

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH MARGINALIZATION IN THE LABOR MARKET

Lamiya Suleymanli*

Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, Baku, Azerbaijan

Abstract

Young people, who constitute the main segment of the working-age population worldwide, play a crucial role in ensuring the economic and social well-being of the country. Thus, the main reason for the material and moral balance of society is the integration of young people into all spheres of life and their active social participation. However, the changing demands and conditions of the modern era have created a foundation for the marginalization of young people in the labor market, leading to the emergence of various social problems. This article analyzes the challenges of youth participation in the labor market and examines its social consequences.

Keywords

Unemployment, youth unemployment, marginalization, labor market, social consequence.

Citation: Suleymanli, L. (2026). Social consequences of youth marginalization in the labor market. *Social Issues*, 4(1), 108-113. <https://doi.org/10.30546/SI.2026.04.5038>

1. Introduction

Insufficient knowledge and skills of youth, along with the changing demands of the contemporary era, weaken their integration into the labour market. Therefore, many young people are compelled to struggle with prolonged unemployment or take on low-paid and unstable jobs. Under these conditions, the majority of young people aged 16 to 29 remain out of the labor market, unable to achieve success in socio-economic activities or advance their personal development. In the context of social sciences, the term “marginalization” is considered one of the most appropriate concepts describing the situation.

The etymology of the word “marginalization” is drawn from the Latin word “margo”, which means “edge” or “border” and is used to describe the condition of an individual or group being placed outside various spheres of life. Generally, marginalization in the social sciences is understood as a social phenomenon that is characterized by the exclusion of individuals or social groups from the economic, political and social life of society. As a consequence of this process, the individual becomes partially or entirely detached from fundamental social institutions - such as education, the labor market, family and the cultural environment.

From a theoretical standpoint, the phenomenon of youth marginalization can be approached through several analytical lenses. The sociological studies articulate marginalization as a social structural status or a kind of “marginal social position”, predominantly characterized by limited access to socially valued resources, weak social ties and exclusion from normative institutions of social inclusion, such as education, stable work and civic participation (Jurayev, 2023).

*Corresponding Author: Lamiya Suleymanli, e-mail: lamiyesuleymanli19@gmail.com

Youth marginalization within the labor market is understood as the condition in which young people are systematically excluded from stable, meaningful employment opportunities. It denotes a type of social and economic exclusion whereby young individuals are barred from full participation in work life and thus from achieving independence. Their precarious situations often manifest in the form of long-term unemployment, underemployment or participation in temporary and insecure employment, during which the young have no stable career pathways. Those who are not in education, not in employment and not in training (NEET) - a category inextricably linked to the concept of marginalization - are left out for very long periods of time, while on aggregate a substantial proportion end up in long-term exclusion from stable work (Levels *et al.*, 2022).

The core problem is, therefore, how structural and individual-level barriers in the modern labor market systematically marginalize youth in their quest to obtain stable, decent employment - and how this process affects individual well-being as well as broader social cohesion, demographic stability and cultural integrity. In other words, youth marginalization is not just an employment problem but a deep social problem with far-reaching implications for societal sustainability.

2. Methodology

The main objective of this study was to analyse the social consequences of youth marginalization in the labor market, with particular attention to how exclusion from stable employment affects young individuals' well-being, psychological state, social integration, demographic behavior and engagement in deviant or risky activities. The study also aimed to identify the structural and individual factors contributing to marginalization and evaluate how prolonged unemployment influences broader socio-economic and cultural processes within society. To achieve the objective, a qualitative and analytical research methodology have been used. Another key methods that have been used were a descriptive-explanatory approach, systematically reviewing existing literature, statistical reports and theoretical frameworks relevant to labor market participation.

3. The concept and causes of youth marginalization in the labor market

Labor market marginalization is the condition where individuals remain excluded from productive employment, failing to participate in the labor market on a stable and continuous basis. The main driving force behind this process is young people in the age group of 16-29 years, as they usually lack professional experience to compete effectively. Consequently, because of the limited occupational skills, they are unable to succeed in competitive labor markets and gradually become participants in the marginalization process.

In modern times, employment is not merely regarded as a source of income or material gain. It has become an integral part of social life and one of the essential factors for maintaining a healthy environment. Unemployment, in contrast, is defined as a socio-economic condition in which a segment of the working-age population is willing and able to work but cannot find a suitable job corresponding to their qualifications within a certain period and geographical area (Adak, 2010). Employment enhances individuals' self-confidence and self-respect, allows them to establish a position in socio-economic life and fosters a sense of being valuable and worthy members of society.

Young people marginalized in the labor market are subjected to social isolation resulting from prolonged unemployment. From a theoretical standpoint, youth marginalization in the labor market is explained through several analytical perspectives. According to Human Capital Theory, investment in education and vocational training enhances the employability of young workers, whereas insufficient education distances them from desirable positions in the labor market. Signaling Theory interprets education as a signal to employers regarding a candidate's skills and competencies; however, when educational credentials do not correspond to market demands, such qualifications may contribute to the isolation of young individuals. Social Capital Theory, on the other hand, emphasizes the significance of individual networks and social connections - broad and strong social ties increase a young person's employment opportunities, while weak or limited connections heighten the likelihood of marginalization (Hofman *et al.*, 2024).

The causes of youth "marginalization" in the labor market can be exemplified as follows:

- **Economic factor:** excessive competition in the workplace, the rapid proliferation of technological innovations and the limited number of jobs and vacancies make it difficult for young people to find employment, gradually isolating them from the labor market;
- **Imbalance between education and the labor market:** the knowledge and skills provided to young people during their education do not always correspond to the qualifications demanded in the labor market. As a result, young individuals are often unable to apply their education in practice or feel compelled to pursue additional professional development courses;
- **Social factor:** social factors such as family income, place of residence, gender and social status can delay young people's entry into the labor market.

4. The social implications of youth marginalization

The most direct consequence of youth marginalization is the increase in unemployment and the associated decline in income. When unemployment becomes prolonged, young people begin to lose their labor capacity and their competitive potential in the labor market decreases. Long-term unemployment forms what is known as the "poverty trap". In this situation, even if an individual receives education, their opportunities to enter the labor market are minimized, forcing them to turn to the informal labor sector.

Unemployed youth gradually undergo a process of social isolation. Social isolation is accompanied by weakened social ties, limited participation in public life and a sense of being excluded from society. At this stage, young people enter a dangerous phase referred to as "social exclusion". Social exclusion is not only an economic deficiency but also leads to negative consequences such as disengagement from political and cultural life and a decline in civic participation. This isolation also delays the individual's motivation to seek new employment (Yilmaz *et al.*, 2010). Socially isolated youth may experience prolonged psychological strain, which can result in long-term stress and depression. Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness are among the most commonly observed conditions in unemployed youth. Studies have also indicated that people who remain jobless for a long time have symptoms of depression three times more often. Stress experienced by unemployed individuals reduces their will to live and can even contribute to an increased incidence of suicide, particularly among young people. Studies conducted in countries such as Sweden and New Zealand have investigated the

causal relationship between unemployment and suicide risk, yielding largely similar results. According to research in the United States, unemployed youth are more prone to suicide, with the first three years following unemployment being the most critical period, although the risk decreases in subsequent years. In New Zealand, a study involving 2.04 million participants found that the suicide rate among the unemployed was twice as high as that among employed individuals (Adak, 2010).

Additionally, the French sociologist Émile Durkheim noted in his research that economic crises increase the propensity for suicide among young people. Durkheim's studies indicate that economic hardship influences suicidal behavior not only through poverty but also through the rapid social chaos and uncertainty it generates. One of the first studies examining the relationship between unemployment and suicide was conducted in 1974 by economists Daniel Hamermesh and Neal Soss. This research assessed the interrelationship between unemployment, regular income and suicide rates. The results demonstrated that during periods of economic decline following World War II, suicide rates increased. Studies have shown that an individual's social environment, unemployment status and personal expectations significantly affect suicidal behavior.

As a result of marginalization, an increase in deviant behaviors among youth is observed. Some young people who are excluded from the labor market and education may be prone to engaging in illegal activities. According to research conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), youth marginalization is closely associated with negative outcomes such as substance abuse, criminal behavior and violence.

The high incidence of criminal behavior among unemployed individuals also stems from poor psychological well-being. In many cases, approximately 75% of those who commit crimes are unemployed and not engaged in any form of education. Unemployed individuals experiencing a sense of inadequacy may commit crimes as a way to "prove themselves" in society and it is evident that in such situations, their capacity for rational thinking is impaired. For example, based on statistical data from Sweden, researchers Dongxu Wu and Zhongmin Wu found that in 2005, the conviction rate among men aged 19-24 was 4.2%, whereas for men aged 29-34, the rate was approximately half that. This difference indicates that younger age groups are more affected by unemployment compared to middle-aged individuals. Furthermore, among those unemployed for more than six months, the probability of committing violent crimes increased by 2%, while the likelihood of theft increased by 33%. Simultaneously, incidences of drug trafficking and driving under the influence also rose significantly (Omboi, 2020).

Long-term unemployment also affects a country's demographic development, manifesting in changes to the population's age and gender structure, the age at which individuals marry, the number of children in families and migration patterns. When unemployed, especially young people, do not have the financial capability to set up a household, they tend to postpone marriage. This feeling of financial inadequacy to support the family is especially pervasive among young men. Consequently, the age of marriage increases and family relationships weaken. The decline in birth rates in the country is also directly linked to unemployment. The mindset of young families has already been shaped in this direction: they choose to have children only when they possess sufficient financial resources, which contributes to the process of demographic aging.

The tendency of unemployed youth to seek employment abroad results in migration flows, which in turn alter the age and gender structure of the population. Most of the population, especially young people, migrate to countries with high demand for

labor in order to improve their financial well-being. Migration processes are more pronounced in regions where job opportunities are limited and wages are low. Consequently, populations tend to prefer both internal and external migration. One unmanaged aspect of migration in developing countries is the outflow of intellectual resources, often referred to as “brain drain” (Ismayilova, 2014). The migration of young, skilled professionals to countries with higher living standards leads to a shortage of qualified personnel in the country of origin.

Youth marginalization in the labor market also generates cultural and social consequences. The unemployed youth often lose adherence to cultural values and life priorities, focusing exclusively on “survival”. They do not participate in cultural or social activity and use any short-term and informal sources of income to provide for their daily needs. Such a situation fosters the decline of work ethics, erosion of moral values and weakening of labor discipline among the population. They refrain from participating in cultural or social activities and turn to short-term or informal sources of income to meet their daily needs. This situation contributes to the decline of work ethics, the erosion of moral values and the weakening of labor discipline among the population.

The cultural and social implications are also profound: unemployed youth often detach from traditional cultural values, prioritize short-term survival over social engagement and seek informal sources of income. This undermines work ethics, weakens moral values and reduces discipline in the workforce. As a result, marginalized youth may no longer identify with their national culture, increasingly adopting Western lifestyles and attitudes, which erode civic participation and weaken collective identity.

5. Conclusion

Youth marginalization in the labor market constitutes a complex socio-economic phenomenon with significant implications for both individuals and society. Prolonged unemployment not only diminishes income and occupational capacity but also engenders social isolation, psychological distress and an elevated propensity for deviant behaviors, including criminal activity and suicide. Furthermore, marginalized youth indirectly influence demographic and cultural dynamics, manifesting in delayed family formation, reduced fertility rates, migration patterns and the erosion of traditional cultural and moral norms.

This study underscore the necessity of comprehensive interventions that address both the structural and individual dimensions of youth marginalization. Key policies aimed at aligning educational and vocational training with evolving labor market demands are essential to enhance employability. Simultaneously, fostering social capital through mentorship programs, professional networks and community engagement can improve young people’s access to job opportunities and strengthen their integration into the labor market. Besides that, sustainable employment creation, mental health support and mechanisms to retain skilled youth within their home countries are critical components in mitigating the long-term socio-economic and demographic consequences of marginalization.

Ultimately, effectively addressing youth marginalization requires an integrative and multidimensional approach that encompasses economic, educational, social and cultural strategies. By tackling the root causes of exclusion and implementing proactive measures to support vulnerable youth, societies can facilitate the meaningful integration of young people into productive, stable and socially engaged roles. Such integration not only promotes the personal development and well-being of individuals but also

strengthens social cohesion, enhances labor market efficiency and contributes to long-term socio-economic stability and resilience.

References

- Adak, N. (2010). Unemployment as a social problem and its consequences. *Society and Social Work*, 21(2), 105-116.
- Chavda, C., Patel, Z. (2015). Youth unemployment: Causes and consequences. *International Journal for Research in Management and Pharmacy*, 4(3), 13.
- Duchak, O. (2014). Marginalization of young people in society. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, 18, 70-79.
- Hofman, J., Zhang, K., Groom, M., Reed, M. & Angell, S. (2024). *Variations in Labour Market Outcomes for Young People Facing Marginalisation: Associated Factors and Explanations*. Youth Futures Foundation, 110.
- Ismayilova, E. (2014). Brain drain in the era of globalization. *Young Electronic Science*, 65(19).
- Jurayev, J. (2023). Theoretical basis youth marginalization. *Society and Innovations, Special Issue*, 2, 388-394. <https://doi.org/10.47689/2181-1415-vol4-iss2/S-pp387-394>
- Kalinowska-Sufinowicz, B. (2018). Determinants of the situation of the youth on the labor market. *Bulletin of Tyumen State University. Series: Socioeconomic and Legal Research*, 4(4), 8-23.
- Kinoti, P. (2024). Youth unemployment and social exclusion. *International Journal of Humanity and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 27-39.
- Levels, M., Brzinsky-Fay, C., Holmes, C., Jongbloed, J. & Taki, H. (2022). *The Dynamics of Marginalized Youth: Not In Education, Employment or Training around the World*, 293. Taylor & Francis.
- O'Higgins, N. (2015). Youth unemployment. *Policy Paper*, 21.
- Omboi, G. (2020). Influence of youth unemployment on crime rates in Mathare Constituency, Nairobi City County, Kenya. A research project submitted to the School of Security, Diplomacy and Peace Studies in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirement of the Award of the Degree of Masters in Security Management and Police Studies, Kenyatta University, 120.
- Pastore, F. (2012). *Marginalization of Young People in Education and Work: Findings from the School-To-Work Transition Surveys*. Global Monitoring Report, 88.
- World Bank Group (2025). *Making Labor Markets Work for the Youth*. An Approach Paper, 23.
- Yilmaz, T., Fidan, F. & Karataş, V. (2010). Socio-psychological consequences of unemployment: Individuals' attitudes according to socio-demographic characteristics (a field study). *Journal of Social Policy Conferences*, 48. (In Turkish).
- Youmans, A., Kutsyuruba, B., Butler, A., Godden, L., Hussain, A., Coe-Nesbitt, H., ... & DeLuca, C. (2023). Marginalized youth and their journey to work: A review of the literature. *Education Thinking*, 3(1), 61-82.

Received: 29 October 2025;

Accepted: 13 November 2025;

Published: 13 January 2026.