Professional advocacy as a key competence in career guidance education in Denmark, Norway and Sweden

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Abstract
In this paper, we explore the concept of advocacy and whether and how it is present in the curricula for education programmes of career guidance and counsellor professionals and related policy documents in three Nordic countries. There are long traditions for advocacy and social engagement in the Nordic public sector, including the career guidance services, and the ideas of equality and social justice lay as a foundation for the Nordic welfare model and people’s self-understanding. Currently, the model is challenged by globalisation, both economically and politically, and inequality and differences between groups are increasing in the Nordic countries, thus highlighting the need for advocacy in career guidance. The advocating role of career guidance professionals is emphasized in the NICE handbooks on academic training of career guidance and counselling professionals. However, not much is known about whether or how competences for advocacy are anchored in the education programmes, thus the objectives of the study is to provide a first insight.

Keywords: Professional advocacy, professional agency, social justice, counsellor education

Relation to the conference theme
The focus of this paper is the competences for the advocating role of the career counsellor and how advocacy and professional agency are reflected in career guidance and counsellor education programmes curricula in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Competences for advocacy and agency are strongly related to the promotion of social justice.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework
For career guidance counsellors (CGC), the abilities to advocate and act for their profession are important core competences and should therefore have a clear place in career guidance and counsellor education. The advocating role of the career guidance counsellor is emphasized in the NICE handbooks on academic training of career guidance and counselling professionals (Schiersmann et al., 2012; Schiersmann et al., 2016) as well as in IAEVG’s ethical guidelines (IAEVG, 2017).
In the NICE handbooks (Schiersmann et al., 2012; Schiersmann et al., 2016), advocacy and agency are mentioned frequently but the distinction between the concepts is not clear. It is necessary to look closer into the two concepts to see how they differ and how they relate to each other.

Definitions of advocacy are varied, but there are common threads that provide general conceptualisations. Advocacy is a key for change and the concept of professional advocacy includes seeking change, securing and promoting social justice, systematically influencing decision making at system levels and shaping social and political outcomes (Mellinger, 2014). Agency refers to the capability to act (Eteläpelto et al. 2013; Mellinger, 2014) and is practiced when “professional subjects and/or communities exert influence, make choices and take stances in ways that affect their work and/or their professional identities” (Eteläpelto et al. 2013, p. 61). Agency refers to both personal and organisational agency, i.e. the personal capability to act lying with the individual practitioner, but the organisational agency is framed by the institutional and legal conditions.

Based on our belief that advocacy should be one of the core roles of career guidance counsellors in the Nordic context and that it is strongly related to agency (the capability to act), we consider it of utmost importance that developing competences for advocacy should be a part of the career guidance counsellor education. We will analyse relevant documents as a beginning of mapping the situation and by that provide a knowledge foundation for further work on this.

Preliminary research question:

*How are competences for the advocating role of career professionals present in the curricula for career guidance and counsellor education programmes and related policy documents in Denmark, Norway and Sweden?*

**Method**

This is an ongoing research project. Through qualitative document analyses of curricula and relevant policy documents from CGC education programmes in three Nordic countries, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The paper will shed a light on how CGC education programmes in Denmark, Norway and Sweden prepare their students for the role of advocating, including professional agency and the capacity to act for advocacy, as reflected in the curricula and policy documents. The core data are all curricula carried out in the study year 2018-19 by the CGC education programmes in the three countries. They were downloaded from the websites for the higher institutions providing the education. A purposeful sample of relevant policy documents is another important part of the data used in this study, to explore whether or how they provide guidelines or directions on the advocating role of career guidance professionals for promoting social justice.

By skimming, reading and interpreting the documents, elements of content analysis and thematic analysis will be combined. Information identified and organized into categories of
meaning (Glaser, 1978) will then be thematically related to central research questions of the study.

Results
The analysis will be carried out during spring and summer of 2019, and the results will be presented for the first time at the Nordic Research Network on Transitions, Career and Guidance’s conference in Copenhagen 2019. The aim of the researchers is to rewrite the conference presentation into an article, published internationally. Moreover, the findings of the analysis will be the basis for an application for funding of a larger, joint study of how competences for advocacy can be developed in education and practice.

References


IAEVG Ethical guidelines (2017). https://iaevg.com/Resources#Ethical_S


Type of contribution: Paper

Title: Social justice in the narratives of (CG) practitioners – an absent, empty or floating signifier? A few remarks on research difficulties

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to present some of the research findings from the project conducted in Poland. The project was focused on career guidance (and social work) practitioners and their perception of social justice. The qualitative methods were used. The paper will present the results from the perspective of E. Laclau’s concepts of the empty or floating signifier. The Author also stresses the issue of the absence of the idea of social justice in daily practices. As a result, a few remarks on research on social justice will be presented, together with some recommendations.

Keywords: social justice, signifier, CG practitioners, research

Relation to the conference theme: The paper raises the issue of social justice perception among practitioners and the difficulties that appear in (qualitative) research. The results of the presented project indicate that research on social justice can be complex and requires a carefulness at each stage.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework: Since one can observe the particular renewal of interests in social justice concepts caused partially by the global disappointment at (social) inequalities, neoliberal paradigms, populisms etc. the attempts to adjust the social justice concepts to empirical research are more visible as well. As many researchers pointed out the idea of justice is not only difficult to express (e.g. Hooley, Sultana, & Thomsen, 2018) but also (sometimes) unworthy to be analysed since it can be only the utopian state of the art (Sen, 2009). In the context of the vivid analytical discussion, it seems to be worth knowing better the concepts of social justice anchored in the daily practices of CG practitioners (as well the social workers). This group participated in the research project conducted in Poland. One of the aims of the project was to analyse the perception of social justice. The project aimed at answering the following (general) questions: How is the concept of social justice perceived among Polish CG practitioners, and social workers as well? Is the concept of social justice present in the daily activities of Polish CG practitioners? What kinds of theoretical assumptions can be identified as a background for CG practitioners concepts of social justice? The project assumed that people develop personal constructs about the world (Kelly, 1991), including
the social justice construct. However, the non-discursive consciousness and nature of acting (Giddens, 1984) were also considered in the project which meant that at the analytical project’s stage some of the statements were classified as social justice-related even though they did not express directly this concept. It also meant that the researcher is aware that the absence of the social justice concept in the narrative doesn’t mean that this concept is absent in the practice. As a result, the opinions/statements related to such categories as values, moral obligations, political solutions etc. were also analysed as social justice-related.

The data was analysed from the E. Laclau’s perspective, namely the assumption of the discursive nature of reality. Additionally, the concepts of empty and floating signifiers were used to stress the fact that it is extremely difficult to analyse and reconstruct the practitioners’ constructions of social justice as they are anchored in various theoretical traditions or are just absent in the narratives. For Laclau, there are two types of signifiers: empty and floating. An empty signifier is one that tries to sever its relationship with any meaning in order to represent a heterogeneous field. Its universality requires it to renounce a precise content. A floating signifier is one that can link up with a variety of concrete projects. Then, because it moves between projects, it is not empty: it is floating (Laclau, 2007). Social justice becomes then the empty (or floating) signifier that can be filled out with various meanings, even the contradictory ones.

**Methods/methodology:** The qualitative methods were used in the project. 15 practitioners agreed to participate in the semi-structured (narrative) interviews. The purposeful sampling was used. The sampling criteria were as follows: place of work, age, gender, geographical location of an institution (city, town, village), types of activity, position within the institution. It was important to collect various narratives. In the project, there were used two types of coding: a) coding based on theory (Saldaña, 2013) was used in the analytical stages of the project based on some social justice theories (Nancy Fraser, Robert Nozick, Amartya Sen) chosen to identify the different approaches, dimensions and “types” of social justice narratives b) evaluation coding (Saldaña, 2013). Coding process was organized in three cycles.

**Outcomes:** Research on the perception of social justice turned out to be extremely difficult on each level and stage. Therefore, the concepts of empty or floating signifiers (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001) were adopted to stress that in the narratives collected, there were various concepts, ideas, values assigned to “social justice concept” by practitioners. Additionally, social justice turned out to be an absent concept – practitioners tend to avoid the discussion
about social justice, show the discomfort while being asked about justice and even change the topics. Therefore, a few remarks emerged after the research project:

a) research on social justice requires a solid theoretical background so that to shift/deal with the various practitioners’ concepts that are not theoretically grounded. Social justice concept need to be “reconstructed and redefined” from mosaics of values, attitudes etc.;

b) interview scenario/structure should be flexible, especially if we do not want to impose the values, language or concepts on people;

c) to understand the practitioner’s concepts of social justice we need to understand the cultural, historical, political and ideological impacts on society (e.g. in Poland, there is a visible reluctance on some part of the society to talk about “social values” because of the socialism era), including educational impacts (to what extent CG practitioners represent neoliberal concepts of social justice and why?)

d) the discrepancy between the theoretical (critical) discourse and practice should be better understood, including the role of education in that.

References:


Title: “It was too early to choose, we were just babies”. Young people’s narratives of balancing between vocational and general upper secondary pathways

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Keywords: educational choice-making, young people, narrative, upper secondary education, agency

Paper proposal (including the required themes):

This paper proposal deals with the questions of agency and social justice in relation to young people’s educational choice-making and narratives of their school time in upper-secondary education. The approach is ethnographic and even though the main focus is on young people’s narration, as a background data I will also consider teachers’ and other educators’ perspectives on educational choice-making in relation to current education policy discourses.

Distinctive for Finnish upper secondary education is a sharp divide into separate types of schools – vocational and general – after basic education which differs from the education systems of some other Nordic and many European countries. In the age of 15 to 16 young people are ought to make an educational choice concerning their future paths. Officially the both paths, general and vocational, offer an eligibility to further apply to higher education but according to statistics, it is very minor percentages of the University students who have completed only a vocational degree. As in other countries, vocational education and training in Finland has traditionally been seen as a short educational route and a sharp way to working life. Because of the labour market changes, it is not very probable nowadays that one finds employment just after graduation from vocational education (Niemi & Rosvall 2013). Even though a pressure to find tertiary education is a real challenge for all young people, the current reform of vocational education strongly emphasises “market relevance” by shortening studies and speeding up transitions of young people (see Nylund et al 2018).

While conducting an ethnographic fieldwork in upper secondary education, manifold, critical and reflective narratives of young people piqued my interest. Many students narrated uncertainty about their educational and working life paths and – in contradiction towards policy aims – expressed criticism towards too early choice-making between vocational and general education. Prevailing discourse on educational and work-related choice-making strongly emphasizes free and individual choices and ignores consideration of social structures and differences. My approach instead highlights the social formation of human agency: even though never completely predefined, young peoples’ agency and their educational paths are scrutinised as always influenced, restricted and enabled by societal structures and practices (Simmons et al 2014; Evans 2007; Henderson et al 2007). The analytical interest of the paper is in the agency which constitutes as a part of an educational choice-making process. More precisely I ask, 1) how do the students narrate their previous choices between vocational and general upper secondary educational and their possibly forthcoming educational and working life futures; and 2) how does the agency become constituted in the narration of young people?

The paper is based on a multi-sited ethnographic research project utilising the tools of life-historical research too. These approaches have enabled combination and use of different qualitative research methods such as participatory observation, individual and group interviews, document analysis, and
various analytical strategies (Lahelma et al 2014; Falzon 2009) as well as critical reflexivity towards research practices (Renold et al 2008). In this paper, I analyse the interviews conducted with 40 students paying special emphasis on the narratives of a few students. As a background data, I use my field-notes and interviews conducted with teachers and other educators.

My study points out how the practices and structures around educational choice-making can both enable but also restrict young adults’ agency. In the discussion of the results, I aim to turn the perspective to the theoretical concept of agency by investigating how various aspects of agency become constituted in the interview narrations of young people.

References:


Type of contribution: paper

Title: “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

Author: Anne-Mari Souto, senior lecturer, DrSocSc, Med, University of Eastern Finland, Career Counselling Education, Joensuu, anne-mari.souto@uef.fi

Abstract: Education is one of the most important resources for migrants to gain access to the labour market and to the “host” society more widely. So far, it has not been scrutinized in Finland whether school choices and paths are equally available to young people with migrant background. This study tackles this question from the young people’s point of view, and examines the ways in which ethnicity is connected to the young migrant's upper secondary school choices.

The study shows that when young migrant people consider their transitions after the compulsory school, their choices of vocational fields are relatively typified and constrained. Limited educational choices raise the question of racism relevant in the analysis: 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.

Keywords: Ethnicity, racism, upper secondary school choices, horizons for action

Relation to conference theme: The discussion about the young migrant peoples’ agency is addressed in this paper via the concept of “horizons for action”. As Hodkinson and Sparkles (1997) have stated, this concept aims at avoiding the pitfalls of both implicit social determinism and viewing people as completely free, autonomous agents. Understanding the interplay between these polar views is necessary in elaborating transitions from social justice perspective.

General description: The study started with the interest to explore the process by which the post 16+ educational choices were made by young migrant people. During the first weeks of observation, certain constricted school choices and paths were shown to recur in the pupils’ plans. This “limitedness of choices” raised the question: do migrant background or ethnic origin restrict these future opportunities, and if so, how does this happen?

I understand ethnicity as a relational category rather than a substance that define groups and individuals. As Robert Brubaker (2004, 24-25) has stated, focusing on ethnic categorizations enables us to analyze processes; showing especially how people and organizations do things with ethnic and racialized categories and what kind of consequences these processes have. I ask how ethnic categories and migrant experiences are used – or not used – to make the sense of the pupils’ future possibilities, strengths and weaknesses, as well as to frame life stories, self-understanding, and education and work transitions.

The decision-making process itself is approached in my study with the conceptual framework of horizons for action. As Phil Hodkinson and A.C. Sparkles (1997, 34) have argued, horizons for action mean, “the arena within which action can be taken and decisions made. Habitus and opportunity structures of the education and labour market 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”.

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This reminds us that opportunities are not just out there to be chosen. This is important in light of the current political discourse that emphasizes the assumptions of individual freedom and responsibility to choose. Racism and gendered occupational images restrict what can be viewed and chosen among the migrant young people.

Besides these social and cultural structures, the decision-making process is also a question of the individuals themselves, their actual resources in specific contexts (or fields as Bourdieu states). Hodkinson and Sparkles have pointed out that people make pragmatic, rather than rational, decisions concerning their transitions to education and work. These decisions are also influenced by emotions. Furthermore, decisions are made in negotiations and relations with others – peers, family members, teachers, school counsellors, and thus they can be only understood in terms of one’s life history and interaction with significant others.

Based on the above, agency is different in different life histories and societal positions and could be bounded (Evans 2007) in many ways. These inequalities and differing horizons for action are a crucial perspective to be noticed in promoting social justice in the career counselling practices (Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen 2018). My analysis exposes these unequal possibilities. I will analyze empirically an actual decision-making process of the migrant youth with different backgrounds, and their counselling discussions with their school career counsellors.

**Method/ Methodology:** The study is conducted in three secondary and one vocational upper secondary school in eastern Finland during the years 2013-2014. The qualitative data for the study consist of 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. In this paper, the focus is on the youngster’s reasons for their upper secondary school choices and their experiences of counselling they have had for. I have used dialogical content analysis (Koski 2011) in categorizing my data.

I have committed to an anti-racist research approach in my study. It entails giving attention to the nature of the words and concepts that are used in research, both in the collection of the data and writing the reports (see Rastas 2007). Racism as well as ethnicity are conceptualized as socially and culturally constructed rather than essentialised phenomena in this approach. In addition to this, I have been open to my affiliations as an anti-racist activist and my previous researches to my interviewees: all this have made the question of racism, usually seen as absent phenomena in the Finnish school context (Souto 2011), visible and real problem to pose. Moreover, these discussions have given me the possibility to reflect my privileged position as a white middle class female researcher conducting the study of ethnicity and transitions. All these methodological and ethical considerations are crucial in understanding the issue of agency from the social justice perspective.

**Outcomes:**
The study shows that certain vocational fields (i.e. nursing, tourism, business) are recurrently represented in the choices of the migrant young people (Souto 2017). Limited educational choices have some common “ethnic meanings”: some of these meanings and reasons are related to the fact that the student him/herself defines him/herself ethnically in a particular way, and partly to the fact that he/ she is defined racially and ethnically in a certain way but not as a Finn by others. For example, on the one hand many of the interviewed wanted to work in the field of tourism or travelling because these fields of businesses represented multiculturalism and multilingualism that were personally important and close to them. On the other hand, they also thought that they were easily accepted in those occupational positions as a black woman or a Russian-speaking boy. All these examples make visible the restricted and bounded nature of possibilities for agency and horizons 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.

References:
At-risk Swiss youth: A mediational analysis of career adaptation, resilience and life satisfaction

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**Type of contribution:** Paper

**Abstract**

At-risk or vulnerable youth population groups have previously been found to be more likely to experience lower levels of life satisfaction and career adaptability, than their low-risk counterparts. In using the career adaptation model as a theoretical framework, the relationship between career adaptation responses and results, as measured by life satisfaction was examined with the mediational role of resilience in a cross-sectional study of an at-risk Swiss adolescent sample. A risk factor score was calculated by including maternal education level, family income, immigrant background and family structure (i.e., intact vs. not intact), each variable was binarized and then summed. This study is important to determine how career adaptation responses are mediated by resilience in at-risk adolescents in order to operationalise career resilience and better understand how resilience and risk can impact adolescents’ life satisfaction. The implications for future research, theory and practice will be discussed.

**Keywords:** (Career) resilience, vulnerable youth, life satisfaction, career adaptation model, career interventions.

**Relation to Conference Theme:**

Career model research that includes resilience as a mediator will enable the better prediction of the life course of youth in developmental jeopardy. As a result, more appropriate interventions can be designed to traverse increasingly complex career-life transitions, which is an important contribution to social justice practices.

**Research questions & Objectives**

Career guidance and counseling practitioners are facing the challenge of how best to address the transitions and traumas associated with a rapidly changing world-of-work (Cohen-Scali, Rossier, & Nota, 2018). However, the emphasis on career self-management, personal agency and other individualized dialogues that focus on an individual’s use of resources overlooks the bigger structural inequalities that mask the differential access to resources that is associated with risk factors such as low socio-economic status, unstable family structures and a low level of maternal education (Blustein, Franklin, Makiwane & Gutowski, 2017; Duchesne, Larose, Vitaro, & Tremblay, 2010). In order to
create context-near interventions for adolescents, the risk-factors associated with specific socio-demographic variables need to be taken into consideration to facilitate career adaptation responses and results.

At-risk or vulnerable youth have been previously mentioned as facing greater challenges in their career development than their more privileged counterparts (Hüsler & Werlen, 2010). In order to enable vulnerable adolescents face career choices, career-related transitions and traumas better, the development of psycho-social competencies has been proposed in theoretical frameworks, such as the career adaptation model (Savickas, 2013). However, the mediational mechanisms of resilience in career development with at-risk adolescents are largely unknown. This quantitative study, theoretically framed by the career adaptation approach, aims to analyse the role of career adaptation responses and resilience on vulnerable Swiss youth’s career adaptation responses, as measured by their current levels of life satisfaction.

**Theoretical Overview**

The career adaptation approach emphasises the development of adaptive responses in career development. According to Savickas, Porfeli, Hilton, & Savickas (2018) there are four dimensions: the first dimension consists of adaptive readiness (i.e., a personality trait implying a willingness and readiness to change); the second dimension is adaptability resources (i.e., a psychosocial construct that denotes self-regulation resources for dealing with change); the third dimension is adapting responses (i.e. the performance of actual behaviors that address changing career conditions and making occupational choices); and the last dimension is the results of adapting responses (i.e., the fit between the individual and occupation as indicated by success, satisfaction, and stability). Therefore, the model proposes that each one of these dimensions leads to the next in a sequence. For example: an individuals’ adaptive readiness mobilizes his/her adaptability resources which shapes his/her adapting responses and ultimately produces adaptation results (Savickas et al, 2108). What is most relevant to the present research is the last two dimensions because we are examining how resilience mediates the relationship between adapting responses and adaption results, (i.e., measured by life satisfaction), which is essential for vulnerable youth in coping with personal and career challenges.

In the present research study, life satisfaction is considered a subjective evaluation based on personal criteria of an individual’s quality of life (Schalok & Felce, 2004). As far as we are aware hardly any studies exist on vulnerable adolescent’s life satisfaction levels in conjunction with their career development, which underscores the relevance of this research to understand how at-risk youth perceive their life satisfaction and are able to explain their cognitive appraisal of stressors associated with the lived-experienced of high risk-factor environments.

Resilience, however, is conceptualised as the ability to handle stressful situations as an adaptive response (Rossier, 2015). The concept of resilience is built on the idea that individuals exhibit positive
adaptation in the face of significant adversity or trauma (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). Resilience has largely been overlooked in career counselling research, theory and practice and this research attempts to add to the slowly emerging research base that supports the development of strengths-based personal attributes to help vulnerable individuals overcome adverse work-life situations and stressors (Richardson, 2002; Rutter, 2006).

Methodology

Eighth grade Swiss adolescents were recruited from 33 schools in the German-speaking regions of Switzerland. The focus of this research study is on cross-sectional data collected at T5 (n=360; M = 13.6 years; SD = .62). This data collection wave is part of a longitudinal study that consists of seven time points that enable career preparedness to be tracked in an adolescent sample over two years, ending in 2020 once they have entered into vocational education and training (VET). In Switzerland the majority of adolescents start with VET after lower-secondary level and qualifications are then obtained in upper secondary level (i.e., at age 15). Although this system has many benefits, it becomes a challenge to stay employable in the changing world-of-work due to the young age at which these individuals receive their VET qualification. There were three measures used in this research study. Firstly, The Student Career Construction Inventory (SCCI: Savickas et al., 2018), The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC: Connor & Davidson, 2003) and The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson & Griffin, 1985).

Data analysis

Participants provided information on socio-economic status, family structure (i.e. intact vs. not intact), immigrant background and highest level of maternal education. This information will be used to calculate a risk score, each being conceptualised in terms of risk and was binarized (i.e., 0 = not at risk, 1 = at risk) (Duchesne et al., 2010). These binary variables will be summed to create a risk factor for each adolescent. Preliminary data analysis will assess the normality distributions of career adaptation responses, resilience and life satisfaction. Thereafter floor and ceiling effects will be analysed. Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations will be computed. Preliminary t-tests and ANOVAS will be conducted to assess if significant across-group differences existed according to gender, socio-economic back ground (SES) and the binarized risk factor. In order to test the hypothesised model we will use structural equation modelling (Mplus 7; Muthén & Muthén, 2014) and a two-step procedure will be followed to examine both the measurement and structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Expected Results

Currently, data is still being collected but will be completed by August 2019. In line with the career adaptation model, the present study aims to examine whether resilience fully mediates the relationship between career adaptation responses and results, as measured by life satisfaction. It is expected that
career adaptation responses influence resilience and that resilience leads to higher levels of life satisfaction experienced (Rossier, 2015). However, we hypothesize that adolescents who have been identified as at-risk will have lower career adaptation response levels, which influences resilience and indicates lower life satisfaction experienced. As a result, interventions are needed that address the constant adaptations required in world-of-work transitions and provide psychological and social sets of skills that may not yet have been developed in vulnerable adolescents or young people worldwide (Cohen-Scali et al., 2018).

References


Title of proposal: The Role of Life Orientation Teachers in Career Construction for Youth in Gauteng, South Africa

Relationship theme

Career construction, career guidance or career development is one of the vehicles for the emancipation of youth and communities (Hooley, 2015). In line with this notion my research topic seeks to better empower South African Life Orientation teachers who are faced with many challenges including not being employed permanently.

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ABSTRACT

Worldwide governments prioritise career development for youth so that they value life and be able to put food on the table when they have their own families. Youth in this study refers to all the learners who are 14-15 years old and in grade 9. My presentation is drawn from my Doctoral proposal, I shall argue that South African education system does not promote an environment in which capabilities for career construction are sufficiently developed.

The research method for this study is qualitative and is underpinned by focused ethnography. Focused ethnography is preferred because it enables the researcher to explore a distinct problem in a specific context (Wall, 2015). Additionally, through focused ethnography various aspects of culture such as beliefs, values and experiences are discovered (Knoblauch, 2005). Among the research questions, I will enquire are the experiences and how Life Orientation teachers engage youth in career construction. Two frameworks will be used, the career construction theory and Systems Theory Framework. Ethical clearance has been obtained recently and data will be collected at the end of July 2019.

Keywords: Career construction, LO, youth
PROBLEM

Career guidance or career construction is infused in a subject called Life Orientation and it is still on an embryonic stage (South African (SA) Government Gazette 2016; Department of Education, 2011).

Regarding the problem, the South African education system does not have the capacity to properly guide youth to make informed subject choices that lay solid foundations upon which further training can be built to prepare them for meaningful careers when they enter the world of work.

A review conducted by Walters, Watts, and Flederman (2009) on career construction in South Africa identified voids in career development provision like the “lack of coordination; no policies or models for systemic delivery of career guidance.” (p 564-565). According to the Government Gazette (2016) many teachers who are tasked with teaching LO are not trained to teach the subject, nor sufficiently grounded in career construction best practices (Hay, 2018; Kay & Fretwell, 2003). Those teachers that may be identified and get training, the next year are reassigned to other teaching roles and another teacher may teach LO (Government Gazette, 2016). Furthermore, there is a lack of booklets guides, resources and career videos (DHET, 2014). Whilst this is the case, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) syllabus allocates 3 hours to the teaching of careers and subject choices in Grade 9 youth (DoE, 2011).

Against this backdrop, the majority of schools do not have permanent teacher positions for career guidance or career construction. In the district that I will collect data from there is one career advisor is responsible for about 33 secondary schools.

Feedback requested.

The approach of career construction or career guidance as stated above seems not to prepare youth for the next transition, either continuing with tertiary education or being prepared for the world of work. This is a PhD study, I would appreciate it, if I could please be assisted with a career guidance model or approaches that have worked elsewhere. Any other comments, relevant criticism along with suggestions to improve this study is appreciated.
Roadmaps and momentums of success: Upper secondary school students’ motivations and experiences of how to succeed in school

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Paper

Abstract
The paper is related to a larger research project which focus on how high achieving Swedish students decode upper secondary school practices and embark on a successful educational career. The paper deals with a subtheme on the students’ own stories of how they succeed in school and what is driving them to perform well. The results are based on in depth interviews with 54 students in upper secondary school, 20 male and 34 female students. The sample is broad mix of students with different national backgrounds and mixed resources in terms of socioeconomic and educational capital. The theoretical tools are conceptualisations of social capital, but draw also on cultural capital. The preliminary results show both similarities and differences in managing school work and motivations and it seems promising to analyse the patterns of strategies in relation to their social and cultural context.

Keywords
High-achieving students, social capital, socio-economic status, educational capital, motivation

Relation to the conference theme
The paper relates clearly to the conference theme. The expected results of narratives of high achieving students have the potential to show how agency is working in creating meaning and motivation in how students shape their future, by managing demands in upper secondary school.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework
This study which is a part of a larger research project, examines how high achieving Swedish students decode upper secondary school practices and embark on a successful educational career. High achievers in this study are students with varied social and cultural background that have above the average score in key subjects (Maths, Swedish and English) at the end of the first year of their secondary school experience. In the project we are interested in how their social and cultural background matters in how they manage school work and how they mobilize social and material support to succeed in school. A large proportion of students that are classified as living in economically and culturally deprived households come from immigrant background. A blind spot in research is the growing percentage of high achievers from low income household (see Bernard, 2004; Fraser, 2004; Crul, & Heering 2008). These students challenge the idea that poverty, racism/discrimination and low educational performance are linked (Wyner et al., 2007). In educational literature, these students are referred to as educationally resilient. This project builds on and seeks to expand upon the deficit explanatory model which explain the failure of these of students’ on their lack of cultural capital.
For this particular study, we focus on their own stories of how they succeed in school and what is driving them to perform well.

Even if the project is carried out in Sweden, its results is valid also on an international level since, for example, many European countries share challenges that have impact on how education is structured and delivered. To tackle structural changes and challenges facing European countries such as poverty, low cultural capital, and social inequalities there is a need to build resilience, both on an individual as well and on a structural level.

Our analytical focus can allow us to shed light on the complex interplay between social and cultural resources activated by these students in their encounter with the school practices. The literature shows that there is a range of factors within the institution’s control that impact the retention of students, such as personal tutoring, study support, etc. (Cotton, Nash, & Kneale, 2017) The cultural and social capital of students is thus a vital factor in the formation of support networks (Lareau, 2003). The analytical framework is inspired by Coleman (1988) and Bourdieu’s conceptualisations of social capital (1977) and these are: Ideational support, material support, and bridging support. Social capital as here seen as collective resources.

Methods/methodology
We have targeted secondary schools in areas, which are known as socioeconomic disadvantage areas and asking for a list of students in their second year of upper secondary school that are higher achievers at the end of first year of their secondary education. We arranged meetings at the schools in which we informed them about the project and if they would like to participate they should fill a short questionnaire. In addition, we contacted the students via letters using ordinary mail, text messages with invitations and with links to our homepage of the research project, which contains detailed information about the project and ethical considerations etc. Hence, the selection is not statistically representative.

Our method in this study is in depth interviews with students (n=54), 20 male and 34 female students, 37 students have parents with immigrant background and 17 have parents born in Sweden. 31 students are coming from families with high educational capital and 23 have parents with no higher education. In our sample we have for example both students with immigrant background and high educational capital as well as students from Swedish background and with parents with low educational level. The purpose of the interview is to let the student tell us how they managed to get high grades in school and how they manage school work/time management. The interviews are between 45 minutes to 90 minutes and were recorded and transcribed into text files. The interviews are analysed in Nvivo both in open coding and by using our theoretical tools. Ultimately, we are interested in study how the student themselves narrate their success and their motivations.

Expected outcomes/results
We have a broad mix of students, with different national backgrounds, both born in Sweden with both parents also born in Sweden, students born abroad as their parents or students born in Sweden but their parents born in different countries like; Iraq, Somalia, Kurdistan, Philippines, India, Finland, Norway, Russia, Syria, UK, Thailand, Hong Kong, South Korea and USA. Preliminary results show that the students have both similar and different strategies when it comes to manage school work such as; carefully selecting peers in school to work with in assignments but do most of the home work alone and at home. There are also
differences in how they motivate themselves, for some students it is by performing well, it is about paying back to the parents who have sacrificed a career in their homeland or that the parents did not have had the chance to study. For others it is a lifeline a survival, away from their current situation at home. The school becomes a sanctuary and you must not think about any other than yourself. That counts also for those who are alone, that is, some of the students do not have many friends but find a way to visualise themselves in a future occupation and find meaning in pursuing the way. The success in school also have a rewarding feedback, many of the students we have interviewed are competitive and ambitious. There are students that aims for the most competitive university programmes and/or universities, but seems less convinced about the content of the programme. The competitiveness has itself a value and if you can earn a place in a prestigious programme, it means that you really are successful. This has however a downside with much stress and doubt of one own’s capacity to reach the goal. For the moment we have not analysed how their strategies and motivations are related to social and cultural resources but we expect to have results on this later on.

References
**Title:** Moving forward or not? ‘Bias Aware Teaching and Learning’ in a Danish university

**Relation to the conference theme (up to 50 words)**

This proposal highlights challenges associated with encouraging bias aware teaching and learning at a Danish university and the implications for socially just practices and students’ and colleagues’ agency. It also suggests the need for more Nordic research into bias aware teaching and learning, if it is to be taken seriously.

**Name, affiliation and email**

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**Abstract and 3 – 5 keywords (up to 150 words)**

Without Bias Aware Teaching and Learning (BATL), how do we ensure socially just teaching, learning and assessment practices? And, in turn how do we facilitate students’ and colleagues’ bias-aware agency when they pursue professional development and careers? In one of my roles as an Academic Developer I am intent on raising a Danish university’s commitment to BATL and eliciting more specific articulation and strategic commitment to universal BATL goals and practices. However, without such strategic commitment to implementing and sustaining BATL coupled with engagement by teachers and students, its take-up is limited to the few champions. Higher Education (HE) is not exempt from biased practices (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974), which provokes the question: whilst there is a growing number of HE institutions researching and addressing BATL why do these tend be non-Nordic HE institutions? Is BATL perhaps less necessary in the Nordic context or is it time to find out?

**Keywords:** ‘bias-aware teaching and learning’

**Description of the problem/challenge including what are the help and feedback you are looking for? (350 words)**

A Danish university’s Centre for Teaching and Learning portfolio of support for Bias Aware Teaching and Learning (BATL) includes its integration into the mandatory pedagogic programme for Assistant Professors; the online resource [http://unlimited.sdu.dk/](http://unlimited.sdu.dk/) a voluntary course on BATL available to all teachers and study programme leaders and access to bespoke consultancy. However, to date there has been limited take-up by teachers, gatekeepers and policy makers and little evidence of BATL practices. Engagement with BATL seems to be limited to the converted, teachers who are already aware of the need for it in their courses. The reasons for this must include ever present time pressures, even teachers who value BATL may not have the time to address their values-practice gaps. But might there also be cultural barriers? What about the value attributed to teacher autonomy in Nordic HEIs, wherein advocates for BATL may encounter resistance by teachers who regard BATL principles and practices as superfluous and intrusive (Solomonides, 2016)? Whatever the contributing factors, the situation raises a concern, as current research reveals the unsustainable and even negative impact of short-term unconscious bias training. Current recommendations are for longitudinal team-based approaches to addressing conscious and unconscious bias (Atewologun et al., 2018), which needs systemic and sustained commitment within departments, programmes and faculties, but how to move this forward? **What would be the most effective approach to engaging the university with BATL?**
Internationally, more universities are embracing the need to raise awareness of bias and to provide practical tools to mitigate its effects on peers and students (Muneer, Cotton and Winter, 2015). But why is it that research into bias in teaching, learning and assessment practices tends to come from non-Nordic countries. Would we not expect research on bias in teaching and learning practices to emanate from countries, which lead the way with equal opportunities practices and legislation? Might expectations of bias in Nordic Higher Education’s pedagogic practices be so incongruent with regional equal opportunity norms and legislation, that the Nordic lens limits receptiveness to BATL? **Is it time for more research into bias in teaching, learning and assessment practices within Nordic universities?**
A dialogical approach to educating critical reflexive practitioners

Relation to the conference theme
Critical reflexivity involves an attention to how we dialogically construct identities in relational ways including the ways in which in- and exclusion processes take place. The educational facilitation of practitioners’ critical reflexive awareness, therefore, has implications for their ethical work with transitions, social justice and agency in professional practice (Maksimovic & Nordentoft, 2019).

Keywords
Critical reflexivity, practitioners, education, ethical, social justice

Theoretical framework and research question
In their work, guidance practitioners must balance and navigate between individual and system demands. In this process, there is a risk that they reproduce both their own and neoliberal ideologies together with social inequalities by not reflecting critically on how they themselves may take part in the reproduction of these discourses. Critical reflexive practice means critically reflecting on the reflexive nature of actions and the way in which these actions are situated, relational and encapsulated in particular personal values and preferences – i.e. ideologies. It builds on a social constructionist premise and draws attention to the inconsistent nature of explanation and how we create our social realities every moment, every day as we speak, write and interact with one another (Cunliffe, 2004).

This theoretical position means reworking learning from a cognitive to a dialogical process (Cunliffe, 2002) and critical reflection can be viewed as a strategy for dealing with the consequences of the post-foundationalist premise that all knowledge is a situated and contextual product of contingent representations of the world rather than a neutral, context-independent foundation. In this regard, Davies draws attention to the importance of how we use language to construct identities and accounts. She suggests that critical reflexivity “involves turning one’s reflexive gaze on discourse—turning language back on itself to see the work it does in constituting the world” (Davies, 2004, p. 361). This critical outset is slippery and emotionally ambivalent because it marks “the end of the age of innocence” in the sense that it is possible to isolate ‘the right’ thing to do. Moreover, it is no longer possible to establish a power free zone in dialogical practices (Phillips, Kristiansen, Vehviläinen & Gunnarsson, 2013). Critical reflexive researchers assert that reflexive analysis of meaning-making processes have potential to expose processes of inclusion and exclusion and the operation of power in-learning processes resulting from tensions that arise in dialogue across different knowledge forms, knowledge interests and power hierarchies. (Pedersen and Olesen, 2008; Phillips et al., 2013; Nordentoft & Olesen, 2018). Because critical reflexivity implies an attention to how power and knowledge relations interact,
it has potential to enhance an ethical and socially just practice. This focus, however, implies investigating one’s own assumptions regarding the nature of what counts as ‘good practice’. In career counseling contexts, this could be assumptions regarding “what someone might or might not be able to achieve because of their age, ability, or gender” (Bassot, 2014, p. 455). To summarize, critical reflexive practice calls for a constant reworking and recognizing of how cultural norms are reproduced and the ways in which such norms constantly mould our relations, interpretations, sense-making and categorizations.

So far so good. Having established the theoretical and practical relevance of critical reflexivity, the question this paper addresses is how practitioners can be educated to be critical thinkers in their practice?

In the paper, I outline a dialogical approach to education of practitioners based on three considerations:

Firstly, because reflexive questioning draws attention to the socially constructed and reflexive nature of discourses and practices it systematically and dialogically investigates the complexity of thinking or experience by exposing and exploring contradictions, dilemmas, an power relations rather than focusing on normative approaches to guidance practices (Cunliffe, 2002, Bassot, 2014; Nordentoft & Jensen, 2017).

Secondly, Pollner (1991) describes radical reflexivity as a form of “unsettling” of practices which can be instigated by drawing attention to moments in which you are ‘struck’ by an unusual course of events and ‘moved to make sense’ (Cunliffe, 2002, p. 36). Being struck essentially involves our spontaneous and unexpected (emotional, cognitive or physiological) response to a course of events (Cunliffe, 2004, p. 410). In this regard, the harnessing of difference can be seen as a generative force particularly well-suited as a way to unsettle practices and illuminate tacit assumptions in the creation of new knowledge (Tsoukas, 2009).

Thirdly, in the paper, I specifically work with Bakhtinian dialogic communication theory (Bakhtin, 1981) to explore how meaning and learning are produced dialogically in the tension between differences between multiple voices. In two examples from the Master Education in Guidance and Counseling, DPU, Aarhus University, I illustrate how differences between practitioners’ theoretical and epistemological assumptions can be scaffolded didactically in order to initiate a ‘struckness’ leading on to a critical reflexive awareness.

**Methods/methodology**

Exposing and challenging practitioners’ assumptions can be an emotionally loaded and slippery process for both students and educational facilitators (Olesen & Nordentoft, 2018). Therefore, it is important to set a clear frame both in writing and orally to create a trustful atmosphere before the reflexive work.

**Example 1: Defining critical reflexivity**

In the first example, I address the conceptual distinction between reflection and critical reflexivity. Educational researchers suggest that often students think they are critical reflexive when in fact they are not (Ryan, 2013).
In reality, they are often descriptive and perhaps non-reflective rather than critical reflexive. In other words, there seems to be a tension between practitioners’ normative assumptions about the nature of reflection/critical reflexivity and their practical actions. In groups students’ are invited to negotiate the differences and tensions between their different understandings of reflection, critical reflection and the difference between them in this collaborative learning exercise. The dialogues are guided by the following questions: What is the significance of reflection/critical reflexivity – i.e. how can you define the concept? When do you/do you not reflect (reflect critically)? How can you learn to reflect/critically? Why/when must you reflect (critically)? In the dialogical negotiation of possible answers to these questions, students are confronted with their own assumptions about the nature of what critical reflexivity implies. In the last part of the exercise is a poster presentation where students present their written reflections regarding the differences between reflection and critical reflexivity visually. Following this exercise, they get a more formal lecture on differences and significance of reflection vs. critical reflexivity drawing on the posters they have made. This exercise can come before and be combined with the video reflexive work I present below.

Example 2: Video-reflexive dialogues

Video-stimulated collaborative dialogues is a driver for reflexive, context sensitive and often emotionally loaded considerations about practitioners’ tacit assumptions about what they do and what actually happens in practice. Assumptions which are embedded in the (asymmetrical) ways they often communicate in their practice (Mitra, Lewin-Jones, Barrett, & Williamson, 2010; Caroll, Iedema & Kerridge, 2008). At the Master Education in Guidance and Counselling (DPU/Denmark) students videotape and analyse one of their own guidance conversations and discuss them in groups (Nordentoft & Jensen, 2017). Following this process, several students choose to work with the stimulated recall method, which is similar to the Interpersonal Process Recall method in their master thesis. In both these methodologies practitioners and clients watch and/or listen to video-footages in which they interact (Lyle, 2003; Maree, 2016). Thus they give voice to the client and potential to provide reflexive insights into differences and similarities in the ways both clients and practitioners act and reflect on their actions (Lyle, 2003, p. 861).

Outcomes/ expected results

A critical and social constructionist approach suggests that by unsettling practices and initiating practitioners’ ‘struckness’ it becomes possible to access and work with their normative assumptions in learning processes and enhance their critical reflexivity. This struckness can be scaffolded by working with tensions and differences between voices in a dialogical approach inspired by Bakhtin. Example number 1 shows how

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1 In the examples, I use the term students and not practitioner because they take place in an educational context.
differences and tensions between practitioners’ conceptual understandings of reflection and critical reflexivity can be framed didactically in a collaborative learning process. Example number 2 illustrates how practitioners’ collaborative dialogues on video footages of their own guidance conversations have potential to initiate critical reflexivity because they illuminate tensions between what they anticipated would happen and what actually takes place.

References


Title: “Youth’s experience and understanding of social justice in the meeting with counsellors in school. How does the school and local community context affect their view?”

Author/s of proposal including affiliations and e-mail address (should be left out in the version for review)

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Abstract and 3 – 5 keywords (up to 150 words)

Based on interviews with students in lower and upper secondary school in Norway, this paper will analyse the students’ views of their meeting with career guidance in school. We will try to understand their agendas for career guidance, and see how this differ in the local context of the schools and the career counsellors’ mixed and locally constructed agenda for career guidance. Based on this we will analyse how the concept of social justice is understood and constructed locally, by student and counsellors.

Keywords: Pupils, Local context, Local agendas, Social justice

Relation to the conference theme (up to 50 words)

Youths in Norwegian upper and lower secondary school meets counsellors with different agendas, due to the local context. The paper will explore if and how different context affect the pupils’ expectations towards the counsellor and the counselling, and if and how the pupils have any notion of social justice in career counselling.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework (up to 600 words)

In the words of Andrews and Hooley (2018) A career is something that an individual pursues in the context of the world. The world experienced by individuals however, is not one, but rather composed of local realities, local contexts (Berger and Luckman, 1966). This paper will explore experiences with career counselling in relation to social justice and local context among pupils in secondary and upper secondary schools. Mathiesen, Mordal, and Buland (2014) found that different local context affect how the counsellors design their practice and role Three main agendas was visible: 1) the school’s needs, 2) the local society and industry’s needs and 3) the needs of the youths. The cross pressure in the counsellors’ role were highly visible, but the counsellors themselves did not experience it as problematic. The fact that they had a clear personal/local agenda for to prioritizing made it easier for them to handle the cross pressure. This implies that pupils in different schools and communities
meet counsellor with different agendas and therefore receive different counselling. In what ways does this contribute to social justice?

We will also explore if and how different context influence the pupils’ expectations towards the counsellor and the counselling. Do students experience such different agendas, or do they just experience a counsellor who to varying degrees succeed in helping them in their choices. And not least, what’s important to them? What are the pupils’ own agenda in their meeting with the counsellors? What do they want, to be like their parents and live on in the village, do they aspire to be they be rich and /or famous, do they want a safe job, or do they aspire to get away from the local community as soon as possible?

In the extension of this, we will try to analyse if it’s possible to construct a general understanding/definition of social justice, independent of the local context. Is social justice “an articulation of what individuals, groups and societies believe is morally and politically right” (Hooley, Sultana and Thomsen, 2018), and therefore inconceivable disconnected from local context? Will the fact that different context may imply different counselling agendas and practice, necessarily lead to social injustice? Or is the most social just practice the one which adapts career counselling to the local context in the best possible way; where “Career guidance has the potential to be a context for action in which people can join forces to deal with problems and the conditions associated with these problems” (Thomsen, 2012)?

The pupils address their frustration over all the difficult choices they have to make, and we see clearly how it is experienced as overwhelming to make a choice that feels crucial for the rest of their lives and at the same time to feel like the opportunities is boundless. Everything is possible if only they want it enough. We will explore the pupil’s experiences of making a choice in relation to the three abovementioned schools agendas. Is there a difference in pupils’ experiences of making career choices based on the counsellors different agendas? If so, how and in which way and can we through this deduce which career counselling’s agendas that make the pupils feel the least frustrated and have the most feeling of being met with a social just practice?

**Methods/methodology**

This paper will be based on 19 group interviews with pupils in 9 secondary and 9 upper secondary school in Norway. The interviews were conducted in 2013-2014 in three different counties in an project completed by SINTEF, NTNU and IRIS (Buland et al., 2014). The schools were selected to obtain variation on these criteria: urban/rural, big/small schools and affiliation to a local community dominated by industrial sector/public sector. These criteria were met in all three counties. The interviews were conducted as focus groups with a duration of 50-80 minutes. We had an interview guide as a starting point, but the participants had good opportunity to talk about what was on their agenda. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.
Outcomes/ expected results

We hope to be able to show how students agendas and therefore expectations when seeking career guidance in school is a differs as a result of the local context. I addition to this we will be able to demonstrate how the concept of social justice is also constructed locally, in the interplay between local society, schools and the local career guidance. The understanding of social justice therefore may be constructed and understood differently in different local context.

References


1. Life of School Principals and Teachers in Private Schools: A Comparison of Challenges in Turkey and Israel

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National perspective: Turkey and Israel

Privatisation of educational provision at global level is inevitably the outcome of the neoliberalism (Apple, 2006). Turkey, since 1980s, have experienced the impact of the neoliberal policy in public education in the form of proliferation of private schools as well as distinctively hidden forms of privatization. Although the Turkish Constitution legally urges 'free public education for all', the privatization agenda (Ball and Youdell, 2008) and how it is implemented, leads to inequalities encompassing entangled and complicated results. Since the 1980s, private schools have proliferated in Turkey and this phenomenon has dramatically accelerated for the last 10 years. Although all schools are regulated by the Ministry of National Education, private schools have their autonomy in teacher and principal selection and providing the working conditions, which is determined by the individual owners’ or the Trusts’ own discretion. Similarly, in Israel, an increased trend of privatization has been witnessed recently creating clashes between the different stakeholders with the privatization agenda (Ichilov, 2010). Some trends are evident in the gradual rise in private resources allocated to schools’ overall financing and operation (BenDavid-Hadar & Paulino, 2009). Many so-called marketing activities take place in private schools. Hence, teachers and principals find themselves working in such activities in addition to their instructional and educational responsibilities. For example, in Israel, principals when they had to get involved in school marketing activities, they tended not to internalize the assumptions and concepts underlying the philosophy of marketing, nor did they use components of the marketing process coherently and they took up a dual stance (Oplatka, 2002). Although the two countries pose differences in their forms of privatization of education, it is significant to explore the struggles and challenges of educators and school principals as the neoliberal tendencies evident in the privatization processes bring a variety of personal and professional pressures for school leaders and teachers at the private schools. Therefore, drawing on Apple’s (2006) conservative modernism and Ball’s (2012) power/knowledge discussions in privatization, we attempt to explore, compare and contrast the neoliberal challenges faced by the private school teachers and school principals in Turkey and Israel through qualitative-phenomenological research as this is an underexplored terrain in both countries. In this respect, 2 large private schools in each country were selected and teachers, school principals, assistant principals and general directors are being interviewed. Qualitative data analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2012) will be employed in analysing the data. Findings will be discussed during the session.

References:

Articulating the ‘official truth’ on guidance and counselling in post-comprehensive educational transitions: A documentary analysis on Finnish national core curricula 1971–2016

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Keywords: Guidance and counselling, national core curriculum, governance of educational transitions, education policy

Abstract

Relation to the conference theme

Attachment to education, delayed continuation to post-comprehensive education, as well as high numbers of drop-outs and late transition to working life commonly are recognised as major problems within political debates. Despite their societal importance, studies on the governance of educational transitions is understudied field of educational research.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework

According to Walther (2006), the complex systems of socioeconomic structures, institutional arrangements and cultural patterns that form the structure of the journey from youth to adulthood can be understood as transition regimes. Drawing on the work of Esping-Andersen (1990), the notion of regime relates to “existing institutional settings that have a history structured not only by conflicts and interests of specific social actors but also by the set of values and interpretations which they constantly reproduce” (Walther 2006, 124).

A universalistic transition regime is characterised by an extended public sector and a wide variety of counselling and activation policies, traditionally typical for the Nordic countries. Systems of guidance and counselling are indeed connected to the idea of universalist Nordic welfare state model and the governance of public institutions. (Pohl & Walther 2007.) Nevertheless, due to common trends of decentralisation and marketisation, the Nordic countries also show evidence of increasing social and ethnic divisions (Lundahl 2016). According to Kananen (2011), as a contrast to widely used political rhetoric, the foundation of the new order has not solely been the ideas of individual freedom or choice. Instead, the most important aim appears to have been to control and direct people to act in accordance with the rules of the market.

In Finland, guidance and counselling are institutionalised firmly into all levels and sectors of education system. The students have a legal right to specified time allocations for guidance and counselling services at educational institutions, which are in most cases governed by the
municipalities (N = 311). The national core curricula are drawn up by the Finnish National Agency for Education. In general, they include the objectives and core contents of the various subjects, as well as the principles of pupil assessment, special-needs education, pupil welfare and educational guidance. The principles of a good learning environment, working approaches and as the concept of learning are also addressed in the core curricula. In terms of our analysis, they also set the official aims for the guidance and counselling concerning on educational transitions.

In order to portray the governance of guidance and counselling in post-comprehensive educational transitions in Finland, we analyse what kind of aims have been stated for guidance and counselling in national core curricula for basic education 1971–2016. We ask: 1) What kinds knowledge, skills and attitudes guidance and counselling is obliged to provide? 2) How these aims have altered in the course of time? 3) What is the underlying rationale?

Methods/methodology

The data consists of national core curricula from the years 1971, 1985, 1994, 2004 and 2016. Jointly, they cover the whole period since the Finnish comprehensive school reform (1971–1977). According to Simola (2015), education policy documents, such as the curriculum, include serious authoritative verbal acts of experts who speak as such and who thereby express the ‘official truth’ on schooling – and the educational transitions involved. They are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault 1972, 49).

Bourdieu (1977; see also Simola 2015) uses the concepts of doxa, orthodoxy and heterodoxy in analysing the production, reproduction and transformation of discourse and its limits in social formations. At a given historical moment, they form heterodoxy, a field of possible opinions. Some actors aim to establish orthodoxy: to legitimate their view as the truth of educational transition, for example. Outside the monolith orthodoxy and the multi-voiced heterodoxy exists doxa, the universe of the undiscussed or undisputed. Doxa represents the prevailing symbolic order and the ‘natural’ state of affairs that we take for granted (Bourdieu 1977; see also Simola 2015). In bourdieusian terms, curricular documents articulate the orthodoxy of guidance and counselling in post-comprehensive educational transitions.

Whilst setting the official aims for the guidance and counselling, the national core curricula reflects the contemporary objectives and principles of educational transitions. The documentary analysis focusing on these changing objectives, aims and rationale is made as an iterative process, combining elements of content analysis and thematic analysis (Bowen 2009).

Outcomes/ expected results

Finland has placed career management skills high on its policy agenda throughout the whole comprehensive school era 1971 onwards. The underlying rationales are simultaneously both economic-competitive and social. The overall aim is to promote the employability of young people, and to increase their self-empowerment and self-assessment so that they are able to make well-considered decisions about their education and careers throughout their lives. Despite common objectives, actual contents for guidance and counselling have altered along the general trends of education and social policies.

References


“It’s about life and death” – Asylum seeking students and ”high-stakes counselling” in Sweden

Type of contribution: Paper

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Abstract
In Sweden, as in other Nordic countries, education and work are seen as important in the realisation of social goals as equal opportunities, community fellowship and social inclusion. Thus, school teachers and career counsellors are considered as important facilitators towards career development. During 2015/2016, Sweden experienced the largest proportionate influx of refugees in Europe with profound effects on career guidance and counselling in upper secondary school. This paper highlights and analyse a changed professional context for career counsellors working with asylum seeking students – what we term “high-stakes counselling” where the career counselling process is intertwined with migration regulations. Based on ethnographic fieldwork and Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997) theory the analysis points to the complexity and hard emotional pressure on the career counsellors as their work may implicate a matter of “life and death” for the young refugees. Career counsellors have to adapt to regulations that narrows their work for expansion of horizon for action and social inclusion substantially.

Keywords: refugees, career counselling, social justice

Relation to the conference theme
The paper critically analyses the scope for career guidance and support to young refugees being in a situation characterized by high risk and uncertainty as well as limited horizons for action.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework
In the wake of the global refugee crisis in 2015-2016 Sweden received more immigrants per capita than any other European country (Karlsdóttir 2018). Consequently, immigrant students constitute a large part of the students at the Introductory Programmes (IPs). The IPs are intended for pupils who are not qualified for the national programmes in Swedish upper secondary school and one of the five IPs is Language Introduction Program (LIP) which is intended for students who have recently moved to
Sweden. Many of the students in LIP are in an ongoing asylum process. On 1 July 2018, a temporary amendment to the law on upper secondary school came into force and gives unaccompanied children who have received a decision on deportation an opportunity to get a residence permit to study. Unaccompanied children who arrived in Sweden before November 24, 2015, but who received the asylum application registered with the Migration Board only after that date, may be covered by the new upper secondary law. If the asylum seeking students complete their education successfully they can apply to get 6 months extension to get a job in Sweden. If the students can support themselves through income from work or their own company, they have the possibility of a permanent residence permit. In January 2019 the Swedish migration agency had received a total number of 11 745 applications, of which 5096 were granted and 2405 were rejected, 3938 were still waiting for a decision (Migrationsverket 2019).

For young asylum-seeking students the pressure to complete upper secondary education is dramatic and stakes are very high. In addition, many asylum-seeking students are unaccompanied minors, i.e. a person “who is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so” (UNHCR, 1997 p. 7). Most of them have dramatic experiences from war, terror and poverty (Menjívar and Perreira 2019). In addition, we know that this particular group of young people are living in Sweden under poor social, economic and housing conditions where they are left waiting for decisions in an unclear legal situation. Their lives are thus characterized by anxiety, uncertainty and poor mental health (Kunskapscentrum för ensamkommande barn 2018). The asylum seeking students’ path is clearly pointed out by structural limitations that clashes with the policy ideals regarding career development in Sweden. Overall, the legal context is highly complex and municipalities have interpreted the amendment differently. From a career counselling perspective, the counselling process becomes intertwined with migration legislations. For career counselors, this situation is challenging both professionally and ethically.

Against this background the aim is to describe a changed juridical, educational and interpersonal situation that we term “high stake counselling”. More specifically, we describe how career counsellors navigate between ideals of fulfilling the dreams of the individual and matching what is actually possible when working with vulnerable students without permanent residence permit under conditions were many old strategies, routines, rules and methods may not apply. We provide an illustration of the complexity of career counsellors’ everyday enactment of policy, legislation and welfare structure. Thus we provide knowledge about how career counsellors’ work is framed by regulations and affect not only young peoples’ career chances but their chances to get a residence permit.

The theoretical framework of Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997) is applied in the analysis, by using the notions of field, position and horizon for action to clarify how career counsellors navigate between different ideals. Similarities in the patterns from the perspectives of the five municipalities were identified and form the basis for the preliminary results.

Methods/methodology

We are inspired by ethnography and we thus focus on cultural formations and maintenance. The data is based on the direct involvement and long-term engagement with processual matters in counselling activities. This paper has a selective intermittent time mode approach which means that the frequency of the visits have been flexible and the selection is made by relevance (Jeffrey and Troman 2004). The intention is to capture career counsellors’ motions and navigation on the field of their everyday work regarding ideals of policy, career development and the actual possibilities for the individual without permanent resident permit.

The foundation of data derives from observations and field conversations in five different municipalities in Sweden that offers LIPs, during the autumn semester 2018. The schedule for observations was selective in relations to occasions when there were career developmental activities planned for the students. The number of observations in each municipality varies depending on the frequency of career developmental activities. The total time for observations is approximately 24 days. Examples of career developmental activities included in observations are career counsellors’
information about adult education, information from trade union representatives, motivational and inspirational lessons, regular teaching and individual counselling. We also draw on a small number of observations of meetings with other school staff and informal conversations and interviews with career counsellors.

We transcribed field notes and interviews and analysed the data through the theoretical lenses provided by Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997). We then applied the notions of field, position and horizon for action on data from the five different municipalities. Common patterns arose from the analysis of the five contexts, which constitute the basis of the results.

Outcomes/ expected results

Preliminary results draw attention to the hard emotional pressure on career counsellors as the outcome of their work is decisive for whether the students have the opportunity to apply for a temporary permit to stay (or if they are expelled and must return to warzones, poverty and uncertainty). Career counsellors have to navigate in a changed juridical and educational context where new regulations and concerns become a part of professional practice. They must hence adapt to the complicated regulative structures regarding permanent residence permit at the expense of policy ideals on career guidance. At the same time, organisational structures and routines in schools are under constant change in order to deal with influx of new groups of students. As a consequence they are tied up by regulations and structures of what is actually possible for asylum seeking students. Career counsellors thus seems to be stuck between a rock and a hard place – between on the one side democratic policy ideals and ethical convictions and on the other side the harsh reality. Overall, the data suggests that meetings between asylum seeking students and counsellors may implicate matters of life and death. This constitute one aspect of a professional practice that we term high-stake counselling.

References


Education, Immigration and Migration: Policy, Leadership and Praxis for a Changing World
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Dynamic globalization processes, political upheaval and socio-economic crises and wars have led to 65.6 million people being forced from their homes around the world; 22.5 million are refugees, over half of them under age 18; most of them denied access to basic human rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement (UNHRC, 2017). Despite the severity of these issues, education scholars have devoted scant attention to these phenomena, some studies show a strong correlation between discrimination, ineffective policies for the integration of immigrants, foreigners, and refugee students, successful integration of native minorities and equal access to education (Arar et al., 2018; Banks, 2017; Dryden-Peterson, 2016; McCarthy, 2018; Waite, 2016). This presentation aims: (1) to explore the work of educational leadership in Turkey and Germany to meet the needs of migrants and refugees, and; (2) to examine these practices as both educational issues and as issues of equity, social justice and human rights.

Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used
We examined how educational leaders cope with the integration of newcomers in schools and communities as future citizens, through the design and implementation of curricular and extra-curricular activities for immigrants' integration through phenomenological qualitative research lens, by interviewing school principals and teachers integrating Syrian students in their schools in 5 schools in each state (Turkey and Germany), although documentary analysis of policy text fully explored in order to reach further understanding of both policy, leadership and scholastic praxis of refugee education.

Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings
We present my empirical findings on these issues as they affect leadership, policy and practice to facilitate dialogue and fertilization of ideas among researchers from different regions, addressing essential questions: (1) How can education stakeholders, state policy-makers, educational leaders and researchers, highlight the needs of migrants and refugees who arrive weak and lacking resources after long arduous journeys? (2) How do education leaders cope with the challenges of absorption of refugee and immigrant students? (3) Who seeks to meet the needs of these newcomers and how? This session can help to better understand educational leaders' role as it influences (and is influenced by) immigration.

References
Preliminary analysis from my PhD point towards a didactical construction of career learning in a tension field between a political articulation and a practical skepticism. Teachers have difficulty integrating career learning into their practice – one reason for this is that they see career learning as a political tool to pressure students, which does not correspond with the teacher professional understanding of the purpose of upper secondary school. It is an argument, that career learning from a social justice perspective bears a great potential in accommodating the two central goals of Danish upper secondary school; ‘preparation for higher education’ and ‘bildung’. In this paper, the links between the two goals and career learning from a social justice perspective is analyzed in relation to data conducted on three different Danish upper secondary schools in relation to the construction of career learning as a didactical matter.

*Career learning, didactics, upper secondary school.*

**Relation to the conference theme**

In the context of Danish upper secondary school ‘career learning’ – and the articulation of ‘career’ in general – is new. For that reason, there is little knowledge on how teachers interpreted the theme into their teaching practice and general understanding of the purpose of upper secondary school, and how this is linked to social justice.
General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework

Ever since the establishment of Danish upper secondary education ‘preparation for higher education’ and ‘bildung’ – in various formulations - has been part of the overall purpose.¹ In a political attempt to reinforce the goal of preparing students for higher education and to modernize bildung, the 2017 educational reform of Danish upper secondary school sought to strengthen the foundation of knowledge, skills and competences within all subjects (Undervisningsministeriet, 2016). As the government wrote in 2016 prior to the 2017 educational reform: “The foundation of upper secondary education is a strong understanding of skills and competencies and a modern general education (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.” (Regeringen, 2016, p.23, my translation)

One way to do this was by introducing four new general competencies that teachers should integrate within and across all subject fields in upper secondary education. One of these was career competencies through career learning². A Danish research project from 2016, concluded that through a thorough didactical framing of career learning, teachers in upper secondary school where to a certain degree able to strengthen the students’ knowledge about choices and clarification, which to some extend can be linked to ‘preparation for further studies’. The project was to a lesser extent successful in accommodating the career learning potentials related to ‘bildung’. (Katznelson, 2016)

However, the overall purpose of upper secondary education and, in this case, career competencies is interpreted in practice may vary, since the teachers have methodological freedom, autonomy of teaching and different teacher therefore attach and associate different meaning to the given matter (Hopmann, 2007). Nonetheless, den Boer & Bakker, states that “For career learning to succeed, it must first be given meaning by teachers. The latter currently possess a series of workable, trusted routines, which form the core of the working community, as these routines have been tried and tested in practice. Changing these routines requires re-negotiation with professionals about their professional identity.” (den Boer & Bakker, 2009, s. 163)

In a continuation of the results from the above mentioned research, this paper will investigate how actors on the political and practical curricular level construct, communicate and practice career learning as a practical didactical matter and how this is linked to their understanding of the goals of upper secondary education. In addition, the paper investigates how career learning, in a social justice perspective, can be linked to the overall purpose of upper secondary education.

¹ In this paper Bildung refers to the whole person, and is a holistic way of understanding the overall purpose of education. “When we refer to a person as educated (gebildet) (…) we mean at least that this person has succeeded in establishing a certain degree of order in the whole of his existence (…) (Bildung) for any state of mind of a person which puts himself in a position to impose order upon himself, as well as upon his relations to the world.” (Gundem & Hopmann, 1998, p. 19)

² The other competencies was; innovative competencies, digital competencies and global competencies- However, these are not included in this paper
The theoretical foundation originates from the German/Nordic didactical tradition, as formulated by Stefan Hopmann (1995, 2007). Here didactics is seen as a matter of ‘order’, ‘choice’ and ‘sequence’ at three interdependent curricular levels; the political, the programmatic and the practical (Hopmann, Künzli, & Jacobsen, 1995). In this theoretical framework didactics require “an irreducible commitment to Bildung, a founding belief in the educative difference of matter and meaning, and a strong conviction that teaching and learning are necessarily autonomous activities.” (Hopmann, 2007, s. 121) In addition, I draw on Wolfgang Klafkis didactical theory, where the importance of bildung as a didactical matter is emphasized through the epochal typical key problems as a core part of any curriculum. (Jank, 2009) (Klafki, 2011)

**Methods/methodology**

Knowledge about how ‘career learning’ is constructed, communicated and practiced on the political and practical curricular level is sought out through an ethnographic empirical investigation using qualitative methods across the two levels, including policy analysis, interviews and observations. The data collection on the practical curricular level will take place at three Danish upper secondary schools located in different settings – an urban, a provincial and a rural district. During the fieldwork, interviews will be conducted with practitioners and students as well as extended observations in the classroom, faculty lounge and the school premises overall. In addition, a systematic literature review of career learning from a social justice perspective will be conducted. In the literature review, knowledge about how career learning can be interpreted in relation to the concept of ‘bildung’ will be sought out, drawing on the theories mentioned above.

When combined, the systematic literature review of career learning from a social justice perspective will be used to inform the interpretation of career learning at the political and practical curricular level. The literature review will serve as the foundation (codes) for the analysis of the articulation of the goals for upper secondary school.

The data from both the systematic literature review and the ethnographic empirical investigation will be analyzed through Reinhart Kosellecks semantic theory (Koselleck, 2007), while drawing on the above mentioned theoretical foundation.

**Outcomes/ expected results**

Preliminary findings from my Ph.D.-project shows that teachers have difficulty integrating career learning in to their practice. Or said in other terms, the teachers have difficulties articulating and integrating the “for whom”, “for what”, “how” and “why” of career learning into their practice. The teachers see career learning as a political disturbance in which ‘policy’ dictates a particular way of representing career in teachers’ practice, that make it impossible for the teachers to attach meaning to the given matter. The teachers express frustration on how politicians tend to focus to much on choices
and pressuring the students through an extensive focus on ‘preparation for higher education’, which does not correspond with the teachers’ wish to focus on ‘bildung’. When interpreting career learning in a social justice framework (Hooley, 2015; Hooley, Sultana, & Thomsen, 2018) the paper intend to bridge the practical didactical construction of career learning to the two goals of upper secondary education.

The relevance of this project is twofold. On one hand it refers to the practitioners, whose skepticism towards the theme of career as a didactical matter affects their construction of and their ability to attach meaning to the matter. On the other hand, it refers to practitioners, who are willing to integrate the theme into their practice, but who are struggling to make it a relevant theme in their didactical practice and make it relevant to their students learning and ‘bildung’.

References


Type of contribution: paper

Title:
Who will mind the gap? Compulsory schools´ and employers´ engagement in Swedish career education

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Abstract (max 150 words)
The paper critically analyses working life aspects of the informal career learning curriculum in Swedish compulsory schools. It aims at understanding how key features of present working life and the highly decentralized and marketized education context interact with and shape the informal curricula of Swedish career education. The paper uses Bernstein’s (2000) curriculum theory, especially regarding power, control and discourses, and Stanley and Mann’s (2016) theoretical framework of employer engagement in education. It is based on two questionnaires, case studies in five schools and analysis of texts from school and working life actors. The findings indicate that a considerable part of counsellors´ work is assigned to helping students navigate in the dense school jungle, while career learning activities concerning working life and occupations often are few and scattered.

Keywords:
career education, career learning, state involvement, employers, transition policies

Relation to conference theme
Critically analysing working life aspects of the career-learning curriculum of Swedish compulsory schools, in a situation of marketized upper secondary education, the paper asks: What contents, activities and actors are young people exposed to and to what extent can it help them forming their careers through these double markets?

Research questions, objectives and theoretical framework
Strategies and instruments aiming to facilitate young people´s school-to-work transitions, e.g. career education and counselling (CEG) have become central policy matters at national level and in the European Union (Bengtsson 2016; Jørgensen et al. 2019, Sultana 2012; Watts & Sultana 2004). The raised political interest in CEG rests on assumptions that they may serve economic, learning and social purposes. Research has shown that they may have such effects (Hooley et al. 2014; Hughes et al 2016). While CEG always has had to relate to working life, school-choice and privatization of education (Verger et al. 2016) means that schools, career
practitioners and students in many countries also have to overview and engage in local and regional educational markets. However, the knowledge is still sparse how career-learning curricula, in particularly concerning working life matters, are affected by this double market situation (see however Hooley et al 2018).

Sweden constitutes an interesting case, as compulsory school students currently not only have to choose among upper secondary programs, but also between a myriad of competing public and private (“free”) upper secondary schools, intensely marketing themselves e.g. via large school fairs, open houses, prospects, homepages and school visits (Lundahl et al. 2013). In contrast, Swedish teenagers have gradually had reduced access to working life experience, e.g. through school based work experience (“prao”) and vacation jobs (however 2 weeks of “prao” has recently become mandatory). From the mid-nineties, the state does not regulate the forms for working life orientation in compulsory school, and presently, systematic collaboration between schools and working life actors is largely lacking. This is puzzling, considering the shortage of skilled workforce, decreased attractiveness of upper secondary VET and scarce apprenticeship training despite many expansion efforts (Jørgensen et al. 2019). Entrepreneurial learning being part of the national curricula should also speak in favour of initiatives to strengthen career learning. According to the Swedish national curriculum, professional and impartial CEG is a responsibility of the whole school. In reality, the career counsellors receive this task, and there is no school subject or hours in the time schedule specifically assigned to career learning (Swedish Parliament 2018).

The aim of this paper is to understand how key features of present working life and the highly decentralized and marketized education context interact with and shape the informal curricula of Swedish career education in compulsory school. For practical reasons we delimit the analysis of working life actors to the employers and their organisations.

We want to answer the following research questions:

1. How can one describe and understand schools´ engagement (or lack thereof) in career learning about working life and occupations?
2. How can one describe and understand employers´ engagement (or lack thereof) in career learning about working life and occupations?
3. How does the school market situation influence Swedish career education curriculum more generally, and what possible consequences does it have on career learning about working life in particular?

Even though this is not a comparative paper, some outlooks are made to Denmark, Finland and Great Britain.

Bernstein´s (2000) curriculum theory is useful for analysing power and control (classification and framing aspects) of the career education curriculum and its dominating pedagogic discourses. Further, the paper uses parts of Stanley and Mann’s (2014) theoretical framework for employer engagement in education to analyse the relationship to the school curriculum (supplementary, complementary or additional) and the intended results on young people´s career development in terms of human capital, social and cultural capital.
Methods and sources

The paper emanates from the research project “Learning for career management skills”, funded by the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working life and Welfare.

The paper is mainly based on

(1) A web-based questionnaire to career counsellors (N=81) in 70 compulsory schools situated in a large variety of municipalities. Here the counsellors described career education and counselling in a number of respects, including the scope and character of engagement of external actors,

(2) Case studies in five schools from five different types of municipalities. These studies included observations, interviews with students, head teachers, counsellors and a selection of teachers, and analysis of written material,

(3) Analysis of homepage contents and other material from schools and organisations-representatives of the labour market identified in the career counsellor survey and in the case studies.

(4) Data from a questionnaire study among 1522 grade 9-students in 70 municipalities. Some of the questionnaire questions are identical to those of a previous study in 22 OECD countries, however not including Sweden (Sweet et al., 2014).

First findings

Career development activities related to the impending choices of upper secondary schools and programs dominate the career-learning curriculum. A considerable part of counsellors’ work is assigned to helping students navigate in the dense school jungle, and out-of-school career activities tend to focus choice of upper secondary alternatives. Swedish grade 9 students report fewer acquired career competencies inside and outside school than Finnish and Danish students do, but information about educational programs constitutes an exception. School organised work experience is the most frequent work-related activity, inviting external actors who give brief career talks the second most frequent. Commonly, organisations specialising in young people’s career choices act on behalf of private and public employers and employer organisations. Only half of the students have made study visits to a place of work. The input to school CEG from working life actors parallels the characterisation of the British equivalent: “short duration, episodic, and unintegrated into any programme of study with defined learning outcomes” (Hughes et al. 2016, 34). In sum, the current Swedish CEG resembles the British VET situation: a combination of low state engagement and low employer involvement (Busemeyer & Vossiek 2016).

References


How can Psychological Intervention and Career Counselling Respond to Uncertainty, Precarity and Unemployment’s Psychosocial Consequences?

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Abstract and 3 – 5 keywords

This paper intends to explore how a group of psychologists discuss the implications of the results of a quantitative study that focused on work’s manifest and psychological benefits, psychosocial uncertainty and coping with uncertainty. A group of psychologists from different areas of practice (educational, career counselling, clinical, human-resources…) are invited to participate in a focus group discussion centred on the implications for practice of a research that was conducted during the beginning of the economic crisis in Portugal, in 2009, a time of increased unemployment, precarity and austerity. This focus group is to take place in April 2019. Analysis is focused on the themes of uncertainty, precarity; (un)employment, and its psychosocial consequences.
There is a focus on the discourses produced on the participants of the quantitative study’s personal experiences (unemployed, precarious…) and on how psychological intervention in different areas can help or hinder people’s well-being, agency and career development.

Keywords: Uncertainty; Precarity; (Un)Employment; Psychological Intervention; Career Counselling

Relation to the conference theme

By exploring situations of precarity, (un)employment, and how people experience work and uncertainty, the quantitative studies intended to problematise the organisation of the labour-market and its psychosocial consequences, underlining socially created inequalities within working environments. This qualitative study intends to foster debate on practices that may, inadvertently, reinforce inequalities, and contribute with suggestions for socially just practices.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework

The level of security (or basic trust) developed in primary attachment relationships contributes to the psychological origins of uncertainty, which allow coping with uncertainty (Bowlby, 1980/1985; Erikson, 1968). Based on qualitative research conducted with underprivileged populations, Marris (1996) concluded that people who experience greater social vulnerability suffer uncountable consequences of uncertainty. He suggests there is an unequal distribution of uncertainty and of the power to cope with it. Within this context, the ones that are powerless are led to adopt self-defeating strategies to cope with uncertainty, which reinforce their condition of vulnerability and their sense of inadequacy.

Cultural, social, and political changes have contributed to individualisation becoming a hegemonic form of socialisation, to communities’ fragmentation, to instability in the labour markets, to competitiveness and distrust in professional relationships, and,
ultimately, to precarious working conditions (Bauman, 2001/2009; Coimbra & Menezes, 2009; Sennett, 1998/2001). Following the financial crisis of 2007/2008, countries such as Portugal were faced with economic crises, whose austerity measures had dramatic effects: increased unemployment rates, hyper flexibilization and deregulation of labour relations, and widespread precarity. It is proposed that all these social, economic and political conditions lead to the creation of new forms of uncertainty in people’s lives and work environments (Beck, 1992), thus complexifying the process of making meaning of experiences and of critically reflecting and integrating them, which may engender a widespread sense of existential insecurity/precarity.

The quantitative study explored the challenges people faced in the beginning of the economic crisis in Portugal, in 2009, analysing how employed, precariously employed and unemployed people: (i) perceive uncertainty in the social context and experience its consequences (in terms of community relationships, work, and the belief of being capable to cope with uncertainty); (ii) adopt emotional maladaptive strategies, to cope with uncertainty); (iii) and experience the latent (time structuring, social contact, collective purpose, status and activity) and manifest (financial access) benefits of work, as described by Jahoda (1992) and Fryer (1998). The model tested explained 67% of the adoption of emotional coping strategies towards uncertainty, being mostly explained by psychosocial uncertainty. Access/deprivation regarding the benefits of work is considered a psychological descriptor of personal circumstances. Furthermore, the model worked in the same manner for unemployed, permanently employed and precarious people but unemployed and precarious workers show higher means than permanent workers. So, psychosocial uncertainty explains the adoption of self-defeating strategies to cope with it, providing evidence for the existence of social origins of psychological vulnerabilities.

Therefore, the consideration of social circumstances in psychological vulnerabilities is vital to avoid victim-blaming discourses and practices. To fulfil democracy’s goals, how can various forms of psychological intervention contribute to a greater balance in the relationship between workers and employers, towards greater equality of income and power relationships.
By presenting the former results, this focus group discussion aims at exploring the following research questions:

1) How do psychologists from different areas give meaning to these results in terms of the psychological consequences of unemployment, precarity and psychosocial uncertainty?

2) How do these psychologists perceive their professional role within these aspects, regarding their practice?

3) How do these psychologists perceive their professional role regarding social justice?

4) Considering the results, do these psychologists identify practices that could hinder psychological well-being, personal agency and/or career development?

5) Does the discussion allow to identify possible strategies that may promote individual, groups, communities’ well-being, agency, empowerment or career development - what implications emerge from these results’ discussion for a practice that may be socially aware, empowering and socially transforming?

Therefore, it is intended to promote discussion within the group of psychologists regarding some of the main results in order to allow for these themes to emerge, be debated and new shared meaning to arise.

**Methods/methodology**

By integrating contributions from constructivism and social constructivism, knowledge is perceived as a pragmatic construction, based on socially created discourses and on the continuous process of reality’s construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966/1971; Gergen, 1985; Lyotard, 1954/2008) and so historically situated (Foucault,1986). Thus, the inevitability of subjectivity and non-neutrality of results and scientific language are accepted, depending on the interpretation of the researcher and his personal, theoretical, social and cultural lenses (Fox & Prilleltensky,1997).

Considering the aims of this study, focus group discussion was chosen as the method that could allow an analysis of the meanings that a group of psychologists may make of the implications of results, but also, the creation of new knowledge and understanding
of the world, through social interaction and debate (Burr, 1995). Moreover, by assuming an ontological and epistemological standpoint that enhances the role of language in the social construction of the world and knowledge, there will be different layers in data analysis (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002/2004).

Consequently, the analysis of the discourses produced will be an interpretative one, for which researcher’s reflexivity will be fundamental, even more so considering the researcher’s common professional role with participants (Parker, 1994; Willig, 2001). It will focus foremost on a thematic analysis concentrated on the themes of uncertainty, precarity, unemployment, and its psychosocial consequences.

It is important to acknowledge that our results will give access to one of many possible interpretations. However, measures will be taken to respect specificity as a form of ecological validity within qualitative research (Parker, 1994), by documenting procedures and assuming a critical attitude towards results and our own perspective (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Silverman, 2000). Finally, an open attitude will be taken, so that we can identify possible emerging categories that may contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon (Behar cit in Riessman, 1993).

**Outcomes/ expected results**

This study is at a very early stage and, considering its exploratory nature, it is complex to advance expected results. It seeks to foster reflection on practices that, by focusing on the adaptation of the individual to the context (Arendt, 2005), instead of focusing on the transformation of damaging features of work environments, may reinforce people’s sense of inadequacy and the status-quo. Broadly speaking, it aims at understanding participants’ meaning-making and positions regarding their work as psychologists and its relationship to social justice. A focus on how these discourses are produced would allow to explore their social and political impact, as well as of psychological practices (Burr, 1995). Therefore, we expect to explore how participants perceive certain psychological practices as possible forms of victim-blaming and of legitimizing inequality (Ryan, 1971/1976), and how they may connect with individuals’ feelings of inadequacy, self-blame, loss of agency regarding the socio-political context, opportunities for career development and satisfaction, as well as other psychological
consequences (anxiety, depression…). And so, analyse power relations in society (Adorno & Horkheimer 1979) and create a space for reflection on how psychology and psychologists can contribute to social justice (Martin-Baró, 1986).

References


Type of contribution: Paper

Becoming a Finnish Student with an Immigrant Background - Life courses and educational trajectories

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Abstract
In this study, we will focus on eight life biographies of 15-year-old students with immigrant backgrounds. We combine life course perspective with the participant observations which grounds on observations made at guidance counselling moments (one-year qualitative follow-up to a school class with an ethnographic approach). As a general task we will ask how a group of pupils with immigrant backgrounds do become Finnish secondary-school students in their narratives. Empirically we ask how are the agentic orientations concerning education expressed in young people’s life-narratives and how is the agency achieved in the Finnish basic education? By analysing the narratives of becoming a Finnish upper-secondary student in the midst of the upper-secondary-choice context, the study will contribute to the discussion on the normative expectations of study guidance and counselling and individual conditions.

Keywords: Upper secondary choice, guidance and counselling, life course approach, immigrant background

Relation to the conference theme
In this study, we will focus on eight life biographies of 15-year-old students with immigrant backgrounds. By analysing the narratives of becoming a Finnish upper-secondary student in the midst of the upper-secondary-choice context, the study will contribute to the discussion on the normative expectations of study guidance and counselling and individual conditions.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework
Research done among migrant families have shown some contradictions and paradoxes characterising the schooling of young people with immigrant backgrounds. Families are holding positive attitudes towards education and high academic aspirations although they sometimes face difficulties and underperformance in education (Salikutluk 2016; Fernández-Reino 2016; Tjaden and Hunkler 2017; Kao and Tienda 1998). In a similar vein, the educational aspirations of Finnish young people with immigrant backgrounds are often academic (Kalalahti, Varjo, and Jahnukainen 2017; Kilpi-Jakonen 2011), despite their below-average school performance (Harju-Luukkainen et al. 2014) and relatively high drop-out rates (Larja et al. 2015).

Recent research done among pupils with immigrant backgrounds in Finland provide some interpretations on the mechanism behind these contradictions and paradoxes. To achieve good educational positions is more difficult for students with scarce social and cultural resources, but also for students with immigrant backgrounds (Kalalahti, Varjo & Jahnukainen 2017; Holmberg et al. 2018). They counter qualitatively different institutional and social structures where they face everyday racism and downplaying (see Zacheus et al. in print; 2017). They must cope with unfamiliar opportunity structures, often with the lack of required Finnish skills, and sometimes with special educational needs. Further, our studies on local educational authorities (Kalalahti et al., in press) show that study counselling and guidance for immigrant origin pupils are often felt insufficient, categorical and complex. Comprehensibly, study counsellors fall in-between these optimistic orientations, structural boundaries and oversimplified or even biased views on pupils with immigrant backgrounds (see also Lindgren 2010).

Despite the rich research above, there is still lack of studies focusing on the interlockings of educational biographies and the context-for-action (see Biesta & Tedder, 2007) of the educational choices of immigrant young people in Finland. The broad aim of this study is to increase the understanding about the dynamics of educational biographies, transitions, and guidance and support in different structural environments. By looking
at life course trajectories of eight young people we will analyse the engagement (“the configurations of routine, purpose and judgement” (Biesta & Tedder, 2007) and agentic orientations that these young people express when describing their educational trajectories and processing the choice for upper secondary education. The aim is to halt their life narratives to the upper-secondary choice and to portray their context-for-action by following their study guidance counselling moments for a half a year.

In Finland, guidance and counselling is institutionalised to basic education at all grades. During the lower secondary education (grades 7–9) pupils have guidance counselling 2 hours for a week in all, usually allocated so that they have one hour of guidance counselling for each week at the 9th and final grade of basic education. Besides the guidance counselling classes, pupils and their families attend to school visits and briefings. The objectives for guidance counselling are set at the national core curricula. According to these tasks, guidance counselling supports the pupils’ agency and independence in decision-making related to their education and career choices. The guidance counsellor has the main responsibility for the implementation of guidance counselling.

After the final year of basic education pupils complete their basic education and apply for dual-model non-comprehensive upper secondary education. For pupils with immigrant backgrounds this is often the first phase where they need individual competences to make successful transitions to upper secondary education. Since we already know relatively much about the causal mechanisms of family background and school achievements among the immigrant families, our attempt here is to focus on the context of guidance counselling with contextual and biographical approach. Our study will develop the knowledge on the agency expressed in educational life biographies within the frames of the Finnish education system. As a general task will ask how a group of pupils with immigrant backgrounds do become Finnish secondary-school students in their narratives. Empirically we will address two research questions:

Q1: How are the agentic orientations concerning education expressed in young people’s life-narratives?
Q2: How is the agency achieved in the Finnish basic education?

Methodology

This study combines life course perspective with the participant observations; it grounds on observations made at guidance counselling moments (one-year qualitative follow-up to a school class with an ethnographic approach), with a special focus on the life courses of eight 9th grade pupils with immigrant backgrounds from this class (interviews). This group of young people have multiple ethnic and migrant backgrounds: they are young people with refugee, migrant or Finnish backgrounds, dual nationalities, multilingual families and multi-ethnic backgrounds. In all, they share stories about facing the Finnish education system with immigrant backgrounds. We participated the guidance counselling practices (lessons, visits, briefings) and followed the moments where the students prepared for, and attended to the joint application practices. This data consists of field notes and interviews.

With the life course perspective, we ask how the chronological age, educational transitions, as well as social relationships and other life transitions interlock in the narratives of the 15-year old pupils with immigrant backgrounds. In the interviews, these young people with the immigrant backgrounds were asked to draw past and future “life spirals”, to mark all important moments of their life course, and to tell stories about these moments for the interviewee. These narratives enabled students to tell stories about their journey to becoming upper secondary students with immigrant backgrounds within the highly structured Finnish education system. The main aim for the mixed method analysis is to reflect individual educational trajectories with the institutionalized forms of guidance counselling, and hence to portray the agentic orientations with individual “contexts-for-actions”. With mixed data, we utilise the life course perspective and analyse the reconciliation of the educational system with the timing of lives, agency, and diversity in life course trajectories (see Brady & Gilligan 2018).

Outcomes

The preliminary outcomes follow the previous research done among the immigrant pupils: the educational biographies of eight young people with immigrant backgrounds are multiple and in many way difficult to
adjust to the Finnish education system. Educational biographies were fragmented and externally guided. Although the young people had found schooling satisfactory and had outspokenly found their future biographies, their imagined future trajectories were also often indecisive and fragile. Their choices and moments for guidance counselling were constant negotiations of identities and nativity, discussions of ethnic identities, languages, nationalities and possibilities that seemed to be, or not, reachable or desired for them. These negotiations with study counsellors, peers and families seemed to concern various mismatches between individual idealities and externally imposed models (see also Yoon 2012; Selimos 2017; Mäkelä & Kalalahti 2018). Nevertheless, their narratives were quite motivated and easy. Although there were differences between their agentic orientations, these young people seemed to rely on the guidance practices and were trustful and optimistic. In this presentation, we will discuss on the role of the study guidance and counselling within the universalistic transition regime in the intertwinemement of educational biographies, transitions and choices (see also Lindgren 2010; Walther 2006).

References


Abstract to be submitted to Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transitions and career development

Title

Organisation of adult education for immigrants in rural areas – support for career development?

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Abstract

This paper reports on an ongoing ethnographically informed project focusing how career development for immigrants in three rural areas is organised through local institutions in Sweden. With the theoretical concepts of within, between and beyond we are analysing how local educational institutions and employment offices organise can be understood to support career development (or not). Our preliminary analysis shows that the size of the rural area seems to matter in terms of how flexible the local institutions are and in what kind of support they can give the students. The smaller communities also seem try to be more collaborative with areas of the same size and more active in order to draw benefits from organisations that are funded to support rural areas.

Keywords: Rural education, immigrants, social justice, career development

Relation to the conference theme

The project presented here involves questions of how local institutions in rural areas supports career development of adult immigrants. Thus several themes of the conference is touched upon, such as social justice for immigrants as well as individuals living in rural areas and their agency.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework

Rural areas are sometimes described with the notion of idyll (Shucksmith, 2016). In a related vein it has been found in research that youth immigrants sometimes describes rural areas as having fewer stigmatised areas, rural places as places in which integration might work more smoothly through education and work due to its smallness and thus giving space for spontaneous interactions (Rosvall, 2017), however little is known if that also counts for adults. In addition there are an imbalance between rural and urban research (Beach, Johansson, Öhrn, Rönnlund, & Rosvall, 2019) in favour for research in urban areas. Although there are many investigations about immigrants and their social involvement and marginalization in education and wider society, research on immigrants in rural areas is scarce and it tends to be conducted from rather urban-centred perspectives and theories. With that background this paper reports on ethnographically inspired project in which career development of adult immigrants and refugees is investigated in three rural areas. To understand immigrant individuals’ agency in career development through local educational institutions, it is important to understand the local context and place (cf. Massey, 1994). Thus, we use Ainscow et al’s (2012) concept of ecology of equity as a tool to investigate power relations with regard to place and agency of adult immigrant students. It means exploration of the demographics of the areas served by schools and the histories, cultures and economic realities faced by immigrant and refugee...
populations. To support the analysis Ainscow et al’s (2012) theory offers the analytical concepts within, between and beyond. Even though such separation is only possible analytically it allows us to deepen understandings of different levels of educational policy and practice through cross cultural analysis of the three researched rural areas. They describe within schools as “the ways, in which students are taught and engaged with learning; the ways in which teaching groups are organised and the different kinds of opportunities that result from this organisation; the kinds of social relations and personal support that are characteristic of the school; the ways in which the school responds to diversity in terms of attainment, ethnicity and social background” (Ainscow et al., 2012, p. 2). Between schools is described as competition and collaborations between schools, which might be especially interesting in this case since the three rural areas are interacting through educational cooperation’s constituted in order to support rural areas. The last concept forming ecology of equity, beyond schools includes the wider policy context within which schools operate; the interests and understandings of the professionals working in schools; and the demographics, economics, cultures and histories of the areas served by schools. Beyond this, it includes the underlying social and economic processes at national and – in many respects – at global levels out of which local conditions arise (Ainscow et al., 2012 p. 3).

Thus, 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:

- How can the organisation of students in and within different local institutions be understood in relation to their opportunities to career development?
- How does or do not different institutions within and between local areas cooperate in order to support students’ career development?
- How is the wider policy context in which those institutions operate understood by professionals in those institutions?
- How does those conditions vary among the research sites and how can this variation be understood?

Methods/methodology

The project reported on had an ethnographic approach in which three rural municipalities have been selected. Most rural areas in Sweden lies in the north and so do the three selected research sites. However they differ in demographic composition in terms of density, size and geographical positioning in terms of distance to larger towns and possibilities of higher education and historical base of production. They have in common that they are organised in a collaboration called “Akademi norr” (Northern academy) which was founded in order to support adult education in the northern parts of Sweden.

Ethnography focuses on the study of cultural formation and maintenance in particular places through multiple methods for the generation of diverse forms of data based on the direct involvement and long-term engagement of the researcher(s) as the main research instrument (Hammersley, 2006; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The intention is to provide accounts of how the everyday practices of those engaged in educational processes are implicated in broader social relations and cultural production and to highlight the agency of educational subjects in these processes. Continuous fieldwork was planned which resulted in field notes from site visits and classroom observations; interviews with institution officials, teachers, study and career counsellors and students at Swedish
language education for immigrants (SFI), Municipal adult education (KomVux), Swedish public employment service (AF). This material was produced through what Jeffrey and Troman (2004) write represents an intermittent time mode. It is meant to allow a flexible approach to the frequency of site visits and progressive focusing in relation to the participant observation and general data production. It involves the development and continual evaluation of a characteristic ethnographic spiral of research planning and reflection, data production and analysis, new planning, and further data production and analysis.

**Outcomes/ expected results**

The size of the place in which the local institutions operated seemed to have impact on how transitions between educational institutions became operationalised. In smaller places professionals could operate in a more flexible manner in terms of transitions and also for example how to with short notice develop courses in order to support immigrants students. Such support could be aimed at career development in terms of shorten educational attainment in progress for employment, broaden competences, supporting language development within a specific field (for example Swedish concepts within business economics). However, such support was also used in order to attain economic assistances from the state to the educational institution or the individual student. Those benefits could attract the immigrant to stay in the rural area, even though in the interviews with the professionals economic benefits following the arrangements of a course was never explicitly used as an argument to make immigrants to stay in the area. The smaller communities also seem try to be more collaborative with areas of the same size and more active in order to draw benefits from organisations that are funded to support rural areas.

**References**


Conf proposal

Format: With a little help...

Title: Going Green

Abstract/Relation to conf theme: The conference introduction claims that ‘In the Nordic countries, there has been little research considering the questions of agency and social justice in relation to career development and transitions.’ This is true to some degree, however I beg to differ in two respects:

(1) Sweden, for one, has a long tradition of research into kompensatorisk vägledning (i.e. compensating guidance) with a strong link to social justice and care for the weaker members of society, underpinned by the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Guidance Association, SVF. This seems to be a blind spot here, even though several reports over the years along with some PhD-theses are available on this pertinent issue.

(2) Moreover, the pressing nature of climate changes and other environmental issues call for a link to ‘agency and social justice’. This, too, seems to be a blind spot. Environmental, i.e. green issues form the basis for social justice in reality: climate changes, for example, hit the have-nots much worse than the ones with plenty of resources. And career choices have environmental implications, both on an individual and a societal level, thus addressing both ‘agency and social justice’.

Key words: green guidance, social justice, agency, compensating

Author: Peter Plant, USN, Norway

Help & feedback: Feedback on addressing the above-mentioned blind spots would be welcome. Both issues, (1) compensating and (2) green, are pivotal to the agency and social justice agenda. A profound paradigm change is high time and crucial, as much guidance, so far, is tied to mindless growth with no view to green issues, in particular. New environmentally conscious approaches are needed. How can this unfold?

Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transitions and career development

Abstract

Type of contribution
Paper

Title
Situated inequality in career guidance in schools

Author/s of proposal including affiliations and e-mail address (should be left out in the version for review)

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Abstract and 3 – 5 keywords (up to 150 words)

Keywords: Situated inequality, Social justice, Youth career guidance

Irving argues that in academic literature there has been a healthy debate on social justice and the relationship with career construction and learning, but very little seems to have changed at a practice level (Irving, 2011, p. 29) and career practitioners are not familiar with the concept (Irving, 2015). If focus on social justice shall lead to changes in practice, it becomes important and a major task to operationalize social justice into guidance practices (McMahon, Arthur, & Collins, 2008, p. 22). Hooley emphasizes that practitioners are right in pointing out that despite growing interest in this area, we still need to answer the question ‘what is to be done?’ (Hooley, 2015, p. 13).

The issue of social justice is complex and it is important that professionals continuously reflect on and discuss how their actions in everyday practice at an individual-, organizational- and community level contribute to or reduce social justice. This requires insight into how social justice issues can play out in the practice of everyday life. The presentation gives insight into two cases - a case on a parents meeting in the school and a case on career guidance of a student called Thomas. Using Højholt’s theory of situated inequality (Højholt, 2016), it is discussed how inequality can play out in guidance and teaching in different and often subtle ways and how it is linked to the many structural oppositions that characterise the field of career guidance. The analysis suggests that inequalities are rife, e.g. even in the questions posed to the students who are assessed not ready for education, and in the meaning ascribed to their answers.

The analysis indicate that social practice in guidance and teaching unintentionally and unnoticed can create unequal conditions for different students (Skovhus, 2018).
Relation to the conference theme (up to 50 words)
The analysis relates to the conference theme since it provides insight into how different problems related to social justice are produced or meet in the everyday practice of career guidance in relation to student’s transitions from lower secondary school to the vocational or academic route. This indicates how social practice can have an impact on the students self-understanding and development of understanding of his or her opportunities in the society – which relates to the students development of agency.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework (up to 600 words)
The theoretical framework for the research is Danish-German critical psychology, which sets out to conduct research from a first-person perspective. Critical psychology particularly emphasizes subjective participation in practice (Mørck, 2006). From this outset, the work is inspired by social practice theory concerning human agency, practice, community, horizons for actions, meaning, intentions, reasons for action and everyday conduct of life. This theoretical approach was chosen out of a desire to study career guidance and career education from a participant perspective and include structural conditions in the analysis. Through a first-person perspective on young people’s and career professional’s personal experiences of concrete dilemmas in practice and an investigation of personal meaning-making processes, it is possible to learn about social structures and conditions related to these experiences (Højholt & Kousholt, 2009; Holzkamp, 2013, p. 275).

In relation to social justice I include the term situated inequality (Højholt, 2016). Højholt argues that everyday practice has to be analysed as situated and that it is important to point to the situated inequality in the classroom instead of displacing the conflicts in and about the school – and career guidance – to abstract concepts, e.g. social background. ‘The school not only measures differences, but constitutes differences’ (Højholt, 2016).

Research questions
- How does career guidance and career education play out in lower secondary school (Danish grades 7-9/10, ages 14-16/17) in interaction with the school and structural conditions?
- How is youth career guidance meaningful to the students?

Methods/methodology (up to 300 words)
The methods used for the empirical research were participant observation and situated conversations with lower secondary students, career guidance practitioners, and teachers. In addition, selected students were interviewed. The fieldwork was carried out on days spread throughout a school year and in relation to guidance activities arranged for the students, either by guidance practitioners or teachers, including individual guidance interviews. Empirical data was also collected during lessons and breaks.

Outcomes/ expected results (up to 200 words)
The analysis sparks a discussion on social justice aspects related to career guidance in lower secondary school and in educational programmes. It indicates that the social practice in career guidance unintentionally can create unequal conditions for students. This highlights that it is important to discuss questions like: How are activities in career guidance organized to expanding horizons? How can career guidance create other opportunities for students than the ones that reproduce e.g. class and gender?
References


Type of proposal: Paper

Title: ‘I feel that I could go anywhere now, anywhere in the world...’ – mobility and agency in graduate career paths

Author: Rosie Alexander, University of Derby & University of the Highlands and Islands, rosie.alexander.ic@uhi.ac.uk

Abstract:
This paper will draw on an ongoing research project which explores the interrelation of career and migration pathways of higher education students from the UK island communities of Orkney and Shetland. Considering the role of mobility in career development, the paper will demonstrate that students classically define their own mobility in terms of their own agency, and where they lack mobility it is perceived primarily as a lack of confidence. However, the paper will explore the narratives of the young people to deconstruct the notion of agency in terms of mobility, demonstrating how a range of structural factors impact on the lived experiences of students’ mobility. The importance of critical perspectives on career development which recognise that student’s self-portrayal of migration choice and migration confidence may conceal wider structural inequalities is identified.

Keywords: Mobility, Migration, Social Justice, Career, Confidence

Relation to the conference theme:
The paper explores the relationship of perceived agency to enacted patterns of mobility and the underpinning structural factors.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework:
Aims and objectives
This paper draws on an ongoing PhD research project. The aim of the project is to identify how living in a remote island community prior to entering higher education impacts on students’ higher education choices and subsequent career journeys. The focus of the research project is on higher education students from the island communities of Orkney and Shetland (in the UK).

Theoretical framework
This project draws on Hodkinson’s notion of careership (Hodkinson, 2008) and the wider sociological perspective of Bourdieu (e.g. Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). These perspectives offer a way of conceptualising the structure / agency debate, identifying how our backgrounds influence our ‘horizons for action’ and the potential range and ways in which we may make decisions, but do not
*determine* the choices we make within these ‘horizons’. Drawing on Bourdieu the project utilises concepts of habitus in relation to geographical space.

The project also draws on the growing literature related to the spatial and mobilities turns in the social sciences (for example Urry 2000, Massey 2005). These perspectives challenge objectivist understandings of geographical space, identifying how geographical space is not just a ‘backdrop’ but is an ‘agentic player’ which impacts on our lives (Gieryn, 2000). Places are imbued with meaning through the ways in which space is practiced, represented and lived (Lefebvre, 1991). People produce and reproduce spaces including domestic spaces – such as practices of home-making. Different places offer different possibilities and Soja’s (2010) concept of ‘spatial justice’ raises awareness of the way inequality has a spatial component – with differential distributions of goods, services, housing and so on. Places therefore are an intrinsic part of our lives. Where we live and how we live in our places offers certain physical environments as well as access to different social environments and opportunities. Therefore rather than place being *less* relevant in the modern ‘global’ world, these perspectives argue for the continuing importance of space and place.

How the spaces that we live in influence our habitus, and what this means for choices of career and migration is a core underpinning of this project. Considering how students choose (or don’t choose) the places they come to live in is also critical. Exploring mobility patterns and experiences, the project draws on notions of capitals that enable mobility – broadly conceptualised in terms of ‘mobility capital’ (Corbett, 2007; Kauffmann et al 2004).

Applying these theoretical perspectives to two specific communities – the Orkney and Shetland islands – this project seeks to understand what effect living in these communities prior to entry to higher education may have on the university and post-graduation pathways of students. Is geography an ‘agentic player’ in the game? How might the spatial habitus of Orkney and Shetland impact on young people’s decision making?

**Methods/methodology**

The project utilises a methodology based on longitudinal qualitative interviewing. An initial survey was used to engage potential participants in the project and generate a sampling frame. This survey was circulated via local press (including the local papers and radio stations) and through social media. All students who completed the survey and met the inclusion criteria for the project were contacted and invited for interview. This resulted in a total sample size of 23 final year full time undergraduate students who had been domiciled in Orkney or Shetland prior to entering higher education. 14 of these students were from Orkney, and 9 from Shetland. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with the students shortly before graduation. The same cohort were surveyed six months after graduation to identify any changes in their circumstances and then interviewed again a year after graduation. The first interview explored students’ experience and background before entering higher education, their choices to enter higher education and their experience of higher education and their plans for graduation. The second interviews focused on their experience of transition into the working world (or into post-graduate study) and the ways their ideas about their career paths had changed over this time. The role of place was a theme in both interviews, including perceptions about the influence of their time in Orkney or Shetland, their migration routes and their plans for migration in the future. Interviews were transcribed and analysed to identify key themes.
Outcomes/ expected results

Preliminary results from the first phase of the study show that geographical location is an important consideration for choice of university of students. Choices depend on a range of socio-cultural factors, with ‘familiarity’ of location a key theme (although exactly which locations are ‘familiar’ depend on personal context). Results also show ‘confidence’ as a key theme, with increased confidence an outcome of university study for most. This includes ‘confidence’ in terms of mobility, and the ability to move and live in different places. Despite this growth in confidence, the results show the actual geographical destinations of students are, once again, not completely ‘free’ with a range of socio-cultural factors influencing the choices students make.

References


Calls have previously been made for research to examine marginalised youth from rural areas and their career development processes. In this paper we examine the tensions between local youth identities and the changing labour market structures and educational opportunities in rural areas. Young people form their identities locally where current labour and education policies call youth to be mobile and ‘placeless’ (Farrugia et. al. 2014). Young people who live in rural or disadvantaged metropolitan areas have a very different starting point to build their careers than peers from socially and locally more advanced backgrounds (Tomaszewski & Cebulla 2014). Labour policies expect young people to be socially adaptive and ready to leave their local environments. In this article we examine the tension between young people’s locally and relationally shaped identities and their future and career orientations. The study is a comparison of two different cultural and geographical contexts in rural Finland and metropolitan South Africa. In both of these contexts, the youth interviewed are considered to be in the margins of society because of their experiences of high drop-out and unemployment rates. Our research task is to examine how social and geographical localities, the conditions of educational opportunities as well as the labour market demands are represented in the life narratives of South-African and Finnish young adults. Data collection consisted of ethnographic field notes, interviews and follow-up interviews. We had a Finnish sample of 18 to 24-year-old young people (n=17), who do not have secondary education or work, who were in attendance of the Open Vocational College (OVC). In the South African sample, data was collected from Kayamandi Township high school learners, between the ages of 17 and 20 years old (n=17). Braun and Clarke’s (2006) content analysis was used to group themes according to two theoretical approaches: namely the relational approach to youth agency as well as the theoretical concept of belonging. Significant findings emerged that showed that there are two types of reconciliation and tensions. The first is that of subjective and familial or community expectations before mobility is undertaken. The second reconciliation is the reconciliation of localities (i.e. old versus new experiences). When these two reconciliatory processes were completed young were prepared to embrace mobility for career development. The implications for further research and practice aimed at facilitating the career development of marginalised youth worldwide are discussed.

Keywords: career development, career-life planning, mobility, relationality, agency, belonging, marginal youth

Relation to the conference theme

Public discussions concerning young people’s career paths and institutional support structures are dominated by an individualistic rhetoric. This implies that offering adequate career services and
educational opportunities will enable young people to become well-resourced and equipped enough to manage their careers and find labour market entry points. New insights can be gained by examining young people’s challenges and reflections about leaving their localities in the search for better education and work opportunities. We aim at shifting the, thus far one-sided discussion, from ‘resourced, agentic and mobile’ young people to a more holistic and contextually integrated dialogue that includes relational processes of how agency, resources and opportunities become available – or not – to young people. There is a need to take on a more holistic and contextual approach in supporting vulnerable young people’s career and life transitions – where mobility is an imperative for an increasing number of young people.

Research questions, objectives and theoretical framework

Young people form their identities locally where current labour policies enhance fluid identities (Farrugia et. al. 2014). This means that youth residing in rural or disadvantaged metropolitan areas have a very different starting point to build their careers than more contextually advanced peers (Tomaszewski & Cebulla 2014). Labour policies expect young people to be socially adaptive and ready to leave their local environments. However, a lacuna of research exists on how young people access – or do not – the resources needed to ‘make it’ in the world-of-work beyond their localities and people, and what implications are for social policy and practice (see Wierenga 2011, 384).

Our objective in this paper is to examine the tensions between local youth identities and the changing labour market structures and educational opportunities. Although this topic is of paramount importance, only recently have calls been made to address this research gap (Juvonen & Romakkaniemi 2018; Evans 2016; Farrugia, Smyth & Harrison 2014; Butler & Muir 2017). Our research contribution is unique because the career-life narratives of marginalised young adults are presented from two different cultural and geographical contexts, rural Finland and metropolitan South Africa.

The tension between young people’s locally and relationally shaped identities as well as their orientations towards their future and career were examined using two theoretical frameworks Cuervo & Wyn 2014; Emirbayer & Mische 1998). These frameworks include the relational approach to youth agency as well as the concept of belonging. The importance of including both approaches is that the notion of relationality highlights the intersubjective and social dimensions of agency and their participation in the construction of agency. The concept of belonging, according to Wyn and Cuervo (2014), sheds light on the attempts of young people to stay connected to people, places and issues that are meaningful to them as they simultaneously try to find their place in the modern economy (see also Butler & Muir 2017).

Methods/methodology

This paper draws on data from two independently conducted PhD studies. Sanna Toiviainen’s data consists of a longitudinal ethnographic study conducted 2014–2016, which consists of ethnographic field notes, interviews and follow-up interviews that were collected at a group-based learning program in a city in Eastern Finland aimed for local young people without secondary education or work, called the Open Vocational College (OVC).
Anouk Jasmine Albien’s data consists of a multi-phase mixed method research design where repeated measures were embedded in an intervention framework in a South African Township with high school learners. Qualitative data and scores were tracked at four time points: T1 and T2 before administering a culturally-constructed career life-designing intervention, as well as at two time points after the intervention (T3 and T4). In addition, ethnographic field notes, intervention feedback and evaluation exercises, interviews and follow-up interviews were included to enrich understandings of career-life changes in this disadvantaged population group.

Braun and Clarke’s (2006) content analysis will be used to create themes that are informed by the relational approach and the theory of belonging. Analysis will be based on participants’ past career-life histories, their future career plans, as well as personal stories about reconciling relationships, education and work. Thus a research base can be created, that centers on the reflections about work or educational opportunities in relation to mobility and locality in marginalised youth populations.

**Outcomes/ expected results**

Preliminary results show, that young people in rural and disadvantaged areas reflect the need to become mobile in order to work towards achieving their own subjective career success. In order for these young adults to accept the level of mobility required for their career development and leave their localities, two different reconciliation processes need to be achieved. Firstly, a reconciliation of two different identities is undergone. The reconciliation of fulfilling familial obligations or expectations and subjective career-life objectives emerged, which highlighted the relational identity formation processes that need to be completed before a decision on mobility could be reached. This process is dependent on finding and maintaining a meaningful role in the community, establishing and sustaining a feeling of connection, a sense belonging as well as reciprocal feelings of responsibility and trust between the old and the new locality (also eg. Wierenga 2011). Therefore, the second reconciliation process is between the two localities (i.e., how the individual integrates experiences from the old versus the new locality). Implications for career development interventions, research and practice are extensively discussed to facilitate the career development of marginalised youth worldwide.

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**Twists and turns through organised education and regulations to work as an MD in Sweden. Experiences of migrants in rural areas.**

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**Abstract and 3 – 5 keywords (up to 150 words)**

This paper critically describe and analyse the opportunities and obstacles highly skilled migrants in rural areas face on their roads through the education system and national regulations to be able to work as an MD in Sweden. Through an ethnographically inspired study in three rural municipalities in the north of Sweden and their organised career development for migrants the case of three migrant women from non EU/EES countries is used to discuss how migrants understand and construct individual agency and space for action in relation to place, gender, race and educational structures and institutions. By drawing on literature in the field of high educated migrants and theories of space, place and gender, power relations are made visible as different national and local support systems and access are put in place determining rights and obligations.

**Keywords:** Migrants, rural education, MD, career development, social justice

**Relation to the conference theme (up to 50 words)**

The research presented touches upon several of the conference themes. Highly educated migrants’ transitions to work in line with their profession regards issues of social justice not only in terms of institutional and everyday racism but also the different opportunities and conditions in rural areas constitutive for individual agency.

**General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework (up to 600 words)**

Becoming employable and get a foothold on the labour market is often described as a central aspect of integration. Highly educated migrants are often seen as a privileged group in this respect not having too much trouble finding work and employment. High educated migrants are also a group sought for by many countries for their skills and competences (Povzanovic Frykman & Öhlander 2018). This discourse is also present in the rural north of Sweden where migrants at least to some extent are seen as a resources in times of depopulation. As a highly educated migrant in a rural area there are potential obstacles such as less educational opportunities, difficulties to find work in line with your profession as well as being the “other” in a small community. But there are also potential benefits such as prospects to find work within your profession as rural areas are desperate for skilled workers. There might also be better opportunities for cultural integration in a smaller community with less housing...
segregation (Rosvall 2017). But despite being viewed as a privileged group among migrants and with wanted skills and competences highly educated migrants are not a homogenous group and are not facing fundamentally different challenges than migrants with lower educational backgrounds. Research points to several complex and interrelated aspects that condition their opportunities such as the reasons behind migration, gender, age, family situation, national rules and regulations, educational structures, and local and national government routines (Povrzanovic Frykman & Öhlander 2018). Whereas previous research on highly educated migrants, especially within the MD field, has provided important insights into the challenges of everyday racism and belonging facing migrants at their workplaces as well as in private life and the need for networks and friends (Magnusson 2014, Salmonsson 2014, Liversage 2009) less attention has been paid on migrants in rural areas. Furthermore, the research tend to be conducted from an urban perspective not taking into account the centre-periphery divide.

It is therefore important to critically describe and analyse the opportunities and obstacles highly skilled migrants in rural areas face in their career development. This paper contributes to the different and varied experiences of highly educated migrant’s integration in Sweden through the stories of three migrant women with an education in MD living in two different rural communities in the north of Sweden. The three women come from different countries outside the EU/EES countries and have migrated for different reasons. The research questions that guide the paper are:

- How do migrants understand their opportunities for career development and transitions to work as an MD in Sweden in relation to living in the rural north of Sweden?
- How do migrants navigate the Swedish education system, local institutions for education and employment and national/transnational regulations on MD licences to practice?
- How do migrants understand and construct their individual agency and space for action in relation to place, gender and race?

To understand the opportunities and obstacles facing high educated migrants career development in rural areas I draw on previous research on high educated migrants in Sweden and globally mainly focusing on transitions between countries, career development, inclusion and racism within the MD profession. Theoretically, I primarily use Massey’s (1994) theories of space, place and gender in combination with postcolonial feminism (de los Reyes 2011) to analyse the power relations inherent in the conditions for migrants transitions and career development in rural areas. Place as well as gender and race are viewed as relational and intersected in complex and situated ways where the global is present in the local and the local is present in the global.

Methods/methodology (up to 300 words)

The paper is part of a project on integration of adult migrants in rural areas focusing on adult education and transitions to higher education in three municipalities in the rural north of Sweden. The municipalities differs in population, number of migrants, educational organisation and labour market opportunities. Despite differences they are organised in a collaboration called “Akademi Norr” (Northen Academy) founded to support adult education in the rural north of Sweden. The study takes its inspiration from ethnography (Hammersley 2006; Harmmersley & Atkinson 1995) and progressive focusing (Stake 1995) to provide a flexible approach. It allows for continuous planning, site visits, data, and analysis to pursue issues raised during fieldwork and analysis. As of now the material consists of
field notes from site visits and classroom observations, interviews with principals, study counsellors, teachers, and students as well as with public officials at the local offices of the Swedish Public Employment Services (SPES). The site visits have made it possible to find migrants with higher education participating (or have participated) in adult education (Swedish for immigrants, municipal adult education) in these rural communities. Interviews with three of these migrants with medical training previous to their immigration to Sweden constitute the main material for this paper. Interviews were conducted with one woman living in Sweden for over two years with medical training and work experience from a South American country. And two interviews were conducted with two sisters, one with a completed MD education and one with part of an MD education from an African country, living in Sweden for under a year. The interviews focused on their experience of immigrating and living in the rural north of Sweden; educational opportunities and obstacles in learning Swedish, validation of education and further education; ambitions and career development; and future living and family life.

**Outcomes/ expected results (up to 200 words)**

In navigating necessary language education, continued education and validation for an MD profession, the three migrants expressed different experiences from their local communities where gender, place and race are interconnected. The two sisters as resettlement refugees in a somewhat larger community had better access to national and local institutional support systems than the third migrant. In the rural north one can gain support through the close community but also be in the hands of bureaucratic rules and dependence on a single reluctant public official at the SPES. In the case of “Maria” this almost jeopardized her participation in “Korta vägen” (Short cut), a language and career development education for highly educated migrants. “Korta vägen” is however located in a larger city resulting in Maria, a mom of a 2-year old, having to be away from her family. The road to an MD licence for Maria with a medical training outside EU/EES is long making Maria question whether it is at all possible to once again practice medicine and living in a rural area in Sweden. Since her medial training is from a Spanish speaking country she is considering moving to Spain where she already has a job offer.

**References**

**Type of contribution:** Paper

**Title:** Reduction of options or learning to cope? – strengthening the agency of young students by preserving both the creativity and rationality in career learning

**Author/s of proposal**

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**Abstract and 3 – 5 keywords**

This paper will study career learning activities in Norwegian primary school. The aim is to analyse how this can be designed to strengthen “alternative” career management skills, like creativity, courage, fantasy, optimism, flexibility and curiosity, and ensure that these skills, being natural for young children, is preserved during the transition into the more formalised career guidance in lower secondary school.

Keywords: Primary school, Career learning, Transition, Creativity

**Relation to the conference theme**

Reduction/restriction in the perceived options for choice when it comes to future education and work, is among the major constraints on the freedom of choice of young people/children. Schools should strive to broaden the limits of what children see as their possibilities, through giving them a wider supply of career management skills. How this can be done through career learning activities in primary school, enlarging the creativity and curiosity in the choices of youth, is the main team of this paper.

**General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework**

Career Management Skills (CMS) are defined as "... a range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions" (ELGPN Resource Kit 2012, p.21), in other words, the skills of rationality and rational choice. In seemingly contrast to this, theorist like Krumboltz (2008) and Gelatt (1989), argue that the central competencies for choice in a world characterize by change and uncertainty, are skills like creativity, courage, fantasy, optimism, flexibility and curiosity. In the to-the-point formulation by Gelatt; Changing one's mind will be an essential skill in the future", elaborated like this: A quarter century ago the past was known, the future was predictable, and the present was changing at a pace that was comprehensible. The rational,
objective decision-making frame of reference for counselling was appropriate then. Today the past is not always what it was thought to be, the future is no longer predictable, and the present is changing as never before. In fact, today even the status quo is in a state of flux. ... What is appropriate now is a decision and counselling framework that helps clients deal with change and ambiguity, accept uncertainty and inconsistency, and utilize the non-rational and intuitive side of thinking and choosing. The new strategy promotes positive attitudes and paradoxical methods in the presence of increasing uncertainty (Gelatt 1989)

When interviewing pupils in Norwegian primary schools (age 6-13, grade 1-7) about careers and working life and choice, we met your people with all these alternative career competencies. They had yet to be included in the formal career counselling in school (starting at grade 8) Their fantasies and reflections about their own future working life was best characterised by words like creativity, courage, fantasy, optimism, flexibility and curiosity (Mordal et al 2018). Their “fantasies” were often nor censored by reality. To them everything was possible, in the sense that their image of working life and their role in it was to a small degree filtered through the harsh realities of what is possible. They still had the power to dream.

Interviewing older pupils/students in Norwegian lower and upper secondary schools (Buland et al 2011), Buland, Mathiesen, Mordal 2014), we often met young people confronting reality in quite a different way. For them, integrated in the formalised career counselling system, the choice of future education and work, was serious business. The choices they were to make, was seen as determinant for their future life, and they reflected on “serious” questions like future labour market, education possibilities, their own shortcomings, wages, this restricting their future choices. The process of circumscription and compromise (Gottfredson, 2002) had reached a new level, limiting the perceived choices, and much of the creativity, courage, fantasy, optimism, flexibility and curiosity of their younger selves, were filtered through and subordinated to the demands and limitations of what was seen as unavoidable reality.

In the paper, we will try to analyse ways in which schools can seek to preserve the creativity of young people, and combine it with the rationality of older students. How can primary school contribute and strengthen the “dream power” of young people when it comes to future careers, and thereby strengthening the agency of young people, getting a larger repertoire in the perceived possibilities? How can primary school through career learning activities help children to develop career management skills that goes beyond the rational skills of gathering, analysing, synthesising and organising self, educational and occupational information, and skills to make and implement decisions and transitions?

Methods/methodology

This paper is based on a study of career guidance in primary school, conducted on behalf of the Norwegian Directorate of Education in fall 2017/spring 2018. During the project, individual qualitative interviews were conducted with representatives of school owners in six municipalities. Based on this, four case schools were selected for visits, during which representatives for school leadership, teachers and pupils in grade 4 and 7 participated in focus group interviews. A total of 68 persons involved.

As part of the data collection, we conducted eight group interviews with pupils in primary school, four interviews with 4th grade students and four interviews with 7th grade students. We
interviewed a total of 37 students about their career aspirations, about career education at school and about their knowledge of working life.

We conducted the analyses according to the principles of grounded theory. This is a systematic, inductive and comparative approach to conducting analyses without strong a priori theoretical guidelines. In this way, it's the informants' opinions and considerations that determine the focus, and theoretical perspectives play in as different ways of understanding the informants' statements. All interviews were conducted by two researchers, recorded digitally and transcribed.

**Outcomes/ expected results**

We hope to be able to call attention to concrete career learning activities that can be integrated in already normal learning activities in primary school, thereby strengthening young pupils’ basis for the transition to the formal career guidance introduced to them at grade 8, thereby ensuring that the creativity of young reflections on work, are not lost in the rationality of higher level career guidance.

**References**


Mordal, S., T. Buland og I. H. Mathiesen (2018): Det er bare snakk om hvilke briller man har på ... En studie av rådgiving på barneskolen, Trondheim: SINTEF Teknologi og samfunn
Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transitions and career development.

Type of contribution: paper

Title:
The impact of individual, family and school level factors on the educational aspirations of Finnish lower secondary school students

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Abstract:
In this study, impacts of individual, social and school level factors on Finnish lower secondary students’ educational aspirations are explored. Empirical data utilized in the study consist of a survey and achievement test results (PISA 2012 literacy test). The data were collected within an international research project International Study of City Youth (ISCY, www.iscy.org). The target group of the study was 15-year-old students living in the Turku sub-region, Finland. Altogether 12 of the region’s 27 lower-secondary schools from eight municipalities participated in the study. These schools had a total of 2.489 ninth graders of which 1.058 (42.5 %) students answered to the questionnaire and participated in the achievement test. Various statistical methods such as cross-tabulations and two-way analysis of variance are utilized in analyzing the complex interplay of individual, family and school level factors in determining adolescents’ educational aspirations.

Key words: Educational aspirations, lower secondary school students, equality, equity

Relation to the conference theme

The starting point of the study is the contradiction between meritocratic ideals of equal educational opportunities and research findings highlighting the significance of socio-economic background in determining one’s educational attainment and aspirations.
Educational choices adolescents make and aspirations they have when leaving comprehensive school are crucial in their career development.

**General description**

In this study, impacts of individual, social and school level factors on Finnish lower secondary students’ educational aspirations are explored. School systems of developed nations are largely built on the meritocratic idea of equal educational opportunities, meaning that factors such as gender, social class and ethnicity should not narrow down one’s educational opportunities and access to higher levels of education (Coleman, 1968; Espinoza, 2007). Instead, one’s educational opportunities and attainment should be determined by individual ability and motivation. Despite this objective, the impact of one’s social background on educational aspirations and attainment has proved to be one of the most consistent findings in the sociology of education (Reay, 2010; Weis, 2010; Biggart, Järvinen, & Parreira do Amaral, 2015). However, what is less studied is the interplay of individual ability and one’s socioeconomic background in determining educational aspirations of adolescents. If it is the case that many of the gifted low-SES students voluntarily give up achieving higher levels of education, education system is not only unequal but inefficient. Due to a potential self-exclusion of gifted low-SES students, a nation loses a large share of its talent potential. Further, explaining and understanding individual aspirations becomes even more complex, when students’ gender and various school level factors are taken into account in the analyses. With the aim of reaching a more comprehensive understanding of the topic, the present study is built on the idea of the complex interplay of individual, social and institutional level factors in determining adolescents’ educational aspirations. Theoretically, the study draws on Bourdieu’s (1977; 1990) work, his concepts of ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ in particular, as well as on Bourdieu-inspired careership theory by Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997, Hodkinson, 2008).

**Methods:**

The data utilized in this study consist of a survey and achievement test results (modified version of PISA 2012 literacy test). The data were collected within an international research project *International Study of City Youth* (ISCY, [www.iscy.org](http://www.iscy.org)). The survey was targeted at 15-year-old students living in the Turku sub-region, Finland. Altogether 12 of the region’s 27 lower secondary schools from eight municipalities participated in the study. These schools had a total of 2,489 ninth graders of which 1,058 (42.5 %) students answered to the questionnaire and participated in the achievement test. Variables and factors included in the analysis are 1)
students’ short- and long-term educational aspirations, 2) gender, 3) socioeconomic background (ISEI-88 classification), 4) school SES (socioeconomic profile of a school’s student population) and 5) school culture (as experienced by students). Various statistical methods such as cross-tabulations and two-way analysis of variance analysis are utilized in data analyses.

**Expected results:**

Based on previous research and adopted theoretical viewpoints, the following hypotheses are set. Firstly, there is a connection between students’ socioeconomic background and their educational aspirations. Secondly, this relationship is more significant among boys than girls. Thirdly, adding achievement test results to analyses will not significantly affect the relationship between socio-economic background and one’s educational aspirations. However, based on previous studies, it is more challenging to predict in which way the adding of the school level factors to analyses may affect the associations between students’ ability, socioeconomic background and their educational aspirations. If it will turn out that school level factors are significant in this respect, the finding emphasizes the significance of local educational arrangements and individual schools in the pursuit of educational equality and equity.

**References:**


Type of contribution
Paper

Title
Manufacturing Content: Exploring Critical Perspectives on the Production of Labour Market Information

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Abstract and 3 – 5 keywords (up to 150 words)
This paper is primarily concerned with understanding how labour market information and its production can be investigated from a social justice perspective. Bimrose and Barnes (2006) have argued for the importance of labour market information in career guidance something which echoes the careers theories of Parsons (1909), Holland (1973) and Gatti (1996). Crucially these approaches ignore the ideological nature of labour market information. Using Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen’s (2017) work around career development and social justice, this paper will explore the challenge that social justice creates for how we understand labour market information. Using Herman and Chomsky’s “manufacturing consent” (1988) we will argue that the production of labour market information, even when it meets rationalistic standards, involves a system supporting function which needs to be critically investigated from a social justice perspective.

Keywords - LMI, information, Chomsky, social justice

Relation to the conference theme (up to 50 words)
This paper will be rooted in concerns about social justice and career by exploring the forces behind the use and production of labour market information. We will challenge assumptions that information is strictly objective and supports rational, independent decision making, instead, we will problematize the agenda behind the production of labour market information.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework (up to 600 words)
Debates around the place of careers information in careers work have tended to focus on the importance of presenting individuals with quality careers information. Bimrose and Barnes (2006) have argued that providing careers information is a key marker of quality careers work while Yates (2013) has argued that careers work should be careful not to focus too much on information as part of careers interactions and instead focus on the self-
awareness and decision making capacities of individuals. This debate has largely focussed on how LMI is delivered whilst what LMI actually is has not been sufficiently critically investigated.

Mollerup (1995) has argued for a set of quality marks of information as needed to underpin effective careers work. These refer to rationalistic conceptions such as accuracy, bias, comprehensiveness and specificity which imply that sufficient knowledge can be arrived at to underpin realistic decisions. This conception of the place of information being linked to rationalistic choice goes back to Parsons (1909) and Holland (1973) and continues to this day through for example through the work of Gatti et al. (1996) and Germeijns and Verschueren (2006). This takes on the assumption that if labour market information meets a set of rationalistic thresholds it is of sufficient quality.

In response, this paper will present a critical literature review to problematize and respond to this rationalistic approach. Methodologically, this research will particularly make use Alvesson and Karreman’s (2011) idea of mystery as a method. This will involve looking to understand the underpinning metaphors in a field of study and problematizing them to develop new understandings. The main research questions will be as follows.

- How has the relationship between the labour market information and career development been discussed in career development theory?
- What metaphors and assumptions underpin these understandings?
- What alternative theories and assumptions could be used to open up new understandings (particularly looking at Herman & Chomsky’s work (1988))? 
- How can these understandings be related to social justice?

Through this we hope to explore theoretical alternatives to the rationalistic views of LMI quality we have discussed above and look at how the production of labour market information can be criticised from a social justice perspective. To this we will particularly look at Herman and Chomsky’s “manufacturing consent” (1988) as a critical lens. This will be used to interrogate LMI as a form of propaganda that maintains control and normalises forms of work and employer/ employee relations. This analysis will be used to explore the importance of understanding LMI especially from a critical social justice perspective as outlined by Sultana (2014).

**Methods/methodology (up to 300 words)**

Alvesson and Sandberg (2013) recommend a five-stage process to look at how to develop novel and interesting theoretical insights in an area. This process is as follows;

1. Identify a domain of literature
2. Identify and articulate the assumptions of the literature
3. Evaluate these assumptions
4. Develop alternative assumption(s)
5. Consider the relationship to the audience

This paper will make use of these ideas to explore how new understandings of the place of labour market information and its production. Alvesson and Sandberg (2013) are particularly
useful for looking at how a critical literature review can be constructed as they do not require empirical data to be looked at as part of their process The hope of this will be to develop new theoretical understandings in this area.

This method will be used to explore three types of literature which will later be summarised into the domain as set out in the process above. These will be;

1. Academic writing on labour market information
2. ‘Grey’ literature in practitioner focussed publications (blogs, magazines, etc.)

Through doing this we will develop an understanding of the key metaphors that support how we understand what labour market information is. We will then attempt to problematize this mainly by thinking about issues related to agency and social justice. The work of Herman and Chomsky (1988) will form a starting point for this. This will look at information which is produced even though it may strictly speaking be accurate (i.e. adhere to rationalistic standards) it is still constructed from an ideological point of view in favour of maintaining hegemony and the place of powerful actors in society. From a career point of view this will be explored in terms of how labour market information tends to look at the world of work as a neutral space which is safe for individuals to participate in it but which obscures how the world of work can be seen to be ideologically charged and a potential site with injustice and inequality.

Outcomes/ expected results (up to 200 words)

The hope of conducting this critical review will be to problematize some of the existing understandings of the labour market. Especially the hope is to look at how different actors have an interest in how the labour market is presented and this transcends traditional accurate/ inaccurate divides which focus on individuals being able to use their agency to understand the world around them. We hope to look at how this creates a situation where the labour market information can become a site of contestation where inequalities and privileges are created and preserved. This is of concern for both career development and social justice and by exploring these critical tensions we hope to explore new ways of theorising career and labour market information.

References


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Journal of Career Assessment, 14, pp. 449-471


University students’ identity work in the context of making most of their study time

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Abstract

The university students’ everyday lives are ridden with different kinds of and often conflicting expectations that emanate from contemporary culture but also from higher education policies. This study focuses on expectations related to study time and employability that highlight making most of one’s studies.

The study investigates how Finnish students respond to societal expectations related to managing and making effective use of their time. We are interested in the legitimation and identity work students do as they account for their everyday activities, including study, work and leisure activities.

The data consists of 28 thematic week calendar interviews with 3rd year university students, where they were invited to talk about their activities during an ordinary study week. The analysis will provide important insight into how students negotiate their day-to-day lives in relations to various societal and cultural pressures.

Keywords: university students, everyday life, time management, identity work
Relation to the conference theme

Understanding students’ everyday concerns, identity work and agency are crucial as regards improving study and career guidance practice - and opening up spaces for re-negotiating identities, because identities, with their associated sense of agency, have also real consequences for seeing or failing to see possibilities for action and change.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework

While themes of progress and duration of studies have been regularly on the Finnish higher education policy agenda, the discussion has recently picked up in the broader context of prolonging working careers in order to remain competitive internationally and ‘save’ the welfare state. Additionally, the current policy discourse places emphasis on the quality of employment and on graduate employability. The focus on employability has only quite recently become a key priority in Finnish higher education, in comparison to many other countries (see e.g. Puhakka, Rautopuro & Tuominen 2010; Siivonen & Isopahkala-Bouret 2016). Together, these policy themes - with associated measures of limiting duration and motivating swift completion of studies - highlight the significance of utilizing study time effectively and appropriately. This poses challenges for curricula, teaching, study guidance and careers practice, but most immediately challenges are experienced by students. Similarly to often conflicting policy goals and ideals, students’ everyday realities are ridden with conflicting expectations, for instance, of taking care of study progress on the one hand and enhancing employability via work or extra-curricular activities on the other hand (e.g. Tomlinson 2008). These expectations emanate partly from education policy but also from broader societal and cultural ideals.

Our on-going study investigates how Finnish university students respond to various expectations related to managing and making effective use of their time, that are present in their day-to-day student lives. More specifically, we are interested in the legitimation and identity work students do as they account for their everyday activities, including study, extra-curricular, work and leisure activities in the context of an interview. The study is related to well-established discussions on academic student identities, engagement, and investment of time and effort into studies and other career related activities (see e.g. Lairio, Puukari & Kouvo 2013). Its novel contribution is to take a close-up approach to everyday student lives and investigate how they are constructed in relation to normative expectations and moral orders and discourses of the society.

The theoretical and methodological framework of the study is based on a narrative and discursive approach to identities and agency. We approach identities as situated social constructions that draw upon culturally available discursive resources. Drawing on Bamberg (2014), narrative and discursive construction of identities has temporal, positional and agential
dimensions. Identities are marked by relative continuity, but can also be constructed through narratives of change, e.g. taking distance from one’s ‘past self’. They are constructed by taking up and emphasizing similarity with, or taking distance from and emphasizing difference to various categories of people or identity positions. Finally, the construction of identities often involves attributions of agency: for instance, whether one portrays oneself as having control over one’s studies and everyday life, or as being victim of circumstances in failing to meet the expectations. Attributions of agency, in particular, are related to moral orders, because they entail ideas of taking or failing to take responsibility, engaging in ‘proper’ or ‘improper’ conduct, and being praise- or blameworthy for one’s actions.

The study also includes an analysis of how students’ different resources circumscribe their access to culturally legitimate, ‘proper’ identities (cf. Skeggs 2004). These are not equally accessible for all, and divisions between individuals emerge along various lines of difference. In this study, we adopt an ethnomethodological, exploratory approach into what kinds of issues and categories of difference bear significance in claiming to be a ‘right kind of a student’ who has control over her/his use of time in the current societal context.

Methods

The data of the study consists of 28 interviews with 3rd year (undergraduate) students (15 women and 13 men) from different ‘generalist’ fields of study, including cultural and social studies (with majority of women), and computer science and information systems studies (with majority of men). We chose to include different disciplinary cultures into the data in order to capture some of the heterogeneity of academic studies. Furthermore, while chosen fields are also highly gendered, this study does not adopt an explicit approach to gender. Instead, gender is discussed to the extent it emerges as an important category in the students’ identity work.

The conducted interviews can be described as retrospective, thematic week calendar interviews. Students were invited, first, to talk about the activities they engaged in during the previous week in study, work and leisure contexts. The interviewees were invited to fill in a week calendar sheet which helped them to be comprehensive in their accounts. Second, we probed particular themes of planning their use of time and social encounters during the week and within a longer time frame, as well as their ideas about their future careers and how their career considerations are present and inform their day-to-day activities.

The analysis here focuses on how students account for and explain their reasons for engaging in various activities in the interactive context of the interview. The interview is seen as an interactive site for the construction and performance of identities. It provides access to, or a window into, on-going identity work that individuals are engaged with in various contexts of their lives (Nikander 2012). As the interviewees tell about how they manage their time, they
simultaneously portray themselves as particular kinds of people and adopt identity positions culturally available for them.

Expected results

The analysis of the data will be conducted during the early spring 2019. The preliminary reading of the data reveals some interesting emphases. Three categories emerge at this point:

First category of students consists of ‘overachievers’ who do not make clear distinction between study, leisure and work activities. In some accounts, even relationships with friends are described in terms of building useful networks. Strikingly instrumental approach to everyday activities characterizes these accounts. They seek to portray themselves as efficient, dynamic and networked agents. Second category of students describes studies more ‘traditionally’ as a separate part of life, as ‘going to school’. They portray themselves as successful by emphasizing their diligence and hard work. The third category consists of narratives of failure in managing one’s everyday life and meeting the normative expectations as regards study progress. Failure is legitimated by drawing upon a psychopathological discourse which also features as a central component of identity. The data hints that along the lines of neoliberal ethos, both success and failure in managing everyday student life is legitimated by individualizing discourses.

The analysis will provide important insight into how students negotiate their day-to-day lives in relations to various societal and cultural pressures.

References


Learning from political economy – using Laclau & Mouffet and Hardt & Negri in career guidance practice

**Type of paper:** Paper

**Title:** Learning from political economy – using Laclau & Mouffet and Hardt & Negri in career guidance practice

**Abstract**
This paper looks at what can be learnt by career guidance from the field of political economy. It will argue that the field has been unjustly neglected by scholars of career and career guidance and that its focus on agency and the capacity to bring about change is actually a good fit with the field of career guidance, particularly where career guidance seeks to adopt a more critical or social justice infused stance. It will argue that the work of Laclau & Moffet and Hardt & Negri offer a particularly fertile source for rethinking the field of career guidance.

**Overview**
Career guidance is often described as a multi-disciplinary field of enquiry which draws on disciplines such as education, psychology, sociology, business and labour market economics. As the field becomes increasingly interested in political agency and social justice (e.g. Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen, 2018; 2019) I believe that there would be value in it engaging more substantially with political economy as an important contributing discipline. Political economy offers a useful base for thinking about career guidance because it is fundamentally concerned with the relationship between the world as it is and as it could be. Political economists are interested in the possibilities for political agency and change in a way that is highly complementary with career guidance’s interest in individual agency and change.

In this paper I will draw on the work of two groups of post-Marxist/Gramscian theorists. I will argue that some of the key concepts of Laclau & Moffet (e.g. Laclau, 2012; Laclau & Mouffe, 2014; Mouffe, 2018) and Hardt & Negri (e.g. Hardt & Negri, 2001; 2005; 2017) can be borrowed and repurposed for those seeking to create emancipatory forms of career guidance. In particular key concepts like: hegemony; strategy; the people; radical democracy; Empire; the multitude; singularity; and the common. I will show how these concepts can be use to inform both the forms that career guidance takes and the content on which it focuses.

**References**


A proposal to Conference:
Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transitions and career development
The International Career Research Conference 2019,
The Danish School of Education, Denmark, October 23-24, 2019

1. Type of contribution: Paper

2. Title: Critical reflections on career as a sports person for re-engaging NEET youth in Hong Kong

3. Author/s of proposal including affiliations and e-mail address

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4. Abstract:

   Some NEET (not in employment, education or training) youth love sports. This paper provides examples of promoting social justice through sports-mediated programs to provide career development service for the marginalized groups. In the field of youth work with Generation Z, the “definition” of sports includes both physical sports such as ball games, and eSports. At the practice level, we explore and discuss how social workers turn NEET youth’s “love of sports” into something more than fun and play. At the community and policy level, we examine the social discourses and policies that influence the accessibility of non-elite
athletes’ engaging in physical sports and eSports to sporting career learning and development. With a critical standpoint, we hope to open up a research agenda around the impact of “serious leisure” on career development services in which professionals might actively engage and empower the de-motivated young people who are NEET or NEET-at-risk. (149 words)

5. Keywords (5): Careers in sports, eSports, Hong Kong, NEET, Social justice

6. Relation to the conference theme

Social justice can be a career development approach to informing practice and promoting change. It is through discussing an intervention example we examine how social workers re-engaged the marginalised NEET youth through sports-based programs to develop their life-career skills and learning opportunities to pursue jobs in the sports industry. (49 words)

7. General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework (up to 600 words)

The topical issue of sports as a career option for young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) is a less discussed topic in the field of career guidance and counseling or career development. We argue that the simple but great career advice “Do what you love!” can be a powerful approach to re-engaging the so-called “lost cohort” in our society. Our key research question is: As some NEET youth love sports, can sports be used for accomplishing the intervention goals of bringing them to start their meaningful career learning journey?

By reviewing the conventional career guidance practice in Hong Kong, disengaged young people are often encouraged to join the youth pre-employment training program and/or some job placement schemes to enhance their employability. Yet, studies show that the impact of such programs or schemes that aim to develop employability as a strategy for engaging NEETs was found to be limited (Ngai & Ngai, 2007), especially when ‘there are still lots of NEETs who have no expectation for their future’ (Ying, 2012). Therefore, the disengagement issue of NEETs not only challenges our imagination of service provisions, but also a new understanding of the vision of career guidance and counselling.

Perhaps in our outdated impression, sporting careers may be the privilege of the talented and elite athletes. However, in fact career opportunities in the sports industry are not limited to those elite athletes. There is a wide range of job positions for non-elite athletes and sports
fans, such as coach, referee, fitness instructor, sports photographer, and sporting event worker, etc. Furthermore, based on a broader definition of “career”, a sporting career can be one’s professional job in the sports industry, or just as one’s serious leisure pursuit (Stebbins, 2014). Serious leisure is a concept used to describe any unpaid work activities that are substantial and interesting for the participant to find a “career” centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, ethos and experiences (Stebbins, 2014). A critical approach that is founded in understandings of the struggles of young people who are NEET or NEET-at-risk should have some proactive responses to the social justice issue in career development practice (Wong & Yip, 2019). Integrating the serious leisure perspective into the “Expanded Notion of Work” (ENOW) is an innovation (Wong, 2015). Playing sports, either physical or electronic, has traditionally been regarded as non-work or something done after work unless you are a paid professional athlete. But in the context of an ENOW-informed career service, serious leisure or sports playing is being transformed into a kind of ‘unpaid work experience’ which helps NEETs to discover and develop their potential interests, strengths and aspirations.

However, we cannot ignore the influence of cultural and contextual factors. In everyday social discourse, playing ball games or online video games are often perceived as afterschool activities or causal leisure for relaxation. In Chinese societies, with the one way to win mentality, academic success is the first thing of young people. Chinese parents believe that “excellence in study lies in diligence, lack of cultivation lies in play”. And therefore the traditional Chinese value has an influence on youth sports participation. Hence, the objective of this research is twofold: first to identify the practical career intervention strategies and methods of re-engaging de-motivated young people to pursue a career learning journey; second, to provide a critical reflection on the underpinning social and structural factors. (567 words)

8. Methods/methodology (up to 300 words)

- In terms of empirical evidence, the study employs a case study method by doing a qualitative analysis of primary data derived from in-depth retrospective interviews with social workers, sports coaches, career service users, and other stakeholders (such as parents). As a social worker responsible for the sports-mediated programs is invited as a co-researcher, more intensive discussion and reflective interviews will be carried out with him along the research process.
- Two types of cases are included: For the physical sports, a dodgeball program will be used as an example. Dodgeball is a kind of team sports in which players on two teams try their best to throw balls at each other and the opponents have to avoid being hit. Currently, there are two international bodies, namely the World Dodgeball Association (WDA) and the World Dodgeball Federation (WDBF). For the eSports,
the online game League of Legends (LoL) is the most popular one for the Hong Kong players. We will do a comparative analysis of physical sports and eSports as the medium for NEETs’ career learning, including social workers’ intervention strategies, service objectives, and service users’ career option expectations and outcomes.

- The source of secondary data comes from social workers’ archives, relevant reports published by sports associations or clubs, as well as government’s sports-related policy paper and document.
- The authors also use critical reflection as a method of inquiry in this study. We are interested in examining social discourses which work against NEET’s talent development and work options as a consequence of narrow-mindedness in defining career success. Drawing on social constructionism, we take note of the structural factors that impact on career services targeted to NEET and NEET-at-risk. (276 words)

9. Outcomes/ expected results (up to 200 words)

- In this study we will discuss what service users experienced and learned when engaging in a sports-mediated career intervention program, the challenges they encountered and the implication for career interventions.
- The similarities and differences between physical sports and eSports in relation to career intervention will be examined.
- Informed by an expanded notion of work, critical reflections will be focused on examining the career development discourse that advocates for better access to resources, opportunities and networks for the marginalized youth to pursue career options as a sports person understood in a broader sense. (92 words)

10. References


Ying, L. I. U (2012). Lost in transition: Revisiting youth training policy in Hong Kong. The Interdisciplinary Graduate Journal of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Macau, Number 1, 81.

Total number of words: 1,293 words
A proposal to Conference:

Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transitions and career development

Copenhagen, Denmark, October 23-24, 2019

Type of contribution: Paper

Title: In search of disadvantaged youth’s agency in career guidance research: The map of self-perceived growth in an enabling environment

Authors:

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Abstract and 3 – 5 keywords (up to 150 words):

Youth are considered capable of exercising agency in reviewing their user and life experience. Informed by the expanded notion of work (ENOW) characterized by a spectrum of different forms of paid and unpaid work for acknowledging young people’s values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge, a new research tool named as map of self-perceived growth (MSPG) is developed for evaluating the impact of a workplace learning program on disadvantaged youth, which was materialized by actively engaging business partners and other stakeholders. This study shows that providing disadvantaged youth an enabling environment for workplace learning, articulating critical incidents and relationships and mapping out their self-perceived growth experience with the use of
legends and a 10-point likert scale, they were able to develop their self-constructed archive in a visualized manner which can help inform research study and construct a narrative for shaping future career development in an individual and collective manner. (147 words)

Keywords (5): agency; disadvantaged youth; map of self-perceived growth; career guidance; enabling environment

Relation to the conference theme (up to 50 words)

This paper introduces a newly-developed research tool which acknowledges the personal agency of disadvantaged youth by mapping out their self-perceived growth in relation to career guidance, workplace learning and life experience. This study addresses the role of self-constructed archive and narrative for showing personal agency realized in an enabling environment. (50 words)

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework (up to 600 words)

Research questions:

There are some major concerns with the conventional approach to researching youth’s user and life experience. First, the process of doing pre- and post-intervention questionnaires may be too challenging, particularly to those respondents with lower educational level or special educational needs. Second, there is still room for semi-structured interviews and focus groups to tape personal experience outside the service scope and self-appraise one’s growth experience and draw learnings for career development. Third, the youth respondents will not know the analyses on their own personal growth and the mechanisms leading to their positive changes, as the findings and analyses are presented in an anonymous and collective manner. The lagging-behind report may delay informing career practitioners to take prompt and appropriate actions to address the needs of their service users. Innovative research tools such as photo-voice and life-line drawing can help. However, there is still an outcry for more innovative research tools for researching youth’s user and growth experiences that can better acknowledge the agency of youth. Similar concerns were raised among the researchers of the community-based team of a Career and
Life Adventure Planning project for Youth (thereafter the Project), which is funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and NEET-at-risk aged 15-21.

Objectives

This study aims to introduce a new research tool for mapping out the self-perceived growth experience of the disadvantaged youth in relation to career guidance and workplace learning materialized in an enabling environment, which was designed to research and archive the self-perceived growth experience by using narratives, visual legends and a 10-point likert scale.

Theoretical framework

Narrative research refers to the use of methodological approach to collecting and researching the narrated stories of the respondents in written or spoken format with or without the use of visual aids. For the sake of social justice, more academics suggested valuing the meaning of both paid and unpaid work experience in one’s career and life development (Heras, 2012; Livingstone, 2010; Stebleton, 2010; Wong, 2015). According to the ENOW framework, acknowledging, delivering and reviewing paid and unpaid work experiences can contribute to one’s accumulation and transferability of capabilities including values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge (VASK).

Career guidance informed by the social justice perspective emphasizes providing resources, opportunities, and networks to the disadvantaged youth by involving multiple stakeholders including business partners. When reviewing the impact of career guidance, it is important to facilitate the youth respondents to evaluate the influence of stakeholders and other environmental factors on their growth experience such as significant relationships and critical incidents.

Informed by the ENOW-VASK framework, the map of self-perceived growth (MSPG) was developed as a visual tool for narrative research to narrate their self-perceived growth experiences, explore the factors leading to changes, and examine the effectiveness of
career guidance and workplace learning of the Project. The basic structure of the MSPG is of two axes (Figure 1). The horizontal axis outlines the temporal dimension of respondent’s experience including both project and non-project personal experiences, their current status or identity, and their learnings and career aspirations. The vertical axis is a 10-point Likert scale from 1 to 10. Four Fs are used to denote facts, feelings, findings and futures for reviewing their self-perceived growth from lowest 1 to highest 10. Nine emoji legends including “critical incident”, “significant others/relationship”, “positive changes”, “negative changes”, “challenges”, “values/beliefs”, “attitudes”, “skills” and “knowledge”, are provided for the youth respondents to articulate their narratives in a visual manner. (580 words)

Figure 1. The template of the map of self-perceived growth (MSPG)
Methods/methodology (up to 300 words)

Semi-structured interviews with legends and a 10-point likert scale were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of a workplace learning programme which provided job visits and placement opportunities to disadvantaged youth aged 15 - 21. The interview is consisted of two parts: Part One was a semi-structured interview, and Part Two was to map out the MSPG. Eleven youth respondents joined the interviews, and seven of them drew up their MSPG, among whom, six of the respondents used the MSPG version without a 10-point Likert scale and one youth used the MSPG version with a 10-Likert scale. The other four respondents were not requested to draw their MSPG after Part One. A template of the MSPG (same as Figure 1) with nine legends was shown to the respondents who were expected to draw up their MSPG after finishing Part One of the interview. The template made it easier for the respondents to map out their user and life experience in a systematic manner. The whole interview lasts around two hours on average, with one and a half hour for Part One, and half an hour for Part Two. With the use of a few cases, the steps of mapping out the MSPG will be presented in the upcoming conference. (208 words)

Outcomes/ expected results (up to 200 words)

For the youth respondents, they are the authors of the MSPG. Second, the respondents need to decide which experiences they perceived as significant enough to be put into the MSPG, select which legends they would like to post for every articulated experience, decide which experience did inspire them in relation to specific F, and their self-rating at the start of the service and at every episode of narrated experience. Third, the finished MSPG would give the respondents an efficient and effective individual summary of the self-perceived growth experience in an archived and visualized manner for research purpose. Finally, to give the respondents a sense of ownership, each of them was given the original copy of self-constructed archive for informing and reviewing their current and future career development and drawing leanings for future development for both individual use and for compilation of career learnings for collective use. Finally, researchers can use the MSPG as an important data source to examine the effectiveness of the workplace learning program and to investigate some latent factors/ mechanisms, both individual and
structural factors, leading to the positive outcomes of the service users. Career practitioners will also benefit from the MSPG for future career intervention. (199 words)

References:


Total number of words: 1,272 words plus one graph