ORGANISATION OF ADULT EDUCATION FOR IMMIGRANTS IN RURAL AREAS – SUPPORT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT?

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BACKGROUND: IMMIGRATION IN SWEDEN/RURAL AREAS

Immigration in Sweden
From immigration from Finland to immigration from Afghanistan
From no regulation of place, to regulation of place, to regulation of place for some
From almost open boarders to almost closed boarders

Popular descriptions of rural areas
Rural idyll
Deprivation of/deficits in rural areas
A divided country (urban/rural distinction)
BACKGROUND: EDUCATION FOR ADULT IMMIGRANTS IN SWEDEN

• Swedish for immigrants (SFI) (by municipality or folk high school) When you are studying in SFI, you cannot be given study allowances from CSN, the Swedish Board for Study Support.
• Municipal adult education (KomVux)
  o Education at the primary level
  o Education at the secondary level
• Vocational college or University
  o Some programmes and courses are specially designed for immigrants (for example “short routes” for physicians, teachers)

In the researched areas this education could be given at the same premises.

PROJECT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Project: Integration of newly arrived immigrants in rural areas through local educational centres.
In this paper we are analysing organisation and practice of adult education for immigrants and refugees as preparation for career development in three rural areas in Sweden.
The research questions helping to focus the aim are formulated as follows:
i. How can the organisation of students in and within different local institutions be understood in relation to their opportunities to career development?
ii. How does or do not different institutions within and between local areas cooperate in order to support students’ career development?
iii. How is the wider policy context in which those institutions operate understood by professionals in those institutions?
iv. How does those conditions (RQ i-iii) vary among the research sites and how can this variation be understood?
THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

To support the analysis Ainscow et al’s (2012) theory ecology of equity offers the analytical concepts within, between and beyond.

• **Within** schools is described as “the ways, in which students are taught and engaged with learning;”
• **Between** schools is described as competition and collaborations between schools,
• **Beyond** schools includes the wider policy context within which schools operate. (Ainscow et al., 2012, p. 2).

SELECTION AND METHODS

• Cooperation with Northern Academy (partnership of 13 municipalities around adult education).
• Survey of all 13 Northern Academy municipalities.
• Based on the survey selection of 3 municipalities with variation in size, distance to higher education, and educational organisation.
• An ethnographic method with 16 classroom observations, 17 staff interviews (teachers, heads, employment officers) 42 students interviews. (preliminary numbers, data collection is ongoing)
RESULTS: GENERAL DESCRIPTION

- Changes in rules and thus reason of migration
- Fluctuation in numbers of immigrants
- A web of collaborations

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

- Almost everyone who learns Swedish well enough gets a job
- Students, teachers, employment officers, employers all refer to language as a gate keeper.
  - Difficult with integration and to talk to people in general
  - Difficult to get a place for workplace learning (which some said to be equally as good as to learn Swedish through education)
  - Difficult to find supervisors and interpreters

GREAT OPPORTUNITIES: LANGUAGE AS A GATE KEEPER
RURAL AND SMALL

- Administrative time for some tasks the same for 1 as 20 students (for example writing an application for funding, prepare course content).
- The smallest municipalities cooperate more in order to offer courses, get funding et cetera.
- More rigid educational and language support structures in the larger municipality, while the smaller municipalities were more flexible.
- Short term support – economic and political support.
- Most of the immigrants thought of “their” rural area as a good place to be – A rural idyll.

RURAL AND FAR AWAY

- Education on distance
- Metrocentric policy
  - Distance education thought of as unproblematic by course/programme giving universities (not having a single parent immigrant in mind)
  - Northern academy rarely accomplished to make universities to give lectures/courses/programmes away from campus.
- Academics that wanted a career matching their competences or parents wanting a academic career for their children seldom saw “their” rural place as an option.
Since late 1980s Swedish education has gradually been more market oriented, which affects education in rural areas:

- Few enterprises interested in offering solutions for rural areas

**CONCLUSION**

- The discourse of few job opportunities in rural areas is not completely correct, there are jobs but matching is difficult.
- Support is often short sighted (including economic support).
- Size matters.
- Metrocentric policy not adapted for small municipalities, which put a need of staff to be inventive.
- Career which includes higher education is difficult.
‘I feel that I could go anywhere now, anywhere in the world…’

Geographic mobility in graduate employment, a social justice issue?

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Structure of the presentation

- Theoretical context: Mobility, neoliberalism and space and place
- The research project
- Findings
- Discussion
Theoretical context

- Labour markets are geographically distributed
- Mobility is necessary to access a full range of opportunities
- Mobility is the ‘solution’ to geographic inequality in neoliberal thought
- Mobility is presented as a moral good
- Social mobility is connected with geographic mobility. (Alexander, 2018)
Mobility as a social justice issue

- But ‘moving on’ meaning ‘moving out’ can cause problems for relatively deprived areas
- And the ability to move relies on resources (mobility capital or motility) which are unevenly distributed (Corbett, 2007; Kaufmann et al 2004)
- Neoliberal discourses risk being internalised so that structural challenges can be internalised as personal deficiencies. (Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen, 2018)
The research project

- 22 final year undergraduate students originally from Orkney and Shetland
- Qualitative longitudinal interviewing – interviews at point of graduation and one year later
- Data analysed thematically.

Image courtesy of:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scotland_location_map.svg
Aims of this presentation

Considering mobility as a social justice issue, this paper explores

– How is mobility perceived at point of graduation
– How is mobility enacted at point of graduation
– How is mobility experienced at point of graduation
Findings 1: mobility facilitated by education

- Entry to HE facilitates mobility (because of funding available)
- But students don’t leave Scotland (due to costs)
- The ‘cohort effect’ of peers all leaving at the same point in time encourages others to leave.

I just wanted to move away so badly I just chose any course that I got into really.

Obviously I wanted to stay in Scotland as well because you get a free education.

I was pretty sure I was going to stay… but when I saw all my friends kind of applying to go away and thinking they were all going to be leaving and everything, I kind of thought ‘hold on maybe I want to do this as well’
Findings 2: studenthood as disembedding

• Students who leave report living ‘two lives’ in two different places
• Returning for holidays limits their ability to become embedded elsewhere
• Leaving for university is associated with ‘independence’

It was quite strange in a way because [its] kind of like two lives that are very separate.

because I'm going home at Christmas, Easter and summer so I feel like there's no opportunity for me to really keep doing a job.

I'm 100% glad that I went to university I think it’s been a really good experience, probably helped me be like more confident as well - just like being independent I guess for a while and living on my own and, you know, doing my own thing,
Findings 3: graduate (anticipated) global mobility

• “go anywhere for a job”
• Being more confident
• Being open minded
• Linked to concepts of:
  – Maximising experience
  – Going travelling

I would probably just go anywhere, looking at it because there's loads of places that I would like to just try,

I would go across the world if a job came up

I feel that I could go anywhere now, anywhere in the world, cos before you know I could hardly go to Aberdeen to stay but I went to America and again I was never homesick and I had a great time
Enacted mobilities - destinations

- Those who are elsewhere are on structured training routes or living with a partner
- Those in Scotland are generally in or near their university location

Destinations of participants one year after graduation:
- Orkney or Shetland – 8
- Scotland – 10
- Other (UK) - 4
Resources structure pathways

- Career as a ‘resource’ for those with a clear vocational focus
- Work experience (and the networks developed) result in employment
- Familiarity
- Transport links ‘home’
- Friends and family

[after my degree] I need to do a period of training, which when I first moved away they were taking on trainees at home, but unfortunately they're not doing that any more

I would go across the world if a job came up do you know what I mean… [but] I wouldn’t want to go just to some random city on my own and just get some standard job cos I could go back to Orkney where I have... already have a social circle and family and all the things that Orkney provides
Discussion: Relational resources and mobility

- Practical considerations are important: financial, transport connections, accommodation
- In practice partners and family are key sources of resource
- Relational resources change through time:
  - Meeting friends and partners
  - Mobilities of other people
- Relational resources can create personal geographies
- Relational resources also ease transition to new places

I'm going back... to save money for that six months because I can go and live with Mum and Dad and work at security and save plenty, if I was not going travelling I don't think I would be going back

mum and dad actually bought a house in Aberdeen ... and I actually got a Shetland girl who was coming down to study as well, so she moved in with me
Summary

• Higher Education is a process of disembedding at the end of which graduates report being ‘citizens of the world’
• However, graduate mobility is influenced by availability of resources.
• ‘Career’ is a key resource, as are partners – and these can facilitate mobility that would otherwise be challenging
• More broadly relational networks provide personalised decision making contexts. Potentially these personalised contexts may obscure wider or structural issues
References