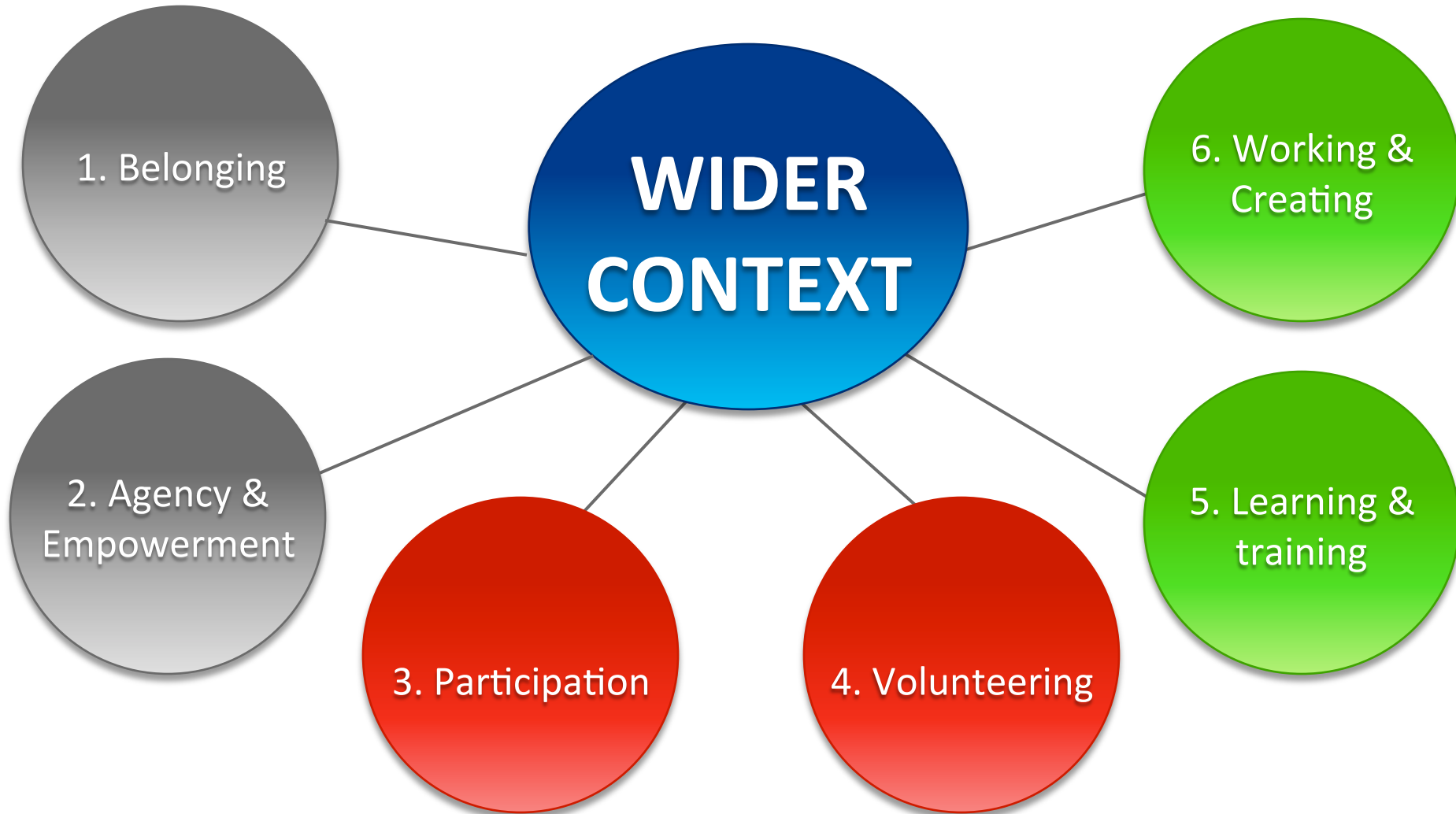
Key challenges faced by contemporary young people: considerations for the development of youth policy

Steven Roberts, School of Social Sciences
June 2017

twitter: @steveroberts_
#youthpolicy2017



JOINED UP THINKING



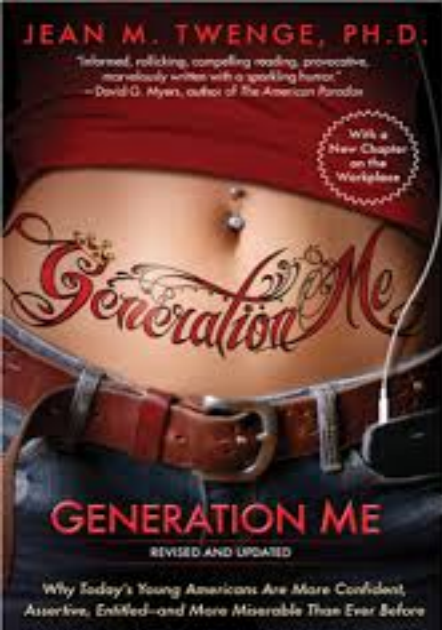
SUBSTANTIVE THEME #1

- What immediately comes to mind when you see this image?:
 - a) Avocado
 - b) Breakfast
 - c) Luxury
 - d) No thanks
 - e) Something else



- *'I have seen young people order smashed avocado with crumbled feta on five-grain toasted bread at \$22 a pop and more. **I can afford to eat this** for lunch because I am middle-aged and have raised my family. **But how can young people afford to eat like this?** Shouldn't they be economising by eating at home? How often are they eating out? **Twenty-two dollars several times a week could go towards a deposit on a house'***
- Bernard Salt, Partner @ KPMG, Columnist @ *The Australian*, October 2016





Millennials are entitled, narcissistic and lazy - but it's not their fault: Expert claims 'every child wins a prize' and social media has left Gen Y unable to deal with the real world

• Simon Sinek will be touring Australia and New Zealand following viral video



Interns: Don't Bother Uniting, You Have No Chains to Lose

f SHARE

Interns: Don't Bother Uniting, You Have No Chains to Lose

BO

BRENDAN O'NEILL
 Aug 22 2012, 1:00am



Interns are naïve whelps who are rising up off their swivel chairs, shaking off their imaginary shackles, and demanding what is not rightfully theirs: a workingman's wage. And I wish they'd just shut up.



YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE RESISTED...

17 OCT 2016 • 1:10PM

I Stopped Eating Smashed Avocado And Now I Own A Castle

 Tweet



 **Jennifer Albright**
@albrightjc

I was gonna put a down payment on a house last year but then I spent \$44,000 on avocado toast

TIME @TIME

Millionaire to millennials: Stop buying avocado toast if you want to buy a home
time/2r9pZdV

RETWEETS

5,647

LIKES

12,278



YOUR VIEW



- ‘In my region, there is a symbol that underpins the notion that young people are lazy or are to blame for making the wrong choices’
- a) Agree
- b) Maybe
- c) Disagree

PROBLEMS WITH 'GENERATIONAL CONFLICT' DEBATES

- Inequality **within** generations falls from view (France & Roberts, 2015, 2017)
- This happens with research, too. E.g. Aus research emphasises new conditions and general trends
- No denying that the world is different for young people today than it was during their parents' youth... But in my view social class matters and acts as a 'shock absorber'



YOUR VIEW



- In your area or region, the new 'hostile landscape' of the economy causes problems for...
- a) Most/all young people
- b) Particular groups of young people
- c) Not all, but more young people than ever before
- d) Other



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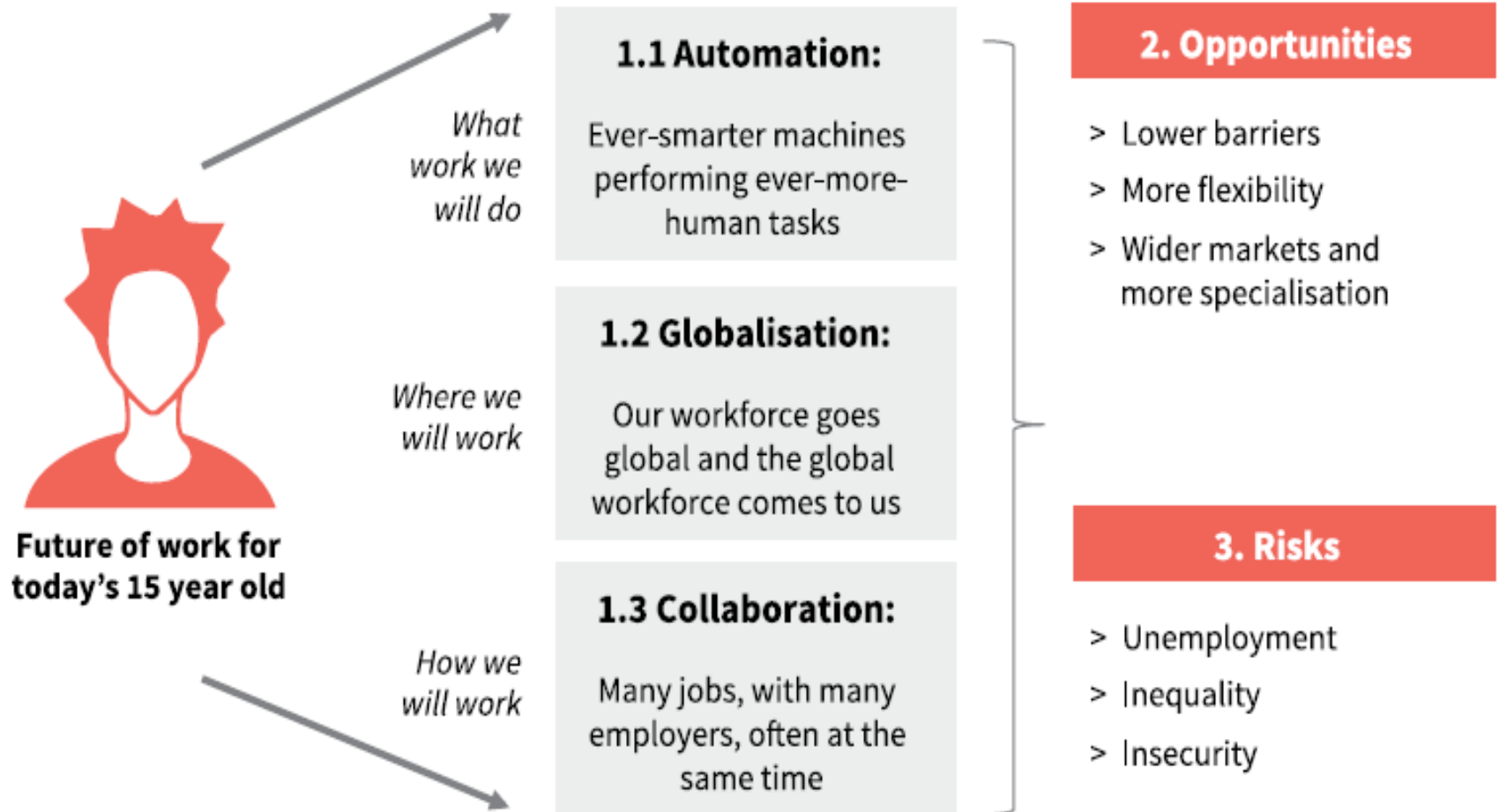
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SUBSTANTIVE THEME #2

*Challenges in
changing economies*



THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK



- Source: Foundation for Young Australians, 2016

YOUR VIEW



The Global Financial Crisis is primarily responsible for the unemployment situation facing young people in your region/ area'

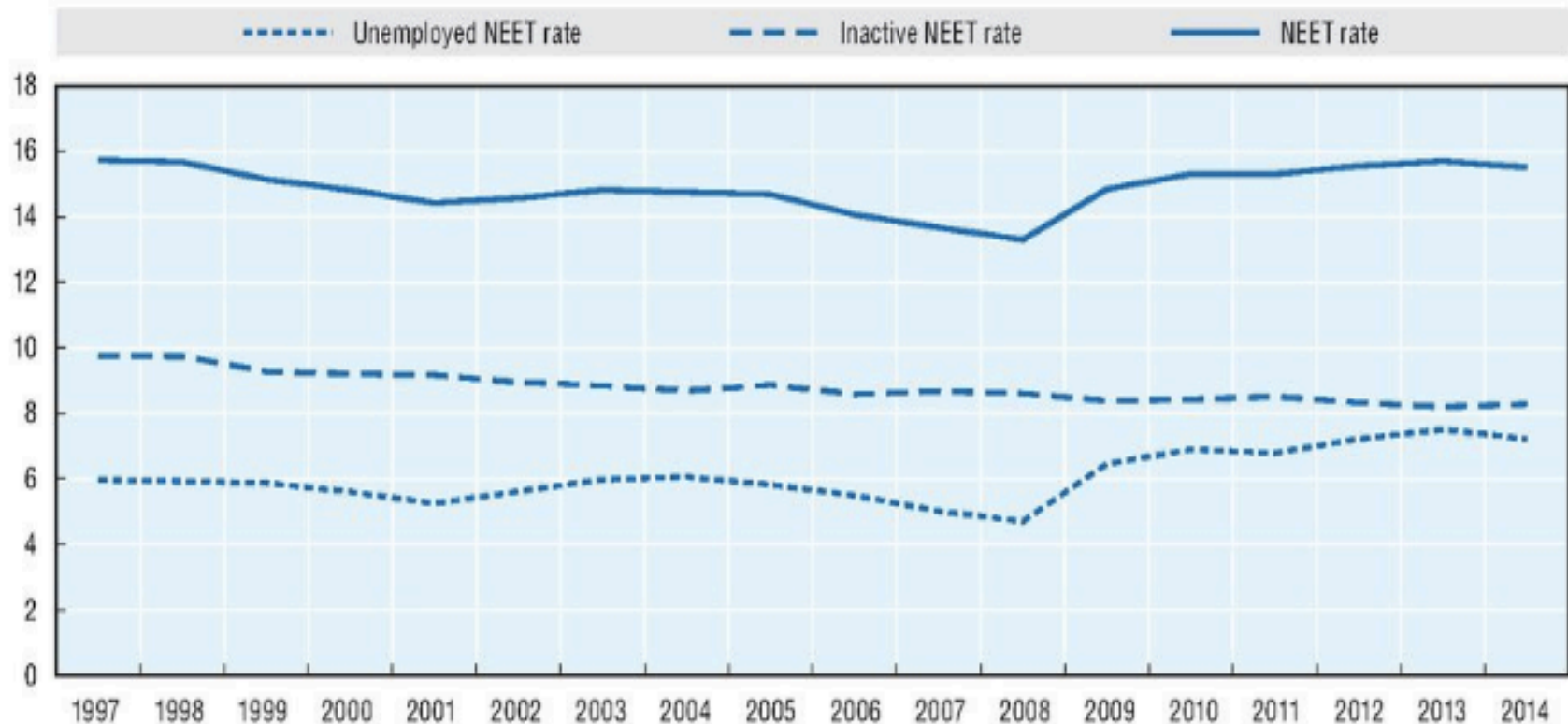
- a) Agree
- b) Disagree
- c) Don't know

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT: A PRE-CRISIS, CRISIS

(OECD Social Indicators 2016)

Figure 1.6. **NEET inactivity has not been influenced by the crisis**

Unemployed, inactive and overall NEET rate, OECD average, 1997-2014



Note: The OECD average is based on 25 countries for which data for a sufficient number of years is available.

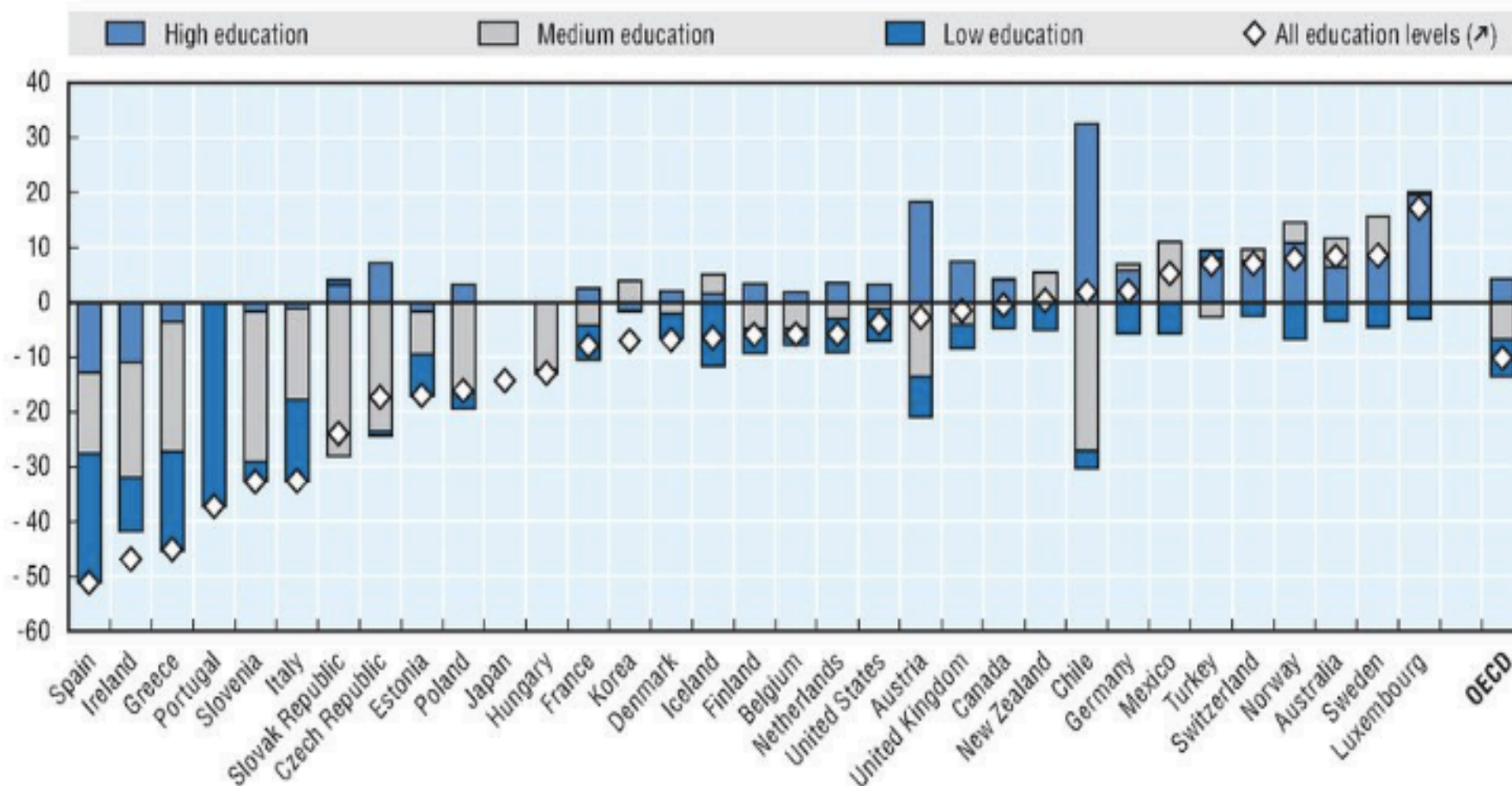
Source: OECD Education Database.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933404855>

UNEQUAL IMPACT OF THE GFC

Figure 1.3. **Poorly educated young people were hit hardest by the recession**

Percentage change in numbers of employed 15-to-29 year-olds, between 2007 and 2014, by level of education



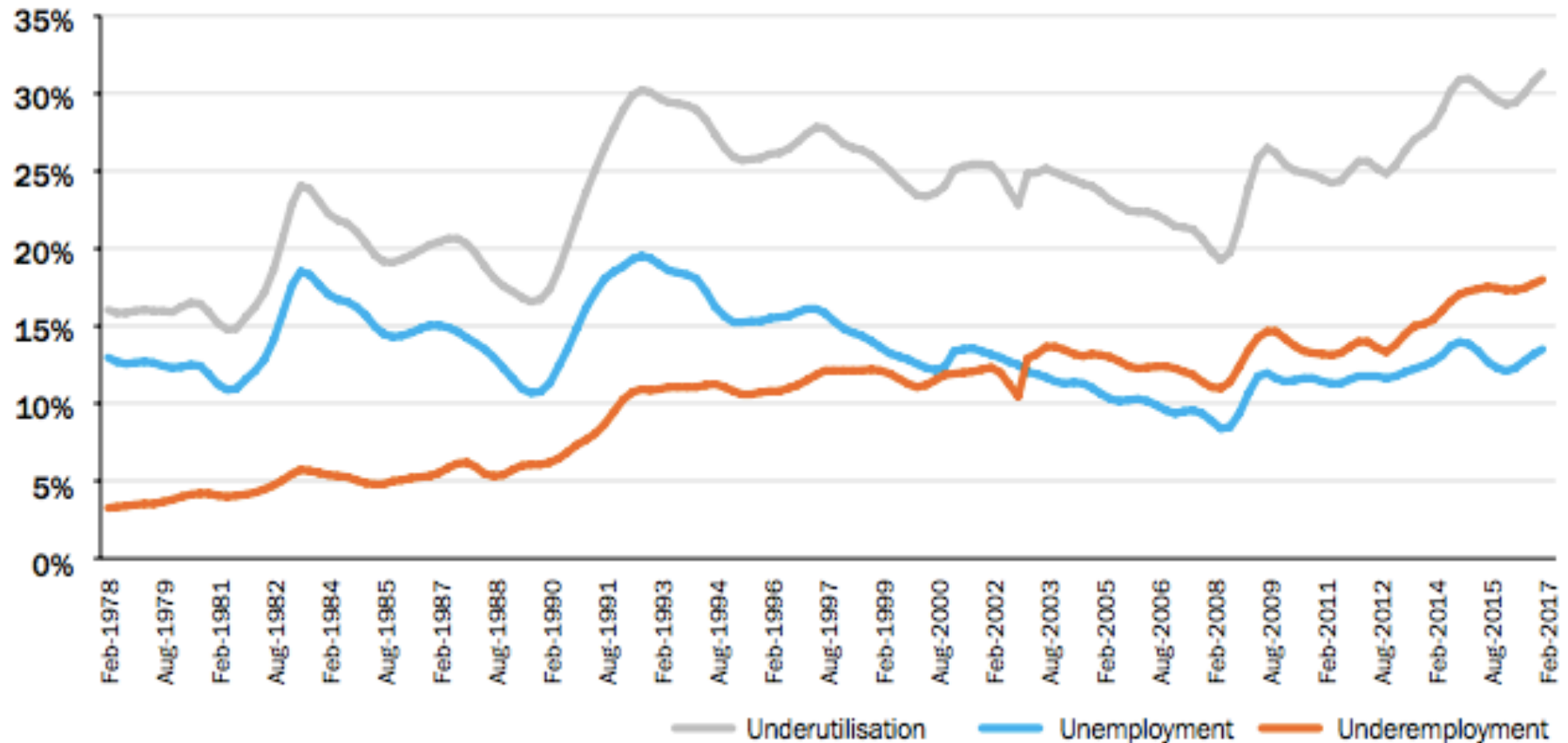
UNDEREMPLOYMENT

- Understood as:
 - i) time related – working fewer hours than one desires
 - ii) skill related – mismatch between worker skill level and skill required for job



YOUTH UNDEREMPLOYMENT IN AUSTRALIA

Figure 1: Youth underutilisation and its components in Australia, February 1978 to February 2017



Source: ABS 2017, *Labour force Australia*, February 2017, Cat. no. 6202.0, Table 22, trend data.

INCREASING PART TIME WORK (BSL, 2017)

Table 1: Employment conditions of youth aged 15–24 in Australia, 2001–2014

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
% In part time jobs														
All	50.4	52.5	53.8	52.6	49.5	50.4	49.5	46.3	50.9	48.4	56.6	56.8	60.7	60.8
Students	90.7	92.7	93.7	95.0	90.7	89.6	88.8	86.8	89.6	88.9	88.3	88.4	90.9	88.8
Non-students	26.5	26.3	29.2	27.1	24.6	27.6	25.1	23.3	27.2	23.5	29.5	31.8	34.4	35.9
% In casual jobs														
All	53.7	55.9	54.5	54.4	50.0	51.6	50.3	48.5	50.3	51.1	56.1	55.1	57.6	57.0
Students	81.7	87.0	84.9	84.6	80.7	81.3	81.5	78.9	78.7	81.0	78.8	78.4	78.5	76.6
Non-students	37.0	35.4	35.7	35.6	30.9	34.1	30.6	30.9	32.4	32.2	36.6	36.1	39.1	39.3
% on permanent contracts														
All	40.2	38.0	41.5	43.5	46.7	44.8	44.7	47.7	43.0	41.1	38.5	39.0	38.1	37.4
Students	11.9	11.5	15.7	16.8	20.4	18.8	18.2	21.6	17.8	17.0	17.4	19.2	20.1	19.9
Non-students	57.0	55.5	57.3	60.2	63.1	60.1	61.4	62.8	58.9	56.4	56.6	55.0	54.1	53.2

Source: HILDA data wave 14

Figure 2: Percentage of 15–19 year olds employed in service and other industries, part-time and full-time

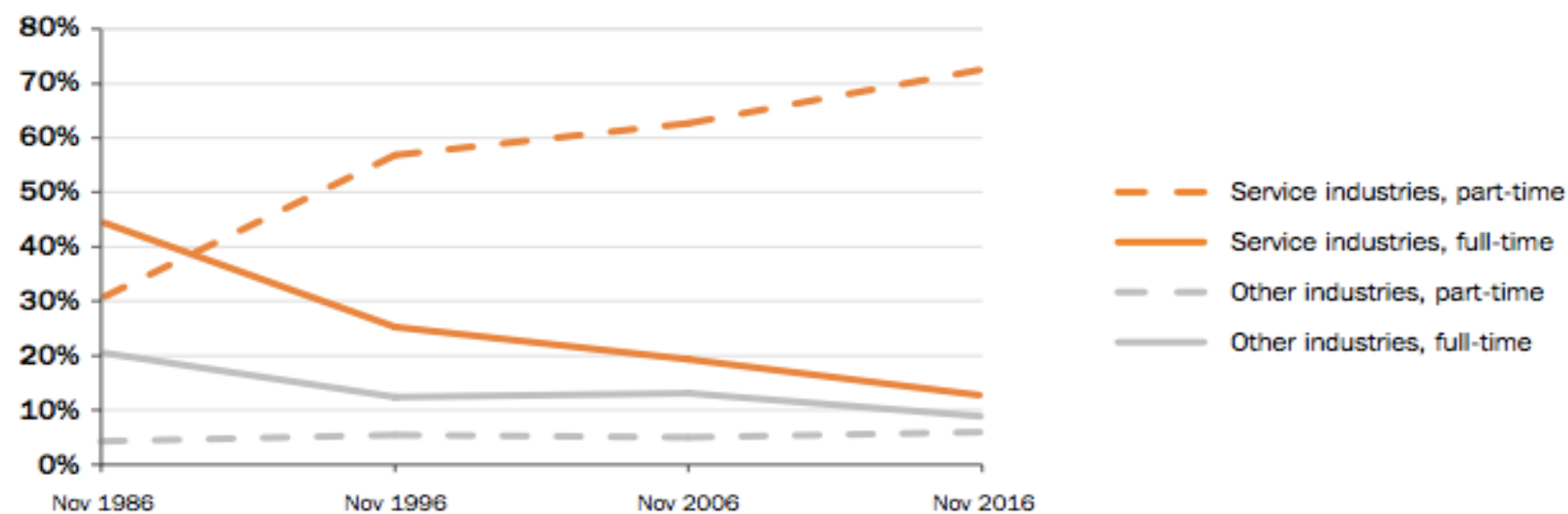
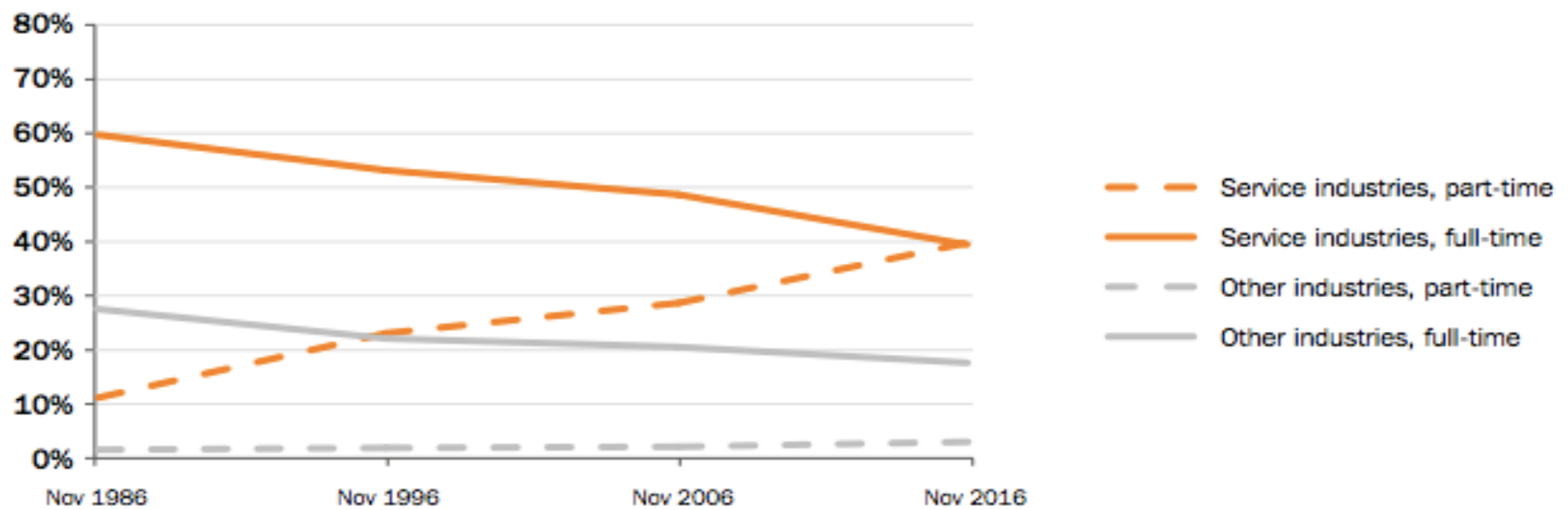


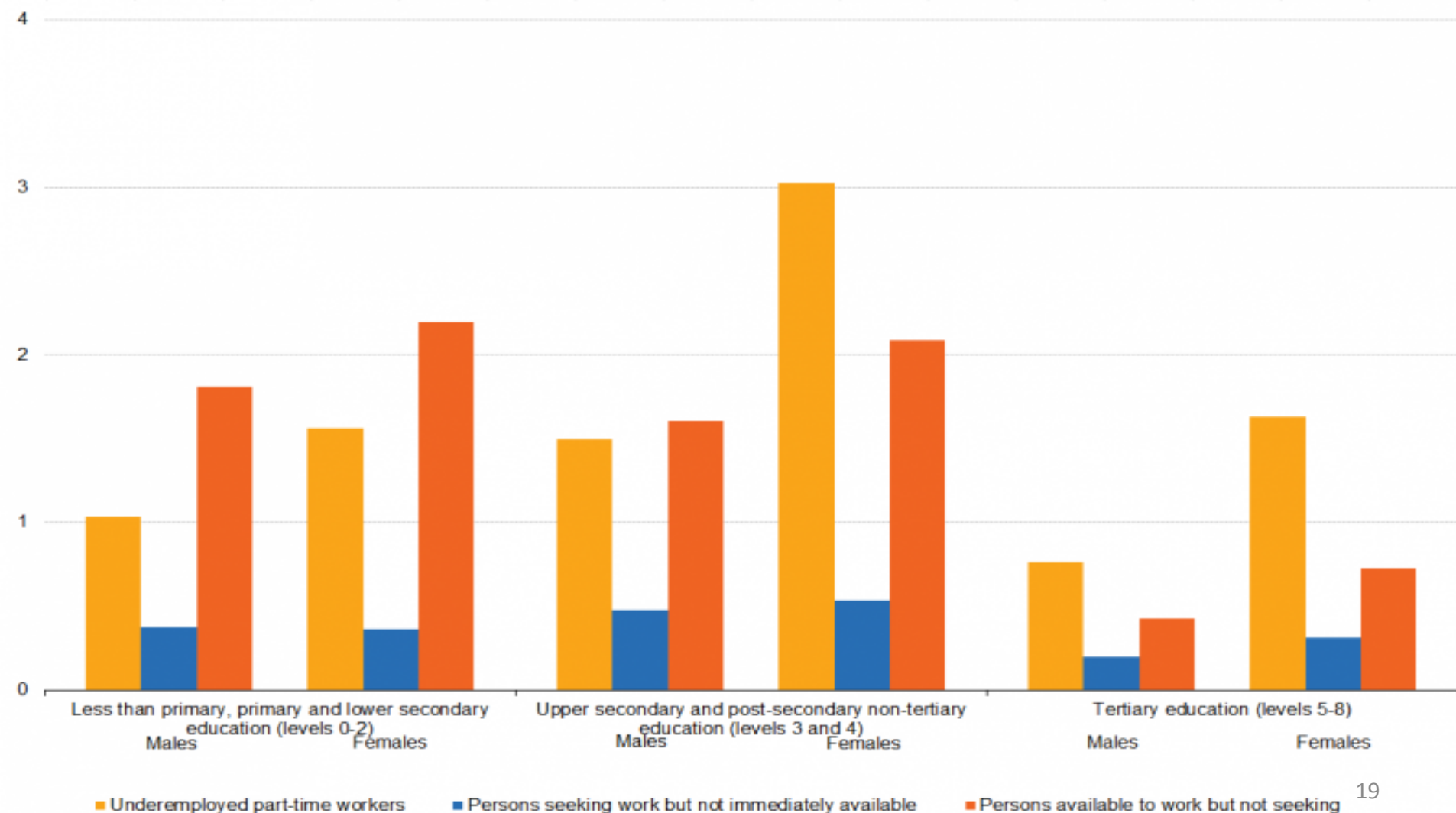
Figure 3: Percentage of 20–24 year olds employed in service and other industries, part-time and full-time



Source: ABS 2016, *Labour force Australia, detailed, quarterly, November 2016*, Cat. no. 6291.0.55.003, data cube EQ12 Employment persons by age and industry division of main job (ANZSIC), November 1984 onwards.

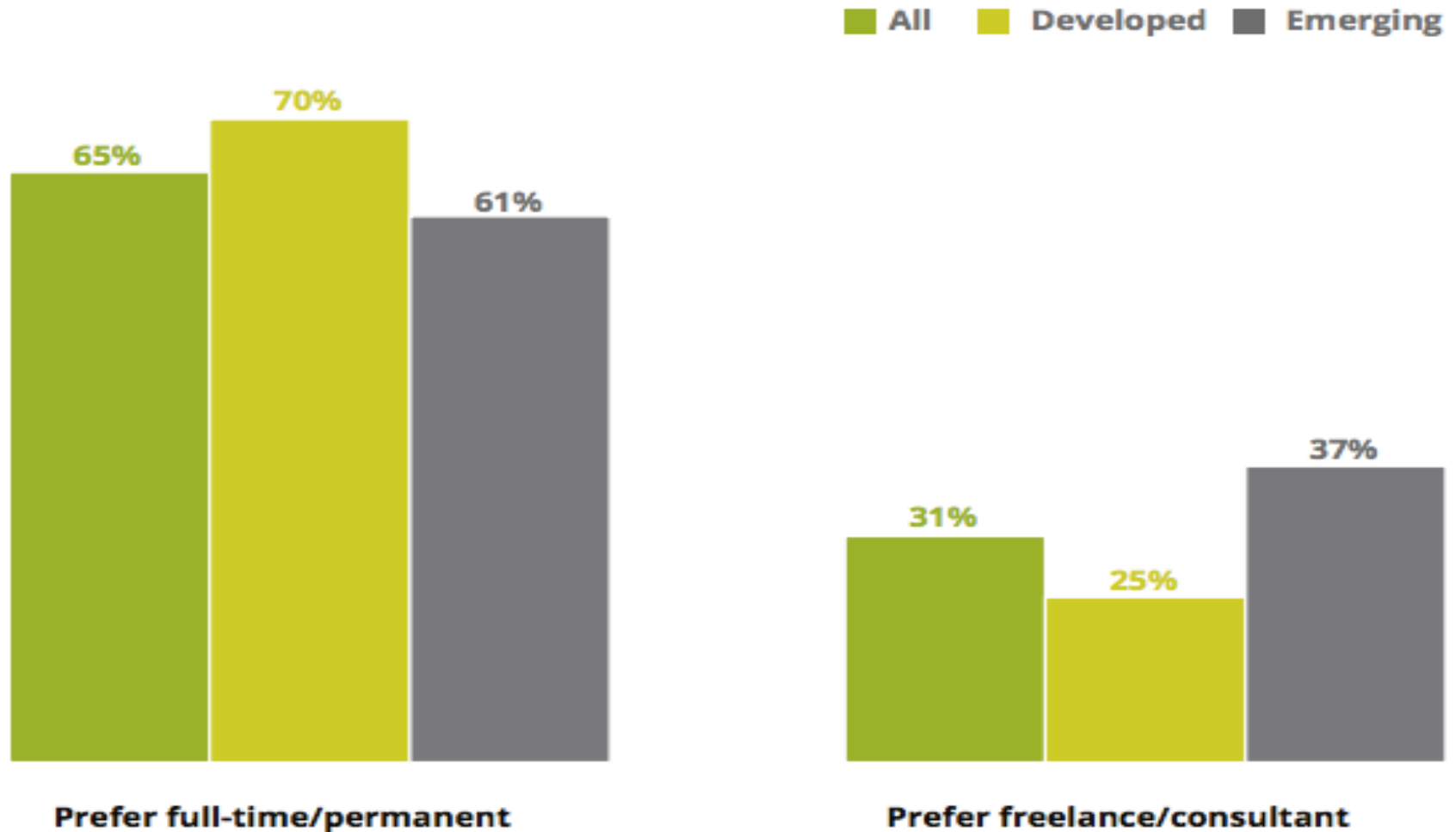
UNDEREMPLOYMENT IN THE EU

Supplementary indicators to unemployment by sex and educational attainment level, persons aged 15-74, EU-28, annual average, 2016 (million persons) (Eurostat, May 2017)



WORKING ARRANGEMENT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT

- The Deloitte 2017 Millennial Survey:



YOUR VIEW



Ken Roberts (2009, p. 4) argued that “**underemployment** is the 21st century **global normality for youth** in the labour market”

In your area or region, which presents the biggest challenge for young people?

- a) Unemployment
- b) Underemployment
- c) Both
- d) Neither (and if so, then what?)

THE 'GIG ECONOMY':


Cause or consequence of underemployment?



CONTRASTING VIEWS...

- “Many workers (particularly those of Generation Y) are disenchanted with their 9 to 5 routine and have an increasing need for flexible and diversified work.”

Ai Group: Workforce Development (2016): *The Emergence of the Gig Economy*

- But -- is it instead about compensating for a lack of wages from underemployment?
 - Is it entrepreneurialism or 'bogus self-employment'?
 - Is it really about the young?
 - Does it promote a 'grey' economy?
- 
- An illustration on a blue background showing two hands in white sleeves. One hand is holding a magnifying glass over a white bar chart. The other hand is reaching towards several interlocking gears, some of which are red and some are white. A white document with a red border is also visible in the upper right corner.

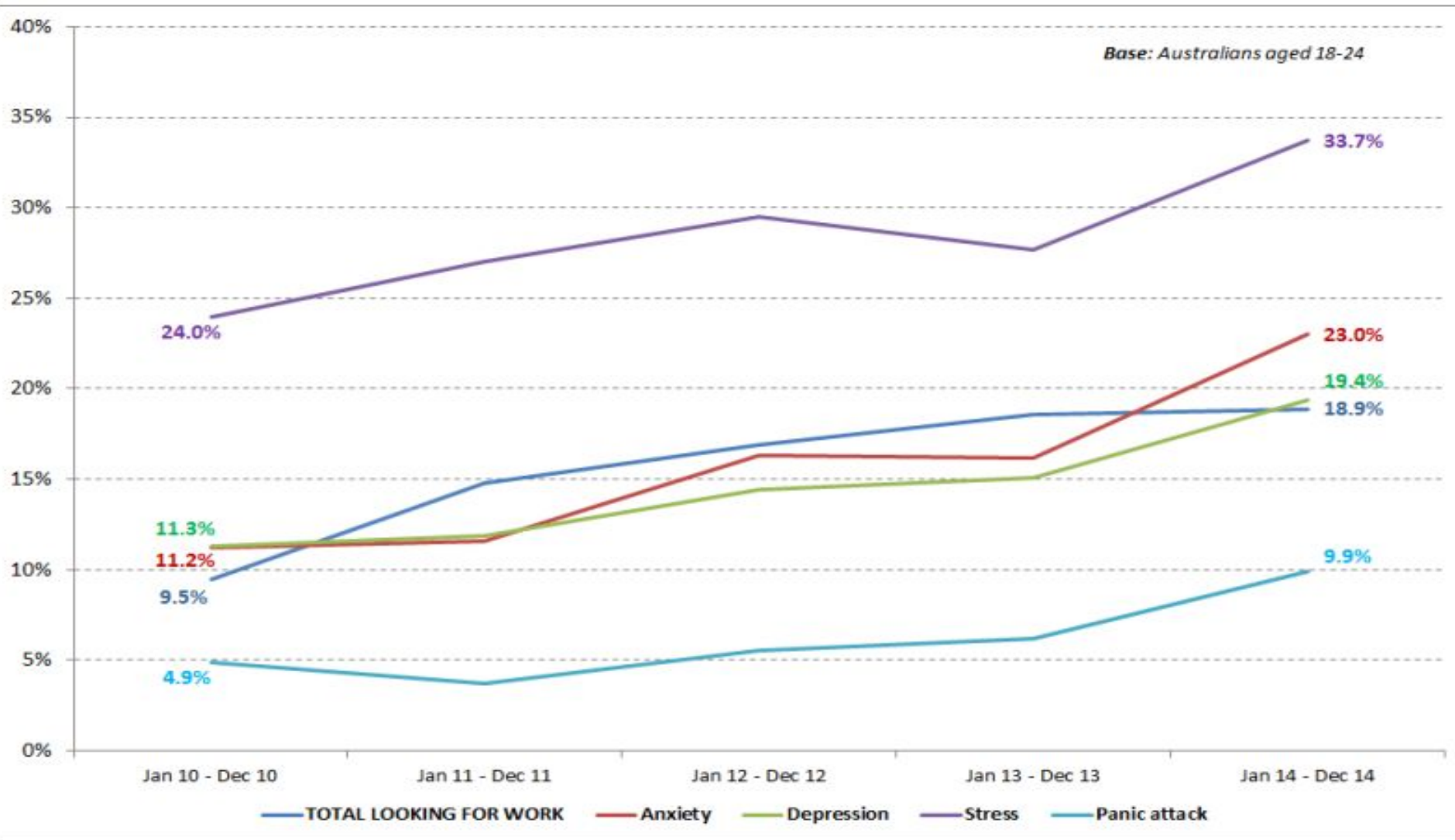


YOUR VIEW



- Young people in my area/region are able to take advantage of 'the gig economy':
 - a) Agree
 - b) Maybe
 - c) Don't agree

MENTAL HEALTH & UNDEREMPLOYMENT

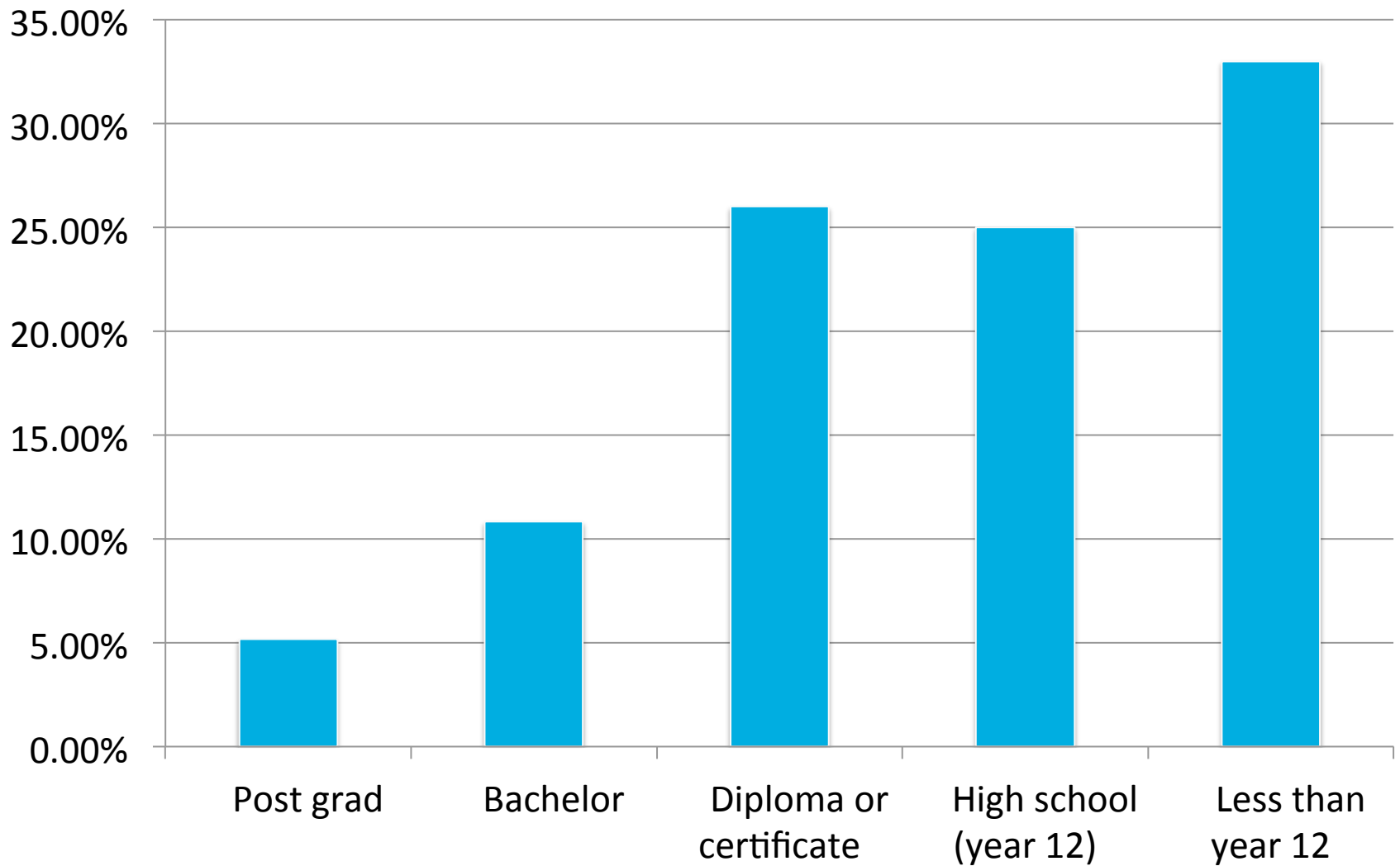


Source: Roy Morgan [Single Source \(Australia\)](#), January 2010 –December 2014 (n=24,420).

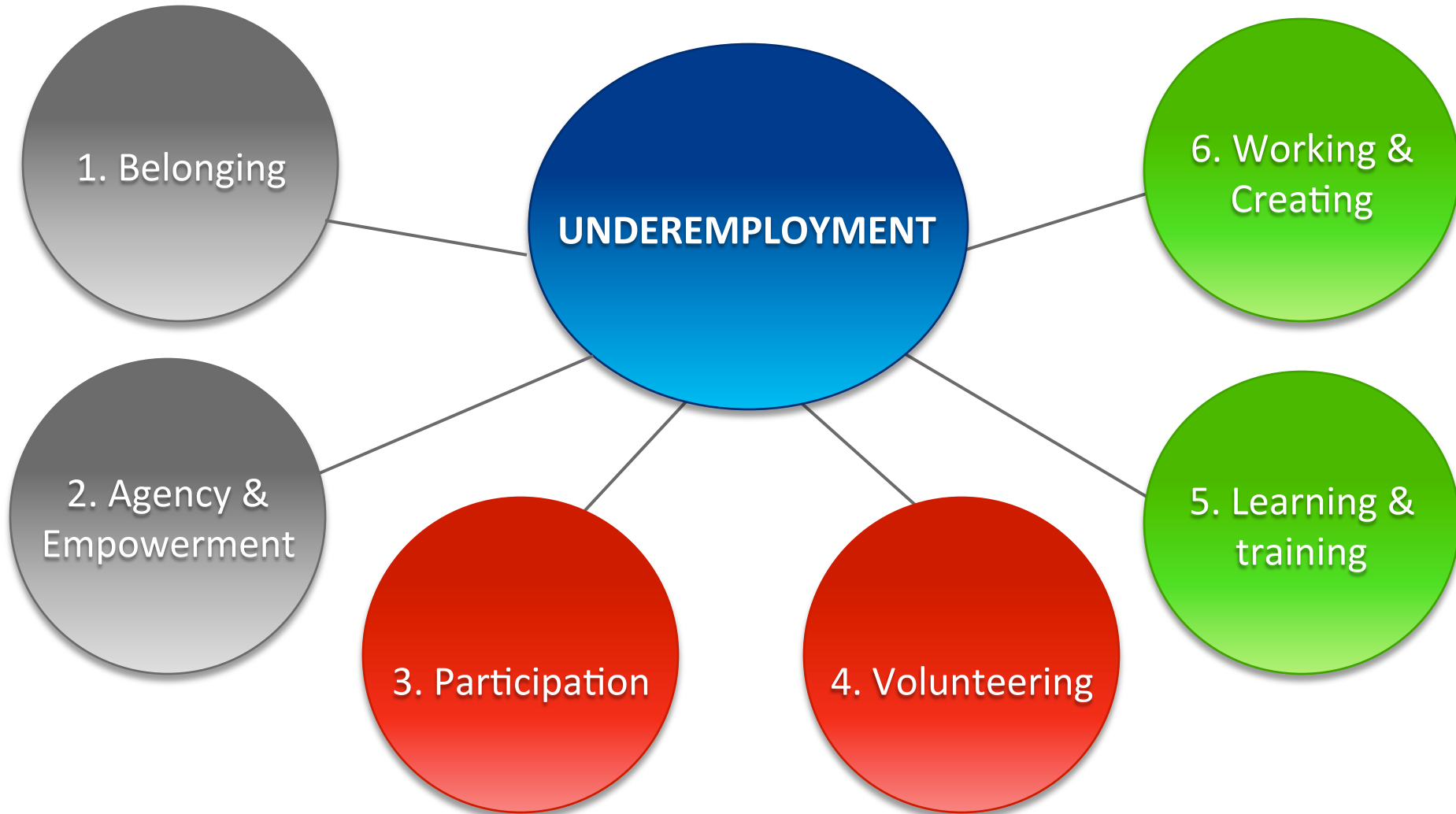
MENTAL HEALTH & UNDEREMPLOYMENT

- Miller and LaMontagne (2016) Underemployment and mental health: comparing fixed-effects and random-effects regression approaches in an Australian working population cohort, *Occupational & environmental medicine*, vol. In Press, pp. 1-7
- Method: Measured within person and between person mental health over 13 waves and exposure to underemployment by hours; 86000 thousand total observations of more than 17000 people.
- **Key Findings -**
- declines in mental health are associated with an increasing number of hours underemployed, especially prevalent if unempl. More than 11 hours per week
- factors associated with underemployment: being a woman, younger, and working in a casual or low-skilled job.

EDUCATION PROFILES OF THE UNDEREMPLOYED



IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL SYMPOSIUM THEMES



EXAMPLE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER DURING THIS SYMPOSIUM

- In the absence of paid, how do young people achieve a sense of belonging and forge their identities? What are the implications for citizenship?
- Does this compromise young people's right to a decent standard of living?
- Are more young people going to be 'couch surfing'? Can we create relationships between the youth sector and the housing sector? Can we better inform young people of their right in respect of housing?
- How can we give people a more equal chance at escaping underemployment? More in/formal training... But what are the limits and works best?
- Employers now view social media profiles... can we provide training to aid young people in presenting themselves as well as possible?
- How can we best teach entrepreneurialism that is not only riding a bike for *deliveroo*?
- Does less work equal more or less 'play'? Can youth policy fill the gap with leisure? More volunteering? But what kind of opportunities? What skills can be developed?
- Can underemployment *foster* engagement with political institutions? Or will it only cause despondency and alienation?

AN EXAMPLE OF IMPLICATIONS: VOICE AND PARTICIPATION

- ‘In many societies, dominant political and economic power sources are closely aligned, and ***governments therefore have a tendency to develop policies favouring those with economic power, while ignoring those without economic power***’.
- James Cote, 2014, *Journal of Youth Studies*,
(my emphasis)

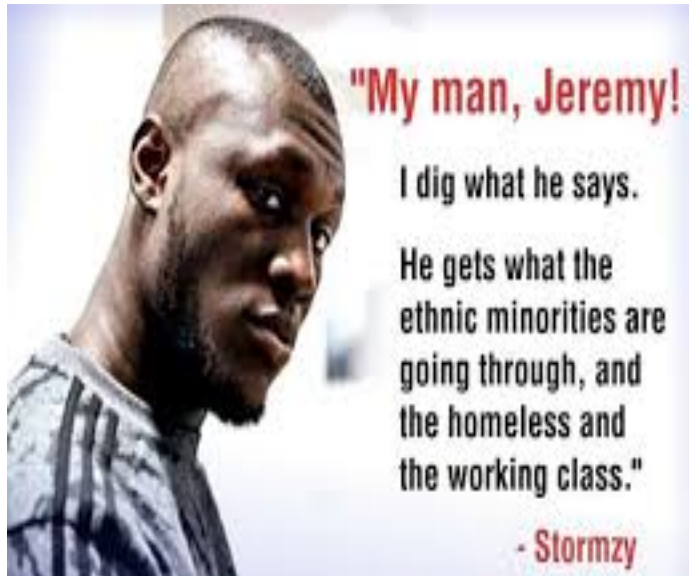


VICTORIA GVMNT RESPONSE

Flagship Projects		
<p>Annual survey of young people in Victoria</p> <p>Redevelopment of the Youth Central website</p>	<p>Youth Summit</p> <p>Victorian Youth Congress</p> <p>Social policy design labs</p> <p>Capability building</p>	<p>Youth barometer</p> <p>Cross government partnerships to strengthen the voice of young people from diverse backgrounds</p> <p>Symposium on co-design</p>
Success Factors		
<p>More young people having a say about issues that affect them</p>	<p>More young people actively and directly influencing the design of government policies, programs and services</p>	<p>More young people involved in decisions about the services they receive, ensuring their goals and circumstances are reflected</p>
Outcomes		
<p>An outcomes framework including measures and indicators will be developed in consultation with young people</p>		

BUT ... MAYBE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES?

- Empowerment is “the process by which adolescents develop the consciousness and skills necessary to envision social change and understand their role in that change.” (Wagaman 2011)
- So what about empowerment through music and culture? How can youth policy harness this?
- Eg: #grimefor Corbyn



‘hip hop fosters new geographies of citizenship inspiring urban youth to transgress prescribed boundaries in allowed speech and political behavior to make new claims on their city and nation’ – Fredericks 2013.

Not EITHER rap/ hip hop OR conventional political engagement – but BOTH/ AND

UK General Election youth participation:
2001, 2005, 2010, 2015: c40%; 2017 = c72%

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- 2 *discursive* challenges:
 - i) **disrupt narratives of generational deficit**
 - ii) **reject homogenising discourses: focus on inequality *within* generations**
- **And a substantive challenge: incorporating underemployment as a central aspect of youth policy responses – it will impacts across many of the themes of this symposium**
- We need a paradigm shift: away from ‘employment=good/unemployment =bad’ dichotomy
- We need to be ready for the mental health implications of rising underemployment
- Youth Policy is great at intervention, but also needs help from those who can promote prevention (we must lobby and advocate!)
- We must focus also on the moderately qualified – after all they are what the most educationally disadvantaged might become



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Thank you for listening

