“It’s not about my interests, it’s about where I will be accepted”

- How do ethnicity and racism shape young people’s upper secondary school choices?

Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transitions and career development, 24 October 2019 Copenhagen

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UEF // University of Eastern Finland
Ethnically and racially segregated school paths - vertical perspective

• Young people of foreign background continue to upper secondary education less often than those of Finnish background
  – more often in vocational than in general upper secondary education.

• Young people of foreign background drop out three times more often than those of Finnish background in upper secondary education
  • Especially young men, African, the Middle East, and East Asian background
  • This can largely be explained by prior school achievement and family resources (economic, educational background). (Kilpi-Jakonen 2011)
"Realistic dreams?"

- You’d fit to be a nurse.
- “If you have high grades and blue eyes, nobody questions your academic dreams. If you wear a headscarf, you’ll be seen differently.”
nursing, business, construction, nursing, bi-lingual high school, tourism, business, nursing, tourism…

• Limited educational choices raise the question of racism relevant in the analysis:
  – How do ethnicity and racism shape young people’s secondary school choices?
  – Ethnically and racially segregated school paths - also the horizontal perspective?

• Research interest:
  – How do young people’s beliefs and experiences – their personal horizons developed within cultural, social and structural influence (Evans 2007; Hodkinson and Sparkles 1997) both shape and restrict what they see as possible and suitable for themselves?
About ethnicity and horizon for action

- **Ethnicity** as a relational category, (Brubaker 2013):
  - What people do things with ethnic and racialised categories (processes) and what kind of consequences these processes have?
  - How are ethnic categories and migrant experiences (inc. racism) used to frame life stories, self-understanding, and education and work transitions?
  - **!! Ethnicity on its own does not explain choices!**

- **Horizon for action** means:
  - the arena within which certain action can be taken and decisions made. Habitus and opportunity structures of the education and labour market (ie. ethnically segregated) both influence horizons for action and are inter-related, for perceptions of what might be available and appropriate affect decisions, and opportunities are simultaneously subjective and objective” (Hodkinson and Sparkles 1997, 34).
  - This reminds that opportunities are not just out there to be chosen.
Data

• The study is conducted in three secondary (at ninth grade) and one vocational upper secondary school in Eastern Finland during the years 2013-2014.
  – the research interviews of young people (31) and their school career counsellors (16)
  – Interviewed young people have born i.e. Somalia, Iran, Russian, Estonia, Thailand, Vietnam, and some African countries.
  – Besides interviewing, I have also observed counselling discussions and lessons in those schools attended to the study.
  – (I am also interested in how career counsellors recognize (and even question) these ethnically meaningful factors behind student’s school choices.)
How do ethnicity and racism shape secondary school choices?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transnationally meaningful vocational fields</th>
<th>Vocational fields that are open to/inclusive of ethnic and racial diversity</th>
<th>- Schools with multilingual or special education supporting systems (general upper s. school)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- i.e. nursing, tourism, construction</td>
<td>i.e. nursing, youth work, tourism, business</td>
<td>“Finnish and Russian are equal to me, it’s important to study both of them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I want to help other refugees”</td>
<td>“If you work at youth houses, anyone can come in and you have to be able to talk with him/her, you cannot look at his/her color of skin, but if you work with flowers or stones in the garden, you can have racist attitudes”</td>
<td>“I look at the webpages and found that they have some supporting systems for migrants, it tells me that they have to be open minded to cultural differences, and I need help although it differentiates me from Finns.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To work as a nurse is respected occupation in Vietnam”</td>
<td>“There’re no other places for Russian speaking people than restaurants and hotels. You won’t get a job else where.”</td>
<td>-&gt; school’s tolerant reputation, possibility to feel safe and get friends, not to be the only different one among students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I love airports because of the international atmosphere there is, I feel like home there”</td>
<td>-&gt; (own or others’) experiences of racism in certain vocational fields, racialized nature (and a model) of labour market, professional requirements to be (or not to be) tolerant and social</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“because of hijab, and meat and alcohol, I can’t work at restaurants”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“construction, I can work summertime in Finland, and winter in Somalia, because of snow and f..cold .. And there is no good houses in Somalia”</td>
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<tr>
<td>-&gt; trans/multinational identification, religious aspects, family reasons, possibility to get a job in both countries</td>
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</table>
Gender & ethnized and racialized school choices

• The variety of vocational choices were more limited and narrow among migrant girls than boys.

Girls:
– For example, to be a nurse was a choice which was supported and even guided or pushed both from the inside (ie. family/relatives) but also from outside (ie. career counsellors) of the ethnic group.

Boys:
– The category of a white Finnish working man as a prerequisite to be accepted in certain, especially male dominated vocational fields was hard, even impossible to achieve -> dropping out and making feminine schools choices.

(see also Kurki 2019; Aapola-Kari, Hoikkala & Lahtinen 2019)
Conclusions..

• Ethnicity and racism, but also gender, shape and restrict in multiple ways young people’s educational choices and paths – their horizon for action in transitions to education and work.

• It is also worth mentioning that career counsellors do recognize this process of segregated choices among their pupils, but they hesitate and avoid topicalizing and discussing it. Especially they are reluctant to ask about racism and discrimination their students have faced.

• The danger of individualistic counselling discourse (ie. in life design approach (Savickas et al. 2009): Its focus being on the individuals shaping their lives, this discourse/ approach does not help to analyze how societal structures and unequal power relations (-ie. intersectionality and mechanisms of segregation) shape individual dispositions and structures of opportunity (Hooley et al 2018).

• Young people are very alone in dealing with these structural issues shaping and restricting their possibilities.


• Lahtinen, J. (2019) Purkatalkoot -hankkeen raportti (luonnos.)


Thank you!

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A balancing act.  
The meeting between pupil and counselor in the eyes of the pupils.  

Presentation at the conference Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transitions and career development  
Copenhagen 23.-24 October 2019
Ph.D-project - Unpacking the counsellors role in the Norwegian school system

- Contribution

- Overall issue:
  - *How can we interpret the counsellors prioritizing and assignments in relation to local school context, policy guidelines and the pupils experiences?*

- Explore the counsellor’s role from different perspectives.
Three articles in the thesis

“A counsellor role under cross pressure? Local variation and consequences for counselling in schools” *Sosiologi i dag*, 2014, 44 (4), 57-78.

«A balancing act. The meeting between pupil and counselors in the eyes of the pupils” (work in process).

«In the pupil’s best interests. Counsellors in schools interpretations and respond to recommendations of separate counselling services” (work in process).
Research questions – article three

- How does the pupils interpret the counsellor role and experience the meeting with counsellors in school?
- What is the pupils agendas for seeking guidance?
- How does the pupils talk about guidance in a social justice perspective?
Research design and data

- 19 group interviews
- 72 pupils in lower and upper secondary school in Norway
- Interviews conducted in 2013-2014 (Buland et al., 2014).
- Selection criteria: urban/rural, big/small schools and affiliation to a local community dominated by industrial sector/public sector.
- New analysis
Main concept and arguments

- Career (Andrews and Hooley, 2018)

- Social justice (Hooley, Sultana and Thomsen, 2018 p. 4).

- Role (Biddle, 1986).
Three discourses of career guidance
(Sultana, 2018; 2018)

- Technocratic or social efficiency
- Humanistic/development-oriented
- Emancipatory/social reconstructionist
Preliminary findings

- Pupils reasons for seeking guidance
- Pupils reasons for NOT seeking guidance
- Pupils view of the counsellor
- Pupils view of social justice in school counselling
Agendas for seeking guidance: 1) to get help/answers

○ “I’ve talked to counselor quite often about several issues. First about exemptions from common subjects (...), and then if she could find out lots of issues (...) and then she helped me prove that I have dyslexia. She has helped me on several occasions” (1st year, school B).

○ “It’s when I wonder on something specific. I’ve decided, but need some information, then it’s ok to ask the counselor” (2nd year, school F)
Agendas for seeking guidance: 2) to elaborate options

- “I needed some guidance when I was suppose to choose my subjects. I felt that I needed guidance on if I should choose social sciences or natural science (...) I got good guidance and was encouraged to choose what I liked the best” (3rd year, School M)

- “We talk among friends about things we find out, and that is when people go to counselling and say: “I wonder what this study is, how do I get there, what do I have to do, and so on”. Because it is many things to choose between, and it is... [hard to figure it out]” (3rd year, School M)
When pupils NOT seek guidance

- “The big choices you have to do yourself, but (...) it is okay [to go to the counsellor] if there are such minor things, but I do not go in to ask her about such big, big decisions” (2nd year, School F)

- “Should I apply for this or that, you don't ask her that!” (2nd year, School F)

- “I have a business arrangement so I get money while I'm at school and then to be an apprentice there for two years”. Researcher: Will you talk to a counselor do you think? “No, I have no need” (1st year, School H)
Different counsellor roles: 1) the one who pushes

- Technocratic or social efficiency discourse
- “I felt that somehow the topic when I entered was secluded and I came out with completely different stuff in my head. That's what I felt. (...) and then I became completely focused on other things than what I actually wanted” (2nd year, School F).
- “Counselors at upper secondary school are all the same, they try to get as many as possible to continue on the study specialization even if it's stupid that you're there in the first place” (2nd year, School B)
Different counsellor roles: 2) The who listens

- Humanistic/development-oriented discourse

- “Counseling has worked much better here, because at least she tries to help you and she listens to you and what you think instead of pushing you to something she thinks is best” (2nd year, School B)
“It was like if I just were left with even more questions and I didn’t get any answers from the counsellor. (...) So if the teachers tell me to go to the counselor now, I just say “OK”, and then I’ll go home and google it” (2nd year, school B).

“I went when I wanted to change subjects, but I was left with more questions. So that’s why I now say: “It won't go my way if I go to the counsellor anyway [so there is no point]”” (2nd year, school F).
Pupils view of social justice in the meeting with counsellors in school

- Not equal services
  - «It is strange that our counsellor shall have so much more time than yours» (3rd year, school V).
  - “Counseling in vocational education has a relatively high standard in relation to [the counselling in] study specialization” (2nd year, School V).

- A counselor who is not meeting the pupils needs
  - One pupil wanted to change subjects, but were told that she could not do it «because it will put the school in a bad light” (2nd year, school V).

- Uneven power relations, pupils show signs of mistrust:
  - “You know, It’s easy...we do not complain, we do not know what we are entitled to so then it becomes difficult to say against them” (3rd year, school V)
Summing up – the counsellors balancing act

Different discourses for career guidance meeting different agendas for seeking guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils agendas</th>
<th>Counsellors role</th>
<th>Good experiences - further development in the career choice process</th>
<th>Bad experiences might lead the pupils away from the counsellors and maybe in to a more lonely career choice process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wanting answers</td>
<td>The one who pushes and give answers</td>
<td>Good experience</td>
<td>Bad experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborating options</td>
<td>The one who listens and ask questions</td>
<td>Bad experience</td>
<td>Good experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Mathiesen, I. H. (2019b). Ruling relations in the school counsellors everyday work. [Course paper. Ph.D course at UiA on Institutional Ethnography arranged in December 2018][in progress].


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“IT’S ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH” – ASYLUM SEEKING STUDENTS AND HIGH-STAKES COUNSELLING IN SWEDEN

Jonna Linde
Joakim Lindgren
Åsa Sundelin
Career counsellor, Rural municipality:

"I’m not working at the Migration Board! I am not the person they (the students) should really talk to, it is the Migration Board. What is the migration Board doing to clarify the situation for the students? They tell us career counsellors how we should do so the students can get a residence permit, we shall guide them properly so that they could possibly get a residence permit, huh?! That’s a pretty big responsibility!"
INTRODUCTION

• The paper will highlight and analyse a changing professional context for career counsellors working with asylum-seeking students in upper secondary school

• Introduce the concept of high-stakes counselling as the counselling process is intertwined with the asylum process
THEORY

• Bourdieu, focusing on fields, habitus and capital
  o The intention is to change the focus from individual to structure

Intention to:

• Give an illustration of the career counselling situation and how the career counsellors handle the situations that they are facing when working with asylum seeking students
METHOD

The paper is based on ethnographically inspired fieldwork

- The field work has been carried out during the academic year 18/19
- In 5 different municipalities
  - rural municipalities
  - small town
  - commuting municipality
- Observations, 24 days in total
- Interviews with career counsellors, teachers, mentors, principals and students on the introduction program.
The Swedish Education System

Young people age 16-20 who are not qualified to upper secondary school

Introductory program

Language introduction (the largest)
• Education and work are important in the realization of social goals such as equal opportunities, community participation and social inclusion.
BACKGROUND II

• Many of them have dramatic experiences of war, terror and poverty (Menjívar and Perreira 2019)

• Their lives can be characterized by anxiety, insecurity and mental illness (Kunskapscentrum för ensamkommande barn 2018)

• The Migration Board places the young people in different geographical locations and sometimes they are forced to move several times on very short notice and in the middle of the semester

• Temporary residence permit
TEMPORARY RESIDENCE PERMIT
(GYMNASIÆLÆGEN)

• A result of an political compromise
• July - September 2018, students were able to apply for a residence permit for upper-secondary school studies even if their asylum application previously had been rejected if they met a number of other conditions

Find and begin an education (13 months)

Temporarily reside with a permit during the education

Find a job (6 months)

New application for prolonging

Permanent employment or contract for at least 2 years or more and meets the requirements of salary and terms = possibility to have a permanent residence permit
The career counsellors have a difficult situation to deal with as there is a very high pressure for the students to complete a full upper secondary education, the risks are very high in failure and can mean deportation.

Career counsellor, Rural municipality:

"Some students tell me

"I have to get a residence permit, I have to focus on the school, I have to fix this, I have to get into a program"

– Yes, but this is the grades you need

"Then I will not be accepted"

And what can I do as a career counsellor? I can’t do anything about it and if they won’t be accepted, well then it’s us (career counsellors) they’ll talk to
The concept of high-stake counselling is intended for counselling of this nature that is characterized by regulations in the field

The career counsellors are in a cross between that

- on the one hand, perform new tasks linked to the asylum process in order for the students to be granted a residence permit, and

- on the other hand, to meet the individual's dreams and explore / plan for a sustainable career based on the wishes and interests of the student
**PRELIMINARY RESULTS III**

- The path of asylum-seeking students is clearly marked by structural constraints, which conflicts with the ideal for career counselling in Sweden.

- The legal context is very complex and municipalities interpret the law differently, the chance of residence permits becomes a lottery based on which geographical location the asylum-seeking youth was placed by the migration board.

- The career counsellors in each municipality become lonely in their work as they cannot support each other because it is different in different municipalities.

- From a career counselling perspective, the counselling process is merged with legislation on migration, thereby partially the asylum process moves in into the counselling office.

  - There is only one or a few vocational educations to choose from in the reality
  - = circumscribed or no choice

**Authorities**
- The temporary residence permit requires vocational program
- The migration board can at any time decide to move the student to a different municipality

**The municipalities**
- Sometimes offer only a few vocational programs
- Competition for a place on the education is based on grades

**Results in**

UMEÅ UNIVERSITY
PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

• The fundamental problem is that study performance determine whether asylum-seeking youths may stay in the country or not.

• This creates a career counselling practice which is characterized by high-stakes.

• Career counsellors need to adapt to regulations that limit their possibilities to work according to the ethical values that are fundamental to career counselling in Sweden.

• The analyse points to the complexity and the hard pressure on career counsellors when their work is described as a matter of life and death for young asylum-seeking students.
REFERENCES


SCB: http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/sv/ssd/START__BE_BE0101__BE0101P/Ensamkommande/table/tableViewLayout1/#
BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE
- CAREER LEARNING IN DANISH UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Critical Perspectives on Agency and Social Justice in Transitions and Career Development

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24. October 2019

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What meaning does teachers attach to the matter of career learning and why?
DANISH GENERAL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

- A three year education
  - Broad – subjects within the humanities and natural science
- Overall purposes;
  - Preparing for further education
  - ‘Bildung’
- Foundation in the Nordic didactic (didaktik) tradition
“The foundation of upper secondary education is a strong understanding of skills and competencies and a modernized bildung. The education must equip the students to take a higher education, and at the same time, the students must be prepared to participate in the society and learn to relate to their own personal development.”
“In the perspective of Bildung and Didaktik there are no facts or objects of teaching as factum brutum, but they are what they are by the substance meeting the teacher and the student while meeting the content. Any given matter (Inhalt) can represent many different meanings (Gehalt), and any given meaning (Gehalt) can be opened up by many different matters (Inhalt). But there is no matter without meaning, and no meaning without matter.”

(Hopmann, 2007, s. 116)
WHAT MEANING DOES THE TEACHERS ATTACH THE GIVEN MATTER?

“I think that they resemble each other [career learning and bildung], at least of you look in the legislation. […] There is a lot of bildung in career learning. It’s about helping the students to become whole persons, give them a broader knowledge about themselves, about society and the world. Both in relation to themselves and in relation to a lot of other things.”
‘CAREER LEARNING’ – BRIDGENING THE GAP BETWEEN THE GOALS OF UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL?
DEVELOPMENT OF SELF AND UNDERSTANDING THE SELF IN SOCIETY
“This is where bildung is important. The students have to get ready for life after upper secondary school, and get a lot of tools. For instance, that they can read the newspaper and understand the context. Not all learning should necessarily point towards further education or the labour market. There is more to it than that. And this is where bildung is important. (...) All these small things forms a whole, forms whole persons, who are ready to go out and take a further education (...). And a lot is happening to the students in these three years – they go from big kids to small adults – not just in regards of their education but also socially. And maybe general upper secondary education is a good place to become more mature, and get ready to come out into this chaotic society afterwards.”
Empirical data

- “Not all learning should necessarily point towards further education or the labour market. There is more to it than that. And this is where bildung is important.”

Career theory

- Development of self does not occur in a vacuum

Didactical theory

- Self-determination, co-determination and solidarity.
Empirical data

• “The general upper secondary school is a broad education where our students are also educated ['bildung'] - not just academically, but as people and even as citizens who can contribute in many parts of our community. I think we have a commitment to [remember] that. This is also a part of the different curricula and in the law.”

Career theory

• Considering how the current situation and structures should be changed. (Hooley)

Didactical theory

• Typical epocal key problems (Klafki)
IN "CONCLUSION"


• Irving, Barrie. 2018. “Challenging Career(s) in Changing Times: Shifting Perspectives.”
