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NICEC

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CAREER EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING

NICEC STATEMENT

The Fellows of NICEC agreed the following statement in 2010.

'The National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC) was originally founded as a research institute in 1975. It now plays the role of a learned society for reflective practitioners in the broad field of career education, career guidance/counselling and career development. This includes individuals whose primary role relates to research, policy, consultancy, scholarship, service delivery or management. NICEC seeks to foster dialogue and innovation between these areas through events, networking, publications and projects.

NICEC is distinctive as a boundary-crossing network devoted to career education and counselling in education, in the workplace, and in the wider community. It seeks to integrate theory and practice in career development, stimulate intellectual diversity and encourage transdisciplinary dialogue. Through these activities, NICEC aims to develop research, inform policy and enhance service delivery.

Membership and fellowship are committed to serious thinking and innovation in career development work. Membership is open to all individuals and organisations connected with career education and counselling. Fellowship is an honour conferred by peer election and signals distinctive contribution to the field and commitment to the development of NICEC's work. Members and Fellows receive the NICEC journal and are invited to participate in all NICEC events.

NICEC does not operate as a professional association or commercial research institute, nor is it organisationally aligned with any specific institution. Although based in the UK, there is a strong international dimension to the work of NICEC and it seeks to support reflective practice in career education and counselling globally.'

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TITLE

The official title of the journal for citation purposes is *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling* and the ISSN number is ISSN 2046-1348.

It is widely and informally referred to as 'the NICEC journal'.

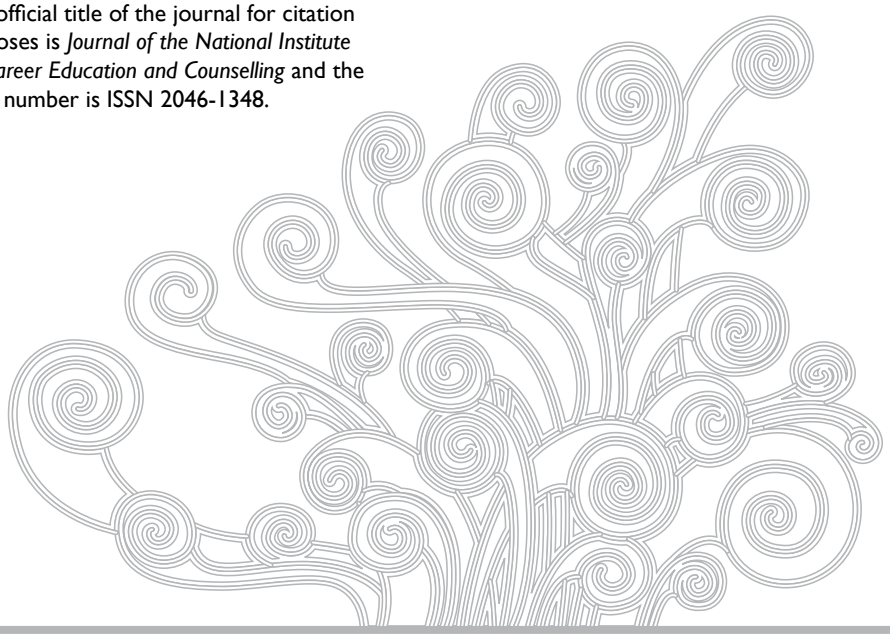
Its former title was *Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal*, ISSN 1472-6564, published by CRAC, and the final edition under this title was issue 25. To avoid confusion we have retained the numbering of editions used under the previous title.

AIMS AND SCOPE

The NICEC journal publishes articles on the broad theme of career development in any context including:

- Career development in the workplace: private and public sector, small, medium and large organisations, private practitioners.
- Career development in education: schools, colleges, universities, adult education, public career services.
- Career development in the community: third age, voluntary, charity, social organisations, independent contexts, public career services.

It is designed to be read by individuals who are involved in career development-related work in a wide range of settings including information, advice, counselling, guidance, advocacy, coaching, mentoring, psychotherapy, education, teaching, training, scholarship, research, consultancy, human resources, management or policy. The journal has a national and international readership.



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The journal is published twice a year (cover price £20/issue) and can be purchased via an annual subscription (£35 UK or £50 overseas, including postage).

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For information on journal subscription or membership, please contact Wendy Hirsh: membership@nicec.org

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Career, community, place and locality

Career is a concept which is concerned with the way in which we link life, learning and work and past, present and future. This kind of thinking about career can often lead us to a level of abstraction which sits in opposition to our everyday experience of career. Day-to-day and even year-to-year career is lived in spaces and places. We go to school, we move to university, we commute to work, we sit hunched at our desk or toil under the burning sun. Work, learning and life do not take place in an abstract no-place, but rather in geographical (and increasingly in digital) spaces. Not all spaces are the same and nor do they offer the same kinds of opportunities or contexts for career thinking, exploration and decision-making. This issue of the NICEC Journal foregrounds the issue of space and place and explores how it impacts on career.

The geography and materiality of spaces and places also have a major impact on the way that career guidance and other forms of career support are delivered. Career guidance is necessarily situated in place as it seeks to link individuals to opportunities and educate them about the local, national and international labour and learning markets. It is also situated within institutions and enacted within diverse spaces including interview cubicals, classrooms, community centres, factories and a growing range of online spaces. The issue therefore also grapples with the question of how these spaces reframe and enable different kinds of career support.

We begin with a piece from **Bill Law** which explores the issues of space and community theoretically. Bill proposes the concept of the 'enclave' as a way to organise our thinking about career and our ideas about how best to organise careers work. **Rie Thomsen** also explores the issue of how career guidance is enacted within places and communities. She argues that this has been ignored for far too long and demonstrates how the nature of the activity is reshaped by its movement into different kinds of spaces and places.

The next three papers all explore the way in which living in a particular place shapes both the career thinking of individuals and the practice of career guidance. First **Kim Slack and Katy Vigurs** look at the career and learning journeys of a group of young people in a working class, urban area in the English midlands. They show how a range of career decisions all emerge out of the intersection between individuals and place and argue that this is something that needs to be recognised in thinking and acting on careers. Next **Siobhan Neary** discusses career and career guidance within Sri Lanka. She introduces the Sri Lankan concept of 'foundation' as a concept that Sri Lankan career practitioners have used to connect the needs of the individual with those of the wider community. **Shaun Morgan** also explores the intersection between community, place and career, this time in a small rural community setting within the UK. Shaun argues that career support workers need to make use of their own cultural capital to propel young people towards social action.

The final three papers look at the relationship between moving place and career. **Rosie Alexander** explores the careers of graduates living in the very rural location of Orkney. She highlights the difference between incomer, loyal and returner graduates and notes a tension between the 'rural' and 'graduate' identities that may need to reframe the way in which careers advisers relate to such clients. **Nancy Arthur** examines the experience of international students coming to Canada. For this group challenges abound in relation to career support, particularly in helping them to navigate questions about staying or returning and providing advice and guidance on remote labour markets and culturally diverse approaches to recruitment and work. Nonetheless, there are considerable challenges for this group which require sensitive handling by careers professionals. Finally the issue closes with an article from **Colleen Reichrath-Smith and Roberta A. Neault** who discuss the experiences of the 'global careerist'. They argue that global careerists (those who pursue their careers across two or more countries) have unique career development needs which career professionals need to better understand in order to be able to help them effectively.

All of these papers explore the importance of space and place in career. Whether it is about how our careers are pursued or how career support is delivered, about staying put in our communities or moving on to new countries, it is clear that space and place need to be considered as a central part of career theory, research and practice.

Tristram Hooley, Guest Editor

Career management: Place, space and social enclaves

Bill Law

Geography influences life chances. This article examines how career-management is situated. What we refer to as 'respect', 'freedom' and 'confidence' are differently experienced in different locations. The term 'place-and-space' is used to frame these realities. In illustrating how work-life is managed differently in different places, this article uses the concept of 'enclave' to refer to the place. It points to how varying language voices experience, and illustrates what that does to making a claim to a stake in society. The article also shows how opportunities in any place can be expanded, creating space to accommodate unforeseen hopes. And it suggests implications for the organisation of professional systems around these ideas. In particular it suggests a rebalancing in the importance attached to career-development expertise, in favour of career-management experience.

Introduction

In current conditions public-service careers work needs to find a new way forward. Those conditions are products of economic, political and commercial change. Careers work is entering yet another phase in a long and fruitful history of importing new thinking to meet new conditions.

A significant part of the new thinking is afforded by geographer Danny Dorling (2010). He documents how much of what is voiced as individual identity can be mapped as different in different areas. He produces a cartography of the places, and shows how the space affects chances in life.

Dorling's account of life chances will come as no surprise to careers workers familiar with the culturally-located ethnographies of Willis (1977), Williamson (2004) and Bright (2011). Contrary to conventional careers-work thinking they find that, though psychologically different, the lives they document are bound together by shared experience belonging to what - with hindsight - we can call 'place and space'. Careers work now needs better to understand whether what has been readily attributed to social class can be more usefully attributed to place and space.

Direct evidence in support of Dorling comes from Leander, Phillips and Taylor (2010) whose research shows how learning lives are located, positioned, and emplaced in ways that influence access to opportunity. What people do is, therefore, usefully understood in its geographic social-and-cultural context. What people learn to believe, value and expect is situated.

To adopt such ideas would modify conventional careers-work thinking. The phrase 'post-code' lottery is used to argue for universal entitlement. Space-and-place thinking points to post-code realities. Careers work needs both perspectives, because what in conceptual terms might be characterised as universal rights, will in practical terms need to be locally negotiated. The day-to-day experience, for example of respect, freedom and confidence, calls for different help, in each different place, with its different culture, each expressed in a different voice.

In a sane society nobody would be in a better position to work on these issues than careers workers. But a shift of focus away from social class, and from universal entitlement, leaves careers work with a great deal of

space in need of re-mapping. [1] For example, how is it that what is learned in one place becomes useful in another? How are beliefs, values and expectations differently situated? How do differently located programmes define success and organise themselves for it? And what operational processes are we talking about? Claims that we are talking about 'markets', 'niches', and 'enclaves' are all defensible - more or less.

Enclaves

Sociologist Mary Douglas (1966) uses the term 'social enclave' as part of her understanding of how people respond to social change. An enclave is a map-able location, a place where people look to each other for whom they can trust. It is a response to fracturing societies, where both congenial families and protecting hierarchies are weakened. Enclaves are bounded by the limits of where people can gain recognition, find affirmation and claim membership. Such gains are also features of work-life; it would not, therefore, be surprising to find that what people do in enclaves has parallels with what they do about work. Indeed a work place can be an enclave - where, that is, there is trust.

Where there is trust then clubs, networks, neighbourhoods, parishes and families are enclaves. Where trust is absent, a person needs a signpost to where it can be found. As Colm Tóibin (2012) vividly illustrates in family upbringing, in an enclave what is group-shared feels like personal remembrance. So the term enclave does not refer merely to a post-code, but to the thoughts-and-feelings that inhabit that location. Shared talk about what is worth believing, worth having, and worth doing tells a person, when things get bad, whom she can count on. Pierre Bourdieu (1991) similarly speaks of cultural acquisitions, where inhabitance cultivates habits-of-mind which equip for participation. In all these respects the reports are of tangible proximity, sharing and conversation - all space-located imagery.

Enclaved variability

One of the most useful features of Douglas's term is that it is possible to talk about virtual enclaves. On-line life has assembled itself around enclaves. Sometimes linked locally, sometimes globally, on-line life is increasingly shaped by the approach-and-avoid dynamics of 'we like' and 'like us' (Law, 2012b). Both Bourdieu and Douglas show how such enclosure can limit life chances.

Enclaves are felt to cushion risk. On-line, on-the-street or on-the-make they are, like niches, a refuge. But, also like niches, they attract predators. Dorling's underlying concern is for access to chances in life. And some enclaves are able to offer their membership competitive advantage. But where the enclave increases another's risk, Douglas shows how any one is capable not just of protection but of aggression.

There is much here that might invite careers workers to look again at what their clients and students do, and to reframe what they know in situated terms. Table one is a thought experiment which suggests some possibilities for that work. It is not research based, but suggests what research might be able to detect, were it to take enclaved career management seriously.

Each of the enclaves listed in Table 1 calls up a more-or-less distinct way of managing work-life.

Such analyses cannot be more cleanly discrete than the realities they represent. However the core concepts on the left are spatial, the behavioural characterisations on the right are probabilities - and they do not exclude the possibility that a clique can get nasty. Each has its own assessment and management of risk. What is recognised as real and useful in one enclave may be seen as alien and irrelevant in another.

Career talk

A significant part of what Douglas brings to place-and-space thinking is the idea of culture. Ethnographers speak of culture when they document what people tell and show of…

- what they believe to be true
- who and what they value as worth knowing and having
- what they can expect to result from any action they take

1 These and other issues are examined in more detail in a longer place-and-space article (Bill Law 2012a).

Table 1: Places and spaces as enclave

What to find	What it might be like
clique	sequestered – sometimes cosmopolitan – people informally approach each other – comfortable – excluding others – making valued contacts – holding each other in-view
association	religious or other cultural membership – favouring a distinctive activity – offering advantages not available to others – with procedures and requirements for joining, leaving and exclusion
on-line location	formed by following and seeking followers – sharing preferences and aspirations – visitors appear because they identify with the inhabitants – or are spying – or preparing to exploit
sub-neighbourhood	nurturing, overseeing and protecting the place – or, where it is damaged or disowned, neglecting or defiling it – approach and avoid local sub-neighbourhoods on the basis of congeniality
housing estate	inhabited because it can be afforded – may be economically-similar but can be culturally diverse – there is an awareness of the way in which post-code affects life chances
territory	a felt need to defend the place – which involves making alliances and demanding allegiance – there may be no-go areas – pushing out those seen as invaders – occupying as if besieged

Table 1 sets out variations on such beliefs, values and expectations. The cosmopolitan in a protected enclave wants that sequestration preserved. People able to advantageously negotiate want that freedom, and the well connected value money-savvy memberships. But life is not like that for everybody. Least of all for people whose experience has taught them to see life chances in terms of how effectively they defend their territory. In all cases career will depend less on psychological profiles and social origins, more on what enclaved experience teaches.

Experience can be a compelling teacher. The talk people learn to talk signposts the walk they are able to walk. Career thinking has an awareness of the importance of situated talk. Moore and Hooley (2012) show how different vocabulary shapes the concepts that students and clients bring to career interviews. And Arulmani (2007) relates careers provision to local semiology. These are culturally-rooted habits-of-mind, which he refers to as 'pride and prejudice'. In both cases the task is to use talk which can make a careers service more recognisable, accessible and trusted to its students and clients. One might say that these movements are part of a process of a service seeking to form an enclave.

Personal to planetary

Concerns for the vocabulary and semantics of career development focus how career is voiced. Arulmani demonstrates that it enhances programme design. But its origins and ownership are in other people's experience – what they see as recognisable, accessible and trusted. It is their property – free of capture, used with consent, and for purposes they recognise as worthwhile. Arulmani draws on that, but he knows he's on licence from the people whose situated experience he depends on. Enclaves do not speak of careers worker's career-development expertise, but of their students' and clients' career-management experience.

In Table 1, that recognition stretches from the cosmopolitan to the territorial. Contemporary culture, and the technologies which shape it, make it possible for people to find and make use of information in their own terms – with or without careers-work support. And those terms reach beyond the individually up-close-and-personal – familiar to conventional careers work. They reach into the out-there-and-pervasive – touching on contacts, locations, a regional work-life, and a continental position in a global economy.

The evidence confirms Douglas's expectation that enclaves seek to protect their own parochial interests, and defeat capture. But recent evidence shows that some want to improve the lot of others - in both their own and other people's enclaves, both nearby and far away (Law, 2013).

An enclave is a system, in the sense that it accommodates a cause-and-effect dynamic which is in exchange with its environment. What can happen, in terms of protection or improvement and for its own or other people's benefit, are at the same time spatially located and systemically active. Moreover, with a reach from the personal to planetary, place-and-space thinking needs system thinking which can accommodate enough to represent such a scale. There is such thinking, though as we shall now see, it seems to have escaped the interested attention of at least some careers-work thinkers.

Interrogating a system

Among careers-work commentators Audrey Collin (2012) proposes system thinking as sufficiently accommodating. She suggests a reach from genetic inheritance to social class. Systems specialist Donella Meadows (2009) defines systems thinking in terms that resonate well with table-one reach. She characterises systems thinking as setting out a complexity which can be mapped and interrogated. It probes hierarchical-arranged elements - some bigger some smaller. And it seeks patterns which link what otherwise would be mistaken as random and disconnected - or wayward.

How do we find these elements? Research into careers work ranges, at the extremes, from tick-box quantification to ethnographic storytelling. However, some form of narrative is needed to convey the variable, layered, overlapping and unfolding confusion that makes systems thinking both possible and necessary. Williamson's work is notable in this way. He follows-up his original sample after more than twenty years, tracking how work-life has interacted with all aspects of people's lives. It means that they are able to voice distinctively situated in place-and-space experience in variable, layered, overlapping and unfolding terms. They can be hierarchically arranged in levels of disclosure.

Careers work needs to hear the voice of experience; speaking of career management rather than of career expertise. Setting that voice in a system-thinking frame can show how one experience dynamically connects to another. But there must be no loss of contact with the place-and-space location of the experience. In what is, again, a thought experiment to imagine the possibilities, table two supposes that somebody asks such progressively deepening questions about how those experiences unfold.

Table 2: Questioning ethnography

1. Why do smart kids sideline school, settle for routine work, turn to crime, and resort to drugs?

'I think I knew when I was younger that I was heading that way – I knew I was going to spend some time in prison – given what I was doing it was bound to happen sooner or later – wasn't it?'

2. Why do they find that so predictable?

'I knew I was going to do an apprenticeship but I did not know whether that was what I wanted to be doing – because I'd not experience of anything – you know, I might have liked to be a social worker or a solicitor – I just don't know'

3. Why are they so short of ideas?

'I knew somebody somewhere was having it – I assumed it must be in London, or New York or America, or whatever – but I didn't have the background, the contacts, the things you needed to be part of it'

4. Why do they have that sense of separation?

'I lost my job because I just couldn't be bothered working – I found that thieving with these boys was much more fun – you didn't have to get up in the morning and it was more um… lucrative'

5. Why are they so ready to run that risk?

'Danny has been good to me over the years – same as Ted, when I needed them – that is what it is about really – you make them kind of friends only once in your life – you do things together when you are younger – and so, when you are older, you know everything about each other'

Each answer formulates each next question, building a layered account of learning from experience. In this example each next answer is a different person's. They are quotes from Williamson's ethnography. Their talk has the feel of a shared territory - although apparently free of aggression. But neglect can be as damaging as attack.

The answers are notable for their unwillingness to evade or deny responsibility. They speak in terms which suggest a sense of doing what, in their place-and-space, they were best in a position to do. And this seems to have given them a belief in their ability to speak for each other. Douglas's use of the term enclave - with its connotations of trust and reciprocated help - seems appropriate. There is what Tóbin characterises as shared memory. The experiment does not show that such a result is inevitable, only that we need research which can detect it and an analysis which will accommodate it.

And it suggests, in Meadows's terms, the possibility of finding and interrogating a map-able pattern, which other people might dismiss as random and disconnected. The five say little of school. But we are entitled to ask what might be achieved by a learning programme offering enough recognition and accessibility to be trusted.

New place in the making

Leander, Phillips and Taylor (2010) refer to a learning programme as a 'new place in the making'. When policy speaks of improving that place it urges structural change. But the balance of evidence does not support the creation of new free schools or academies. There is stronger evidence (Hattie, 2009) for the quality of the exchange between students and teacher.

That exchange can be expressed as:

input - 'what goes in?' > process - 'what goes on?' > outcomes - 'what comes out'

This is system thinking at its simplest. It allows boxes to be readily ticked, evaluations to be easily reported, and certificates to be confidently awarded. Such simplicity also serves some interests.

Hegemonic interests are, by definition, less interested in what people need to know and more interested in what they want people to believe. There are dramatic examples. For example, Mark Peel (2011) documents political attitudes persuading helping professionals that people in need of care must, in some way, have themselves to blame. It seems that centrist power can systemically distort professional commitment.

But where they can maintain independence of such pressure professional careers workers have their own indicators for helping the wayward. They show that life chances are improved where feedback, expectations and models are expanded (Law, 2009). However, that thinking needs re-thinking. It is framed by social-class structures, and alert to the danger of entrapment by family dynamics. Place-and-space thinking allows that the structures are more complex and the dynamics wider-ranging.

And change is complicating the already complicated. What is learned never corresponds to what is taught. Education is not 'telling them so they know'. People recognise different aspects of what is going on as interesting, useful, relevant and worth the effort. Place-and-space thinking shows how those recognitions are learned in enclaves.

Arbitrary pressure aside, without an appreciation of such complexity and volatility it is not possible to understand what a learning programme can do, how it can be assessed, and how it can enlarge place into space. Least of all is it possible to understand how that can work out differently in different enclaves. It seems worthwhile to set out (Law, 2013) what could be the practical implications for using enclaved bases to enlarge a-new-place-in-the-making, using systems thinking…

resources	expanding from bi-lateral into multilateral partnerships, engaging both education and community resources, and adding to economics and psychology the inputs of social-and-cultural research
processes	re-forming partnerships across curriculum and in community agencies, reflecting the range of career-management experience in a stage-by-stage programme, enabling critical thinking to interrogate experience
outcomes	moving on from starting points, letting go of what hinders, holding on to what is

> valued for sustainable and fulfilling action, realising a stake in society, clearly voiced and speaking of nothing as inevitable

Any person who wants not to be bothered by such layered and inter-woven complexity should stay away from curriculum. Conventional careers work has rarely found much of a need to grasp the complexity of learning with any depth or dynamic. It needs to now.

And it is needed now. The planet is peppered with governments which find it less troublesome to curtail learning and contain voice. As that happens people are not in a position to voice their experience, and legitimate interests are overwhelmed by the manoeuvring of the well positioned. And UK careers work is a party to all such issues. Space-and-place thinking is capable of framing a pervasive case for human rights: to learning for life, to stakeholding in society, and to a heeded voice. This is not what careers thinking has characterised as universal rights, but few commitments have a deeper and wider connection with that broader conception of rights than the independent enablement of career management.

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Career guidance on the move: Developing guidance in new places

Rie Thomsen

This article is about how the notion of place can be used in an analysis of career guidance practices and their development. It is about how a focus on the context of career guidance can develop an awareness of the place where guidance is practiced and support the development of career guidance in new places. In this article I introduce an analytical perspective on place; I give the example of the guidance café a practice development that took place into serious consideration because it was an attempt to develop career guidance practice through relocating it.

Introduction

> Once one begins interrogating the power of place as a construct for analysis, one sees that it might be, and increasingly is, applied constructively to any realm of human experience or inquiry. (Gruenewald 2003:636)

There has been little writing about the geographical context of career guidance and the physical place in which career guidance takes place in career guidance theories or career guidance research. McLeod and Machin (1998) write that 'contextual factors have largely been ignored in counseling theory, research and practice.' They advocate the importance of research into this topic and the inclusion of contextual considerations in guidance practices. McLeod and Mahin (1998) describe the contextual factors influencing counseling as: The immediate physical and material environment, the culture and climate of the organisation, the relationship between the counselling agency and its institutional and community environment and the general social and cultural factors. Stead et al (2012) conclude on their content analysis of qualitative research in career development that: 'The locations of data collection were broken down as follows: educational institution (32.8%), participant workplace (9.0%), home (3.0%), community center (1.1%), and other location (16.0%). Most striking was the finding that location was not mentioned in 38.1% of the studies.' (Stead et al, 2012:115) According to Stead et al a great deal of the researchers did not clearly disclose the locations and places where they conducted their studies on career development. These observations are the point of departure for this article which will focus on the physical place of career guidance and how this affects practice.

From 2005 to 2009 I undertook a study on career guidance as part of a doctoral study. I chose to investigate career guidance from a participant perspective as I wanted to understand how participants in career guidance came to make meaning of their participation in career guidance in their everyday lives. Since my aim was to study career guidance from the perspective of participants this would only be possible if I could be present in places where career guidance was practiced alongside people's lives. I chose two settings: one was a factory that was closing down its production and had commissioned a career guidance practitioner to establish a 'career guidance corner' to support the workers transition to other jobs or further training. The second setting was a folk high school. I also knew that taking part in career guidance was obligatory for students in the Danish folk high schools[1] (Højskole)

1 Folk high schools are residential schools providing general and nonformal education. The length of the courses they offer courses vary – from one week to up to almost a year – and are attended by adults of all ages. The topics vary from politics to sports. The courses are nonqualifying courses which are meant to broaden general, social and democratic competencies.

and that career guidance in the folk high schools previously was described as a 'career guidance space' (Kofoed 2004 : 47), which led me to expect that I could study alternative modes of delivery at the folk high school.

Across the two places there were similarities as well as differences. The similarities were that neither the workers nor the folk high school students were pursuing the opportunity to get individual career guidance sessions. Both the workers and the folk high school students valued career guidance where it was available at all times as an informal practice. Thomsen (2012) describes this as career guidance in communities where career guidance is seen as a collective phenomenon that makes it possible to adopt a variety of participant positions such as listening, hearing and seeing the answers given to other people, getting ideas for your own questions, offering solutions or raising problems, getting a peer perspective on a matter, continuing the conversation later with others who have also heard what has been said (Thomsen, 2012: 217). In both places the flexibility of career guidance practice together with the use of the specific places where it was practiced played a significant role in how career guidance came to be a meaningful to the everyday lives of the workers and high school students.

My interest in the notion of place was not there from the beginning of my study, it came alongside my field work in the two places. I came to understand that the place where career guidance was practiced mattered and that I needed concepts of place to describe and analyse and understand guidance practices from the perspectives of participants. Since my theoretical background was mainly informed by (social) psychology I would often read studies that seemed to be de-contextualised (see below) or I would use the word context to describe the surroundings of practice. I felt curious about other concepts for understanding how place influences practice since places are more physical than context. Places have a concrete geographical location, sometimes they have buildings, places in buildings have furniture, sometimes tools or art, windows, plants etc. and places have uses sometimes specific sometimes not.

Conceptualisation of context and place

Danish psychologist Ole Dreier argues that: '… *psychotherapy* is often practiced and presented as if it took place in a vacuum or in a strange, *privileged idealised space* with no connection to an objective social world. It is perceived as if it could occur anywhere and nowhere. The dominant perceptions of therapy are *decontextualised*. They are based on the implicit assumption that the concrete context is not important, that it has no influence on what takes place there' (Dreier, 1993:25, emphasis in the original). Could it be that this line of thinking not only counts for psychotherapy but is also a way of perceiving career guidance practices? If so, this could explain why qualitative researchers, according to Stead et.al (2012) give little or no information about the places in which the guidance they researched was practiced?

The geographer Edward Casey argues that: 'Places are not just empty localities. Places are full of things and inhabited by people and actions (…) places gather things in their midst – where `things´ connote various animate and inanimate entities. Places also gather experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts.' (Casey, 1996:24)

Edward Casey explores places from a phenomenological perspective and emphasises that a place is much more than a physical location because places attract things, memories, expectations etc. He even goes so far as to say that: 'A place has its own `operative intentionality´ that elicits and responds to the corporeal intentionality of the perceiving subject. Thus place integrates with body as much as body with place' (Casey, 1996, p. 22).

Recognition of place in policy on career guidance

When the Act on Guidance was passed in 2003 career guidance for young people in Denmark was centralised in two types of career guidance centre: firstly; in 50 Youth Guidance Centres, where the practice discussed in this article was based; and secondly, in seven Regional Guidance Centres. The career guidance in

folk high schools was kept out of this centralisation and retained the right to practice career guidance in the school. Two main reasons were given: 1) the folk high school's focus on liberal education and existential development; and 2) the students live at the school and so the school provides a learning space for the students to try out different interests. The reform made it obligatory for the folk high schools to offer career guidance to their students.

This implicitly reveals recognition of the folk high schools as places that can contribute positively to the goals of career guidance. If this had not been the case, the folk high school students should go to one of the seven Regional Guidance Centres for career guidance as it is the case for all other young people in Denmark. I take this as an example of an implicit recognition of the importance of place in the policymaking process.

Place also seemed to matter in different ways in relation to career guidance in the company. In the company the career guidance practitioner was commissioned to establish a career guidance corner. A guidance corner is a workplace-based career guidance approach, where a career guidance counsellor travels to a company and offers person-to-person guidance in a corner of a workplace assembly room, using pamphlets about education or training and with a portable computer containing guidance and information programmes (Turner and Plant 2005). The concept of 'guidance corners' were introduced in the 1990s by the then Women's Workers Union[2] in Denmark to introduce career guidance into the workplace. Because the members were paid by the hour, many of them did not find it possible to travel to the Union Office for guidance on training and educational issues. By establishing guidance corners in the workplace, The Women's Workers Union in Denmark developed a new way of organising career guidance –a way that took the influence of the place into consideration in a way that resulted in a change of place for practice.

One could argue that for both career guidance in the folk high school and in the work-place it is recognised that:

- The place where guidance is practiced plays a significant role – otherwise it would not have been important to either keep it in a certain place (the folk high school) or change it to a new place (the factory).
- Making career guidance available at places where people are already present for other reasons makes career guidance available to more people
- Career guidance can benefit from the social spaces in the place where it is present.

Casey's remark about places having an `operative intentionality´, moreover, draws our attention to the challenges of relocating guidance practices. In fact, relocation may change the practice so that career guidance practiced in new places offers new possibilities and restraints. Thus it would also be possible to use relocation as a driver for change of guidance practices. This next case happened like that. A career guidance practitioner was inspired by discussions on the influence and meaning of place as it is discussed in Thomsen (2012). She decided to move her practice to a new place; the following case gives an insight into her reasons for doing so and what challenges and benefits she experienced.

A case for consideration: The guidance café[3]

A youth guidance center was struggling with getting a specific group of young people to attend career guidance activities. Some activities are obligatory if you are a Danish resident under the age of 25 and not in education or training (NEET). Some individuals amongst the NEET group, especially young men from minority ethnic groups, did not pay much attention to career guidance even though the guidance practitioner tried reaching out to them in different ways. She

2 Women's Workers Union (Kvindeligt Arbejderforbund) was a trade union for Women. In 2005 the Women's Workers Union merged with the special workers union and formed 3F (United Federation of Danish Workers). The largest trade union in Denmark.

3 Career guidance practioner Camilla Sneum from UU-Øresund has provided material for this case description. The material stems from a project she invented, carried out and decribed. The case also figures in (Thomsen et.al, 2013).

found out that in the combined community center and library in the Vapnagaard area where most of the young men lived there was a popular afterschool initiative called the Homework Café. She talked to different people and got permission to establish a career guidance café alongside the Homework Café but in the community center next to the library. The purpose was manifold:

- to make contact with and provide guidance to 18 to 25 year olds who live in Vapnagaard and who were not in education or training;
- to advertise the youth guidance center to Vapnagaards residents; and
- to find out whether the youth guidance center should allocate resources to career guidance in other places for instance in other residential areas.

Prior to the establishment of the guidance café the guidance practitioner contacted a number of young people she knew through prior guidance activities. The young people she asked were all living in Vapnagaard and already enrolled in different educational institutions. She asked them to come by the guidance café and to bring a friend they thought might benefit form meeting her. She also asked them if they would be willing to speak about their educational choices as part of the café. She did so to be sure that somebody would attend the café the first couple of times she was there.

During the career guidance café the guidance practitioner asked the young people who came to see her how they found out about the initiative. Some came because they were invited by the guidance practitioner in the same way she would invite them for activities in the Youth Guidance Center. Others came because they were invited by other professionals who knew about the new guidance initiative or by the volunteers from the adjacent library who were in charge of the popular homework café and knew the young people through that. Some young people had heard about the café through a friend, some had read about the guidance café in the local newspaper and others came because they saw that something was happening, when they were taking part in the homework café in the library or just passing by. The young people that came were mostly young men from minority ethnic groups, young mothers and young girls from minority ethnic groups who were looking for supplementary guidance on further education.

Experimenting with career guidance in new places

The career guidance practitioner explained to me that the guidance café allowed for her to experience the young people in their own community and in their own place which gave her a more nuanced picture of them and their lives. She explained that now she was the visitor and on foreign ground. She said she felt that these experiences would allow her to develop and offer guidance activities they would perceive as meaningful for them. And she could feed back to the Youth Guidance Center which topics might be relevant in group guidance sessions. In addition she made contact with other professionals and volunteers around this group of young people and found that the professionals from different professions together could support the young people in gaining education or training. The guidance practitioner's overall reflection on her experience with the career guidance café was that by being present in the community center she gained new opportunities to get in touch with the young people in Vapnagaard. She also discovered that her presence affected the young people who participated in the café and the community's perception of both career guidance and of dropping out of an education. She explained that the understanding of dropping-out changed from 'a failure to an experience that can be used in the next step of the education journey'.

The practitioner's decision to set up career guidance activities in the community center reflects recognition of the impact different physical places can have on guidance practices. It also shows that place as a contextual factor not only influences career guidance practice, it is also possible for career guidance to influence contextual factors in this case the community's perception of drop-out and of career guidance.

The change of place challenged the practitioner in different aspects. She was challenged on the use of her

resources because different people were interested in the information and the support she as a career guidance practitioner could offer. The girls who came to see her about further education were not in her target group, the Regional Guidance Centers were where they should have taken their questions and considerations. The volunteers in the career guidance café also came to see her, but they should have sought help from the Adult Education Centers and the Public Employment Service. The practitioner was relaxed about this but raised it as a problem related to the organisation of the Danish system for career guidance which was accentuated because career guidance was now available in the community.

Conclusion

What can be learned from this case study about the role of place? I should like to return to the quote from Grunewald that started this article and specifically Grunewald's point about *selfhood and placehood as intertwined*. By moving career guidance to the residential area of the young people the career guidance practitioner was trying to reach out to the young people there. They could have continued to not take part in career guidance, but instead career guidance was adopted as a valuable practice which contributed to a change in the communities understanding of dropping-out of education. When the career guidance practitioner made an effort to establish a career guidance café in the community centre it seems likely that she made an important contribution to a new understanding of selfhood there. Before they considered dropping out of education as a failure. The new understanding of dropping out might be phrased like this: 'We can also benefit from guidance, we haven't left education for good, we are expected to return to education and there is someone here to help us find out how'.

If placehood and selfhood are intertwined, career guidance being present in a certain place will affect the people who reside there and, in turn, the way they think about themselves. I argue that research in career guidance as well as the practice of career guidance can benefit from a more placebound or topographic approach (Hastrup 2005) that allows for guidance to be delivered and investigated where people are and where they live. The case study shows that moving out and developing new ways of practicing guidance in a new place have wider consequences than changing citizens' sense of selfhood. The practitioner in the case study was widening access by reaching out to a disadvantaged group and widening access by adding a new location to her service. Both out-reach and location are emphasised by the ELGPN as important for widening access to career guidance (ELGPN 2010). Because this practitioner was from a youth guidance center she was especially focused on reaching out to young people but she experienced that because she was present in a central place in the community the opportunity for information and support became visible to different groups who was at that place. Young people seeking advice about further education and adults who were volunteers at the homework café nearby reached out to get career guidance – this indicates that the issue of widening access through offering career guidance in new places is as relevant to other groups in society.

This issue of the NICEC Journal introduces interesting discussions on different aspects of place and community. Yet it is also clear that there is much more to be said, discussed and known about the importance of place in career and career guidance. My belief is that place is a concept that can be applied in analyses of career guidance practices, and can be considered as a source for developing career guidance and widening access.

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Variation in local career trajectories of young people sharing a similar low socio-economic background in one geographic community

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This paper uses a life history approach to examine the decision making of six young people around what to do when leaving compulsory education. They all share similar social backgrounds and are located in one geographic place – a deprived, working class, urban area in the English midlands – but the six individuals have opted to follow three different post-16 pathways, even though they all achieved GCSE qualifications that would have enabled them to enter further education, and therefore potentially higher education. These different post-16 routes include employment without formal training (the workers), employment with formal training (the apprentices) and studying in higher education (the students). All the participants (and their families) are historically 'rooted' in the local area and this paper explores the influence of the social learning that takes place within local communities of practice – in the form of friendship groups, families and school communities – on the young people's different, yet all resolutely local, early career trajectories.

Geographical location of the research: City as overarching community

This research seeks to locate decision-making within the geographical context of young people's lives. Like many areas in the UK, the participants' home city has seen the loss of much of its traditional industry. The decline of the mining and pottery industries in particular has had a marked effect on the city. This downturn is likely to have taken place after the majority of the participants' parents had left school. Thus, the participants' parents' decisions around what to do when they themselves left school may have taken place in a very different economic climate to the one facing their children – one in which jobs were more readily available and, moreover, ones that did not require high level academic qualifications.

At the time the participants in this study were at secondary school, educational attainment in the city was lower than the national average, but improving. Local post-16 staying on rates for full-time education and higher education were also both lower than the national average, while rates for work-based training were higher. There was also evidence of tension between, on the one hand, the drive to raise achievement and skill levels and, on the other hand, local perceptions around the qualification demands of employers in the area. These issues formed the wider backdrop against which participants in this study would be making decisions around career pathways.

Theorising young people's post-16 decision making

The association between socio-economic background and decision-making about trajectories after compulsory schooling is relatively well researched (Forsyth and Furlong, 2000, 2003; Connor, 2001). However, this research does not account well for variation in decision-making among young people from the same background. Hodkinson and colleague's work (1996, 1997, 2004, 2008) has been developed into a theory of career decision-making, which involves three elements (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997):

1. Decisions are pragmatically rational within an individual's horizons for action;
2. They are influenced by interactions with others which are related to unequal resources different individuals possess;
3. They are located within a series of turning points throughout an individual's life course.

They argue that an individual's horizons for action are determined by external opportunities and their own subjective perceptions, which are influenced by the opportunities they have access to and also by their sense of self. Within this framework, decision-making does not fit neatly into a rational process of choice but is based upon partial information, emotional and tacit preferences as much as upon logic and any rational assessment of possible returns. This paper suggests that geography is a significant element of an individual's horizons for action and is implicated in the participants' decision-making.

This paper focuses on the family, peers and schooling as intersecting communities, which shape individuals' life experience and act as 'sites' or 'places' where young people's self-efficacy can be developed or restricted. Parents, for example, influence the development of self-efficacy by providing opportunities for mastery experiences and promoting certain values and standards (Bandura, 1997, 2001). Similarly, schools may influence self-efficacy development through aspects of practice such as ability setting and particular teaching approaches (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Locke and Latham, 1990).

If parents, peers and schooling form part of an individual's social geography it makes sense to consider ways of investigating formative aspects of the social context for the experience of learning. A community of practice is defined as a shared social practice, which is located within a specific cultural context and may reflect values inherent within that culture (Wenger, 1998). Decisions over post-16 pathways may depend upon the nature of the relationship between communities of practice, disposition towards learning and self-efficacy.

Methods and sample information

The stories of six young people have been drawn on in this paper: two HE students, two apprentices

Table 1: Selected participant information

Participant	Local post-16 status	Age	GCSE achievement	Academic ability group at secondary school (set position)	Family background	
					Mother	Father
Hailey	HE student	21	10 – 11 'all good grades'	Top	Pottery worker	Miner
Harry	HE student	19	A grade Maths plus 7 others	Top	Tailor	Retired mechanic
Anna	Apprenticeship	20	1 B, 4 or 5 Cs including Maths, 3 Ds	Lower	Full-time carer (ex-veterinary receptionist)	Retail – works in lighting shop
Adam	Apprenticeship	20	2Bs, 1C, 2Ds, E plus 3 others he is unsure of grade	Lower	Mother left family when Adam was 6 years old.	Coded welder – power stations
Wenona	Working in administration	19	C grade English, remainder Ds – perception that she underachieved because of mental well-being problems.	Lower	Senior carer - Care home	Plasterer
Wendy	Working in administration	19	All Bs + 2 Cs	Top	Housewife	Retail – works in mother's shop

and two workers. All six lived locally all their lives, as had the majority of their parents. Five participants were White; Wenona was of Pakistani origin. All had achieved sufficient academic qualifications to render progression to further full time study and, therefore, HE a possibility (see Table 1). They each took part in an individual, semi-structured interview, which ranged in length from 40 to 60 minutes.

Findings

This paper focuses on young people's decision-making around what to do when leaving compulsory education. Within this decision-making they are making a judgement about their ability to succeed in and the desirability of further learning. Other issues may come into play in making this judgment. For example, what opportunities do they think further learning will offer? What value do they place on different outcomes of learning? Leaving school also opens up the prospect of moving to a new environment and becoming part of a different community of practice. Other questions that may arise therefore relate to what sort of communities of practice do they associate with different post-16 pathways and to what extent do they consider membership essential to success?

The HE Students

Hailey's parents split up when she was 5 and as a result she moved with her mother and sister to a large council estate in one of the most deprived wards in the city. She felt that her family were different to other families living there. One of the ways in which they were different was the emphasis they placed on academic achievement.

> When we moved to [name of area] we lived on the council estate and I did feel as if…we didn't want no trouble we just wanted to get on with our lives, have a good education, mind our own business. Whereas there was a lot of drugs going on…and we didn't want to get involved in that. So really in a way we did feel out of place as if we shouldn't really be there.

Although happy at primary school her transfer to secondary school did not go well. She attributed this to her separation from her friends in class and the style of teaching although she was placed in the top sets. Her mother removed her from the school and she enrolled at an alternative secondary school in the area.

At 16 Hailey moved to a sixth form college outside the city. While she felt the school encouraged students to go to the school's sixth form, she also felt that its main focus was on those 'who did well'. She was clear on the implications of this in terms of students' future directions.

> **Int:** Do you think everyone was encouraged to stay on or was it different for other students?
>
> **Hailey:** …it must have been really hard for the ones who were in the lower sets and didn't do so well. Although we had a careers service in school…I think personally it should have been essential for them to go and see them…whereas it was optional it should have been essential for them to go and plan their next move. Because really once they'd left school they were kind of on their own and they'd got no support or anything. It was just kind of up to them then what they did and they…a lot didn't have the grades to go to 6th form or college so it kind of…
>
> **Int:** Because you sound as if you didn't really have much of decision…
>
> **Hailey:** That's it, I just saw it as there was no choice really. That was what I was doing and I wanted to carry on through education.

While Hailey enjoyed learning generally, an important factor was that a degree was a route to a 'good' job. When she left college Hailey progressed to a local post-1992 university, the first in her family to attend HE, where she graduated with a degree in Psychology, Sport and Exercise. At the time of the interview Hailey was still working in the job she had worked in while at university (receptionist at a leisure club) but looking for a degree-level job. Hailey had found it difficult to find employment locally, something she attributed to the lack of graduate level jobs in the area. Those that were available required her to commute relatively long distances or move away from the city, something she was very reluctant to do.

Harry's father's family had lived in the same area for a

number of generations. His mother moved to the area when she was five years old and had lived there since. Like Hailey, he felt that his family had higher values than other families living in his immediate community. Like Hailey, Harry also had a relatively strong interest in getting 'a good job' and achieving a high income but his interest and passion for music took precedence. He felt he had 'always wanted to go to university'. Harry attributed this attitude in part to his father's wish for him to have opportunities that were denied to him.

On leaving school Harry attended a local further education college where he completed a BTEC in Music Technology; an experience he enjoyed, getting on well with lecturers and other students. At the time of the interview Harry was part way through a degree course (Music Technology and Management) at his local post-1992 university. However, he was not particularly enjoying this experience, because the majority of the students on the course were 'posh' and not from the local area. He found it hard to mix with the other students and was regularly missing lectures.

The Apprentices

Anna lived with her parents and younger brother who was severely disabled. Her parents had always lived locally and the family live in the same house her mother had grown up in. While Anna's family placed a strong emphasis on 'working hard' this was in a general sense rather than specifically in relation to education:

> We [the family] all work. We all go out to work for what we do...we haven't got idle-itus…They [parents] would say get off your backside and do something or else…My mum's got no time for wasters.

Like Hailey and Harry, Anna felt that many other families in her immediate community did not share the same values. When she left school Anna enrolled on an apprenticeship scheme working as a nursery nurse at a local FE college, something she arranged herself without help from the school. Anna's reasons for this route were her fondness of children and her experience of caring for her brother, which had contributed to a sense of being extremely capable in a caring role. This expertise had been validated by professional staff at the hospital and was highly valued by her family. She also felt endebted for the care her brother had received and wanted to 'give something back'.

Anna's decision to look for a local apprenticeship had been influenced by her perception that, because of her particular life experience, she was more mature than the typical college student:

> I never wanted to go to college and do a full-time course. I wanted to go to work. And if I didn't get my GCSEs I would have had to have gone to college. And I didn't want that. I wanted to be a bit independent. Meet new people. I know I would have met new people at college but if you're at work…I had to grow up and didn't want to meet people who were a bit immature for me. People say I'm old headed, but I had to be.

Adam attended the same Catholic high school as his father. Apart from sport, he did not enjoy school and reported wider discipline issues at the school with some students becoming involved in drugs. Adam was very quiet, his main interest throughout school was sport, which he believed he was talented at.

Adam had always wanted to work in a PE related career but felt that the prospects within the local area in this regard were poor. He did not particularly like academic learning and felt that while there were a number of opportunities for people who continued in this type of learning, he did not want to go down this route himself unless it was in a topic he was really interested in and felt the local employment prospects would be good. As a result he felt his options were limited; while he valued qualifications, those obtained through academic learning were less valuable to him:

> **Int:** So would you have aimed to have gone into a job that had training involved in some way or any sort of job?
>
> **Adam:** No, I would have tried to get one with training.
>
> **Int:** Why's that?
>
> **Adam:** Because it's got more opportunities to go on to bigger and better things…for certain people they told them they could have this option of staying on or going to college. But with

what I wanted to do there was nothing really.

Int: So certain people got this option?

Adam: Like people who wanted to stay on at the 6th form and do the subjects that were available there.

Int: So they got more information?

Adam: Yeah.

Int: So what did you want to do?

Adam: I wanted to go into engineering.

Int: On an apprenticeship?

Adam: Well, I didn't know that the apprenticeship existed. I didn't get any information off the school or advisors at the school or anything like that.

Unsure of what he wanted to do, Adam left school but received a telephone call from the local FE college and through them obtained an apprenticeship. He has since completed a BTEC and is partway through a second which will provide him with entry to a Foundation Diploma and hopefully a degree.

The Workers

Wendy's family had lived locally for a number of generations and her large extended family were well known in the area. She attended her local secondary school, the same one all her family had gone to, but while she had enjoyed primary school she did not feel the same way about secondary school. She experienced a lot of problems settling, feeling 'lost' and frightened: '[I] couldn't see anyone I knew…I dreaded school for the first two years'. Few of her primary school friends transferred to her secondary school and Wendy found it difficult to break into existing groups as many of her classmates had transferred from a different primary school. Her problems settling into school affected her confidence, which in turn had implications for her educational achievement and her ability to develop new friends.

This was something she took into consideration when making decisions about her future. Instead of entering college, something that she had discussed with her family, she elected to continue working.

Int: So you went straight into the kennels you were working at when you were still at school?

Wendy: Yeah, work experience I started. I did both my two weeks there. But in the two weeks they offered me a weekend job as well… and when I left they asked me if I wanted a permanent job. Which was 6 days a week, Monday to Saturday.

Int: So did you think that was the easiest option for you at the time?

Wendy: Yeah…I knew the people there and I was comfy, enjoyed it…I got into work and I wasn't bothered about college after that.

However, Wendy was not particularly settled at work as her current employer was closing down. She talked of wanting to take part in more formal learning to obtain more qualifications to 'prove' to potential employers that she had got ability. Although she felt that she was more confident now, her past experience continued to make her cautious about exposing herself to situations or challenges she perceived as threatening.

Wenona's father had always lived in the local area, but her mother had moved to England from Pakistan for her marriage. Wenona had a large extended family living close by. Unlike most of the other participants' families, Wenona's attempted to select a secondary school and entered her for the entrance examination for a local independent school. However, she did not pass this examination. As a result she went on to attend 'the last option', the closest secondary school to her home, the same one her father had attended.

Wenona said her parents had a positive attitude towards her school, and were keen that she should go to college. Wenona did well at school and progressed to a sixth form college in the city where she wanted to study IT. However, a family visit to Pakistan led to Wenona starting college late and she found that she did not enjoy the course and felt unable to make friends. After attending for two weeks she made the

decision to leave despite knowing this would meet with disapproval from her family.

Following this Wenona did not work or engage in any further study for a year; a period that was very difficult for her. She began an online course 'but didn't even finish that' and her confidence decreased. Through family connections, she found an administrative job in a local ceramic retail warehouse. She works in an office with a small group of women and is very happy there. She is currently studying for an NVQ in Administration alongside her colleagues and, while not discounting further learning, said she would only do so as part of this same group.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has sought to provide the social geography within which the participants' perceptions of learning and decision-making have developed. It has focused on their school experience and notions of the value of learning. Although the majority of the participants came from a background, which would be categorised as working class, it is clear from their narratives that this term had more than one meaning for them. They appeared to position themselves and their families in relation to other working class families, as well as families perceived as being more advantaged. For the Apprentices in particular, being working class frequently related to being in paid employment, being 'in work' and coming from a family that had 'always worked'. The HE Students and the Workers, however, indicated that their parents also emphasised doing well at school in terms of their future.

Across all three groups there was a relatively high degree of consensus in how they talked about school generally. For example, they associated a student's 'school set' position with ability and class, they felt that clever students had a better relationship with teachers and also stayed on or progressed to a sixth form college and from there to university. As a result of these factors, there were clear differences between the groups in terms of how they talked about their own school experience. The HE Students and Wenona appeared to have a more positive perception of this. Their narratives are of wanting to do well, rather than to simply 'get through'. Similarly, they give more examples of getting on well with teachers. The perceptions of the Apprentices were less positive in that their focus was on the social aspect of schooling rather than learning, of just 'getting through'.

All the participants achieved at least 1 C grade at GCSE, many considerably higher than this. They were all, therefore, technically capable of progressing to further study and, potentially entering higher education. Their views of this as a potential option varied considerably, however. Given that all participants expressed a wish to remain in the local area, this view is also shaped by their perceptions of the local community and labour market; both of which have been particularly adversely affected by the current economic climate. The HE Students clearly valued this route over other alternatives and felt that possession of a degree would be a valuable asset in terms of their ability to enter a career locally. The Apprentices, however, felt that work-based learning offered better prospects in terms of employment because academic qualifications were of little value locally. While the Workers shared a greater degree of similarity with the HE Students in terms of the value of further full-time learning, both appeared to be particularly influenced by their parent's views on this.

The participants in this study began school with certain perceptions about themselves and about learning. This shaped their schooling experience in that other students and school staff may have viewed them in a particular way and they may have had different relationships with both. Their schooling experience may, in turn, have influenced and shaped their self-perceptions about themselves as a learner or about learning. Despite the similarities in background, the participants had very different perceptions of their schooling experience and different views on learning itself. This paper has demonstrated the role their family, school and community have played in shaping these perceptions.

This study suggests that the beginnings of post-16 decision-making processes are located early in the life course and that the decisions young people make at 16 may be more of an outward expression of this process; a formality rather than a 'turning point'. Although the participants in this study achieved at least the minimum qualifications to enable them to progress to further study and thereby meet HE entry

requirements, only those pupils identified as 'bright' by the school appeared to have been considered 'HE material' – by the school, other pupils, their parents and the participants themselves. This may effectively polarise young people at a relatively early age and have a negative effect on the effort they subsequently put into academic learning and ultimately the level of qualification they achieve.

This process may also influence the type of information, advice and guidance schools provide. Given the recent policy changes, which have placed responsibility for the provision of impartial IAG on schools, this issue may become an increasingly significant one. This study suggests that those pupils who are not considering, or who are not expected by the school to stay on may receive less information on alternative pathways. Conversely those who are considered 'bright' may not receive information about other options for further progression in learning, for example, more vocationally orientated or work-based routes. As a result they may not be making informed decisions. Higher education may not be the right pathway for every pupil identified as 'bright' and this may result in them making poor choices and ultimately 'dropping out' of HE which may impact negatively on their self-perceptions (Quinn et al, 2005).

If horizons are limited to the local labour market the nature of that market may limit aspirations. If local jobs are not perceived as requiring academic qualifications then the incentive to enter HE may be lower. Low geographical mobility is associated with low social mobility and individuals have to balance their attachment to the local against a desire to obtain a career. For the HE students the ability to enter a more highly paid career had been a significant factor in their decision to progress to HE and they had specifically balanced their choice of degree with their perceptions around the employment opportunities this would offer locally. This suggests that in relation to young people from lower socio-economic groups like the participants in this study, the drive to widen participation may need to be more closely linked to local labour markets.

The impact of the local area is also evident in relation to the schools these participants attended. The issues that these schools face because of their location in an area of higher than average disadvantage have clearly impacted upon participants' school experience in that many of the schools in the area have levels of achievement that fall below the national average. Similarly, progression into further formal learning post-16 and higher education are low compared to other areas. However, a number of the participants in this study appeared to 'buck' the trend of the school they attended. Both Harry and Wenona, for example, attended schools performing below local and national averages but went on to achieve at a level high enough to progress to further formal learning. Harry and Hailey also appeared to be amongst the minority progressing to higher education from their respective schools. The data generated by this research, then, offers support for the view that other factors, such as self-efficacy, can moderate the effect of attending a lower achieving school. On the one hand, the findings from this study indicate that schooling experience may help to encourage and support aspirations in some working class pupils. For others, however, it may play a part in building that gap. Moreover, the findings indicate that this gap may begin to develop at a relatively early age, which raises issues about the success of strategic interventions that aim to move away from the notion of young people being fixed into post-16 pathways early on in their school life.

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Can aspiration kill local community? Challenges for young people and career practitioners in Sri Lanka

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Raising aspiration is a primary focus of careers work. However, in some circumstances enhanced aspirations may create tensions in situations of limited accessible opportunity. Additionally focusing on the autonomy of the individual and their choice can impact more broadly on the local community. This article will explore the importance of locating career guidance in context, specifically in reference to some of the issues facing career practitioners working in Sri Lanka. These practitioners seek to inspire young people to a range of careers whilst remaining conscious of the individual and local impacts that may result. It will consider the concept of 'foundation' which encompasses the physical, social, religious and spiritual, cultural and political environment and the role this might play in providing a holistic model for career guidance.

Introduction

Career Guidance can be seen as a 'public good' which supports the achievement of labour market, education and social policy goals (Watts and Sultana, 2004) by enabling individuals to take control of their education and employment. However, it is possible to question whether career guidance is always a public good? Are there situations in which career guidance provided to support social mobility, raise aspiration and encourage enhanced education levels can have a negative impact not by design but by default? Career guidance is often constructed as a liberal, non-directive process which values the rights of the individual when making decisions concerning their career choices and their lives (Watts, 1996). However, there are questions as to whether this conception of career guidance is essentially a Western one which might need to be reframed for other cultures.

This paper examines some of the ethical issues, which can impact on careers practitioners working in developing economies, in this case Sri Lanka where insecure job prospects and unstable futures for traditional agrarian industries may constrict opportunity without curtailing aspiration. It explores some of the tensions that may exist for practitioners when trying to balance the needs of the individual against the wider needs of local and national society. It considers the need for models of career guidance that are localised and culturally specific. The paper is based on discussions with Sri Lankan practitioners during a training programme that was delivered as part of a wider education project.[1]

Career guidance services in Sri Lanka

Career guidance and counselling programmes have been part of national education policy reforms in Sri Lanka since the mid 1990's (Balasuriya and Hughes, 2003). The overall aim of these have been to address the disparity between labour market needs and the outputs from education and training systems. The ongoing commitment to supporting the establishment of an effective school to work system is acknowledged in a number of Sri Lankan reports and policy documents including the: Sri Lanka Country Assistance

1 The author was part of a team of consultants working on the Knowledge for Education Society project in Sri Lanka in 2011 supporting the development of career guidance provision in schools.

Program Evaluation: Education (ADB, 2007); National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education (NEC, 2009); and the National Policy on Career Guidance in Schools (NEC, 2010). The research for this article was undertaken as part of The Education for Knowledge Society Project (Package 2). This was a multi-strand education project aimed at addressing the skills gap between education and the labour market which included career guidance as a major strand of the development work.

In Sri Lanka responsibility for career guidance and counselling is devolved to different government ministries and departments. These result in differentiated approaches to the delivery of careers work within the country as follows.

- Ministry of Education provides career guidance through career guidance teachers in schools and career guidance officers located in Zonal Teacher Centres.
- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development provides career guidance officers who are deployed through the National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), the Department for Technical Education and Training (DTET) and the Vocational Training Authority (VTA).
- Ministry of Higher Education oversees University Careers Services which provide careers support for graduates.
- Ministry of Productivity Promotion provides career guidance, employability programmes and vacancy information through the Department of Manpower and Employment.

In addition to these state funded providers career guidance is also available through a range of specialist projects funded by organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), National Youth Services Council, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and Young Entrepreneurs Sri Lanka.

This presents a fragmented landscape, whereby young people in particular, can access career guidance through a number of different avenues, but each has a specific remit. In addition to this, the lack of national coordination can result in a lack of consistency, quality and expertise as all ministries employ their own approach to recruitment, training and development. There has to date, been limited standardisation and this potentially creates a lack of coherence for the end user as there is no identified benchmark as to minimum levels of training and qualifications for practitioners.

The Sri Lankan youth labour market

In 2010 The World Bank produced *The challenge of youth employment in Sri Lanka* report which highlighted that although Sri Lanka had a well educated population, young people struggled to get good jobs (Gunatilka et al., 2010). The report describes 'good jobs' as those that are secure, well paid and offer high social status.

Over 66% of the employed workforce in Sri Lanka are employed within the 'informal labour market' (Gunatilka and Vadopivec, 2010). Defining 'informal work' is somewhat complex; the definition presented by Hussmanns (2001) considers the informal sector as enterprises that are not registered under specific forms of national legislation such as tax, social security or professional association regulations. Often this includes those who are self-employed, work in domestic work or work for micro-employers with less than five employees. The informal sector therefore represents the antithesis of the 'good job' where workers experience security in terms of work benefits and career prospects. Over one third of the informal workforce in Sri Lanka are young people (Gunatilka and Vadopivec, 2010).

This duality of the labour market in Sri Lanka has been highly influenced by employment protection legislation (The Termination of Employment of Workmen Act, 1971). Gunatilka and Vodopivec, (2010) argue that Sri Lanka has one of the most expensive and restrictive severance packages in the world, whereby employers incur large firing costs and experience complex dismissal procedures. This results in limited staff turnover and a strong informal labour market which potentially impacts on the speed in which employers create jobs especially in times of economic insecurity.

There are many and varied reasons contributing to the poor employability of young people in Sri Lanka (Balasuriya and Hughes, 2002; Kularatne, 2010; Gunatilka et al., 2010). Kularatne (2010) identifies a strong desire amongst educated young people to work in the public sector with only 19% of those interviewed willing to consider the private sector as an employer. Kularatne's participants also sought high prestige jobs and an above average salary of over 30,000 rupees a month when the median monthly household income was just over 24,000 rupees (Office for Census and Statistics, 2011). Gunatilka et al, (2010) suggest three contributors to high levels of unemployment amongst young people; (i) skills mismatch, (ii) queuing for better opportunities and (iii) slow job creation.

Geography is a major issue within the Sri Lankan labour market as unemployment is not consistent across the island. Some provinces particularly the Southern and Eastern have significantly higher unemployment rates when compared with the Western province, which is the location of the capital and produces 50% of the country's GDP (Chandraisiri, 2010). There is also a significant variation in access to training opportunities, which somewhat correlates with the provincial unemployment rates. There is for example a concentration of training programmes in Western Province, which also boasts the lowest youth unemployment rate (Chandraisiri, 2010).

Unemployment has been a major contributor to the instability of the country both in terms of the realisation of financial investments but also as a catalyst for social unrest. The contribution of youth unemployment to the civil war has been documented by Amarasuriya, Gündüz and Mayer (2009) as has the lack of opportunities for minority groups within the secure public sector labour market. The twenty-five year conflict was in part attributed to the exclusion of the Tamil community from public sector employment opportunities (Gunewardena, 2010).

Unemployment in Sri Lanka, although dropping nationally, is increasing for young people aged 15-24 at 19.4% overall (24.7% for young women) (ILO, 2013). The ILO (2010) argues that young people in South Asia need to be able to develop the right skills sets to enable them to compete in a rapidly changing employment market. In Sri Lanka young people experience significant barriers in terms of an insecure job market, slow job creation, unrealistic career aspirations, migration opportunities and a lack of vocational qualifications and skills. Some of the issues are systemic such as the mismatch between education and the labour market, others however can be addressed with support in navigating the transition between education and the labour market.

The (policy) need for career guidance in Sri Lanka

Given this complex and challenging youth labour market there is a belief that much more can be done within the education system to better prepare young people to manage the transitions at the end of statutory schooling. It is felt that many young people and their parents are too focused on academic opportunities. Consequently a high percentage of young people are disappointed with only 16% being eligible for admission (figure for 2009) and only 4% actually entering traditional degree programmes in Sri Lanka. This then requires students to seek university places overseas (Sri Lanka Sunday Times, 2009) and adds an additional level of elitism to university education in Sri Lanka. Young people with higher education fare little better than their low skilled counterparts in the job market and often experience higher levels of unemployment than those with fewer qualifications (ILO, 2013).

There is an imbalance between the demands by young people for higher levels of education and qualification and the opportunities available in the labour market. This often results in overseas migration (Arunatilake and Jayawardena, 2010). Balasuriya and Hughes, (2003) identify a key need to change attitudes and perceptions of vocational education and training in particular as young people and their parents are often reluctant to consider this as a preferred choice. Allied with this is the need to more effectively promote parity between vocational and academic qualifications and progression opportunities at tertiary level for those from a vocational and training background.

Kularatne's (2010) research presents a challenging picture for policy makers where young people's

expectations of work often lack realism. Many young people aim for their ideal work scenario with little comprehension of the need for compromise. Much of this is due to a lack of awareness on their part of what opportunities are realistically open to them. Parents who lack the knowledge and skills to effectively guide their children to make realistic and attainable careers choices reinforce this leading to many valid career opportunities being dismissed through ignorance. Careers guidance has been positioned to challenge these entrenched views and to try and establish a more seamless approach to labour market alignment (Balasuriya and Hughes, 2003). However, questions remain as to how effectively a Western concept of career guidance is pertinent within a Sri Lankan context.

Career guidance in context

Career guidance for young people remains a relatively recent activity in Sri Lanka. For practitioners the challenges lie in how to support young people to explore their career options when the choices may be limited. The options for many, particularly for those who are poorly skilled and come from disadvantaged backgrounds are to move to cities to work in the insecure informal sector. The alternative is overseas migration to the Middle East on fixed-term contracts often for 3-5 years. Overseas migration is dominated by low skilled females with 49% employed as housemaids (Abeyasekera, 2010).

The provision of career guidance therefore is a complex activity which needs to be cognisant of the systemic issues such as unemployment and inequality while also supporting young people to aspire to achieve their potential. The local context is important as practitioners need to understand the factors and influences that contribute to the totality of the individual. Law's (2009) work on community interaction theory can be usefully employed here as it highlights the way in which career management is influenced by those whose opinions are most valued and explores the interaction between what Law refers to as 'big-picture social issues' and individual inner life.

Locating careers guidance within the context that the young person inhabits requires practitioners to engage with the influences that may impact on the choices of the young person. Practitioners in Sri Lanka termed this as the 'foundation'. They saw this as a multilayered concept within which a range of economic, political, environmental, geographical, cultural and spiritual factors needed to be considered. These 'foundation' factors combined to shape the individuals' worldview. The practitioner needed to be able to decipher this 'foundation' to understand the individual's specific context and what the primary influences may be. If an individual has few political affiliations, social connections or low economic status for example, then job opportunities in the public sector might prove a challenge.

The geographical location has a significant impact as this may impact on the type of vocational training which may be available and on opportunities in terms of dominant industries are prevalent, for example around the coast fishing has been a dominant industry while in the midlands and south the tea plantations have provided the primary employment, predominantly for women. In the more northern areas rubber and paddy offer local communities their main income. Consideration and exploration of these elements support the delivery of guidance in a way that is meaningful and personal to the individual.

Raising young people's awareness of career and learning opportunities outside of the locale was perceived by some careers practitioners as potentially detrimental to both the individual and the local community. The rationale for this concerned large scale migration resulting in limited labour to meet the local requirements, and the insecurity of the informal labour market elsewhere. Additionally those young people who will only seek secure public sector positions will often queue and wait for opportunities to become available rather than explore other opportunities in the private sector (Gunatilka, 2010). The ethical dilemma for a practitioner therefore was twofold; raising and supporting aspiration but acknowledging the limitations of the opportunities that may exist and the potential impact on traditional and local community.

Within some of the rural settings many of the job opportunities will be low skilled physical work, which may have limited attraction for young people. Yet they

are synonymous with the local identity whether it is tea, rice, rubber, fishing or other indigenous trades. When these are compared with opportunities in the large cities or overseas which may pay higher wages, local opportunities may lack appeal and lead to migration which can have a detrimental result on local and traditional livelihoods. This has been particularly an issue in some regions that have experienced rural-urban migration, often as a way of supplementing family income (Ratnam, 2011).

There is also the struggle to challenge entrenched individual and family beliefs about what is a 'good job' and to reframe new opportunities such as vocational education as an option. Sri Lanka has invested extensively in developing vocational qualifications and training at all level including the University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC). Vocational qualifications and skills development however, have yet to become the dominant, or industry preferred, method for skill acquisition (NEC, 2009). Vocational opportunities need to be more widely promoted if young people are going to have access to new and evolving opportunities as they develop. Vocational education could therefore provide help to address the mismatch in the job market between what education produces and what employers want. Careers practitioners therefore have a key role in helping to shape these messages, with vocational education potentially offering wider access to career options. However, there is still work to be done in providing equality of access to training opportunities across the island.

Ratnam (2011) considers the role of guidance in helping the client to explore the nature of their motivations and in challenging existing notions of mainstream corporate careers and the quest for modernity. She suggests that career guidance can help to question these views, through challenging inequality and oppression. She argues that individuals should be supported to embrace traditional career choices and see them as modern careers through developments in technology and investment in vocational education and training. This suggests that there does not need to be an either or choice in terms of moving to a city/ overseas or staying local. Vocational education and training opportunities can both enhance skills levels in a way that is more meaningful for employers, support the development and modernisation of local industry and provide equal access to young people at all educational levels. Career guidance can have a key role in helping to achieve these objectives.

Conclusions

Career guidance has an important role in helping to shape the future for the youth of Sri Lanka. It can support young people to navigate their way between statutory schooling and work and contribute to ensuring that young people have the skills and knowledge that will make them employable, through a greater engagement with vocational education and training. The concept of 'foundation' can help to locate these discussions by providing a focus which allows the individual and the wider community issues to be considered. This may help young people to think more broadly about the choices and the barriers they face. A broader engagement with vocational education and the private sector may go some way to creating a better labour market fit and a more equitable society, but this needs to be addressed through acknowledgement of the needs of the local and national community. However, to successfully achieve this will require some re-education of both young people and their parents to enable them to retain aspiration, but aspiration that is realistically informed.

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From outsider to insider status: Constructing an authentic social self

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This article explores community based modes of engagement employed by a variety of support workers providing, amongst other things, employment advice and guidance to marginalised youth living within a small rural community setting. The paper sets out to demonstrate that such key workers are better able to promote understanding, transmit social norms and act as a positive role model, when they set-aside their applied disciplinary knowledge and objectives. However, since social inclusion is essentially *performed*, I will argue that role modelling and strong relationships with key workers, though important pre-cursors for change, are insufficient to sustain transitions to independent living, employment or training for marginalised youth. As such, key workers need to use their relationships with young people to help build social and cultural capital and, moreover, identify activities that make a meaningful contribution to identifiable social group objectives, since this leads to peer recognition and the development of an authentic social self.

Introduction

Drawing upon a number of semi-structured interviews (n = 15), this article is concerned with exploring the range of advice and guidance provided by a variety of key workers – representing social care, youth services, and the education sector – to support young people aged 16-24 and NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Interaction with these key workers typically occurs on a small group or 1:1 basis, away from large institutional settings. The intimacy of the settings, and the bespoke support provided, tends to facilitate the development of strong interpersonal relationships, which are considered by the key workers to be of critical importance when promoting social integration. I will suggest however that establishing these relationships, though important, is insufficient to sustain transitions to independent living.

The fieldwork was conducted in a small rural community setting within the UK. The local economy, which is dominated by financial services, and an array of associated corporate services (representing approximately 34% of the total local economy), is growing at approximately 3% - 4% annually despite the global economic crisis. Unemployment currently stands at 2.5%, but most job vacancies are currently concentrated in catering, tourism and hospitality, sectors which collectively represent approximately 2% of the local economy (Economic-Affairs, 2011).

We can surmise from this data that the local economy is buoyant, unemployment is low, and the community is relatively affluent, having a per capita income which higher than the UK and EU average (Ernst & Young, 2012). But there are pockets of socio-economic disadvantage and, moreover, a recognition that some young people need additional support to make a transition into employment and independent living:

> I'm too young to have my own flat. I wouldn't be able to live on my own. I don't like being on my own…I'm too young
>
> (Young person)

> We are meeting the needs of this age group and that entails a great deal of nurturing and a great deal of care and personal involvement
>
> (Key worker)

Local policy makers are also sensitive to the plight of the long-term unemployed, particularly the NEET group. At the time of writing, a significant initiative to establish new training and employment pathways for marginalised youth had been announced and concerted efforts were being made to connect young people to these opportunities.

This paper will explore the nature of the support provided and argue that there are a number of barriers, some of which are closely associated with the local community within which the participants are located, and others related to broader societal issues, which need to be overcome in order to facilitate inclusion. This article returns to basic questions posed by classical social theory: How is social integration possible? How do individuals and society stand in relation to one another? (Habermas, 1987; p. 54).

From outsider to insider status

Given that inequality has widened, and social mobility has declined over recent years in the UK (Watt, 2008; Milburn, 2009; OECD, 2011), concerted efforts are required to promote social inclusion. Those who remain socially excluded are likely to have a relatively poor quality of life (Vojak, 2009), finding themselves potentially 'scarred by poverty and lack of opportunity' (Pawson et al., 2004; p. 5). Furthermore, there is a broad consensus that transitions to adulthood are becoming increasingly hazardous and complex (Philip & Spratt, 2007; Kay & Hinds, 2009; Munson & McMillen, 2009) because contemporary living 'is a life without clear options' and strategies (Ritzer, 2003; p. 245) and there has been a general 'deterioration of the human condition in the midst of materialist improvement' (Heron, 2008; p. 86):

> You know, when life gets a bit tough, sometimes just little problems, like the littlest of problems can grow…I wasn't a full blown alcoholic, but I was drinking every day and taking vallium everyday…it's like my way, what I turn to when I'm stressed out, but I always take it too far
>
> (Young person)

> I went to rehab, and then went to [city] and lived in a halfway house for 3 months…and I was ringing my friends all the time, who were having a good time, and I thought I was missing out. I came back and went back on the drink and the drugs again
>
> (Young person)

These issues persist as problematic aspects of modern life, despite the UK ranking second in an international league table profiling basic human needs, foundations of wellbeing and opportunity (Social-Progress-Index, 2013). In response to these problematic issues, there has been a surge in the prevalence of mentoring for young people deemed to be at risk of social exclusion (Rose & Jones, 2007; McGowan et al., 2009; Milburn, 2009) across the UK, and indeed other modern industrialised countries. Mentoring is considered to be a self-evident good as it promotes personal development and compensates where there is a lack of an appropriate role model (Rogers & Taylor, 1997; Goldner & Mayseless, 2008a). While mentoring is often associated with volunteers matched with particular young people, it also forms an integral part of key worker support:

> Most of the young people I work with are disadvantaged, cut out of society, often with very little understanding of what we perceive to be traditional norms and values. So I see mentoring as playing quite a key role in helping them become more integrated and proactive members of society
>
> (Key worker)

Furthermore, the importance of mentoring marginalised youth has received greater recognition locally within the past 12 months through the creation of a formal project entitled 'future you', which is designed to provide support with the transition to independent living.

Although the range of advice and guidance provided by key workers, within the context of mentoring, covers a diverse range of issues, it is often career related in order to facilitate the 'transformation of their personal attitudes, values and beliefs' to ensure their commitment to becoming employable' (Colley, 2003; p. 22). Indeed, the local mentoring project mentioned above is principally aimed at those who are NEET, by providing an individual training and work placement support package.

Given that such key worker support is typically focussed on improving employability, I have adopted a broad definition of career guidance, to encompass a 'wide range of information, advice, counselling and learning interventions...focused on the individual's management of their lifelong relationship with the worlds of learning and work' (Hooley et al., 2012; p. i).

Engaging with the labour market

Facilitating the transformation of personal attitudes is however difficult where worklessness amongst marginalised youth is concerned. Indeed, Mead, cited by Marston (2008), struggles to apprehend the cause of employment related ambivalence: 'Whatever outward causes one cites, a mystery in the heart of no work... [is] the passivity of the seriously poor in seizing the opportunities that apparently exist for them' (p. 361). The following comments from research participants illustrates the situation:

> I didn't really have any direction if you know what I mean? I didn't know what I wanted to do when I was older…So I didn't really have much motivation to do anything because it was kind of like well…I couldn't see the point at the time. Of course, I completely regret that now...I wish I could go back and…slap some sense into myself when I was 14. (Young person)

> I was just lazy. I didn't like being told what to do. And a lot of my friends didn't go to school either. Like where I lived, no one went to school… everyone was known for not going to school. We'd all rather sit and mess about
>
> (Young person)

> I'd say 9 times out of 10 they [support workers] are trying to change me into a better person than I am at the moment with like getting a job...they'd like see me get off my backside and be getting out there meeting new people, new friends, and enjoy life a lot more than I am now. But at the end of the day I am enjoying my life right now and I'm happy the way I am
>
> (Young person)

It is perhaps tempting to concede that in some cases little can be done to motivate marginalised youth since: 'the task of altering habitus is simply unfeasible in many cases, and certainly not to a set timetable' (Colley cited by Pawson et al., 2004; p. 19). That said, we should not be unduly pessimistic about marginalised youth improving their prospects since they are not 'apathetic prisoners of their habitus' (Jeffrey, 2008; p. 749) and can consequently use their agency to improve the socio-economic conditions of everyday life. Indeed, many marginalised young people are actively looking to secure employment, and sometimes seek community resources to help achieve this aim.

> I'm going to get a job because I want a job. I'm not one of these people who just doesn't want a job. I want to work with young people… some of them will be getting into trouble and I'll understand them cos I've done it…I've talked to [key worker] and she can be one of the references for me and she's one of the big people as well…but it's not up to her she says, you've got to go through a whole board or something stupid
>
> (Young person)

In the above example, the young person has community situated access to relevant career guidance that builds social capital in the form of 'instrumentally valuable social bonds' (Jeffrey, 2008; p. 747). In this case, the young person recognises the key worker's enhanced social status as one of 'the big people' and wants to use the relationship, we might surmise from the comment regarding recruitment processes, to further their employment prospects. As such, the key worker is uniquely placed to realise this aspiration and help the young person develop the resilience needed to engage with 'stupid' corporate processes. The key worker's support therefore enables the young person to escape from the marginal activities of outsider groups to develop skills, knowledge and patterns of association commensurate with the economic mainstream (Pawson et al., 2004). Similarly, key workers also play an important role keeping youth engaged with their employment, as the following example suggests:

> This week we've had a young person who has said he's bored in his job. He's the only one in his peer group who has a job. He's 17, he's bored at it, and he's been doing it 18 months and he doesn't feel he's making any progress at it and

> feels like giving it up. So we explained to him the concept of failure, and that he would be failing if he gave up something he originally engaged in… it [the conversation] certainly sowed a seed in his thinking process…
>
> (Key worker)

It is clear that the key worker equates unemployment in such circumstances as personal failure. Indeed, all the young people interviewed all experience the normative force of a moral obligation to secure and maintain employment, even when they are 'enjoying life right now'. To accept such an obligation, to find and maintain employment in these circumstance, involves a degree of sacrifice of one's subjectivity and individuality: 'a subject acting morally has to submit to an authority and do violence to his nature in a certain sense, but he does this in such a way that he takes on the obligation himself and makes the moral requirements his own' (Habermas, 1987; p. 48). We could argue that the key worker is perpetrating an act of oppression by impressing this moral code onto a young person to ensure they 'take on' the obligation to sustain their employment. This interaction between key worker and young person is, of course, fully aligned with the spirit of capitalism and the moral imperatives of the Protestant ethic (cf. Weber, 1992), and represents an example where the 'mode of production [shapes] all other dimensions of society' (Bell, 1976; p. 36). That said, the key workers are undoubtedly acting out of a personal conviction that remaining employed is in the young person's best interests, and are consequently concerned with facilitating a long-term shift in the young person's life trajectory.

But where unemployment is equated with personal failure, it is no surprise that 'the absence of work often powerfully shapes people's subjectivities' (Jeffrey, 2008; p. 740). Furthermore, since Colley (2003) argues that the 'realization of individual potential is equated with the maximization of productivity' (p. 26), it suggests, conversely, that we are unable to realise our potential when economically inactive. Our value to society arguably collapses when unemployed since there is no potential to be realised, and we are therefore rendered near worthless within a social order that broadly equates status with economic productivity and consumption. As the young person cited earlier recognises: getting a job makes you a better person.

An understanding of how this value-laden moral code shapes our subjectivity should enable key workers, who provide career related advice and guidance to marginalised youth, to appreciate how the principle of economic participation fundamentally shapes social relations and profoundly affects our levels of self-esteem. Furthermore, since people will not develop in a positive direction if they get caught up in battles of will (Wormer, 2007), and attempts to (re)engage youth with the labour market are something of a contemporary obsession (Marston, 2008), key workers need to address the issue of worklessness sensitively so as not to further alienate marginalised youth.

The authentic social self… performed

The provision of career related guidance for marginalised youth is not just a question of working to alleviate here-and-now issues arising from poverty through the vehicle of employment. The successful transition to adulthood in the late-modern age involves the 'development of 'agency' and becoming a knowledgeable and reflective subject who is able to take part in social development' (Mørch, 2006; p. 3). However, participation in social development entails social interaction with others; a problematic issue raised by both key workers and young people.

> It could be that they want to fit in and feel understood…because they do all seem to be loners as well, even though they're in this group.
>
> (Key worker)

> I'm not a confident person when it comes to being in groups. I don't like talking to people… and I wouldn't walk into a shop or anything on my own. (Young person)

> I'm getting a bit more respect than I used to… people talk to me like I'm a proper person. When I was younger I used to dress like a proper chav...like socks over my trousers and hat on and people like wouldn't talk to me when I was walking through town. And like old people did look at you funny. (Young person)

Guidance from support workers could therefore facilitate this kind of social interaction as it helps the young person overcome oppressive social non-

recognition or misrecognition and thereby enable integration into the local community like 'a proper person'. As such, key workers could work to link marginalised youth through communicative action to significant others who are capable of conferring recognition onto the young person (cf. Taylor, 1994). It is an important aspect of social integration, as McQueen (2011) points out: 'to be recognised negatively, or misrecognised, is to be thwarted in our desire for authenticity and self-esteem' (no page nos.). Interaction therefore constructs social capital, including; 'people's 'sense of belonging' to the community, and norms of co-operation, reciprocity and trust of others within the community' (Morrow, 2001; p. 38).

There is an underpinning assumption, which is particularly relevant to the young person cited above, that the modern world is characterised by self-determination, where the individual can cast away old roots and remake oneself anew (Bell, 1976). However, although the young person above may no longer wish to be identified as a 'chav', it might be difficult to achieve a change of identity within a close-knit community. The following key worker, while discussing a range of social issues affecting the marginalised youth they work with, makes the following point:

…stigma, and an inability to escape a reputation, and the people who are a negative influence, that's the biggest hurdle…the stigma comes from [issues that] every bugger knows about…and they'll not be able to break away completely

(Key worker)

As such, there is little space in this particular community setting to cast away one's roots and start afresh. Making amends for past transgressions, or wishing to project an alternative identity, thus becomes more difficult. It therefore appears that the 'capacity for change is intimately bound up with 'social identity' (rather than with individual character) because this 'social self' is defined in terms of group loyalties' (Pawson et al., 2004; p. 5). In the case of the young person discussed above, her group loyalties were made visible by a particular dress code; a code which communicated her cultural otherness to the mainstream community. By understanding the importance of recognition in promoting social integration, key workers can provide advice and guidance that seeks to shape a new social self through interaction with new groups. For example, the following young person was supported by a key worker to resume playing rugby again, and he clearly attributes a boost to his confidence with participation.

I lost all my confidence as well, but rugby is bringing it back up again…I'm in a team and you've got to be confident with the ball.

(Young person)

Confidence is not arguably boosted simply by a desire to perform his rugby skills well, but is intrinsically linked to the membership of a group and the associated performance of a recognised role. The effective performance of this role is driven by an expectation from his team mates that he will make a purposeful contribution to the team and, ultimately, to the winning of games. It would appear that this young person, who is otherwise socially marginalised, has integrated into the team identity by sharing overlapping ideas which 'condense into unproblematic background convictions' (Habermas, 1987; p. 136). As suggested, the key unproblematic background conviction in this example is the collective desire to play rugby. This shared conviction provides, in turn, an authentic motivation for the young person to act within the context of this particular social setting. It is an interactive process that Rogoff, cited by Fog (2003), describes as appropriation, which 'occurs in the context of engagement (often with others) in a sociocultural activity, but focuses on the personal processes of transformation that are part of an individual's participation' (p. 34).

In this particular context, the authentic self is realised since recognition is conferred, and social solidarity strengthened, by and throughout group members, via the shared sociocultural activity. The role of the key worker in this process has been twofold; to facilitate the interaction and to provide reassurance that the risks involved with establishing trusting social relationships will be rewarded by appropriate responsiveness (cf. Welch, 2013) and due recognition. Moreover, such an improvement in this young person's social and cultural capital is a successful 'outcome', which improves both the quality of the young person's life and the fabric of society. But this outcome does not readily reduce down into a quantifiable wellbeing measure that reflects the real value of participation,

and there is certainly no direct economic value at this stage.

While this particular example involves participation in a recreational activity, the same principles arguably apply where engagement with other social fields occurs including; education/training provision, work experience placements, voluntary work and, indeed, paid employment. As a point of interest, the young person discussed above did successfully make the transition from marginalised outsider to employed insider.

Conclusions

While career guidance in its broadest sense does prompt young people to critically reflect upon their assumptions and values (cf. Broadbent & Papadopoulos, 2009), their current social position, and the effectiveness of their cultural stock of knowledge (cf. Habermas, 1987), through communicative interaction, it is merely pre-cursor priming for social action. As Sayer (1997) points out, 'the freedom to redescribe ourselves is worthless, unless the discourse is performative' (p. 475). This, in turn, has important implications for the provision of guidance and the notion of role modelling, especially where there is no intrinsic and meaningful performative dimension for the young person to action.

The theme of place and community in this edition of the NICEC journal has therefore highlighted, firstly, that despite the relative affluence of the community, a range of key workers provide community situated career guidance to marginalised youth within a sympathetic local social policy context. Furthermore, these support workers sometimes go beyond signposting to employment and training opportunities, to proactively induct marginalised youth into the sociocultural frame of reference for our time. In essence, this is achieved by creating opportunities to promote social solidarity and develop cultural knowledge, which thereby helps marginalised youth realise an authentic social self.

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'Here you have to be a bit more fluid and willing to do different things': Graduate career development in rural communities

Rosie Alexander

This article presents the background and findings to a research project focusing on how graduates living in a very rural area understand themselves, their careers and their futures. In this project a cross section of recent graduates living in a very rural area (the Orkney Islands) were interviewed and the data were analysed using a qualitative methodology. The findings show some tensions between 'rural' and 'graduate' identities and show some practical ways that graduates managed this tension. The article concludes with some tentative suggestions about implications for careers advisers when working with clients from rural areas.

Introduction

For higher education career services the pressure to be getting graduates into work has perhaps never been more acute. With increasing fees, the value of higher education has come under scrutiny, and demonstrating the economic value of a degree has become politically important. Questions about the value of different kinds of degree from different institutions are increasingly debated both in the academic world and in the press (Walker and Zhu, 2010). However, much of the literature in this debate makes the assumption that graduates have *access* to the *same* opportunities. This assumes either a) that all graduates are mobile and prioritise high status well paid employment over location, or that b) there are no regional or local differences between labour markets.

Challenging these assumptions, a number of commentators have noted regional differences in graduate employment. In *What do Graduates Do? 2012* Ball notes that 'It is clear from the DLHE information that jobs are not spread equally around the whole country, nor can everyone move to any part of the UK in search of a job.' (Ball, 2011: 4). The regional differences Ball and others are concerned with, however, are large scale differences – comparing, for example, outcomes in 'Scotland' to 'Wales' and the 'South East'. Such large scale comparisons like this are useful, but tend to overlook smaller scale regional differences between rural and urban communities. Indeed graduates living in rural areas will (like rural dwellers generally) make up a small proportion of the overall population, and quantitative research on large data sets risks glossing over differences in the experience of rural graduates. This article concerns a research project that was designed to address this gap by focusing on graduate experiences in a very rural area.

Migration patterns and rurality

One key question in this research was why some graduates choose to live in very rural and remote areas. Looking at the reasons for graduate migration research has shown that although employment *is* an important factor in graduate migration it is not the *only* factor, with graduates making decisions based on a range of economic, personal and social factors (Ball 2009; Bond, Grundy and Charlsey, 2006; McGregor, Thanki and McKee, 2002).

Further research has also shown that different migration decisions by graduates can be correlated to quite different employment outcomes. In one key piece of research Ball (2009) studied graduate employment in relation to migration choices in the South West of England. In this research 'incomer' graduates (originally from elsewhere, and who studied elsewhere) experienced the best outcomes and were the least likely to be employed in non-graduate roles. Loyal graduates (those who lived in the area prior to study, studied in the area and stayed in the area after study) also had strong outcomes, with a strong tendency to be employed in nursing, social work, teaching and other vocations. And Returners (originally from the area, studied elsewhere and then returned) had the least favourable outcomes. One of the recommendations from the final report was that further work was done to 'examine the motivations of these different groups for choosing their employment location' (Ball, 2009: 31)

The question of what motivates people to live in very remote and rural areas is something that has been of interest to policy makers in Highlands and Islands region of Scotland for some time. Against a backdrop of depopulation and an ageing population, retaining and attracting more young people to the Highlands and Islands is an identified priority (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2009a). In research commissioned by the regional enterprise agency lack of employment is identified as a key detractor from the area and 'lifestyle' factors as key attractors to the area (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2009a, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2009b). This raises the question, for graduates, how do they come to live in areas with perceived 'lack of employment' and how does living in a rural area impact on their career decision making?

When considering the relationship between career pathways and location, a social constructionist viewpoint may be useful. Social constructionism proposes that social reality is constructed by individuals in interaction with their environment. So, for any of us, our contexts help shape and co-create our realities. From this perspective, the social environment we grow up in will impact on how we construct our ideas of ourselves and our career identities. Furthermore, the social environments we find ourselves in later in life will also impact on how we understand ourselves and our developing career identities. This may be a particularly important perspective when considering rural areas which some rural geographers have suggested are characterised by distinct 'rural narratives' (Cloke, 2006; Woods, 2010). Rural narratives are typically constructed in opposition to urban narratives and characterised by values of 'stability, egalitarianism, geographical roots, community, a sense of responsibility to others and family relationships' (Holt, 2010: 5).

Where there is a potential distinction between 'urban' and 'rural' narratives, it is also important to consider the findings of some educational research from Canada and Australia which suggest that educational narratives are typically more urban than rural. Corbett in his research in Canada identified how rural school children going to university had to 'learn how to leave' by distancing themselves socially from their peers, and developing an ability to be 'social floaters', by not over identifying with any individual group (Corbett, 2007). Holt's study in Australia looked at how students from rural areas going to university were disadvantaged by the 'urban public narrative' of their higher education settings (Holt, 2010).

The Research Project

As the Careers Manager for the University of the Highlands and Islands, the questions of why graduates live in rural places and how living in a rural place impacts on career decision making and finding work are very real to me. The university I work for has thirteen campuses covering some of the most rural and remote communities in the UK and every day I work with graduates from these areas. In order to develop an in-depth understanding of the experience of these graduates, the research project I conducted took a case-study approach into graduate experience in one particular rural and remote community: the Islands of Orkney.

Orkney is an archipelago off the north coast of Scotland made up of approximately 70 islands, 20 of which are inhabited. 67.5% of the population are classified as living in 'a remote rural area' and 32.5% are classified as living in a remote small town (Scottish Government, 2012). The population stands

at approximately 20,000. In terms of employment, self-employment and part-time employment are more common than in the rest of Scotland, and the economy is characterised by a higher proportion of small or medium size enterprises (SMEs) (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2011). In terms of sector of employment, construction, transport and communications, public administration, education and health, and tourism all employ statistically more people in Orkney than the national average, with manufacturing, services, and finance, IT and other business employing statistically fewer (Orkney Islands Council, 2010).

Fourteen participants were involved in the research, all of whom were living in Orkney and had graduated within the last 7 years. Two focus groups were conducted and then a series of in-depth follow up interviews were undertaken with a cross-section of graduates, including representatives from the incomer, returner and stayer migration categories identified by Ball (2009). The interviews and focus groups were recorded and the data were analysed to identify key themes. The aim of the project was to generate a theoretical framework for understanding the experience of rural graduates, with specific objectives to:

- Identify constructions of 'graduate' identity and 'rurality' and the interplay between these.
- Identify rhetorical strategies in the construction of graduate identity in a rural context.

Outcomes of the research

Following qualitative analysis of the interview and focus group data, key themes were identified, and these are summarised below.

Constructions of Rurality: Working in Orkney

The graduates in this research generally portrayed Orkney in a way that was consistent with 'rural' narratives – of family, equality, community and stability. For many the desire to 'settle down' was linked with living in Orkney, particularly where this involved having children or building or buying a house. One participant commented 'Orkney: it's home, it's where my family are but… also having my own family, I wanted to be back in Orkney because Orkney, it's somewhere that is safe'.

Orkney was perceived to be a very small community, where social and working identities were not always distinct. So, many of the graduates described the challenge of meeting clients, bosses or customers in social situations such as in the street or the supermarket. Where in some ways this was a challenge and prevented graduates from 'letting their hair down', it was also described positively, because it could be very rewarding to see how their work had positively impacted on people.

Orkney was also described as a community-spirited place, where being part of the community was important. In an employment context this meant that working or volunteering in a role that had some community benefit was seen as a strong tactic for developing a reputation and future employment prospects (as well as allowing better integration with the community).

> If people don't see you doing anything or people can't form an opinion on you based on anything you're doing then they're just not going to bother approaching you – they're not going to bother speaking to you.

'Being seen' in the community and building social relationships were commonly cited as more important in job search than more direct techniques. Some graduates directly contrasted the direct techniques of writing speculative applications, CVs and networking, to the more informal approaches they would use in Orkney. Indirect, informal approaches were preferred particularly by employed graduates, because of the risk for them of their employer finding out they were looking for work from other employers. One graduate described this as operating 'under the radar,' and her advice when looking for work was that 'the best thing to do is kind of not advertise it but not deny it at the same time, just kind of play the middle ground and put out feelers'.

Constructing a graduate identity: being a graduate in Orkney

Many of the graduates in this research expressed caution about disclosing or discussing their degree

level study freely in open conversation in Orkney. One commented that she didn't talk about her degree because she didn't want people to think that she was 'too big for [her] boots'. However, this did differ according to the contexts the graduates found themselves in. So for graduates in professional jobs it was felt that discussing their studies or their professional expertise at work was often appropriate, although in their social lives they normally avoided talking about their degree because they socialised in very mixed friendship groups. Occasionally this was contrasted to how they thought it would be if they lived in bigger places where they imagined they may both work and socialise in 'young professional' social sets. Managing these different social-professional environments for many graduates resulted in them displaying behaviour consistent with Corbett's concept of 'social floating'– that is 'they saw social space, abstracted about it, and planned their moves within it' (2007: 780). However, where for Corbett social-floating was an aspect of 'learning how to leave' a rural area, it could be suggested from this research that 'social floating' is rather about learning how to stay (and be successful) in a rural area.

In terms of career opportunities for graduates, working environments were characterised as 'smaller' than in large cities – so that the same job in Orkney would involve more variety and require greater flexibility and enterprise. Practical and 'day to day' skills and social-professional contacts were seen as being of high value in working contexts Orkney. In this way the physical realities of the workplace were linked to the rural narratives that value community and equality.

In terms of career development, opportunities for progression were felt to be limited, although the potential for lateral moves was seen as good. Flexibility was therefore very important for a graduate developing a career in Orkney, and as the quote from the title of the article says: 'here you have to be a bit more fluid and willing to do different things'. Compromise was also a common theme, and graduates expected to have to compromise in their career path in some form or other – either by first taking jobs south before being able to move to Orkney, or by taking jobs in Orkney that were at a lower level than they had had (or could have had) south. For the graduates in the study, developing a career in Orkney was characterised by luck, and if the cards fell right, many graduates actually felt that career prospects in Orkney could be *better* than elsewhere: 'if you know the right people and have the right connections, then actually opportunities can arise that wouldn't maybe be there for you otherwise'. In order to maximise their chances, being flexible, thinking strategically and using social contacts were all identified as important.

Rhetorical strategies used by Returner, Incomer and Stayer graduates

In the context of Orkney, returner, incomer and stayer graduates used specific rhetorical strategies to describe their experiences.

Returner graduates commonly constructed their experience using the dichotomous terms 'home' and 'South'. When asked about their experiences at university, returner graduates tended to translate this into talking about going 'south'. 'South' was characterised as young, exciting, and dynamic. University was positioned as 'south' and 'going south' was presented almost as a rite of passage – something you did while you were young before you moved 'home' to settle down and have children. This narrative of leaving and return provided a powerful way for these graduates to distance themselves from the uncomfortable aspects of degree level study (implications of hierarchy and being 'too big for your boots'), while at the same time aligning themselves with the 'rural' values of family and community (because they were choosing them over 'south'). Where the terminology of university may be associated with arrogance, the terminology of 'going south' was more positive and associated with success – 'going south' was perceived as something many young people did, but not just for university, also for vocational training, or just to travel and develop confidence. In contrast *not* to go south could be, in the words of one graduate, 'a sign that I'd already failed without even trying'.

Incomer students interestingly often used similar rhetorical positioning to returners. Although unable to use the 'home' / 'south' dichotomy, they were able to describe living in Orkney as a choice, and were able to talk about moving to Orkney for the lifestyle thereby

endorsing the values of rural life and also distancing themselves from experience elsewhere (including university experience). Many of these graduates also mentioned their own 'rural' backgrounds, allowing them to use a similar narrative line to returning students, talking about 'returning' to a rural community.

Although only small numbers of loyals were interviewed as part of this research, the preliminary findings suggest that they may be the group of graduates that find most difficulty in positioning themselves in the rural labour market. Both loyal graduates who took part in this research described feeling disillusioned and unsure about what the point was of having done a degree, and whereas some other graduates also described feelings of disillusion, they had always experienced this in a location other than Orkney and, indeed, this experience was often the stimulus for making the choice to move to Orkney. Loyal graduates who studied in Orkney and graduated in Orkney, were less able to use the narratives of 'home' and 'south' and were therefore also less able to use these narratives to distance themselves from their university experiences and to emphasise the choice to stay in Orkney.

These tentative findings do need further research however, because in this research none of the loyal graduates who took part identified as 'Orcadian', instead they all thought of themselves as incomers (albeit that they had arrived in Orkney some time before starting their studies). This meant that they tended to position themselves more like incoming graduates – as if they were outsiders to Orkney. It is possible that loyal graduates who identify as Orcadian have an experience that is quite different, being more able to position themselves as insiders, and therefore closer to the positions adopted by returner graduates.

Supporting career development in rural communities

The results of this research suggest that graduates in rural areas perceive their career development opportunities as different to those offered in larger communities. And this suggests that when working with people in rural areas it may be important for careers practitioners to be sensitive and responsive to the rural context.

The clearest conclusions can be drawn in terms of job search strategies that guidance professionals may help clients to develop. Firstly the results suggest that in remote rural areas a more indirect method of job search may be preferable to direct methods such as sending speculative letters or CVs. Networking is important, but it may be important to operate 'below the radar' building social networks and sounding out potentially useful contacts indirectly. Avoiding too much self-promotion is also advisable, with a better approach being to get involved in community projects or voluntary work – anything which helps your abilities be 'seen' and for you to get known, but without having to directly promote yourself and risk coming across as 'too big for your boots'.

There are also implications for careers education in terms of the kinds of employability skills which may be valued in rural communities and which may be taught in school, college or university settings. Enterprise skills, problem solving and creative thinking were all identified as perhaps more important in rural than in urban areas, because of the smaller working environments. In addition people and communication skills, specifically in terms of the ability to 'operate below the radar' or to 'socially float' are also very important.

In terms of approaches to career development it is also possible to make some tentative conclusions. What this research suggests is the importance of thinking tactically and flexibly within rural labour markets. In practical terms in a community like Orkney it may be difficult to 'plan' a career path because ultimately there are limited numbers of people employed in each profession, which may mean that specific opportunities never arise during a graduate's working life. The alternative to career planning for many of these graduates was to develop a strong reputation in the community, to develop a range of skills and experience (from lateral career moves, or through social, voluntary or community activities) and to develop a wide range of contacts. This prevents becoming over-identified with one career path, and maximises the potential progression

routes the graduates could take (if they happened to come up). For career practitioners this may suggest that encouraging clients to have a more open and flexible approach to career development may be more important in rural areas than talking about career planning.

Finally, for careers advisers working in rural communities with rural clients, there is an additional consideration to be made – in these contexts meeting clients in social situations is very likely and cannot be avoided. Rather than being problematic, this fact of rural life does actually offer great potential – by maintaining a professional-but-social attitude with our clients when we meet them outside of our work, this effectively models and encourages clients to develop the social floating skills that can be so useful in their careers.

Conclusion

The results of this research project suggest that living in a rural area can have a significant impact on how graduates perceive their career opportunities. In comparison to more urban areas graduates felt that developing a career in Orkney required greater flexibility and compromise and more indirect job-search methods. Where opportunities were generally felt to be limited, graduates understood the role of chance and of trying to maximise their chances by using their social contacts. Understanding the rural context and how it can provide both career opportunities and challenges is vital for careers advisers in order to deliver informed, effective and appropriate services to clients.

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International students and career development: Human capital in the global skills race

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Views of international students have shifted from considering them as temporary learners seeking international education to positioning them as a valuable source of human capital. These views form a context from which to consider international students' career development needs while living and learning in higher educational settings and in considering their career options post-graduation. Influences on international students' career decision-making to stay in the destination country are discussed. Targeted areas for career services are outlined to support the transition from education to employment in the destination country and for international students returning to their home countries.

Introduction

There is growing interest by policy-makers across the education, employment, and immigration sectors about the role of international students in academic programs and in the labour market. Views of international students vary between countries, ranging from considering them as temporary learners who seek an educational experience outside of their home country, limiting post-graduation immigration, to positioning them as a highly skilled source of human capital and desirable immigrants for destination countries (Douglass and Edelstein, 2009; Zigarus and Law, 2006). These various perspectives underpin the importance of considering international students' career development needs while living and learning in higher educational settings and preparing them for employment options post-graduation.

Historically, it was assumed, due to immigration policies, that international students were temporary sojourners who would return to their home countries following the completion of their academic programs in higher education (Pedersen, 1991). However, immigration policies in many countries have changed in recognition of the relatively untapped pool of human capital in the international student population (Arthur and Nunes, in press; Gribble and Blackmore, 2012). International students, and particularly graduate students, are highly educated people. They bring a wealth of experience from their home countries and cultures, their academic credentials earned in the destination country, and contacts for future international business partnerships. As a result, they have expertise for the labour market to meet local needs, and expertise to position companies for serving diverse consumer markets both nationally and internationally. Consequently, international students have increased opportunities to focus their longer-term career planning on gaining employment experience in some destination countries, taking that expertise home, mobility between countries, or pursuing employment and immigration in the destination country.

The expanding options for international students have major implications for their career planning and decision-making, and for campus support services. Available research suggests there are barriers in the transition process from education to employment that need to be addressed at the levels of policy, institutional services, employers, and the preparation of international students (Gribble and Blackmore, 2012; Nunes and Arthur, 2012; Popadiuk and Arthur, 2013; Sangganjanavanich, Lenz, and Cavazos, 2011). The discussion in this article will frame key influences

on international students' career decision-making with recommendations for career services to foster employment and social integration. Readers are invited to consider how international students' career decisions are inextricably bound to their sense of community, place, and relationships between home and destination countries.

Trends for International Student Mobility

The numbers of international students worldwide are expected to increase, as source countries pursue ways to be competitive in the global market, and as institutions of higher education expand their internationalisation mandates (Bohm, Davis, Meares, and Pearce, 2002). There has been more than a fourfold increase in the numbers of international students in the past four decades, increasing from an estimated 0.8 million in 1975 to 3.7 million in 2009 (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 2011). China and India are the top two source countries for international students (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2009). Although the top country destinations preferred by international students are the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France and Australia (UNESCO, 2009), Malaysia, Singapore, and China are emerging destinations, illustrating growth in mobility between countries in Asia.

There has been surprisingly little attention paid to the career development needs of international students, including key influences on their career decisions, and the factors that help them to persist in attaining their career goals (Reynolds and Constantine, 2007; Singaravelu, White, and Bringaze, 2005). The decision to study in another country is usually motivated by both *push* and *pull* factors (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002) related to international students' career trajectories. Conditions in the home country are theorized to push international students towards other countries, including lack of local academic and employment opportunities, pressure from families, perceived value of international education, and difficult political or social conditions (Arthur, 2004). The pull factors for studying in another country pivot around perceived advantages such as the quality of education, lifestyle considerations such as safety and standard of living, or seeking to expand knowledge and skills with foreign languages, applications of technology, business, and professional practices (Gu, Schweisfurthb and Daya, 2010).

Although these push and pull influences are often portrayed as discrete entities between countries, they are connected by three common factors, (a) many international students are motivated to enhance their career opportunities (Brooks, Waters, and Pimlott-Wilson, 2012), (b) relationships in both home and host cultures have an integral role in supporting the career decisions of international students (Popadiuk and Arthur, 2013), and (c) ongoing evaluations are made by international students regarding opportunities in both home and destination countries (Arthur and Flynn, 2011). Considering the interplay between these factors is essential for understanding international students' initial reasons for studying in another country and for their decision-making as they complete their academic studies and consider their options for employment. Consequently, the career planning and decision-making of international students must be considered within their worldview and their sense of priorities. For example, many models of decision-making are based on assumptions of autonomy and independence. Students from more collectivistic cultures may have a stronger connection to values that honour community and family wishes and their decision-making may be based on different priorities than students from more individualistic cultures (Arthur and Popadiuk, 2010).

From a broader macro view, changes in the global economy and competition for human capital have positioned international students as a key commodity in the higher education market and in the employment market (Adnett, 2010; Douglas and Edelstein, 2009). International students bring a major revenue stream to institutions of higher education through differential tuition fees. The economic investment made by international students in foreign tuition fees, along with spending in the local community, has fueled competition between countries to increase the inflow of international students.

Some governments of destination countries are looking at the longer-term economic benefits of recruiting international students to the employment market (Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy, 2012), primarily due to labour market demands. A number of country examples illustrate how immigration policies have changed to better accommodate international students (e.g., Arthur and Nunes, in press; Gribble and Blackmore, 2012). However, readers are cautioned that there are large variations in immigration policies between destination countries. Immigration policies can change suddenly due to economic and/or political conditions, and readers are advised to locate the most recent regulations of specific countries regarding student visas and employment permits post-graduation. For example, several countries incorporated under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), have revised their policies directed at working visas and temporary residence procedures for international students and graduates (CERI, 2011). Time studying or working in the destination country is taken into consideration through the immigration regulations and rating systems of countries such as Australia, Canada, Finland, New Zealand, and Norway (CERI, 2011). In the United States, shifting immigration policies has resulted in a more complicated screening process for international student visa applications (Douglass and Edelstein, 2009) and post-graduation visas are classified in relation to practical training. The economic downturn in countries, such as the United States, impacts the employment prospects for international students. Economic conditions may also lead to restrictions about employers hiring international students, such as is currently evident in immigration policies in the UK, while also increasing the competition for available jobs (Gribble and Blackmore, 2012). Although immigration policies are country specific, these examples show how international student recruitment and retention policies are connected to systems of higher education, employment, and the labour market conditions of destination countries.

Presumably, in comparison to other immigrants, international students may be preferred by employers because they have gained credentials and experience in the local culture (Hawthorne, 2006). However, attitudes by employers and their hiring practices do not always reflect an appreciation for the benefits of international experience. Research with international students has reported their impressions from job search and interviews with employers, suggesting that the experience they bring from their home countries is devalued, and employers may be primarily interested in work experience gained in the local context (Nunes and Arthur, 2013; Sangganjanavanich et al., 2011). International students are in a disadvantaged position if employers favour hiring from the pool of local applicants. Such bias has been documented regarding the employment transitions of the general immigrant population. Employer attitudes such as ethnocentrism, anti-immigrant biases, and lack of recognition of foreign experience and credentials have been cited as systemic barriers for employment integration (Bimrose and McNair, 2011; Chen, 2010).

The extent to which international students are welcomed into employment systems is connected to prevailing social discourse about the role of immigrant workers in local contexts. If positive sentiments are maintained through seeing the benefits of hiring people with local and foreign experience, international students are likely to be welcomed in local communities. However, when prevailing attitudes are that immigrants take jobs away from local people, particularly during times of economic downswing, international students may not be welcomed by employers or by local communities (Chen, 2010). Local students may also view international students as potential competitors for the job market, which may result in overt discrimination or more subtle forms of social avoidance. The perceived quality of relationships in the host country, including faculty, local students, and employers, can have a profound influence on academic success and on international students' motivation and success in transitioning to employment post-graduation (Popadiuk and Arthur, 2013).

Implications for Career Services

Policies that link international students to the labour market of the destination country need to be matched with programs and services to support international

student success for gaining employment in their chosen field. It should not be assumed that the labour market is open to them, and international students need adequate preparation for formally and informally connecting to employment. There are four key areas that are important directions for career services in higher education, directed towards international students: (a) knowledge about the labour market, (b) programs for scaffolding employment experience, (c) mentoring, and, (d) practice for managing the cultural norms for job-seeking. Although these are listed as discrete topics, they are often intertwined in terms of international student needs to support their career development.

Knowledge of the labour market in local, national, and international contexts can help international students to make informed decisions about where they want to focus their job search post-graduation. Shifting economies within countries may mean that international students require labour market information to understand local opportunities and/or be prepared to mobilize to pursue opportunities in other locations. Prior to graduation, one of the key issues raised by international students is overcoming barriers about gaining access to employment experience. They have identified the importance of local work experience and mentorship as avenues for their success (Nunes and Arthur, 2013; Popadiuk and Arthur, 2013). Gaining access to the labour market may be due to lack of information, or it may be also due to lack of available opportunities. While enrolled in higher education, international students need to gain experience, through school-industry partnerships such as co-op programs, summer or part-time employment, volunteer experience, or roles with professional associations. Such experiences are valuable for international students to apply their academic skills, to learn more about the norms and expectations of the workplace and their selected fields, and to cultivate references for future employment. Faculty members play a pivotal role in helping international students to make connections for employment and to mentor them about ways to position their professional experience. Other sources of mentorship include international student graduates who are further along in the transition from education to employment, who can inspire others to be successful and share tips about how they managed to navigate local employment systems.

One of the challenges that many international students face is becoming familiar with both the formal and informal protocols of job search strategies, interviews, and norms for workplace interactions. Education about job placement and opportunities to practice job search skills have been identified as priorities by international students (Behrens, 2009; Shen and Herr, 2004). There is considerable variation between and within countries about how employment is obtained, e.g., academic achievement, family loyalty and kinship networks often bound by social class, employment agents, etc. Depending upon the degree of cultural differences between international students' home and host cultures, behavior expected for job search, interview protocols, and presentation of qualifications may be nuanced in ways that are difficult for international students to follow, without coaching about cultural norms (Behrens, 2009; Sangganianavanich et al., 2011). The onus continues to be placed on international students to be workplace ready, in term of understanding expectations and assimilating to local customs and norms for behavior. Perhaps one of the most neglected areas in the interface between career services in higher education and the labour market is the education of employers about this relatively untapped pool of skilled labour. International students can be prepared for seeking employment, but employers need to be receptive to hiring them.

Career Preparation for Returning Home

The emphasis of this discussion has been on the retention of international students in the destination country. Even though many international students would like to pursue employment and permanent immigration, the reality is that most international students return to their home countries (Musumba, Jin, and Mjelde, 2011; Spencer-Rodgers, 2000). Career services on campuses need to be responsive to the unique needs of international services in preparing for the re-entry home (Leung, 2007). It is important to remember that the re-entry process begins while in the destination country during the later stages of

completing an academic program and preparing to enter the labour market in the home country. Students may not recognise the need to prepare for returning home, out of their sense of familiarity and prior life experiences. However, the literature on re-entry transitions suggests that most people underestimate the degree of reverse culture shock that they will experience (Christofi and Thompson, 2007; Gaw, 2000), primarily due to the degree of change at home, and often a lack of recognition about how much the individual has changed through exposure to new cultural norms and lifestyles. Information can be distributed to international students through ongoing student orientation, re-entry workshops where students can discuss and learn from each other, or through electronic bulletins. The main purpose of career services targeted towards re-entry is to help international students prepare for leaving the destination culture and prepare for life at home. Such services need to have as their primary focus support for international students to document how their experiences while studying as an international student can transfer to marketable skills. In other words, re-entry programming needs to focus on helping international students to increase their human capital potential and employment integration in their home countries.

Ideally, the educational experiences of living and learning in another country positions international students favourably upon returning home (Campbell, 2010). However, conditions in the home country can change dramatically during the time that individual studies abroad, and fluctuating labour markets can result in more or fewer employment opportunities. It is important that international students maintain their employment contacts and receive support to develop new contacts with employers in their home countries. For example, some institutions in higher education have devoted resources to career specialists dedicated to supporting international students with their job search in the primary source countries. The liaison between educational institutions and employers helps to link international students with employers. In turn, there are contacts, resources, and referrals that favourably position the educational institution for future networking and projects. Perhaps one of the strongest marketing points that can be leveraged is seamless student support from the point of inquiry about international education to departure and integration into employment.

Conclusion

Retaining international students in destination countries is a strategic immigration strategy in terms of recruiting talent and adding to the diversity of the available labour pool of highly skilled workers. However, the career decisions made by international students extend beyond perceived employment opportunities to factors such as safety and security in the destination country, lifestyle options, gender expectations, affordability, the ease of making new relationships, and the sense of belonging in the local community. The decision to stay in the destination country can disrupt extended family connections and international students need to build a sense of community and home in the new country. Beyond immediate employment opportunities, the perceived quality of life is fundamental for weighing options post-graduation. Securing employment in their chosen academic field is a key for both economic and social integration. However, most international students will continue to evaluate their situation through comparisons of opportunities between home and destination countries. That evaluation extends beyond securing employment to the sense of community and connection within the workplace and in the local community. The career decisions of international students are not simply a choice of securing employment in one country over another. Rather, the quality of lifestyle, sense of place, and relationship connections influence their initial decisions post-graduation and their decisions about career pathways for the future. The discussion about international students needs to extend beyond recruitment of human capital to considering how to support their social and workplace integration post-graduation.

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The global careerist: Internal and external supports needed for success

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There are many types of internationally mobile workers and families, including expatriates, repatriates, accompanying partners, and 'third culture kids'. This research used an email survey to gather input from six global careerists. Respondents were asked about their definitions of success (personal and professional), their career challenges (personal, social, and professional problems), and their supports (social, work experience, attitude, previous transition experience, and organizations/resources). There were similarities and differences amongst the six respondents' experiences with international mobility. Better understanding the challenges and unique needs of global careerists can help counsellors to more effectively serve this growing group of workers.

In an era of globalization and increased interconnectedness via the Internet the 'world as a workplace' is a reality for more people than in the past. Whether migrant workers relocating for temporary work, expatriates relocating longer term but not permanently (in some cases with their accompanying partners and/or children), immigrants choosing a new country as home base, international students choosing to stay in their new country post-graduation, refugees seeking haven in a country that provides sanctuary or repatriates returning 'home' after working abroad, international workers or 'global careerists' face a unique set of career and life challenges.

This article presents highlights from relevant literature followed by results from a survey of six participants whose careers have involved international transitions: one working expatriate, two accompanying partner expatriates (one of whom was self-employed), one 'third culture kid' (i.e., an adult child from an expatriate family, impacted by international mobility), and three repatriates. Although results from this exploratory research cannot be generalized without further investigation, several themes surfaced across the participants, illustrating potential commonalities amongst global careerists. However, differences are also presented that illustrate the need to customize career supports. The article concludes with a discussion of external and internal supports that contribute to career success and ideas about how career workers can more effectively serve the globally mobile workforce.

Literature review

Although the term 'global careerist' is more commonly used in the business literature (Mäkelä and Suutari, 2011; Suutari and Smale, 2008) than in counselling (Neault, 2007), it has been adopted in this article to describe various types of internationally mobile workers. To provide effective career supports it is important to understand the diverse needs of this growing group. This review discusses literature from international business, international education, human resources, counselling and career development to shed new light on the complexity of global careers. Siljanen and Lamsa (2009: 1468) described the 'heterogeneity of expatriates' and it is important to recognise that individuals may bridge several global careerist categories at various stages of their careers. For example, third culture kids may concurrently be international students. Upon graduation, they may repatriate to their passport countries but share the experience of immigrants or expatriate workers if they have not previously lived or worked in that country.

Accompanying partners may establish their careers and then, themselves, take on an expatriate assignment; reversing roles with their spouses for the next stage of both careers. Even within some of the sub-categories of global careerists, there are differences. Altman and Baruch (2011), for example, described a continuum of expatriate workers with low-skilled migrant workers at one end of the spectrum and highly skilled professionals and senior leaders at the other. Tornikoski (2011) used the categories of 'assigned' and 'self-initiated' to discuss different types of expatriates.

Deciding whether or not to accept an opportunity to work internationally, for many employees, is influenced by the impact the move will have on their immediate families (Larson, 2006). For those who choose to relocate, their accompanying partners' careers are typically affected, too (Permits Foundation, 2012; Simpson and Wiles, 2012). Children of global careerist parents tend to form cultural identities that are informed by their parents' cultures combined with the differing local cultures in which they've lived (Bonebright, 2010; Ittel and Sisler, 2012). The term 'third culture kids' (TCKs) is used to describe these children, who may identify more closely with other TCKs than with the cultures of their own families or passport countries. Once grown up and ready to enter the workforce, their needs and unique contributions to the global workplace may be easily misunderstood or overlooked (Ittel and Sisler, 2012).

Wadhwa, Saxenian, Freeman, and Gereffi (2009) used the term 'returnee' to describe those who have lived and worked abroad and choose to return 'home'. Wadhwa et al described this as increasingly common in developing economies such as India and China; however, it is also a trend that is expanding to address skill shortages in countries like New Zealand.

The needs of internationally mobile workers are diverse as they are impacted by generational differences (Wilson and Snowdon, 2012), loneliness (Sow Hup and Hua Han (2011), and the challenges of getting foreign credentials and professional experiences recognized in a new country (Lamontagne, 2003) or upon returning home (Bolino, 2007; Menzies and Lawrence, 2011). International students who choose to stay in their host country face career challenges (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz, and Cavazos, 2011). Amongst skilled immigrant workers a pattern of career compromise is often apparent (Lau, 2010). However, although mobility-based work-family conflicts are common (Mäkelä and Suutari, 2011) and family issues have been found to have the most significant influence on an employee's decision about whether to accept an international posting, career aspirations were also identified as important (Larson, 2006). Almost a decade ago, Neault (2005) highlighted challenges in managing global careers; this brief review of relevant literature demonstrates that these challenges remain and, therefore, the need for career professionals to learn how to better serve internationally mobile workers is of critical importance.

Theoretical Perspectives / Influences

Several theoretical perspectives may help conceptualize the unique career challenges and needs of global careerists. Although beyond the scope of this article to describe them in detail, a few relevant theories and models are briefly listed here with citations to support further investigation of those that seem most relevant.

Transition models (Bridges, 2009; Schlossberg, 2011) can serve as useful frameworks for careers impacted by global mobility. Much has been written within the past two decades on 'boundaryless careers', emphasizing a new type of psychological contract between individuals and employing organizations (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Stahl, Miller, and Tung, 2002; Suutari and Smale, 2008), focussing on career agency within an increasingly interdependent global society (Tams and Arthur, 2010), and delineating the importance of optimism. This is important, as Neault (2002) found optimism to be the most significant predictor of career success and job satisfaction. In Career Flow, with hope at the centre of the model, an optimistic attitude is also considered important (Niles, Amundson and Neault, 2011).

Finally, Neault and Pickerell's (2011) Career Engagement model highlights the critical importance of aligning capacity (both individual and organizational) to level of challenge; many global careerists find themselves overwhelmed (too much challenge) or underutilized (capacity left untapped). Optimism is one

contributor to capacity within this model, recognizing the dynamic interaction between individual, organizational, and societal influences on career engagement.

Method

To further explore challenges experienced by global careerists and supports they identify as contributing to their success, an open-ended survey comprising five questions and a multiple-choice 'poll' posted on LinkedIn were conducted. We were particularly interested in the impact of locality or 'place' on their career experiences, both when working abroad and returning home. Our strengths-based research approach was informed by Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson and Erlebach (2010).

The survey explored definitions of successful international transitions, barriers encountered, helpful supports and family impact. Participants shared surprises associated with their transitions and insights about what changes might improve similar future transitions. Surveys were emailed to selected contacts within the authors' personal and professional networks; both authors are Canadian, with one currently living in Canada and the other in the Netherlands. Of 13 invitations, 6 respondents (46%) completed the survey and the accompanying informed consent document with demographic questionnaire. This is a convenience sample that can not be considered representative of all global careerists.

Survey results were themed within NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software program. Data entry and preliminary clustering were conducted by a research assistant; further theming was conducted independently by the authors. Although the themes reveal some commonalities across global careerists, notable differences, especially between different types of global careerists, also surfaced.

In addition to the survey the researchers used the polling feature on LinkedIn. A single question with five multiple choice options was posted in the authors' personal networks as well as in four relevant groups: Trailing Spouse Network, Portable Career Network, Career in Your Suitcase and Connecting Women. The poll explored which support had been most important to the respondents' successful international career transition(s) – network, attitude, career services, cultural fit or qualifications. The poll was open for one month, reposted once, shared on Facebook, and Tweeted to followers; it resulted in 12 responses.

Results

All six survey respondents completed a demographic profile. Ranging in age from 25 to 63 years old, most were female (n=5), all identified English as the only language they spoke fluently and were married or with a live-in partner, and two had one child currently at home. Although two were in the process of repatriating, they both self-identified as 'citizens'. One self-identified as a third culture kid (TCK). Another respondent, self-identifying as an expatriate, also described a global career beginning as a TCK, and comprising stints as an immigrant, expatriate worker, repatriate and accompanying partner. Another respondent self-identified as an immigrant, expatriate and repatriate. Each of these respondents was an example of the complexity of global careerists' experiences and identity. The final respondent, self-identifying as an expatriate, was an accompanying partner currently self-employed.

Most respondents were well-educated with various levels of post-secondary education. Most were currently working in a field related to their professional identity, although one accompanying partner was in an entry-level job supporting a partner's repatriation process. One accompanying partner self-identified as retired. One global careerist, self-identified as an immigrant, expatriate and repatriate, described eclectic fields of work but didn't align with any single profession. Another identified three roles within two fields. The final respondent identified one field of work but listed several roles that contributed to self-employment income.

Definitions of Success

Participants were asked 'What does success mean for you in this international transition?' Their definitions clustered into two broad categories – personal and professional. Personal responses indicating intrinsic success measures included 'establishing a new normal including a sense of belonging and identity congruence',

'emotional resilience', 'constructing a home that was a safe haven', and 'developing meaningful relationships in my life here'; 'staying in close communication with my family… and creating a happy home environment'. Indicators of professional success involved such extrinsic outcomes as securing suitable employment (e.g. 'a position which… pays well', 'recognition of my peers', 'finishing up my exams and getting registered … [and] finding a full time job in my career' as well as intrinsic characteristics including 'a position which challenges me' and 'finding a career that is interesting and fulfilling… in which I could work long-term').

Although all respondents said that their family/significant others shared their perspectives on success, it was interesting to find that, for all but two, their definitions of success had shifted during their transitions. One shift was from focusing on finding a challenging part-time paid position with peer recognition to accepting that those needs would be filled by volunteer positions and not paid employment. Another shift, for an accompanying partner of an international student, was from 'just putting in time' to 'embracing the life-enriching experience'. One respondent reported shifting from a somewhat mechanistic understanding of what international transition asks of a person to a broader understanding which recognised the time required to 'work your way back to a feeling of belonging'. However, when partners' definitions of success do not shift concurrently, support may decrease; this will be further discussed in the following sections.

Challenges

The challenges that emerged from the data also clustered into personal and professional. Respondents described how personal challenges in re-establishing social networks impacted their familial relationships as well as their own emotional wellbeing and adjustment. Similar social challenges were reported as respondents rebuilt their professional networks – several had underestimated the time required for these important tasks. Other examples of professional challenges included: the need to take a survival job because of the length of time required to complete the credential recognition process, the impact of 'credential creep' upon opportunities available following repatriation, the challenge of finding opportunities that adequately connect with values and interests, labour market and work culture differences, transferability of credentials and experience, and work permit restrictions.

Supports

Participants were asked 'What supports helped you transition successfully?' The supports described by respondents clustered into five sub-themes, very similar to those described by previous researchers: social, work experience, attitude, previous transition experience and organizations/resources. Significant social supports included partners and other family members, neighbours, church, support groups/fairs, local involvement and maintaining important past connections. Several respondents described the importance of finding suitable work, whether a survival job for immediate financial support, volunteering as an outlet for meaningful contribution or a complete career change to accommodate the realities of working in another country. Respondents also described important attitudes that contributed to their successful transitions; these included resilience, self-confidence, creating a safe haven at home and learning to be alone without feeling lonely.

Several respondents reported positive contributions from previous transition experiences, both domestic and international; learning from past transitions prepared them for future challenges and helped minimise personal and career disruptions and maximize resettlement success.

Finally, respondents indicated the benefit of accessing such organisational supports and resources as professional associations, recruiters and placement agencies, company relocation services and support groups, online information and career services.

Lessons Learned

Respondents identified a variety of changes that could positively impact their future international transitions. Suggestions for enhanced supports included access to career services, financial support for credential recognition, language studies, retraining, expediting the foreign credential recognition process and access to mentors. One respondent recommended increased holiday time for expatriate workers to facilitate

maintaining connections with family and friends abroad. Another respondent recommended mentors to support repatriates – someone who could help translate the value of international experience for the local labour market.

Combined, these results underscore the range and complexity of issues experienced by global careerists. Although more research is needed to confirm and further explore the patterns identified here and the supports most effective for success with international transitions, the preliminary findings are explored in the following section.

Discussion

It is clear from the literature and supported by the information gathered through this survey that global careerists are not all created equal. In each experience the desired outcomes of the individual, resources and supports available and the response to challenges and barriers, contributes to a different reality. Global careerists themselves often do not realise or recognise that they have become part of a growing group that has a great deal of information and resources available.

Therefore, career development professionals working with internationally mobile clients need to first take time to explore and understand the individual circumstances of these clients. For example, one accompanying partner reported being supported by a temp agency to find work opportunities that met a 20-hour per week work visa restriction. As often occurs, credentials from one country were not recognized in the next; despite this, a life-enriching international experience resulted from the individual's adaptability, positive attitude and willingness to accept lower-skilled work while embracing unique opportunities to connect with locals. However, it is possible that a career advisor with a stronger understanding of the issues associated with global careers may have been able to assess for transferable skills and experiences and to recommend more suitable part-time employment. As described in the Career Engagement model (Neault and Pickerell, 2011), although many foreign-trained workers report feeling under-utilized in their positions, others feel overwhelmed as they are asked to do unfamiliar tasks or communicate in a language they are still learning.

There are, however, specific areas of focus for career professionals who support global careerists through their international transitions. A few are highlighted in the following sections, clustered into external strategies, supports, and services and internal characteristics and attitudes that career practitioners and counsellors can help global careerists to strengthen.

External strategies, supports and services

Our research demonstrates that successful global careerists employ a range of strategies including:

1. Joining and forming networks. Concurrently maintaining local and global networks can be particularly important to career portability (Parfitt and Reichrath-Smith, 2013). Respondents identified the importance of both formal and informal personal and professional networks (e.g. friends, family, and professional colleagues). Career professionals could help by teaching networking skills with a cultural awareness component or supporting clients to identify a group of individuals in transition and form a peer support network or 'success team' (Sher, 2003).
2. Connecting to local communities. Oliver Segovia (as cited in Parfitt and Reichrath-Smith, 2013) suggested looking outwards to the local surroundings for direction and purpose; he cautioned that only looking inwards invites disconnection and disillusionment. Therefore, becoming aware of the values and issues that connect and drive the local community and getting involved where there is a good fit with skills, experience and dreams can be another effective career management strategy.
3. Accessing key supporters. Family and friends can provide reminders of previous accomplishments and encouragement during times of self doubt. Trusted supporters can also fill in blind spots (Business Balls, n.d.); in an international relocation, without cultural insights, 'you don't know what you don't know'.
4. Identifying and engaging potential mentors. Whether formal or informal, mentors can help global careerists interpret and action local

information, transfer knowledge, learn skills and reflect on lessons learned. One respondent indicated this as something she would have appreciated as part of her repatriation process. In the Netherlands, for example, a voluntary association of language mentors is available.

5. Accessing career services. A career development professional with insights into global career-related issues can help build a relocation strategy, market international experience in the current location, interpret the policies of regional or national accreditation bodies, provide access to groups of similar individuals, and set realistic timelines and expectations.

6. Learning the local language. Although it is important to set realistic expectations of what is linguistically achievable within the available timeframe, building language competency offers a key to understanding culture and connecting with local neighbours, service providers, and colleagues in a more meaningful way.

Internal characteristics and attitudes

Although external strategies, supports and services are important, and were highly valued by respondents, internal supports also impact upon the success of international transitions. Several important characteristics and attitudes that career professionals can help strengthen are highlighted in this section.

1. Strong sense of self: Many global careerists report a struggle between cultural adaptation and assimilation - the ongoing tension between fitting in and remaining authentic to their core identities. Developing a career portfolio can be an effective strategy; portfolios can serve as a place where experiences, accomplishments, life stories, important hobbies and defining moments are collected, organized and presented in such a way that they can be used to support all aspects of career development, including international transitions and the risk of a sense of lost identity (Parfitt and Reichrath-Smith, 2013).

2. Flexible attitude: Successful international transitions, as described by respondents to this study, often involve shifts in how success is defined as well as letting go of some culturally bound beliefs without giving up. Enhancing their flexibility can help global careerists to stay actively engaged in the present instead of longing for the past.

3. Holistic view of career: Successful global careerists tend to have a broad sense of the components comprising their 'career;' they are not limited by their former professions or job titles. Several respondents to this study described an eclectic combination of work, life and learning roles, paid and unpaid, that together contributed to their engagement and satisfaction. Career professionals can help individuals explore their career beliefs; in turn, this type of activity will provide insights into the client's perspective.

4. Ability to connect: Openness to share struggles and ask for help creates a stronger feeling of connection. One respondent reflected, 'the biggest hurdle is the emotional one – of working your way back to a feeling of belonging, feeling fully vested and involved in your new life, and enjoying it – and it takes more time and effort than I'd thought'. Career professionals can provide a vital link for clients in the early stages of an international transition.

5. Willingness to grow and change: Successful global careerists are open to new experiences, allowing themselves to learn through, and be shaped by, those experiences. A posting to Thought Catalogue, a blog for expatriates, summed up this attitude well, 'There is a certain amount of comfort and confidence that you gain with yourself when you go to this new place and start all over again, and a knowledge that – come what may in the rest of your life – you were capable of taking that leap and landing softly at least once' (Fagan, 2012). Career professionals could support global careerists to benchmark required competencies, mine previous experiences for transferable skills, examine career beliefs and build confidence.

6. Creative problem-solving: To make successful international transitions, global careerists need to anticipate and acknowledge barriers and setbacks without being stopped by them. They become adept at workarounds, negotiating alternatives

and cobbling together what they want and need. An exercise from improvisational theatre, 'Yes, AND!' is a tool career development professionals can use to help global careerists respond more effectively to unexpected developments they regularly encounter.

Conclusion

Global careerists are a growing and diverse group with complex needs. For career development professionals to effectively serve them, it is important to recognize the unique challenges encountered during their international transitions and the types of internal characteristics and attitudes and external supports, services and strategies that they have identified as effective. This preliminary research explored six stories of international mobility. Expanding this research to include representatives from a wider range of global careerists at various stages of their international transitions would further illustrate the heterogeneity of this group and help to surface the supports and strategies that contribute to their success. Research testing the efficacy of career services and interventions for the globally mobile would also fill a gap in the literature, facilitating more evidence-based practices for career professionals serving this growing group.

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Forthcoming NICEC events

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Seminar: **Identity and transitions mid-career**
Kate Mackenzie-Davey

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Network meeting: **Career coaching: new world or old wine?**
Phil McCash

Location: The Work Foundation, 21 Palmer Street, London SW1

Monday, 20th January 2014	5pm – 6.30pm

Seminar: **IES report for BIS on adult career decision-making**
Wendy Hirsh and Rosie Gloster

Location: Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, Euston, London

(Further dates in 2014 to be confirmed.)

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Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling: March 2014 Issue

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