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Baby boomers and the lost generation: On the discursive construction of generations at work

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Abstract

Generations, and generational categories, offer a means of organising our understandings of age and age-related issues. Particularly within practitioner-orientated debates, differences between generations are highlighted as creating tensions which organisations must address. In contrast, we offer a critical interrogation of generations and unpack the implications of particular constructions. Specifically we examine the discursive construction of generational issues in UK online news about age at work, focusing on baby boomers and the lost generation. We highlight the discursive work involved in constructing each generation as entitled to work and how responsibility for employment issues is variously positioned. These

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inter-related concerns develop into a debate about consequences, as different versions of the future are constructed. In contrast to essentialised understandings, our study shows how generations and generational categories are constructed and organise understandings of age at work. We further highlight how the constructions of generational differences and tensions become enrolled and legitimate age-related differences with regard to work. Such insights are essential to further our understandings of age-related issues in contemporary organising.

Introduction

Our paper argues that generations, and indeed particular generational categories, are an important constituent of the 'reified system of classification' which shapes understandings of age in respect to work (Ainsworth, et al., 2012, p. 162). While generations are prevalent in practitioner texts and invoked as a proxy for age or a demographic category in scholarly work, there are increasing calls for further critical interrogation (Cody, et al., 2012; Foster, 2013; Parry and Urwin, 2011). Lyons and Kuron (2014) highlight the need for critical qualitative inquiry given the conceptual complexity, perception of generational differences and limitations of existing research. This is a notable lacuna given developments in critical exploration of (particularly, old) age (Gullette, 2004), age(ing) at work (Fineman, 2011; Trethewey, 2001) and age categories such as older workers (Ainsworth, 2002; Ainsworth and Hardy, 2007, 2012; Riach, 2007; Rudman and Molke, 2009).

We both follow and extend this productive line of enquiry to generations, in turn offering further insight into age-related issues in contemporary organising. We avoid an essentialised perspective, for example, assuming individuals have the same values based on a particular categorisation of birth years (Howe and Strauss, 2007; Twenge and Campbell, 2008). Rather we examine generations as discursive constructions (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2007). Thus, the

reality of generational cohorts, their differences or the characteristics of members of particular categories are not of fundamental importance. Instead we unpack how constructions of generations are enrolled in debates about age at work, focusing on the understandings and relationships established between particular generational categories and work-related issues.

In wider discussions about age at work, older workers have traditionally been positioned as marginal (Fevre, 2011). There is concern about ageing populations, the greying of the workforce, longer, differently shaped working lives and the changing nature of retirement (Sargent, et al., 2013; Schalk, et al., 2010). This has developed alongside changing regulatory frameworks, for example regarding mandatory retirement (Lain, 2012). While critical research on youth in organisational studies is less common (see Furlong, 2006 for an exception), there is nevertheless unease about increasing youth unemployment (Allen and Ainley, 2010), when younger workers are seen as talent and 'potentiality' (Taylor, et al., 2010, p. 374). As we will explore, age and generation share a conceptual proximity through a reliance on chronology to define terms, fix meanings around an essentialised identity and measure variables and relationships of managerial interest. But whereas the socially constructed nature of age at work has been usefully examined (e.g., Ainsworth, 2002; Ainsworth and Hardy, 2007) such approaches have yet to be applied to generations, an omission we seek to redress.

Significantly, generational debates are increasingly prominent in practitioner texts (Institute of Leadership & Management and Ashridge Business School, 2011; Logan, 2008; Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2008) and popular media (Howker and Malik, 2010; Willetts, 2010). Set within increasing complex economic contexts and labour market uncertainty, generations

are presented as distinctively problematic. Differences between them are proposed as creating tensions which both organisations must address, for example managing 'at least four generations spanning more than 60 years in age' (Cogin, 2012, p. 2268). Intergenerational tension and generational diversity have thus become established as issues of managerial concern (Fineman, 2011).

While originally conceived in terms of family and genealogical relationships, Foster (2013) suggests an understanding of generations as identifiable social groups now dominates, with the term applied to birth cohorts (Macky, et al., 2008; Meriac, et al., 2010). These cohorts are invested with common traits and values by virtue of shared experiences of a socio-political environment within a particular historical context (Howe and Strauss, 2007; Twenge and Campbell, 2008). Moreover, particular labels have been increasingly applied to cohorts (e.g. baby boomers), confirming a sense of coherence and establishing discrete subject positions in relation to work and employment.

Understandings of generations, while conceptually distinct from most definitions of age (Kooij, et al., 2008; Schalk, et al., 2010), involve comparisons based on values perceived at a particular chronological age, for example, how today's youth differ from the youth of previous generations (Smola and Sutton, 2002). Discussions also invoke contrasts between older and younger people's outlooks, perceptions and values (Dries, et al., 2008; Meriac, et al., 2010). This echoes variable-based research which highlights relationships between chronological age and dimensions of organisational interest such as job performance (T. Ng and Feldman, 2008) or compares older workers with younger counterparts (James, et al., 2011). Significantly, it is recognised that chronological age is at best a proxy measure (not a causal variable) for issues influencing work-related outcomes (Kanfer and Ackerman, 2004;

Warr, 2001). This has resulted in calls for new and better conceptualisations of age at work than those based on chronology alone (Kooij, et al., 2008; Schalk, et al., 2010). Despite similar concerns, as we review in detail below, generational categories seem to have gained particular traction and are rarely unpacked (Lyons and Kuron, 2014; E. Ng, et al., 2012).

In contrast, there has been considerable interrogation of age-based categories such as the older worker. These are usually operationalised by (inconsistent) chronological age triggers, a widely acknowledged limitation (Ainsworth, 2002; Kooij, et al., 2008; T. Ng and Feldman, 2008) given the variable legislative, industry and gendered markers for older age (Loretto and Duncan, 2004; T. Ng and Feldman, 2009). However, viewing old age as a social construction (Gullette, 2004; Kohli, et al., 1983) enables a move away from chronology to examine how social structures and cultural practices are implicated in our understandings. Building on insights from critical gerontology (latterly, e.g., Rozanova, 2010) discursive studies have unpacked the construction of the older worker (Ainsworth, 2002; Ainsworth and Hardy, 2007, 2009; Riach, 2007; Rudman and Molke, 2009; Trethewey, 2001). These challenge age as an individual attribute, showing instead how age is deployed as an organising principle shaping (and shaped by) social structure, identities, power and knowledge. From this perspective both age and the older worker are discursive achievements and subject positions are emergent, the outcome of active ongoing processes rather than pre-given, fixed entities. In this paper, we explore how adopting a similar discursive approach can offer insights to the construction of generations and their effects. Given existing critical perspectives focus on older workers (Ainsworth, 2002; Riach, 2007), we offer an inclusive approach by analysing both older (baby boomer) and younger (lost) generations.

Our empirical analysis draws on data from UK online news sites collected over 150 days to January 2012. News has frequently been used to examine the framing of work-related issues by broader societal discourses and is considered critical in setting agendas for debate (Machin and Van Leeuwen, 2007). As highlighted, generations are well established within societal discourse (Foster, 2013) and are increasingly implicated in discussions about age-related employment issues (Fineman, 2011). Indeed, during our period of data collection, key events prompted much press coverage. First, October 2011 saw the effective end of mandatory retirement in the UK. Within a month, the Government announced a rise in pension age to 67 for both men and women (HM Treasury, 2011). Shortly afterwards UK youth (16 to 24) unemployment exceeded 1 million, a record high (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Thus debates regarding both older and younger workers coincided and we were alerted to the ways understandings of generations were enrolled as explanatory devices. Moreover, these events were set against the backdrop of the challenges of work in the new economy (McMullin and Marshall, 2010) characterised by job insecurity, demands for flexibility and increasing risk of unemployment (Lippmann, 2008). Within this broader socio-political context, we aim to unpack the ways in which generational discourses and resulting subject positions, shaped in part by the construction of generational categories, are productive of particular understandings of age-related issues at work. Through examining these issues we open up the construct of generation for scrutiny and offer further consideration of its discursive effects. Later we provide more detail about our research context and methodological approach; however, first we review the relevant literature on generations.

Generations and generational categories

The term generation is frequently invoked when discussing age-related issues (Parry and Urwin, 2011) but is rarely clearly defined (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). Originally related to

familial relationships, both Mannheim (1927/1952) and Bourdieu (1993) are frequently cited in the shift to using the term to define a social group (Foster, 2013). Increasingly, and particularly in popular discussions, generations have become the preferred descriptive term for birth cohorts 'based on membership in an age group that shares collective memories during formative years of life' (Joshi, et al., 2010, p. 395).

Researchers have conceptualised birth cohorts sharing major social, political and economic events as a way of explaining generational identity (Howe and Strauss, 2007; Twenge and Campbell, 2008). In particular, generational cohort theory predicts (and empirically measures) relationships between such contextual factors and the values, attitudes and beliefs of cohort members (Twenge, 2010; Twenge and Campbell, 2008). From this perspective, generations are both sociological and psychological concepts. In the US, Twenge and colleagues proposed implications for organisations suggesting that with Generation Me (c.f. Table 1) 'managers should expect to see more employees with unrealistically high expectations' (Twenge and Campbell, 2008, p. 862).

However, both the theoretical basis of cohort studies and the interpretation of empirical evidence is much debated (Parry and Urwin, 2011; Trzesniewski and Donnellan, 2010). Researchers (Lyons and Kuron, 2014; Macky, et al., 2008; Sullivan, et al., 2009) have highlighted conceptual and methodological limitations where large scale survey methods are deployed to map differences in individual-level variables across (disputed and poorly defined) generational divides and extrapolated to cohort-based characteristics. Particular generations are then frequently operationalised as category variables (Cogin, 2012; Davis, et al., 2006; Sullivan, et al., 2009) and examined with respect to outcomes such as job satisfaction (Benson and Brown, 2011) and work values (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008;

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Cogin, 2012) whilst controlling for variables such as job security (Benson and Brown, 2011) and life-stage (Cogin, 2012).

Thus, generational categories (and differences between them) emerge as starting point for examining issues such as work ethic and values (Meriac, et al., 2010; E. Ng, et al., 2010). However, some studies find differences in values within a single generation resulting from other factors (e.g. gender, Wallace, 2006 and academic achievement, E. Ng, et al., 2010) prompting Deal and colleagues to conclude that findings regarding a particular generation (Millennials) is 'confusing at best and contradictory at worst' (2010, p. 191). Even where explicit labels and birth years are proposed, definitional issues largely remain unexamined (Cody, et al., 2012). Reporting of generational differences is sometimes reduced to distinctions between age groups (Cogin, 2012) or between younger and older workers (Deal, et al., 2010) or else age groups are used to explain a generation thus conflating generation and chronological age; for example younger workers for generation Y (Institute of Leadership & Management and Ashridge Business School, 2011). However, the reported absence of (many) generational differences (and the presence of similarities) in certain work settings (Davis, et al., 2006; Smola and Sutton, 2002) has given cause for concern (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008; Sullivan, et al., 2009).

Further confusion arises regarding inter-relationships between age and generations. Some studies specifically account for age when examining generations and, say, work values (Hansen and Leuty, 2012; Twenge, 2010). But, as Parry and Urwin's (2011) review highlights, many conflate generation and age as possible drivers of difference while others invoke generation as proxy for age or as an unproblematic demographic characteristic

(Ramarajan and Reid, 2013). Although some acknowledge these issues (Jorgensen, 2003; Smola and Sutton, 2002; Sullivan, et al., 2009), findings may be deployed less carefully.

A further concern is the considerable variety of categorisation, particularly the terms and boundaries applied with the literature. This raises concerns for those applying findings to organisational contexts (Cody, et al., 2012). Academically, the categorisation summarised by sociologists Strauss and Howe (1991) is commonly cited (Parry and Urwin, 2011) and is the default in research (Macky, et al., 2008). Nevertheless many studies depart from this categorisation, as set out in Table 1 (below), with the basis for such departures often left unclear and all the alternatives below are widely utilised.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

These categorical labels illustrate the wider influences on understandings of generations. Parry and Urwin (2011) note the label generation X can be traced back to work commissioned by a woman's magazine in the sixties; the term baby boomer originates in a description of the post-war rise in birth-rates, while the lost generation label has been attributed to Hemingway (1926). This particular term is intriguing given it has been reused at various times to represent some traumatic experience of, usually, youth: war (Holden, 2005), recession (Hirayama and Ronald, 2008) and/or periods of unemployment (Lynch, 1985). In turn this highlights the potential discursive effects of these labels in constructing generational subject positions. Such observations highlight the need to utilise discursive approaches to unpack current understandings of generations and how particular generational labels are enrolled in debates about age at work. Moreover, if perception of generational differences is

more robust than the empirical evidence (Jovic, et al., 2006) this raises the question of how such ideas become and remain established.

In response, critical perspectives on generations have started to emerge. Phillipson and colleagues (2008) analysed baby boomers as a problem generation while Fineman (2011) critiqued the reification of generations. However, given the insights revealed by examining the social construction of age more broadly, the notion of generation is clearly ripe for further attention (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). The research question under consideration here is thus how are generations enrolled in the construction of age-related employment issues, with a focus on baby boomers and the lost generation. As a result of such examination, we offer insights as to how these categorisations are reified and enrolled as explanatory devices in debates about age at work.

Methods

To address the above research question, we unpack understandings of baby boomers and the lost generation accomplished within UK online news texts about age at work. As previously highlighted, our data collection took place against the backdrop of the challenging context of work in a new economy (McMullin and Marshall, 2010) and during a period when issues of age at work made headline news. Therefore UK online news provides a particularly pertinent context within which to examine the ways in which generations are enrolled in the construction of age-related employment issues. Examining both journalistic articles and, where available, readers' comments provides rich and varied data within which to explore our research question.

Despite extensive consideration in other fields, there has been relatively little empirical engagement with online news in organisational studies (Mautner, 2005; Pablo and Hardy, 2009). Lewis describes online news as an emergent genre characterised as 'a theme-based group of news objects held together graphically overlapping with other such groups and undergoing progressive updating' (2003, p. 97). It is suggested that the discursive consumption of news is contextually embedded within the local cultures of their readers (Machin and Van Leeuwen, 2007). This has led to empirical studies in other fields (e.g., Acevedo, 2007, on drug use and users) adopting a nationally focused approach. This provides the rationale for our sample of UK online news, including those news sites which had an equivalent UK print version, identified their focus as UK news, and/or were identified as a UK-based organisation. These sites encompassed national and regional titles across the spectrum of press within the UK.

From this sample, data were collected systematically using internet tools and alerts in a daily automated search process over 150 days. After piloting (*disclosive reference*), the search terms utilised were older worker, age regulation, age discrimination, age diversity, youth employment, and the composite generation and work. Texts were automatically identified via these daily searches with links returned to a specified email. Further material was collected via snowballing from these sources (via following links or connections to related articles).

We reviewed each day's return to select relevant texts; materials were logged, downloaded and imported into NVivo, the software used to support data management and analysis (Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012). Where available, reader comments were also collected, but usually a few days after the initial alert so allowing time for contributions to be posted (*disclosive reference*). Our overall data set comprises over 1000 sources, where a source

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might include multiple texts as both articles and posted comments were saved together. Sources range from the equivalent of one paragraph to over sixty pages of text and below both the published (P) and accessed (A) dates are provided.

Within discussions of internet research ethical concerns are particularly pertinent. Our data comes from public sources, i.e. those not requiring log-on or membership for access. While we have anonymised author and/or organisational identities, we have not deployed cloaking; the subtle alteration of text to preserve meaning but avoid tracing via search engines (*disclosive reference*). This would be problematic for discursive analysis since it may alter both our analytic interpretation and your reading (British Psychological Society, 2013).

Our early analysis was inductive as we worked, separately and together, to make sense of the data and develop an initial descriptive coding framework. This first stage involved searching texts for references to generation (and variations thereof) and coding for different generational labels, emergent topics and types of material. Given the quantity of data relating to generations, a completely inclusive approach would not allow the necessary depth within a single paper. Therefore we focus on the lost generation and baby boomers, as these were particularly prominent within UK online news at this time. We examined a sub-sample (a week's data) to review this decision, before extracting a full data set based on the coding of texts as associated with discussions about these two generational labels.

The resulting data comprised texts totalling 24000 words for baby boomers and 25000 words related to the lost generation, though these were not mutually exclusive. The second stage of analysis involved a review of these data and the subsequent identification of the themes of responsibility, entitlement and consequences via a further iteration of thematic coding. Table

2 below offers an overview of themes and their frequency within these data. Each item of text was assessed as to whether it contained one of more references to any of the three themes (multiple references in a text were recorded as a single incident). It is important to note that these descriptions developed iteratively as we tested and re-tested our understandings throughout the analysis. Further, these themes are inter-related and themselves discursively complex, emerging in relation to particular understandings of these generations and of work more broadly. In particular we suggest that the first two themes – entitlement and responsibility – are implicated in the (re)production of the third – consequences, but all three are seen to be significant in our task of unpacking how generations are enrolled in constructions of age-related employment issues.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Having identified these three themes, the third stage involved detailed discursive analysis, as we unpacked constructions of baby boomers and the lost generation and their enrolment within these debates. As acknowledged extensively within the organisational studies literature, while there are many different, overlapping types of discourse analysis, the practicalities of these often vary by individual researcher (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). Common underlying principles include a foundation in social constructionism and applying 'insights from Foucault and/or Fairclough' (Hardy and Grant, 2012, p. 558). Overall, applying Ainsworth's (2001) categorisation, ours is a more descriptive than critical approach to discourse analysis, as we believe this is a necessary first step to open up understandings of generations for scrutiny. Our detailed discursive analysis involved a separate close reading by each author who then came together to review their analysis in a process that Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) describe as 'a circular movements between an overall understanding and closer textual analysis' (p. 153). Each researcher took the role of challenging themes and

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conclusions identified by the other so as to refine and develop the findings. These justifications required further iteration with the data as the analysis progressed and findings were related back to the overarching research question.

Findings

Here we examine the themes of entitlement, responsibility and consequences to examine how generations are enrolled in the construction of age-related employment issues. In our discussion we review the implications of these findings for age as 'a culturally and politically resonant discourse in contemporary society' (Ainsworth, et al., 2012, p. 162).

Entitlement

Entitlement to work is a universal concern (Harpaz and Fu, 2002) which has become ever more contested in the context of the new economy (Lippmann, 2008). With a shortage of viable, secure jobs and tightening social security budgets, tensions emerge as the relative merits of entitlement claims are debated. These tensions enrol and reconstruct generational characteristics; creating subject positions for baby boomers and members of the lost generation. Below we consider first the entangled construction relating to baby boomers. Although this first article did not use the term baby boomers, as we shall see later reader commenters deployed the label. This text suggests older workers' entitlement is earned through their contribution to productivity:

Age equality campaigners today hailed the end of employment rules forcing people on to the "scrap heap" at the age of 65....[name], chief executive of [a skills-focused charity], said greater age diversity would make a more productive workforce. She said: "In these difficult economic times, older workers can add resilience to a business's workforce, offering a vital blend of hard-soft skills that allow them to react in a more productive manner to economic crises." (P:30/9/11; A:9/10/11).

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Here entitlement is linked to organisational benefits in terms of productivity and a clear specification of what older workers contribute. The only alternative to work is the "scrap heap", suggesting the end of usefulness (defined as economic productivity) and reinforcing work as the primary measure of an individual's value to society. As the young are explicitly absent from the text, direct competition is avoided; rather a sense of inclusivity is invoked through expression of support for greater age diversity, drawing on the broader discourse of diversity for organisational benefit. Nevertheless within this diversity, positioning a unique value for older workers as "more productive" is signalled.

While generational labels were absent from the article, these were used by commenters:

Another policy designed solely to benefit the baby boomer generation... these older workers create a log-jam ... doors become closed to able graduates...bright young things are more capable of moving a company forward than older people who are generally more conservative and risk-averse. Move over baby boomers, take your generous pension pots and retire gracefully. (P:30/9/11; A:9/10/11)

This discursively mirrors the article using a declarative account and creates equivalence between older workers and baby boomers, while also aligning the interests of this (conflated) group and policy makers. This entanglement of an age-related and a generational label allows understandings of both to be brought to bear. An alternative, less work-entitled position ("conservative", "risk averse" vs. "offering a vital blend of hard-soft skills") is proposed and contrasted with the entitlement of "bright young things". Thus the original text's positioning of older workers as productive is challenged both by their lack and by more positive (younger) alternatives. The construction of baby boomers as blocking access and thereby denying entitlement sets up a generational tension within this competitive economic context. Since it is suggested that baby boomers have an alternative source of income, they should retire gracefully; not a "scrap heap" in sight. Taken together, these two texts show

how an action related to chronological age (the abolition of the default retirement age) is re-positioned as a further skirmish ("another policy"), within a generational battle for jobs.

Such generational competition is also constructed with in this news report:

Just as youth unemployment hits a record high, fanning fears that Britain's young people could become a "lost generation", the government has scrapped the default retirement age ... ... what are the consequences for young people struggling to find work? Many older people don't understand the younger generation and the young have many misperceptions about older people. Young people may perceive older people to be "blocking" potential job opportunities, thereby deepening the rift between young and old.
(P:15/11/11; A:22/11/11)

Age-based and generation-based categories are again here conflated to reinforce the notion of a pre-existing rift between young and old which is now worsening. Here the lost generation's entitlement to work is normalised whilst older people seeking work (who previously would have retired) are positioned as novel and threatening. Misperceptions and misunderstandings are part of the construction of this rift, similarly presented as pre-existing but made worse by legislative changes. These are seen to impact "young people" thus creating the lost generation. The notion of "blocking" (restricting entitlement to work) is explicitly identified as a tension with the suggestion that even its perception is potentially harmful.

In addition to disputes regarding whether they have required skills and abilities to work, challenges to baby boomers' entitlement are in part constructed through an understanding that they are in a privileged financial position, one that is seen as particularly problematic within the current economic context:

The subject of finances has never seemed to divide the generations as much as it does today. There's a perception those born in the 1940s and 1950s have had it very good, while their children will struggle. Backing up the perception is the fact Babyboomers have benefited from a record period of house inflation and appear to be retiring on gold-plated pensions.
(P:19/11/11; A:22/11/11)

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That baby boomers have had it "very good" is set against the struggle of their children, invoking both a familial relationship and cohort categorisation. Bringing both these forms to bear reinforces the notion of generation as a useful concept. In this way, discussion about generational entitlement is made salient, obscuring socio-economic differences within these groups. The favourable position set out in this extract for all baby boomers is supported by facts about house price increases and pensions. Establishing a strong financial position thus contests the entitlement to work for economic gain.

In contrast, the lost generation's entitlement to work, situated within emerging political tensions around youth unemployment, is taken for granted and uncontested:

Labour said the figures were fresh evidence that the coalition Government's harsh cuts programme was threatening to create a "lost generation"… It is vital that the younger generation have the chance of work. (P:10/11/11; A:22/11/11)

Here it appears that the generation might be lost unless entitlement to work is secured. The labelling of the generation is both embedded in and emergent from this positioning. Figures refer to youth unemployment for the age category of 16-24 and thereby this age group becomes labelled as the younger - and potentially lost - generation by virtue of this statistical grouping and numerical evidence. Within UK Government statistical reporting there is no equivalent evidential base that relates to the notion of baby boomers.

However the work entitlement of the lost generation is more complex (and contested) when unpacked at an individual level. This account provides a personalised story within an article entitled "jobs drought may blight a generation":

The 18-year-old child care assistant described looking for work as being more tiring than being in full time work … "I've been looking for jobs since I finished my course… I was hoping to stay on at the primary school I did my placement at but they could only offer me voluntary work … when I first qualified I thought somebody would take me on but it's not as easy as I thought" (P:23/12/11; A:30/12/11)

Identified by her age as belonging to the generation at risk, this offers a narrative of entitlement to work due to both education (qualification is associated with being hired) and of effort, the work of job hunting. This constructs entitlement to work as an individual attribute, personalising the broader idea of deserving a job and, along with other stories within the articles, builds up this entitlement for the generation as a whole. We also note that here volunteering is rejected, whereas previously we saw this constructed as a desirable alternative for baby boomers.

However the deserving nature of the lost generation who are working to get a job is much contested. Entitlement and the right to work can be constructed as negative when the capability to work is disputed. The comment below was one of 115 posted in response to an article about 'a lost generation of young Britons':

I run a small business and recently tried to hire a graduate … of the ten we invited for interview all but one were arrogant, dismissive, mildly illiterate and all had that air of entitlement as in 'just give me the job' (P:16/11/11; A:22/11/11)

Offered from a position of experience (an employer), this avoids accusations of stereotyping by constructing a narrative that allows for an exception ("all but one"). The specificity of both applicant numbers and graduate status demonstrate that this is a problem even with those we might assume are more capable of performing in an interview situation. Whilst not directly challenging the work entitlement of the lost generation, individuals within it are constructed as problematic and thus unemployable. They are depicted as acting as though access to work does not have to be earned, displaying an inappropriate attitude to an employer and failing to demonstrate basic skills.

This problematic representation of the lost generation appeared repeatedly within comments posted across a range of online news sites:

When in a position to employ people I never employed young people as they are unfit for purpose in every regard. They are like children, constant supervision was required and they have absolutely no initiative and will literally sit on anything, hands in pockets, looking morose. It is not a lost generation as [much] as a generation that can get lost.
(P:24/9/11; A:30/9/11)

The positioning of the lost generation (and "young people") as "children" is explored more fully under the theme of responsibility below. However the repeated combination of cohort and familial generational concepts to bolster the construction is again noteworthy. Used here, the familial construction and designation of the lost generation as childlike serves to challenge entitlement to work, itself positioned as an adult right. Again supported by a claim to be an employer, the lost generation are dismissed as entirely unsuitable for work.

Particularly within the prevailing economic climate, it is unsurprising that entitlement has become such an area of tension in relation to work–related debates. In these extracts we see that entitlement to work is contested through the ascription of certain circumstances and characteristics to both baby boomers and the lost generation. Generational labels are used frequently but inconsistently and often conflated with age labels. At the same time we see both familial and cohort notions of generation enrolled in positioning of group constructions within what appears to be a generational battle for jobs.

Responsibility

Having considered entitlement to work, here we unpack the ways in which responsibility for the related problems are entangled with constructions of the two generations. Set within the broader socio-political context this theme also involves positioning those who have responsibility for solutions.

For the lost generation, responsibility is most debated in relation to unemployment. We highlighted above the use of the term "children" to describe this group and we found other similar terms deployed, removing the possibility of this group accepting or taking responsibility. The following comment was posted in response to an article, headed 'One million unemployed young people "must not be ignored"'.

It is not the fault of the youth of today as they are a product of our society just as a dog will behave as its owner allows it to (P:16/11/11; A:22/11/11)

The "youth of today" are positioned as a misbehaving pet, a comparison which removes any sense of responsibility. Rather responsibility is transferred to their owner, here society. As another comment suggested, "cut the kids some slack and stop blaming them for what is not their fault". This effectively removes collective and individual responsibility, but also agency, from the lost generation.

As in the previous example, the size of the issue (one million), and the term youth or being young, are embedded with the notion of the lost generation. The following extract is from an article titled "Youth unemployment passes 1m mark":

[Union official] said: "The Government has created a lost generation of young people unable to gain a foothold on the employment ladder. Ministers need to create a land bridge of opportunity for young people." (P:16/11/11; A:22/11/11)

Perhaps it is unsurprising that a union official would attribute responsibility to the Government for creating the lost generation. The physical metaphors deployed suggest that the gap between their current position and work is too wide to bridge on their own but also that the lost generation lacks the attributes to close the gap. In addition to the Government, within the comments posted in response to this piece we noted attributions of responsibility

made broadly to parents (invoking familial generation), grown-ups, the educational system, teaching staff, the benefit system, and society.

Under entitlement we previously reviewed a personal account of the difficulty of finding work. This device was repeated across many news stories: "UK faces lost generation as jobless youth hits record":

Aged 25, [name] has been largely unemployed for the last four years…This week, he applied for 87 positions. "That's below normal actually," … A qualified gardener licensed to operate pruning machinery, over time [his] search has become less and less picky. This week, for the first time, he applied for work in fast food restaurants. "It's nigh on impossible," [he] said. (P:17/11/11; A:23/11/11).

The statement of this individuals' age is (intriguingly) outside the 16-24 age categorisation of youth unemployment. His membership of the lost generation is, however, established by the length of time he has been unemployed, an example of how the generation's construction relies on chronological age, (relative) youth and/or unemployed status as defining characteristics. Echoing a previous construction of entitlement, this utilises numerical evidence of actively looking for work and qualification, but reports this is an "impossible" mission. Thus individual responsibility of looking for work is not enough, something else must be done.

The notion that the lost generation is not and cannot be held personally responsibly is explored in this article:

Those unlucky enough to have been born around 1990 … believe that their lives will be determined by their age, not by their background or their schooling and certainly not by any help a negligent government deigns to give them… The government, which is very careful not to offend the elderly, who vote in large numbers, has slashed help for sixth-formers, students and young mothers, who do not. (P:16/10/11; A:17/10/11).

Here a direct connection is made between year of birth, age and a fatalistic lack of control over their working lives; they are unlucky. The Government here is positioned as responsible for the lack of help for this group, whilst supporting "the elderly" due to their voting patterns.

In contrast baby boomers are constructed as lucky, having been handed the world, here in a comment:

Baby boomers ... had the world given to them on a silver platter. The world was your oyster and YOU ruined it. Now the younger generations will be suffering for decades because of your greed and hatred. (P:20/11/11; A:22/11/11).

This emotional comment uses extreme case formulation ("ruining the world") to place sole responsibility for the suffering of younger generations in the hands of the baby boomers. The sense of responsibility is placed broadly, reflecting previous attributions to the Government and society. However this enrols the baby boomers as the defined group to blame within the broader socio-political context. This is entangled with the previous theme, since attributing responsibility for the lost generation to baby boomers has the effect of de-legitimating the latter's entitlement to work.

This is echoed in a reader comment:

All the boomers have done is by stint of mere luck is hog all the good jobs then ensured that the following generations were denied the same opportunities by kicking out the rungs of the ladder as you climbed it. (P:24/12/11; A:30/12/11).

Baby boomers' "luck" was to be born at the right time (in contrast to the unlucky born later); however they have also been ascribed responsibility for the position of the following generations. We discussed above the use of physical metaphors to describe access to employment; here "the ladder" has been destroyed by the baby boomers, who are simultaneously positioned as above and before them.

Self-identified baby boomers unsurprisingly resist attributions of blame and of luck; personal stories within the comments are used to present an alternative history:

There are no easy answers…do what we baby boomers did in the 60's, 70's and 80's …get a job, do any overtime on offer, get a second job, get a weekend job. Work your backside off while you are young … stop whinging and waiting for someone to give you a break, it is not going to happen. (P:10/12/11; A:29/12/11)

While accepting "there are no easy answers", this comment promotes a sense of individual rather than generational responsibility. They suggest the baby boomers achieved results through hard work (rather than luck). It also further reinforces the earlier position of the young as displaying a sense of entitlement, rather than taking responsibility by working "your backside off" while you are young.

In these extracts we see how responsibility for problems (and some solutions) is entangled within constructions of the two generations. Once again, generational labels are conflated with age-type labels, for example, calling the lost generation "children". In relation to unemployment, this term is part of a wider positioning that effectively removes individual and collective responsibility for its members. Agency is also largely denied them through a discourse of fatalism where being unlucky positions the lost generation as lacking control over their working lives, reinforcing the irrelevance of responsibility. In contrast baby boomers are constructed as lucky and as having abused the responsibilities of adulthood and causing suffering for the subsequent generations. While broader socio-political issues (such as the role of Government) are invoked within these debates, the effect of the discussion is to focus attention on perceived differences between the generations.

Consequences

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We now examine how, within our data, individual and broader consequences are developed from an understanding of the issues associated with entitlement and responsibility for each generation. As highlighted previously these first two themes are implicated in the (re)production of this third theme, as understandings of generations are enrolled in setting out a view of the future. For baby boomers, it is proposed that individuals should transition from paid to voluntary work as this would satisfy their entitlement to utilise skills to good effect, whilst not taking paid jobs from the young. This transition is, in principle, facilitated through pension provision and constructed as for the good of all. In contrast, for the lost generation, the notion of being lost translates to an individual and group position of hopelessness with negative consequences:

[name], 19, is discouraged ..."No emotional talk here, but I want to get up and do something," he said. "It's hopeless. It's like, what's the point in waking up?" (P:16/11/11; A:22/11/11)

This need to "do something" leads to a broader argument, discussed further below, that without access to work this "something" is likely to be negative. This contrasts with alternatives to work offered for baby boomers within the same text which were more positive in tone, though still constructs a position outside paid employment: "they can use their time, talent and experience to help support local charities and voluntary organisations" (P:16/11/11; A:22/11/11). Though as previously highlighted, the consequence for baby boomers is exit from the valued sphere of paid work, a position earlier constructed as being on the "scrap heap".

Returning to the negative consequences predicted for the lost generation this article extrapolates from individual hopelessness:

Figures out tomorrow are expected to confirm the worst youth unemployment figures for nearly 20 years. But it's the lack of hope, as much as the lack of jobs, that is dangerous ... the youth unemployment time bomb is ticking and in Britain there are few signs of things getting

better… Doing nothing is not an option. You only have to look at Tottenham, Hackney, Croydon and Manchester* to see the alternative. (P:12/10/11; A:16/10/11)*locations of riots during July/August 2011.

While this generation may be lost and assigned little agency, here they are constructed as "dangerous" and about to explode. This piece draws on the (then) recent unrest in some UK cities to suggest that if no action is taken the "time bomb" will explode enrolling a particular generation in the production of a negative consequence for all.

Riots are invoked as evidence of the issues that need to be addressed, and as in the comment below (and cf responsibility), baby boomers are given a role in ensuring this outcome is avoided:

Most important, baby-boomers need to stop the me-me-me, and give youth's creative talent an opportunity to develop. Otherwise, down the road, you will see social unrest which will dwarf the recent English riots. (P:2/10/11; A:10/10/11)

Here an arguably extreme construction enrols issues of entitlement (for the lost generation) and responsibility (of baby boomers) to set out a path towards avoiding a negative outcome. Baby boomers' talent is positioned in a previous extract as a resource for charities. In contrast, youth's "creative talent" is positioned here as potentiality, a key resource that must be positively channelled (via paid work) to avoid damaging social consequences. These negative outcomes were described elsewhere in similarly powerful terms as "socially corrosive", and as a prospect that should "chill your blood", thus reinforcing their scale and significance.

We highlighted previously how the alternatives of retiring gracefully or the scrap heap are offered as potential futures for baby boomers. These both involve exit, either dignified or

not, from paid work. In response we only found one instance of collective action reported within our data:

The famed baby-boomers ...are the ones who have most to lose from this [pension] reform.... their expectations are being dashed and they are being give scant time to plan ...a group of these women delivered a giant postcard to Downing Street this week, accusing the Government of breaking its promises. (P:17/9/11; A:25/9/11)

While our data does not shed light on the outcomes of this protest, its reporting constructs a different consequence than for the lost generation. While the consequences of unemployment for the lost generation are depicted as social unrest, baby boomers are reported as peacefully registering a complaint about pension provision. Within these texts, they seem to have been retired already, with their interests simply not impacting others.   In this respect, the construction of limited agency contrasts with the responsibility assigned to baby boomers for causing and resolving the lost generation's problems.

Reporting on a recent European survey, this article reflects on the resulting issues regarding relationships between the generations:

The UK is riven by intergenerational splits ... we are a segregated society and there are definitely problems here. There is segregation within work and social lives. (P:30/10/11; A:2/11/11)

Echoing earlier extracts, generations are set up in competition both in the search for work and within the workplace. The term segregation invokes a broader equality discourse (more typically associated with class or ethnicity) to suggest these issues are firmly rooted within the UK society. As already highlighted a further consequence is that issues of segregation and tension once constructed are transformed into problems for organisations to manage.

In this third set of extracts we see how individual and broader consequences are developed from an understanding of the issues associated with entitlement and responsibility for each

generation. For the lost generation, loss of hope is part of the wider discourse of fatalism; when discussing consequences, this is worked up in the data to mean inevitable unrest – or worse – and to justify action (including by baby boomers) to avoid this. However despite being seen as responsible for the problems of the lost generation, within these data baby boomers seem to lack agency in relation to employment issues.

While organising our findings under the themes of entitlement, responsibility and consequences serves as a useful basis for our more detailed analysis, there are complex inter-relationships between them as different concepts of generation (familial and cohort) and constructions of baby boomers and the lost generation are enrolled in constructing age-related employment issues from access to work through to retirement. These issues are summarised as we look across our findings and draw our conclusions below.

Discussion

In examining how generations are enrolled in the construction of age-related employment issues we have focused on the topically relevant lost generation and baby boomers. Scrutinising the construction of generations, we offer insights as to how these categorisations are reified and enrolled as explanatory devices in debates about age at work. By unpacking their construction in UK online news debates about entitlement, responsibility and consequences we have shown how the overall notion of generation, particular generational categories and their relative positioning in discussions about work are discursive achievements. Significantly, these highly accessible debates (Machin and Van Leeuwen, 2007) act to make accessible certain understandings of age and privilege particular age-related subject positions whilst simultaneously obscuring alternatives (that might be related to class, ethnicity or education).

Extending previous investigations of age-related identities (e.g. Ainsworth and Hardy, 2012; Riach and Kelly, 2013; Rudman and Molke, 2009), we find that both older and younger aged-subjects are produced from a generational perspective; in our data as a baby boomer or member of the lost generation respectively. However, as considered in more detail below, how these generational identities are discursively positioned differs in terms of their entitlement to work, responsibility and the consequences of these issues. Our analysis finds that subject positions are reinforced through enrolling both familial and cohort understandings of generations which, while distinct theoretical constructs, here combine to produce apparently discursively-robust constructions of generational identities. Our analysis thus extends understandings of the resources that are brought to bear to both construct generations as a means of organising age and to establish certain generational groupings (Foster, 2013).

We find that generational membership is ascribed through an often unstated assumption of categorisation by year of birth, a perceived biological fact which avoids the need to engage with the issue of shifting membership of chronological groupings, such as the more commonly researched older worker (e.g. Ainsworth and Hardy, 2007). Thus we suggest that generations offer a powerful means of organising understandings of age (here, in online-news media) and provide the means to articulate, define and make sense of issues of age at work (Schalk et al, 2010). Moreover, we suggest that invoking and enrolling generations further avoids accusations of age discrimination thus potentially offering the means to undermine equality legislation (Riach, 2009). This highlights the importance of generational discourse as an area for critical enquiry in developing our understanding of age as 'a culturally and politically resonant discourse' (Ainsworth, et al., 2012, p. 162).

Our analysis further unpacks the ways in which generational discourse is deployed in creating difference and setting up tensions between generations whilst making it harder to look across these divisions to determine similar concerns and issues. Whether or not generations are competing with each other for jobs is not the issue at stake in our analysis. In a labour market where jobs are scarce we see competition for two positions, namely being in paid employment or being acknowledged as in a position of disadvantage (Ainsworth, 2002) since this provides the basis to secure further resources (e.g. from the Government). This extends notions of intergenerational tension (Fineman, 2011) and equity (North and Fiske, 2013) to the domain of work entitlement, which seems particularly pertinent in a difficult economic era (Lippmann, 2008). Our analysis found that attempts to contest or de-legitimate certain understandings of generational attributes act to reinforce the overall validity of the categorisations (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2012). We reflexively acknowledge that by making the lost generation and baby boomers the focus of our analysis we run the risk of doing the same.

This reification of generations de-legitimates individual differences (e.g., in relation to financial resources or indeed chronological age) and legitimates collective generational identities. Such branding of generations deflects attention away from structural inequalities which might account for the position of (at least some members of) a generation (or age group) in relation to employment (Trethewey, 2001). The homogenisation of a generation is thus used to stigmatise or valorise an age group and to justify and legitimate its differential treatment in the labour market.

While significant progress has been made in understanding the social construction of age, particularly in relation to older workers, we suggest that future research should extend the range of ages and means of categorisation under consideration. Our analysis further shows how the discursive construction of each generation depends on the presence of the other, as generations are positioned through comparison with each other in relation to our themes. A key discursive struggle is to achieve recognition of their specific entitlement to work. This is achieved through attempts to marginalise one generation at the expense of the other, by identifying some form of lack or by positioning it as in need of correction (Riach, 2007). Thus, baby boomers lack financial need and their selfishness needs correction; likewise, the lost generation lack basic skills and have attitudes that need correcting. As we summarise below, this is observed in how the overall depictions of each generation mirror the other, using age-related difference and generalisation to shape the construction, with sometimes contradictory positions evidencing the discursive struggle.

Baby boomers (in addition to being older) are constructed variously as lucky, selfish, conservative, risk adverse, blocking access to jobs for young people and in a privileged financial position. Their entitlement to paid work is contested, their talent positioned as suitable for voluntary endeavours, reinforcing neo-liberal discourses of productive old age (Rudman and Molke, 2009) but situating them outside a (more) valued productive ecomonic discourse (Fineman, 2011). Alternatively, they too are depicted as victims, particularly of the recent recession, having lost their savings and struggling to find work. The status of both victim and of being selfish is applied across the generation, and is thus difficult to resist within these debates which exclude other possible forms of identification (e.g. class). By extrapolation, increased reliance on governmental support is postulated however, baby boomers' are also aligned with dominant groups (e.g. Government). Baby boomers are (in

part) constructed as being responsible for the creation of the lost generation, responsibility which is extended to negative consequences, including potential unrest. This, however, is a consequence of baby boomers' past agency, while their current protests are reported as lacking impact, echoing, Trethewey's (2001) observations on the inevitability of decline. However, perceived contradictions within the discursive construction of baby boomers might limit opportunities for collective responses (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2007). This is in line with the suggestion that age discrimination is an individual problem for older workers (Gullette, 2004) positioned within the neo-liberal emphasis on responsibility for the self (Asquith, 2009) and productive ageing (Rudman and Molke, 2009). Moreover, this is embedded within changing economics for older workers (Sargent, et al., 2013) as retirement recedes for some whilst others seem to enjoy (what are labelled within our data as) "gold-plated" pensions. This creates a potential double-bind for baby boomers who, within our data, are damned if they work (being selfish, taking jobs from the lost generation) and damned if they don't (unvalued, burden on society). These texts are silent on resolutions except when volunteering is proposed as a means for baby boomers to contribute to society, a resolution which assumes the financial reward of paid employment is neither necessary nor justified for this generation.

The lost generation (as well as being young) is constructed as unlucky, jobless and with an unearned sense of entitlement. The lost generation's entitlement to work, however, is taken for granted and their talent presented as potentiality (Taylor, et al., 2010), vital for the country's future. Its members are positioned as the most disadvantaged in relation to finding work (c.f. Ainsworth, 2002), though disputed individual capability complicates this otherwise unquestioned sense of entitlement. They are constructed as child-like in their lack of ability to accept or take responsibility, as familial generational understandings are enrolled within

this cohort-focused debate. This positioning also removes agency such that tackling their joblessness is beyond the capacity of individual members of the lost generation. We note another interesting contradiction, here, between the lack of agency depicted in the infantilising discourses under responsibility and the portrayal of a group ready to riot. Without access to work, members of this generation are depicted as both damaged and likely to *cause* damage if issues of unemployment are not addressed. Thus members of the lost generation need to be given assistance to enter the world of work but access is only granted to entry-level jobs under the supervision of others. In a challenging labour market the lost generation is discursively constructed in such a way as to justify the age-based targeting of financial assistance and prioritisation in employment schemes[1]. As highlighted previously, the term lost generation had lain dormant but is now deployed once more to label a young disadvantaged group. Discursively this enables previous cultural understandings (e.g. of struggle and difficulty) to be reassigned and re-understood in our research context[2], with the risk of discursively entrenching stereotypes.

What becomes apparent when unpacking the discursive construction of each of these generations is that their overall discursive positioning accommodates apparent contradictions in respect of the themes examined within our analysis. So entitlement to work is both granted and withheld from each generation as a particular case is made within a specific text. Deploying the notion of generation appears to allow interpretative flexibility within a range of positions without compromising its overall discursive robustness. Moreover, it is noticeable in these data that those falling chronologically between baby boomers and the lost generation are marginalised in these debates, as the focus is largely at each chronological end of working life. In these texts references to, for example, generation Y or X mostly appear as illustrative terms invoking the multi-generational workforce rather than as directly engaged in

debates around entitlement, responsibility and consequences. This invisibility contributes to the reproduction of existing age norms and segmentation in the labour market, such as the problematisation of younger (Furlong, 2006) and older workers (Fevre, 2011).

As discussed at the outset, existing critical examinations of age in organisation studies have focused on certain chronological categorisations to examine the emergence of subject positions, particularly the older worker (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2012). Within our data we find both older and younger worker subject positions co-exist within generational discourses. In contrast to the temporally flexible notions of older and younger, generations provide a means of fixing membership and thus the attributions made become regarded as permanent characteristics. This potentially detracts from the notion of a universal ageing experience (we will all get old) and opens up the possibility that there might be 'different' constructions of ageing between generations (Riach and Kelly, 2013). Given that generational discourse has gained particular traction, there is a risk that processes of ageing are neglected with these debates as attention is placed on the (current) experiences within these categories. Thus we could usefully ask what will happen to understandings of the 'luck' of baby boomers as they enter later life or whether the lost generation will be 'found' as they reach middle-age. Critical examination of the evolution of generational discourses should therefore be a priority for future research endeavours. In summary, our contribution to the existing critical debates on age at work is thus to demonstrate the impact of essentialising generations, noting how their construction acts to stabilise particular understandings of age whilst obscuring differences that might be more pertinent to issues of work entitlement, responsibility and their consequences.

Conclusions

Generations have gained traction in practitioner-oriented debates. We offer a timely reminder of the importance of unpacking representations of generations and generational tension since this is increasingly presented as requiring new approaches to managing work and people, usually by those offering their assistance with this task. In contrast, we show how age at work is (re)produced through the reification of generations and the enrolling of cohort and familial understandings to produce robust generational identities. We have started to unpack the discursive construction of baby boomers and the lost generation, exploring how they are enrolled in the construction of age-related employment issues, but there is more work to be done (for example, exploring debates on work entitlement in the context of foreign workers). What is not in doubt is that generations deserve our (overdue) critical academic engagement.

Notes

[1]The British Government announced the £1 billion Youth Contract scheme in November 2011; launched in April 2012 it aimed to provide nearly half-a-million new opportunities for 18-24 year olds, including apprenticeships and voluntary work experience placements, plus increased support and help for young people through various programmes.

[2]This label has also been adopted by the young: UK hip-hop duo Rizzle Kicks released a single in August 2013, titled Lost Generation, which includes the repeated phrase 'I'm living in the lost generation'.

Acknowledgements

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Table 1: Generational Labels and Boundaries

Label & Birth Years (Strauss and Howe, 1991)	Alternative Labels	Alternative birth years
Veterans *1925 – 1942*	*Silent Generation; Matures; Traditionalists*; Greatest (Sullivan, et al., 2009); Conservatives (Dries, et al., 2008)	1925 – 1945 (Cogin, 2012; Dries, et al., 2008); 1922 – 1945 (Sullivan, et al., 2009)
Baby Boomers *1943 – 1960*	Boom(er) Generation; (Kowske, et al., 2010) Me Generation (Dries, et al., 2008)	1946 – 1964 (Benson and Brown, 2011; Cogin, 2012; Dries, et al., 2008; Meriac, et al., 2010); 1946 – 1962 (Davis, et al., 2006); 1946 – 1961 (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008)
Generation X *1961 -1981*	*Thirteenth;* *Baby Busters;* *Lost Generation;* Xers (Jovic, et al., 2006)	1965 – 1976 (Benson and Brown, 2011) 1965 – 1980 (Cogin, 2012; Dries, et al., 2008; Meriac, et al., 2010); 1963 – 1981 (Davis, et al., 2006); 1965 – 1983 (Sullivan, et al., 2009); 1962 – 1979 (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008)
Generation Y *1982 -*	*Millennials;* *Nexters;* *Echo Boomers;* Net Generation (Bennett, et al., 2008) Digital Natives (Smola and	1981 – 1995 (Cogin, 2012); 1981 – 1999 (Meriac, et al., 2010); 1984 – 2002 (Sullivan, et al., 2009); 1981 – 2001 (Dries, et al.,

	Sutton, 2002) ; Generation Me (Twenge and Campbell, 2008); Generation Next (Macky, et al., 2008) Millennium Generation (Dries, et al., 2008)	2008); 1980 – 2000 (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008) 1980 – 1994 (Smola and Sutton, 2002)

Adapted and extended from Parry and Urwin (2011), original in italics.

Table 2: Theme description and frequencies

Theme	Overview	Frequency of coded texts
Entitlement	Entitlement to work or alternative compensation (e.g. benefits or pension). Encompasses the right to select type of work. Relates to effort invested by individuals and generations. Includes constructions of entitlement to particular support (e.g. training).	Baby boomer data: 50 Lost generation data: 35
Responsibility	Responsibility for the problems associated with either the lost generation or baby boomers in respect to their employment. Also responsibility for particular solutions. Applied at a generic (e.g. government, society) and individual level. Includes issues seen to exempt or increase responsibility (including age).	Baby boomers data: 138 Lost generation data: 79
Consequences	This includes statements of the future consequences for individuals, generations or more generically (for society, the	Baby boomers data: 44 Lost generation data: 39

	economy) that arise from particular understandings of these generations in relation to work. These include specific predictions (e.g. social unrest) and more general outcomes such as positive or negative trends in respect to society, the economy, inter-generational relations etc.	