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### Generation in transition: Youth transitions among native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey

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# 6: Transition during School: Working while Studying

## 1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, youth researchers have argued that school-to-work transitions have become more complex and prolonged due to new conditions in European labour markets and education systems (Wyn and Dwyer, 1999). One widely acknowledged reason for this prolongation is the expansion of higher education, which is increasingly accompanied by growing participation in part-time student employment. The fact that young people increasingly work while they study extends their education over their occupational career. This poses the question of when exactly labour market transition begins and ends for young people (du Bois-Reymond, 2009a). Hence, today, a better understanding of transition experiences requires analysing the dynamic interplay of multiple transitions taking place simultaneously (Schoon and Silbereisen, 2009).

The preceding chapter studied the initial transitions into a certain educational trajectories of native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey living in Amsterdam and Strasbourg. The current chapter now explores how these young people combine their studies with work through their trajectories, and how the combinations of work and study influence the transition process. Thus this chapter will look into the labour market transition that young people can be said to experience *during their schooling*.

Previous studies have suggested that student employment is mostly undertaken for financial reasons, such as to pay for tuition costs or to sustain a consumer lifestyle, in addition to gain credentials needed to secure a full-time position in the labour market (Brooks, 2006). Student employment practices thus familiarize young people with the world of work, where they get to build occupational skills as well as work-related orientations and motivations. However, working can also have negative implications for students' educational careers, depending on the type of job, working conditions, or hours of employment, in the form of falling grades or even dropping out of school entirely (McNeal, 1997, Ruhm, 1997). As a result,

student employment is in many ways a critical activity during the transition process.

Recent research in the Netherlands and in France has documented a significant increase in student employment over the last two decades. In the Netherlands, student employment (in Dutch called *Bijbaan*) refers to a student job that takes place during the course of schooling around 12 hours per week. According to CBS statistics, in 1992 one third of the students between the ages of 15-24 worked at least 12 hours per week during the course of their studies. This percentage had increased to more than 50% by 2001 (Lucassen, 2003). In 2006, almost 80% of Dutch students between the ages of 20-24 reported having a regular job of at least 12 hours per week, with 60% of them working more than 12 hours (Riele and Siermann, 2007). Similarly, in France, student jobs refer to both regular jobs for 12 hours per week as well as to small irregular jobs (*petit-boulots*). According to the Generation Survey 1998, 70% of students reported having had some sort of a job during their studies although only 11% of them were on a regular basis (Cereq, 2001). In the Generation Survey 2004, participation in student jobs increased to 75% while regular employment reached 17% (Cereq, 2007).

As previous studies alerted that there is a lack of significance of student employment for the occupational careers of 'second generation' groups (Kasinitz et al., 2008), there is very little research on the student employment patterns of the descendants of immigrants in the Netherlands and France. Nevertheless, certain trends are discernible in the existing statistics. First, the participation of descendants of immigrants in student employment has increased in the last few decades in the Netherlands, though these students are less likely to combine work and study compared to their peers with native-born parents (Lucassen, 2003, Wolbers, 2008b). However, neither Lucassen (2003) and Wolbers (2008) distinguish between immigrants and their descendants. As a result, it is not clear whether the descendants of Turkish immigrants combine work and study less than the children of natives. In France, previous research has shown divergent patterns of student employment based on family socioeconomic standing. For example, the children of managers and executives are more likely to work in jobs in the area of their studies, and thus have higher chances of transitioning to the labor market through these jobs, compared to children from low and middle-income families (Béduwé and Giret, 2004). Lower status jobs also carry precarious working arrangements and more strenuous work conditions that lead to dropping out or failure in school (Pinto, 2010).

This chapter is composed of three sections. First, it delineates the structural contexts of student employment in Amsterdam and Strasbourg with a special emphasis on labour market context and student financing mechanisms. Second, it uses TIES data to describe student employment practices among children of Turkish immigrants in Amsterdam and Strasbourg. Since financial reasons form the major motive for student employment, a detailed overview of the financial position

of the students in both settings is provided. The third section refers to the qualitative interviews to understand the motivations behind student employment practices and the implications of working while studying on the transition process.

## 2. Structural Contexts for Student Employment in the Netherlands and France

### 2.1. Labour Market Contexts

The growth of student employment in the Netherlands has primarily been interpreted as a sign of increased labour market flexibility (Meer and Wielers, 2001). Delsen and Poutsma have argued that increased flexibility in the working practices of the Dutch labour market has led to a rise in the number of temporary contracts and part-time employees (Delsen and Poutsma, 2005). Accordingly, students were deemed to be one of the most eligible groups to take jobs with flexible hours, temporary contracts, and low wages—to the extent that in some cases they even replace senior workers with low education levels who demand greater employment security and stability (Meer and Wielers, 2001). In the case of France, recent reforms to promote flexibility in the labour market did lead to an increase in temporary contracts. However, the effect of this reform was to preserve reasonably high levels of job security among senior workers (“insiders”), but to lower them among new entrants, especially young workers (“outsiders”) (Jamet, 2006). Consequently, young people are more vulnerable to precarious working arrangements, such as short-term fixed contracts and repeated periods of unemployment (Zdrojewski et al., 2008). Under such circumstances, there are a restricted number of student employment opportunities, all with temporary contracts, flexible working hours, and low job security. The French government has recently begun to use new legislation<sup>19</sup> and official reports to promote student employment, identifying it as a means of gaining autonomy and professional experience while improving integration into the labour market (Bérail, 2007). However, left wing parties and student unions in France consider work-study situations to be an indication of financial need due to a lack of sufficient government funding.

### 2.2. Student Finance Systems

Another factor in the proliferation of student employment in both countries are their respective reforms to financial aid systems. In the Netherlands, since 1986, there has been a gradual transfer of financial responsibility from the government to higher education students through reforms in the financial system (Vossensteyn, 1999). Prior to 1993, the state provided a basic grant (*basisbeurs*) to all students older

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<sup>19</sup> For example, a law has been passed that allows universities to employ their own students in administrative positions at school (Bérail 2007).

than 18 attending post-secondary vocational education (MBO) or tertiary education (HBO, WO). The amount increased if the students did not reside at their parents' house. The children of low-income families received a supplementary grant based on a means test,<sup>20</sup> and all students were allowed to take out extra loans with an interest rates. Furthermore, all students were offered a travel pass to use either during the week or on weekends. However, after 1993 this system changed with the introduction of performance-based grants (*prestatiebeurs*), which transformed both basic and supplementary grants into so-called “conditional grants”. These grants did not need to be repaid in the case of successful graduation, but, should the student fail to graduate, the grant would become a loan subject to an interest rate (Eurydice, 2007). Even before the reform, student organizations were arguing that educational grants were substantially below student expenditure (Vossensteyn, 2002). Under the new measures, students became obliged to acquire loans at interest, depend on parental contribution, or take a student job. Most students preferred part-time jobs to extra loans as they were already at risk of being faced with loan repayments in the case of academic failure (ibid). The new legislation not only increased student employment, but also rendered students' socioeconomic background more significant. Students from privileged backgrounds could rely on parental support, while those from lower income families became obliged to depend on student employment or loans.

The French student assistance system has also been criticized for its insufficiency, with regard to both the amount disbursed and to the number of students who benefit from it. Unlike the Netherlands, in France, only students in tertiary education programs (BTS or university) can benefit from scholarships, and only the children of low-income families can benefit from government assistance programs.<sup>21</sup> According to a survey by the OVE, only 30% of French students reported having received some sort of student financing, most of whom came from low-income families (OVE, 2006). According to the official report by Wauquiez, most middle class students are excluded from the collective aid system because they are not considered “poor” enough, and most of them resort to part-time employment to finance their expenses (Wauquiez, 2006). However, states assistance constitutes the smallest proportion of income for all students—the highest contributor is the income gained from student employment (OVE, 2006). In 2008 the student financial aid system was overhauled to make it more accessible. Under the new reform, social criteria scholarships are dependent on the income of the parental household, the number of dependent children, and the distance from the household to the student's place of study (Eurydice, 2008). Social criteria

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<sup>20</sup> While the *basibeurs* is the same amount for all students - around 100 € - with the supplementary grant the scholarship can go up to approximately 400€.

<sup>21</sup> There is six-level system, in which a student's rank is determined by parental income, whether one lives in the parents' home, and number of siblings studying. Those in Level 0 receive no aid and those in Level 6 can get up to €450 per month.

scholarships can be supplemented by merit aids based on students' grades or success in education, and there is also a new national emergency fund that is implemented in cases where the existing funds are insufficient to cover financial need. Additionally, a new student loan system was implemented in the 2008-09 academic year with the intention of increasing access to such funding while also bringing variety to the ways in which students finance their studies. The state also now provides funds for accommodation and food.<sup>22</sup> Unlike in the Netherlands, while students must complete a certain number of academic credits per semester depending on their course of study to sustain their scholarships, the French scholarships do not automatically become loans if the student fails to complete his or her academic program.

### 2.3. Education System and Labour Market

As mentioned in the education chapter, in the Netherlands and France differ from each other in terms of the way in which individuals acquire occupational skills in the education system, and how these skills are recognized in the labour market. The Dutch education system has a strong vocational orientation, through which professional skills are acquired at higher secondary and tertiary vocational schools, and students are often expected to conduct considerable periods of internships or traineeships (Mueller and Gangl, 2003). Conversely, France has a less vocationally-oriented education system in which professional skills are gained mainly through on-the-job training (*ibid*). Despite new developments in vocational tertiary education in France, where the role of employers and internships are encouraged, (Powell et al., 2009), professional tertiary education and vocational tracks still typically require much shorter internship periods compared to the Netherlands (Pigeaud et al., 2009, Visser, 2010).<sup>23</sup> These differences may have an effect on student employment practices, as gaining work experience is more valued and even promoted by the education system in the Netherlands than in France. A recent study by Wolbers (Wolbers, 2003) using EULFS, showed that, in addition to the higher levels of participation in apprenticeships or internships, student employment is also more common in the Netherlands than in France. High participation in internships, which are institutional forms of work-study combinations fostered by educational institutions and the labour market, creates and promotes student employment in the Netherlands.

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<sup>22</sup> The impact of this new reform will be observed in the coming years.

<sup>23</sup> According to the Vocational Education and Training (VET) reports of CEDEFOP, while most vocational programs in the Netherlands require at least 20% of study time to be spent working for a minimum of 6 months, in France the internship requirement is only 4-6 weeks.

### 3. Work-Study Combination in Amsterdam and Strasbourg

The TIES is a cross-sectional survey and only provides a snapshot of respondents' activity. Table 9 shows the distribution of activity reported by the descendants of immigrants from Turkey at the time of the survey. Since the current chapter is about *student* employment practices, the data analysis will only focus on students, who form 37.2% of the sample in Amsterdam and 30.1% in Strasbourg. This group includes those who are combining work and study, doing an apprenticeship or only studying. Those who are not studying will be excluded from the analysis.

*Table 9: Respondents' current activity*

	Amsterdam			Strasbourg		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Working	44%	32.8%	38%	59.8%	39.4%	47.2%
Work and Study	22%	16.4%	19%	6.2%	6.5%	6.3%
Apprenticeship/ Internship	4.6%	8.6%	6.8%	1%	0.6%	0.8%
Inactive (sick/ not seeking work)	4.6%	4.7%	4.6%	4.1%	2.6%	3.2%
Caring for children	0	18%	9.7%	1%	11%	7.1%
Unemployed	9.2%	11.7%	10.5%	9.3%	14.2%	12.3%
Only Studying	15.6%	7.8%	11.4%	18.6%	25.8%	23%
Total (N)	109	128	237	97	155	252

Source: TIES Survey 2008

It is possible that those who are not in school anymore might have had a student job in the past. Unfortunately, we do not have detailed retrospective information on the labour market histories of respondents for both settings, especially with respect to student employment<sup>24</sup>.

In the Amsterdam survey, the 30.7% of students who reported themselves as “only studying” were also asked whether they had had a student job in the past. 21.6% had had a student job in the past, and only 9.1% had never worked before. Unfortunately, in the Strasbourg data, students were exempted from the job history questions, and it is thus unclear whether they had worked before, or if they were looking for a job at the time of the survey. There is only information on their current activity. Therefore, the available data on previous student employment is

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<sup>24</sup> In Strasbourg, the first job of the respondent was specified as “the first job after having graduated”, but, in Amsterdam, this specification was not made, so the respondents refer to any first job they had—which may have been a student job.

not consistent across settings, and will be excluded. As a result, this analysis will only focus on the student employment activity at the time of the survey. It will look at which students combined work and study and under what conditions. Table 10 below illustrates the distribution of student employment activities among the sample of native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey who were still in school at the time of the survey.

*Table 10: Participation in student employment*

	Amsterdam			Strasbourg		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Work and Study	52.2%	50%	51.1%	24%	19.6%	21.1%
Apprentice/ Internship	10.9%	26.2%	18.2%	4%	2%	2.6%
Only Study	37%	23.8%	30.7%	72%	78.4%	76.3%
Total (N)	46	42	88	25	51	76

Source: TIES Survey 2008

### 3.1. Nature of Employment

In order to understand the characteristics and regularity of the student jobs in the sample, we will analyse the following variables: hours of work per week, type of contract, and duration of employment in the current job (Table 11). Full-time jobs are defined as those of 32 hours or more per week, versus part-time jobs at 31 hours or less per week.

In Amsterdam, most of the sample worked in part-time jobs with temporary contracts. However, their jobs appear quite stable as most reported working in the same place for more than one year. Conversely, in Strasbourg only a minority of the students reported having worked at their job for longer than one year. That said, the case numbers are rather too small in Strasbourg to make a robust analysis.

In Amsterdam, most of the sample found work in financial intermediation services and the wholesale/retail sectors, followed by hotels and restaurants. In Strasbourg, the majority worked in the wholesale and retail sector, followed by financial and healthcare services. In Amsterdam, friends and family provided access to student employment for most of the survey participants. In Strasbourg, most students used job agencies to find work, followed by their social contacts as the second most common resource.



*Table 11: Nature of student employment*

	Amsterdam			Strasbourg		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Full time work (vs. part time work)	12.5% (87.5)	19% (81%)	15.5 (85.5%)	66.7% (33.3)	40% (60%)	50% (50%)
Stable contract (vs. other types)	33.3% (66.6%)	33.3% (66.6%)	33.3% (66%)	50% (50%)	20% (80%)	31.2% (68.7%)
Worked at firm for 1 year or more (vs. less than 1 year)	61.9% (38%)	52.3% (47.6%)	60% (40%)	16,7% (83,3)	20% (80%)	18.7% (81%)
Total (N)	24	21	45	6	10	16
Mean Age	21.6	22.4	22	21.5	21.8	21.6

Source: TIES Survey 2008

### 3.2. Student Financial Resources and Monthly Net Income

Financial motivations form a significant impetus for student employment. The TIES survey provides information on the students' self-reported monthly income based on earnings from their part-time jobs and/or scholarships. Table 12 shows the distribution of income sources in both settings.

*Table 12: Sources of students' income*

	Amsterdam	Strasbourg
Scholarship & Work and Study	23.9%	5.3%
Only Work and Study (no scholarship)	27.2%	15.8%
Only Scholarship (no work and study)	31.9%	34.2%
No source of income reported	17%	44.7%
Total (N)	88	76

Source: TIES Survey 2008

In Amsterdam, 83% of the sample reported having some sort of an income from either scholarships, student employment, or both at the time of the survey (Table 12). In addition, 34.4% reported having an income of less than 550€ per month, while 44.4% of the students reported more.

However, in Strasbourg, only 55.3% reported having a regular income, while 44.7% had no source of income from scholarships or jobs at the time of the interview (Table 12). One fourth of the students stated that they had a monthly net income

of less than 550€, while only 9% reported having an income of more than 550€ per month.

In Amsterdam, income from scholarships, student employment or both was considerable, while, in Strasbourg, most students seemed to be dependent on family support. The next section will address how receiving a scholarship is related to student employment in both settings.

### 3.3. Scholarships and Work-Study Combinations

In Amsterdam, 55.8% of the sample stated that they received some sort of a scholarship. Table 13 shows the activity distribution of those in receipt of scholarships against those who did not in Amsterdam and Strasbourg. The table illustrates that those who do not receive a scholarship are more active in work-study situations in both settings.

There is a significant association between work-study practices and whether or not the student received a scholarship for the children of Turkish immigrants in Amsterdam. Those who receive no scholarship funds are three times more likely to combine work and study than those who do.<sup>25</sup> In Strasbourg, the association between work-study combination and receipt of a scholarship was not significant according to a Pearson's chi-square test. Using odds-ratios, it is apparent that those who do not receive a scholarship are 2.4 times more likely to combine work and study compared to those who do.

*Table 13: Activity among scholarship and non-scholarship students*

	Amsterdam		Strasbourg	
	No scholarship	Received scholarship	No scholarship	Received scholarship
Work and Study	61.5%	42.9%	26.1%	13.3%
Stage	20.5%	16.3%	4.3%	0
Only Study	17.9%	40.8%	69.6%	86.7%
Total (N)	39	49	46	30

Source: TIES Survey 2008

### 3.4. Parents' Financial Activity and Educational Capital

As indicated earlier, there is no information on the parental household income included in the TIES survey. However there is information on whether the

<sup>25</sup> Pearson's chi-square was significant:  $\chi^2(1) = 5.17\%$ ,  $p < 0.05$

participants' parents were currently active in the labour market at the time of the survey. Once again, this section provides information only for the sample group who were still in education at the time of the survey.

*Table 14: Students' Parents' occupation*

	Amsterdam		Strasbourg	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Working	43.2%	30.6%	75%	44.7%
Seeking work	2.3%	3%	3.9%	9.2%
Sick or otherwise inactive	31.8%	27.3%	9.2%	3.9%
Retired	6.8%	2.3%	6.6%	1.3%
Caring for children	0%	29.5%	0%	39.5%
Missing / DK	15.9%	6.8%	5.2%	1.3%
Total (N)	88		76	

Source: TIES Survey 2008

Table 14 illustrates the patterns of employment among the parents of the respondents who were still studying at the time of the survey. While there is no information on the income level of the parents, 31.8% of the respondents reported that their fathers are inactive or on sick leave compared to 9.2% in Strasbourg. Hence in Amsterdam only 55% of the sample had at least one employed parent, whereas 45% reported both parents as inactive or unemployed. However, in Strasbourg 85% the students had at least one parent active in the labour market. When we look at the association between parental activity and the work-study combination of the students, there is no significant association. However, concentrating on the odds-ratios reveals that, in Strasbourg, native born descendants of Turkish immigrants with both parents inactive are 2.6 times more likely to combine work and study compared to those who had at least one active parent. In Amsterdam, those with two inactive parents are only 1.2 times more likely to combine work and study than those with at least one employed parent. As a result, students whose parents were not active in the labour market are more present in work-study combinations in Strasbourg than those in Amsterdam.

Previous research demonstrates that higher education students are more likely to combine work and study, as are older students (Lucassen, 2003). The TIES survey shows similar patterns. In the sample, the majority of the students who combined work and study were in higher education. Nevertheless, there was no more

significant association between being in higher education and combining work and study compared to being in vocational or higher secondary school and doing so.

### 3.5. Summary of Quantitative Findings

The fact that there was no retrospective information on student employment history from respondents in Strasbourg limited our analysis to current student employment. At the time of the survey, native-born descendants of Turkish immigrants in Amsterdam were more active in work- study combinations than those in Strasbourg. This activity was reflected in the participants' financial standing. Children of immigrants from Turkey in Amsterdam had access to more financial resources through scholarships and income from student jobs, and thus had higher monthly net incomes. Moreover, those who did not have scholarships were more likely to combine work and study in Strasbourg than in Amsterdam.

In Strasbourg, scholarships were the most common source of income among students (39%), while 44.7% of the students reported having no income, and were solely dependent upon family support. Accordingly, parents in Strasbourg were more active in the labour market than those in Amsterdam, and those students whose parents were inactive were more likely to combine work and study in Strasbourg than in Amsterdam.

## 4. Qualitative Study: In-depth Interviews on the Student Employment Experience

### 4.1. The Nature of Student Employment in Amsterdam and Strasbourg

The qualitative section of the study focuses on a sample of the native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey in the Dutch and French education systems. It involved 25 interviews with students in Amsterdam and 25 in Strasbourg, discussing their school-to-work transition processes. The interviews revealed that student employment is a significant experience for young people, and information was gathered on the students' employment histories, circumstances under which they sought work, and their reflections on the employment experience. In Table 15, student employment activities are summarized with regard to both students' current and past experiences. "Regular and irregular employment" refers to situations in which students worked during the course of their schooling on a regular basis for at least one period. The same respondents might also have worked irregularly at some point, but they remain in this category. "Irregular Employment only" refers to cases in which students worked only in irregular jobs during summer breaks or holidays or at short intervals during vacations, but never regularly during their course of studies. This distinction is intended to highlight the regular nature of student employment in Amsterdam especially.

As in the findings from the TIES survey samples, work-study practices were found to be more common in Amsterdam. Since the qualitative interviews were able to account for occupational histories, we have more detailed information on student employment in Strasbourg. In Amsterdam, almost all the respondents had a job throughout their studies, except for one person who dropped out of school after lower secondary education (VMBO) and started working. In Strasbourg, more than half of the surveyed youths combined work and study, though female respondents held part-time jobs less frequently. Unlike Amsterdam, there is also more variation in work-study combinations in Strasbourg, with a mix of regular and irregular employment, or no employment at all.

Table 15: Qualitative profiles for work and study

	Amsterdam			Strasbourg		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Regular (and Irregular) Employment	13	11	25	5	4	9
Irregular Employment only	0	0	0	6	3	10
Didn't combine work and study	0	1	1	1	5	6
Total	13	12	25	12	12	25

The most popular areas of employment among the respondents in Amsterdam were the retail sector—mostly in supermarkets, but also as assistants or sales advisors—and the airline industry—cleaning airplanes or working in the baggage section. There is also a notable gender division in these employment practices; airport jobs, which are physically demanding but easily accessible and well-paid, are mostly taken by males. While the majority of Amsterdam students worked in low-status jobs, some held positions that were related to their area of studies—such as those in banking or finance—and expected to improve their CVs. Most jobs in Amsterdam were arranged around school hours during the week. Young people were flexible with their working schedules, and working hours ranged from 12 to 24 or more per week, with some considering full-time work during the short school vacations or over the summer. Furthermore, some participants had rather stable employment; they worked for the same employer for 2.5 years, and switched between full and part-time work through their studies. The respondents in Amsterdam mostly used their social contacts to find jobs, in addition to employment agencies (e.g., *uitzendbureaus*) and online advertisements. They became increasingly acquainted with certain jobs, especially those in supermarkets and airports, so they would take up these jobs whenever they fell into unemployment.

In the case of the Strasbourg group, there were three main areas of employment; in the construction sector, in factories working in assembly lines, and in janitorial jobs (mostly in the Parliament). There were also smaller side jobs, such as newspaper

distribution or babysitting. Another activity was doing unpaid work in the family business. In Strasbourg, many of the part-time jobs took place during the summer or school vacations. However, those who were regularly employed had to work during the weekends. No respondents worked in the same place for more than one year, although some may have returned to the same summer job every year. Some of the Strasbourg respondents reported finding it particularly difficult to work while in school since class attendance was obligatory and also very demanding.<sup>26</sup> As in Amsterdam, most jobs were found via social contacts; especially the cleaning jobs. Others were found through job agencies (e.g. *office de l'intérim*); including factory work and other short-term posts.

These findings regarding the nature of jobs and working practices in both group of respondents overlap with those of the TIES survey sample: More students in Amsterdam had access to scholarships, but also had higher levels of monthly income from student employment and benefits, while those in Strasbourg tried to supplement their income with parental contributions and also from with small side jobs or summer job savings. Whether or not the students' parents supported their educational and individual expenses had a direct influence on their working practices and job choices in both settings, irrespective of the individual income of the respondents.

#### 4.2 Financial motivations to work in Amsterdam and Strasbourg

Financial reasons formed the major impetus for student employment among respondents. In Amsterdam, all respondents resided in the same household as their parents during their studies.<sup>27</sup> Most students received a student finance grant called *studie financiering*, ranging from 100€ to 500€ per month depending on their parents' income and place of residence. However, the students stressed that these scholarships did not cover all of their expenses, but were just a supplement to their income. Soner, a final-year student in post-secondary vocational education (MBO) studying commerce (Handel), was working in a phone store at the time of the interview. He had always had stable part-time employment since age 16. He worked for at least two years in each of his jobs. His main motivation for changing employment was higher pay. He stated that scholarship funds only covered some of his primary needs, and that he had to work to supplement them:

INTERVIEWER: What do your parents do?

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<sup>26</sup> The level of difficulty depended on the type of study. While official hours of study do not differ greatly between the Netherlands and France, in practice higher education seems to require more class attendance in France but provides more autonomy in Amsterdam.

<sup>27</sup> Those who lived with their parents only considered leaving home after getting married. Some students even continued to live with their parents or in-laws after marriage, due to difficulties finding social housing or affordable childcare.

SONER: My dad works. My mum sometimes [works]; once or twice a week if necessary. Now I get studie (study aid), but after tuition, health insurance, and the phone bill, nothing is left. So I have to work. I mean, you have to work; there is nothing left. It is expensive here you know.

Even among students with low-income parents, the financial situation of the family was not mentioned as “an obligation to work.” The objective conditions—in this case the parents’ financial standing and the scarceness of scholarships—lead more students to part-time work as the most “reasonable” activity (Bourdieu 1977, p.77). Irrespective of the parents’ financial position, the earnings from these part-time jobs did not contribute to household income. This income was for the respondents to pay for their personal expenses such as school fees or consumer goods. Gül, a final-year HBO student at a tertiary vocational school, had had an intensive student employment career since she was 16. She mentioned that she had a considerable income, and that she mainly spent it on clothes. While she wouldn’t share her income with her parents, she would also not ask for money from them.

GÜL: First I worked in a store. When I was 16 I think I worked for two years there or something, but, while I was working there, I found my other job. I have always done two jobs at a time. I can’t get enough money, you know, that’s what my mother says. My closet is always full. (giggles)

INTERVIEWER: How many hours per week would you work?

GÜL: I became greedy with money; I worked a lot! First in Blocker and also in the phone company. I was working every single day. I had quite a good salary at the end of the month.

Increased consumption was an important outcome, as well as a major motivation, of student employment among my respondents. Previous research on youth sociology has shown how participation in the consumer economy has become an integral part of young people’s lives, and is even considered one way of becoming an adult (du Bois-Reymond, 2009b). As Best argues (Best, 2009), young people purchase and use goods in the consumer market to construct certain identities and to set themselves apart from their parents. Şakir, who dropped out of post-secondary vocational education (MBO), works as a security guard and lives with his parents. He began working in the airport when he was 16, and had quite stable employment there for four years before he started working as a security guard. Asked about his current income and whether he finds it sufficient, he responded as follows:

ŞAKIR: Something happened here and whether he finds it sufficient employment there for four years before he started working as a security guard second generation and I am third generation, and there is a huge difference between these two things. Why? Because they came here. They don’t speak Dutch. They purchase

only the cheapest things. They don't do certain things. They have to take care of us. They came under these circumstances with the idea of returning [to Turkey] someday. But we are not like that. I was born here. I grew up here. So I have to spend the rest of my life here. I take this into consideration when I take each of my steps. I think that I will live here for the rest of my life. I speak Dutch, English, and Turkish. I have learned things over time. There is a big difference between my parents and me. [There is] also [a difference] between my grandparents and my parents.

Şakir articulates his “lifestyle choices”, in terms of how he dresses and spends his leisure time, as his distinction from his parents (Best, 2009,p.256). He used this distinction to emphasize the difference in social standing that had developed (“something happened here”) between himself—a member of the “third generation”<sup>28</sup>—and his parents, who were second generation “immigrants”, trying to sustain their families on a minimum income and dreaming of returning to Turkey. Born and raised in the Netherlands, Şakir set himself apart with regard to his qualifications, future prospects, and also his tastes. Student employment has thus provided native born descendants of Turkish immigrants with purchasing power, and this consumerism has become an integral part of their lives.

All of these respondents lived in the same household as their parents and depended on them for shelter, food, and services such as laundry and cleaning. However, by not taking money from their parents and paying for their own expenses, they were articulating a sense of “independence” and building “responsibility.” This feeling of independence becomes vital during the transition process, when young people are deciding whether to enter the labour market or pursue their studies into higher education. Especially for vocational students, financial independence from parents relieves economic concerns that would create pressure to enter the labour market. Ufuk was a vocational student with low-income parents. He had been working since he was 16 at the airport. He explained his future plans as follows:

INTERVIEWER: What is your next step?

UFUK: I am planning to attend HBO [tertiary vocational education]. Some say it's hard, but I want to try...

INTERVIEWER: Do you have to pay for that school?

UFUK: Well some, not much. I've looked into some websites and been to a few open

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<sup>28</sup> Şükrü provides an alternative conceptualization of generations. He classifies his father, who arrived in the Netherlands after his grandfather, as second generation, and himself as third generation, born and raised here. According to statistical definitions, his father is classified as 1.5 generation while he is second generation. Thus, adding to our discussion of this concept in the theory chapter, we see that the respondents themselves have their own definitions of the generation concept, which may not follow the generally accepted one.



days where they talk about the schools, you know. But money is not an issue, you know; if you work part time, you make money.

Ufuk's vocational diploma makes him eligible to enter the labour market, but he didn't seem to be in a hurry, and wanted to try tertiary education first. Similarly, Sencer decided to access higher tertiary education after his vocational training. He did not ask his families permission since he paid for the school costs himself.

SENCER: I didn't really ask them you know. I am the one who pays for the school, for the books. I haven't asked for money from my parents since I was sixteen you know. Of course, they were OK with what I did in the end.

In Strasbourg, by comparison, students under financial obligations could feel pressured to start working vis-à-vis their parents. As in Amsterdam, all of the respondents in Strasbourg resided in the household of their parents during the course of their studies. Only those studying in tertiary vocational education (BTS) or university were eligible for scholarships; those in high school (*bac*) or in vocational training (*CAP/BEP*) were not. As a result, only a minority of the Strasbourg respondents were receiving a scholarship. If they were receiving one, their grants ranged from 150€ to 430€ per month, depending on family income, the number of siblings attending school, and the distance of their family's residence from school.

The Strasbourg students described the amount of the scholarship as insufficient to cover their expenses. Nevertheless, they expressed gratitude for this income rather than dissatisfaction, saying it was "better than nothing." Since both the access to and the amount of these grants were very limited, the motivation to combine work and study was contingent on the financial support that parents provided. While in Amsterdam the financial support of the family did not have a strong impact on the decision to work, in Strasbourg it determined whether someone worked on a regular basis or not. As combining study with a regular job was quite demanding, only those who felt the financial obligation to work regularly chose to.

After acquiring the vocational diploma (*BEP*), Behzat had good grades and was advised to continue his studies. He went to high school and received his *professional baccalauréat (bac pro.)*, and subsequently began a tertiary vocational training (*BTS*). His parents were not able to support him financially and he had to work to pay for his personal expenses:

BEHZAT: I used to work during the holidays—in factories for example—and this was where the problem began. When the semester started, these jobs called me back to work. At first, I went to work at weekends and to school on weekdays. Sometimes I would even work during two days of school. Then I would feel very tired. I had to work because my father and my mother are both retired. My brother and my sister got married and they moved to their own homes. So I was the only child living with

my parents, and I didn't want to be a burden on them. I wanted to make my own money. I was 18 back then. I didn't want to have to ask my parents for money.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

BEHZAT: Why? Because all my friends had already started working. But I hadn't. They paid for their own driving licenses. They had cars, but I didn't. I had also learned a trade and I told myself I could also make money and pay for my driver's license. I regret it. I wish I had finished my BTS (tertiary vocational diploma). It is getting very difficult to find a job without a BTS these days.

Behzat had five days of intensive classes, which did not make it easy for him to combine work and study. He remembers that his father once asked him; “How long are you planning on studying?” Even though this was not an overt suggestion he quit school, all the conditions surrounding him suggested that entering the labour market the right activity; his parents expected him to work, he already had a vocational degree, and all his friends were working. Today he regrets his decision; although he has a good job, he fears that, should he become unemployed, he will not find decent work again without a BTS degree. Behzat's case also points to the significance of gender roles and the male working-class culture that surrounds many of the male respondents. Although these youths are in favour of higher education—contradicting theories of resistance among working-class males (Willis, 1977)—it is not an easy goal to pursue given their circumstances. As illustrated in the previous chapter on education, most native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey are advised to pursue vocational degrees (BEP/CAP), which do not provide direct access to higher education, and thus have to pursue a longer track to university. As they get older, these males need more money for their private expenses. Hence, for some, student employment becomes a necessity; especially if they want to stay in education. During lower secondary school (*college*), Cengiz was a successful student but he was advised to take the vocational track; a decision he did not oppose. His parents were also supportive of his wish to take the vocational track since they wanted him to learn a trade. However, once in vocational education, he was advised to continue into higher education on the basis of good grades. His family already had a supermarket business, where he had been working after school until late at night. This situation became problematic when he began higher education;

CENGİZ: In my first year of professional lyceum, my parents already had the supermarket business. I was going there to work every day after school to help them. But it was too much. I was fed up. I said either I should drop out of school or quit the job, but couldn't do both. Doing both, I was also unable to study properly. You could tell from my grades. At the vocational school (BEP), I had no difficulty; I never had to study. I was again working for my family, but it was easy. The vocational program was so easy; I think it was even easier than the secondary school (*college*). It was the year I started the vocational school my parents got the

supermarket. I was just going [to work there] every night. We were all motivated by having our own business. We were comparing ourselves to others who had a supermarket and how much they were making. So I was working. It was also our pocket money. My dad said, “You can get whatever you want.” But when I started high school, it changed.

INTERVIEWER: How did it change?

CENGİZ: The courses became more difficult because I was working so much. I finished the first year. I passed my classes but my grades were not that good. In vocational school my average was 15/20 but in high school it went down to 10/20. My teachers said I should come the next year but I talked to my father and told him that I did not want to continue with school.

INTERVIEWER: How did he react?

CENGİZ: Look, I had my trade; I had a profession. He only said, “Do as you like, but don’t come and say it was because of me.”

Cengiz thus grew accustomed to working during vocational school, but everything changed once he started lyceum. The fact that he already had a “trade” created a psychological safety net for Cengiz which allowed him to quit schooling. Yet, having dropped out, Cengiz neither worked in the family business nor in the area of his profession (plumbing), but rather did all sorts of menial jobs, from delivery to factory assembly. Unlike Behzat, Cengiz did not express any regrets about his decision to drop out. He was only unhappy about his choice of trade, and he wished he had studied car mechanics instead of plumbing.

Conversely, while Deniz also had to work regularly because of her family’s financial difficulties, but her job actually became a motivation towards achieving a degree:

DENİZ: I worked in factory jobs and cleaning jobs—maybe six or seven positions like that over the course of my studies in high school and higher education. It was hard. Don’t get me wrong, I did all those jobs willingly; in the end, I made money and I’m grateful. I never looked down on them; they taught me a lot. These jobs made me more dedicated to my studies; even today, they remind me how lucky I am to have my current job.

Unlike Behzat, Deniz had parents who were very supportive of her educational track despite their lack of affluence. Her father, who was a painter, even worked extra hours to pay for private lessons for her to catch up with her classes. Deniz felt responsible towards her father to make an income so as not to be a burden on her family.

In fact, like in Amsterdam, the majority of the Strasbourg respondents felt the need to work part time for their personal expenses, yet none used their earnings to

contribute to their family's income. These earnings were their own; to pay for their consumer needs or living expenses and obtain a sense of responsibility.

The second group of students were those who had no obligation to work due to their family conditions, but still wanted to make some income for their personal or living expenses. They worked during holidays or summer breaks for pocket money to spend during their visits to Turkey or with which to purchase consumer goods. Veli, a university student, worked throughout the summer for money to spend throughout the year:

VELI: I always worked in the summers. I would work with my father and my uncle on the construction site. I also worked in a restaurant. I would earn my pocket money because I didn't always study here. I studied outside [of Strasbourg] for three years; two years in Lille and one year in Nancy. I tried to earn at least the cost of my gas bill by working in the summer.

INTERVIEWER: How long would you work for?

VELI: About a month, I would say. I had holidays for one month.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think about your experience?

VELI: Not much. I just earned some money; nothing more than that.

Most students took the opportunity to work in minor jobs to earn some extra income and to not have to ask their parents for money. This group formed the majority of the respondents in Strasbourg. Since labour market opportunities were quite limited, the most reasonable activity for them was to work temporarily when they could. Comparing all these accounts, the consumer behaviour and the spending of the respondents in Strasbourg was lower compared to that in Amsterdam, where almost all had regular jobs to pay for personal costs.

Financial motivations are the major trigger for student employment among the majority of native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey in Amsterdam and Strasbourg. In the case of low family funds and insufficient student aid, part-time and temporary jobs enable students to engage in a consumer lifestyle and establish a sense of responsibility and independence while living in their parents' home. This was true for both academic and vocational students in both settings. The need to work was also not determined by one's work or study orientations; students who were very motivated to study but also obliged to earn an income did combine their studies with part-time work. While, in Amsterdam, it was rather convenient for students to combine regular employment with their studies, in Strasbourg students preferred to work during summer holidays on an irregular basis unless obliged to pay for their costs. As a result, Strasbourg students who had to combine work and study regularly had difficulty continuing their education, unless highly motivated to

study. On the contrary, in Amsterdam, student employment practices eased the immediate financial pressure to start working and this enabled them to experience rather extended and flexible transition processes, in which they either alternated work and study or did both. As a result, some students did drop out of vocational education, though none directly blamed their failure on their employment. Rather, those who dropped out made a relatively smooth transition into the labour market simply by staying on and converting their student jobs into full-time employment. Yet none of those who dropped out remained in their full-time positions for long, as they became dissatisfied with the employment situation. Thus, student employment positions created a kind of buffer zone after the drop out, but did not lead to permanent employment. As a result, these student jobs didn't provide permanent job prospects, but, for some, it eased the transition until they established themselves in the labour market.

#### 4.3 Role of Family Support and Students' Educational Capital in Choice of Part-time Jobs in Amsterdam and Strasbourg

Even though financial motivations were the main trigger for majority of the respondents in combining work and study, some experienced and benefitted from student employment in a different manner. Those with higher educational achievement and whose parents provided financial support were likely to choose jobs in the area of their studies, and tended to see their work experience as an important credential for the labour market. Clearly, a socioeconomic differentiation has developed among the immigrant parents from Turkey since their arrival in the 1970s, as some have earned more financial, social and educational capital during their stay in the host country. That those who have enjoyed certain advantages is evident in student employment practices within and across settings. The students who had the financial support of their parents said that their fathers not only paid for their school costs, but also for their consumer needs. This allowed them to focus on finding student jobs that would ultimately be important credentials for entering the labour market. Melek, a third year HBO student studying Business & Economics at HBO reported that her parents covered all of her expenses. When asked about her student employment experiences, she said she had never worked in any menial job, such as at a supermarket, but that she had tried to find work related to her field of study instead:

INTERVIEWER: What are the most important elements when you are looking for a job after graduation?

MELEK: Qualifications, self-confidence, but also work experience. I think work experience is the most important. [Employers] still expect you to have done a part-time job in addition your studies. They expect that. If you have that experience, you receive priority [in the hiring process]. In order to minimize the risks of unemployment, I am trying to fill in my CV with experience at good companies.

INTERVIEWER: How?

MELEK: Via internships and student employment. For example, in my second year, even though it was very difficult, I still worked. Because I thought that, in this way, I could find an internship a lot more easily the next year.

In the beginning of her second HBO year, Melek started looking for a job related to her studies through the website of an employment agency. She managed to arrange a part-time job (16 hours per week) in a prestigious international audit company; PwC—a name she was unfamiliar with before her job-search. She claims that it was only through people’s reactions to the name that she understood how good a company it was, she believes that this part-time job improved her chances of finding a good internship in her third year. For Melek, as a self-described “allochtone girl wearing a headscarf”, these experiences were vital to improving her future chances in the labour market.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, Bulut’s parents covered her expenses and mobilized every family resource to help her study. She had just finished her MA degree after completing an HBO in Business & Economics. Bulut was concentrating on internships and part-time jobs in the area of her studies. She highlighted the symbolic importance of “where one works” rather than “what one does” and how these positions were not only significant for her CV but also for providing crucial social capital for her future transition.

However, not all respondents with more financial resources worked in career-relevant student jobs, and some from less affluent backgrounds did. Some MBO students conducted dual training, combining four days of work with one day of study. Others transformed their internships into part-time employment or vice-versa. For example, Nevin was an MBO student who found her scholarship grant too meagre and wanted to combine her studies with part-time employment. She was not happy with her job in a wholesale store because it was too strenuous for her. She managed to gain a position four days a week at the company where she did her internship, and going to school only one day. Nevin claimed to have enjoyed work more than school, and didn’t mind finishing MBO in three years rather than two. In Amsterdam, most respondents were very conscious about the need to build and invest in their CVs. The major difference between higher education students working in their area of study (i.e. Melek and Bulut) and vocational students (i.e. Nevin and Hakan) was that the first group was more aware of the impact of company names or social networks that would facilitate entry into good positions when they graduated. Higher education students were also more concerned to

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<sup>29</sup> “Allochtone” is a pejorative term used in the Netherlands to refer to the native-born descendants of immigrants. However, it is important to underline that this terminology is being used by the respondents themselves to express their fears about how discrimination and stereotyping in the labour market might make it hard to find a position.

develop symbolic social capital for their future employment, while vocational students could not access any contacts via their parents. When this knowledge capital is supplemented by family financial support, young people are more easily able to access the kind of part-time work that is directly aligned with their studies, usually resulting in a more desirable graduate job.

In Strasbourg, none of the respondents had student jobs in their area of study. However, this might have been a sampling issue rather than a structural constraint as previous research has underlined that students with parents in managerial positions generally did work in jobs in their area of study and had smoother transitions to the labour market (Béduwé and Giret, 2004 ). Nevertheless, some respondents were inclined to undertake *institutional* work-study combinations, in the form of dual training, to be able to work in their area of study. This sort of combination was mostly utilized for tertiary vocational training (BTS), especially when the school was a private one. “Dual training” in BTS (*BTS en alternance*) involves four days of work and one of study per week, requiring young people to search for an employer who is willing to hire them and pay for their schooling in return for low-cost employment and certain tax reductions. However, it is difficult to find companies that are willing to commit to such an arrangement. Engin looked for a company with which to conduct dual training for two years after receiving his high school diploma (*bac tech.*) because he wanted to combine his studies with a job in a related field. In the end, he gave up on the idea and entered the labour market with only a high school diploma. By contrast, Selin, due to her extended networks through her father and her uncle, managed to find a Turkish company. However, when this arrangement didn’t go well and she had to change her employer, having already worked made it easier for her to find another, where she combined work and study for two years after high school. She later made a smooth transition into the labour market by staying with this second company. Selin didn’t work in a student job at any point in her schooling, nor did she have a summer job, as she had the full financial support of her family. Similarly, Gönül had to drop out of university due to a personal problem, but mobilized her family networks to find internships and an employer prepared to undertake a dual program. The internship experience arranged by her father in Germany, along with her previous training at university, helped her to find an employer. Again this transition wasn’t smooth for Gönül. First she worked with a Turkish employer and then she had to stop. After one year she was able to find another employer who would finance her dual training and stayed in the same job after finishing her studies. As this example demonstrates, both the parents’ financial and social capital and an individual’s own educational capital are instrumental in facilitating employment or at least in gaining entry into the labour market.

Some students in Strasbourg opted out of student employment deliberately since they saw it as an obstacle to their studies. This group was mostly composed of

female students. Zeyniye, a university student, stated that she was never obliged to work because her parents provided full support. While she did not have financially affluent parents, her father was committed to helping his children with their schooling:

ZEYNIYE: My brother, the eldest, finished ICT. My sister changed programs many times but she finished her degree in accounting. I have a Master's degree in languages, and my younger sister is about to get her Bachelor's degree in biology. Thank God my father achieved his aim. I cannot say we did not suffer or have hard times. His friends were telling him to put us to work. Now, when they visit during Bayrams (religious festivals), they look at us and admire us. I never had to work in my life. None of us children in the family worked. My father would tell me "Your mother and I couldn't study, so you should. I will support you during your education so that you cannot blame me in the future.

Zeyniye presented work as a distraction and even as an obstacle to studying, rather than as a credential or activity to accompany it. By contrast, this view of student employment was not raised in Amsterdam. For example, as discussed above, Melek was studying at HBO and had the full support of her parents. Yet her major concern was to find jobs in her area of study in order to have a later advantage in the labour market.

In both settings, those in higher education and who received the full financial support of their family were able to organize their student employment to their own career advantage. In Amsterdam, these students chose jobs which would look positive in their resumes and would count as relevant work experience. Students in higher education were particularly aware of the importance of developing work experience in their area of study. However, in Strasbourg, work in the area of study was an even more privileged activity, which only those who had certain levels of financial, social, and educational capital were able to access. This is significant as previous research in France has shown that those who worked in jobs in their area of study were more likely to make a successful transition to labour market. This was also found to be the case among this study's respondents. However, the jobs in question were not typical or menial student jobs, but were rather institutional work-study programs that constituted dual training. One last notable group were those who refrained from working following the logic that it would harm their studies. This group clearly indicates a different perception of student employment; one in which work is not seen as a credential or an academic activity but rather a hazardous distraction or alternative. This group was mostly composed of girls who received financial support from their families, suggesting a division of gender roles. Some girls in Strasbourg felt less pressure to undertake part-time work, both during their studies and even in cases where they dropped out.



## **5. Conclusion**

The chapter illustrated that labour market activity during school is significant for the transitions experience of the respondents of the study. Nevertheless the extent of this influence differed across settings. Both the quantitative and qualitative findings show that the native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey in Amsterdam were more active in the labour market during their studies compared to their counterparts in Strasbourg. In Amsterdam, state policies to decrease scholarship access and individualize the cost of education for students via loans combined with increased labour market demand for low- or unskilled labour, and the increased value attributed to professional experience by the education system. This had created a situation in which students, irrespective of parental financial capital, saw student employment as a “natural” activity. As well as facilitating consumerism, student employment provided a way for respondents to feel responsibility and independence while continuing to live with their parents. This financial independence played a crucial role during the transition process; native-born descendants of immigrants from Turkey in Amsterdam felt less pressured by financial obligations to enter the world of work, and were thus able to extend their studies, access tertiary education and experience rather more flexible transition processes. Conversely, in Strasbourg, state policies promoted student employment in order to pass on the costs of higher education (due to meagre scholarships opportunities), and also encouraged the professionalization of education by citing job experience as an important credential. However, these policies were not yet wholly supported by the labour market or the school environments. The labour market was unable to provide flexible employment for students, offering rather precarious working conditions instead. Schools also enforced strict class attendance rules, making it hard for students to accomplish both activities without putting their studies at risk. This created a tension for students who wanted to pursue their education but did not have the means to do so, and this was even more the case when they did not receive sufficient scholarships. Furthermore, the lack of part-time employment opportunities often meant that leaving education and accessing the labour market were the only option for students with financial obligations.

The intention of this chapter is not to praise the student employment opportunities in Amsterdam over Strasbourg. In fact, student employment proved to be both physically and mentally very demanding for many respondents, and hence detrimental for their studies. Nevertheless, student employment did ease transition for respondents in Amsterdam from low-income families, enabling them to participate in a consumer lifestyle and gain a sense of financial independence without dropping out of education altogether. Our quantitative analysis showed that the 83% of the sample reported having some sort of an income from part-time employment, scholarships or both. However, in Strasbourg, family resources remained the main source of student income, as only 55% of the students reported

having some sort of an income; mostly from scholarships. In both settings, those who didn't receive a scholarship were more likely to participate in student employment, which put their educational participation at risk and created conditions that led to many dropping out.

Furthermore, since the Amsterdam respondents had already started participating in the labour market, the boundary between work and study was rather blurred. Some students even managed to accomplish considerable contributions to their careers, having a positive effect on their transitions. However, employment practices varied significantly among respondents, and the beneficial nature of the student employment was strongly shaped by the financial and social capital of the family, as well as by the student's own education capital. Accessing a job in the area of study or doing dual training provided significant advantages for transitions from school. By working in such jobs and placements, students developed both cultural and social capital in their area of study, which positively contributed to their transition. However, in Strasbourg participating in student employment influenced some respondents' transitions in a detrimental way, leading to their dropping out of school. A few managed to access institutionally designed work and study combinations (e.g., BTS *en alternance*), not only combining work and study but also making a smooth transition into the labour market. However, respondents who were not able to participate in such combinations had more difficulty finding jobs; even those with same education level (BTS). These young people thus lacked both the cultural and the social capital that could have been gained from participating in such employment during their studies.