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Book of Abstracts

Career in the post-welfare society:
Precariousness, work migration and
transitions

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Intersections of migration, sustainable career development and gig work: Considerations for career counselling

New employment arrangements such as app-based gig work are on the rise in the post-welfare society. Non-existence of relevant policy or hastened legislative responses leave gig workers in a vulnerable position. In many developed countries, gig labour is predominantly migrant labour. The post-migration context challenges the career development of global south migrants. App-based gig work facilitates entry for migrants into the labour market of global north countries of resettlement and also comes with challenges that disrupt their long-term career development. Access to both decent work and migration are human rights. Attending to the sustainable career development needs of migrants not only enhances their lives but also improves the outcomes of host countries migration programs. This presentation considers the intersections of migration, gig work and sustainable career development for migrants, potential avenues for career research, and how emancipatory career counselling can support migrant gig workers.

Keywords: sustainable career development, gig work. Immigration, emancipatory career counselling

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Flexibility as a response to labour market instability: the experience of recent graduates

In neoliberal ideology, the modern worker is highly flexible, adaptable and mobile – proactively adapting to the needs of an ever-changing labour market. University graduates in particular may be thought of in these idealistic terms. However, there is relatively little research that has explored how graduates themselves perceive and experience flexibility in relation to the workplace. Drawing from a larger piece of PhD research, this paper explores the experiences of seven graduates in the North of Scotland who graduated during a particular instance of labour market instability: the North Sea oil and gas crash of 2014-5. The findings highlight that although flexibility (in occupational role or geographical location) was apparent, this experience varied according to individual circumstances and resources. Further, experiences of flexibility were often experienced negatively, in terms of loss and insecurity. This paper concludes by exploring the problematic implications of promoting “flexibility” as a positive attribute for graduates.

Keywords: flexibility, mobility, neoliberalism, labour market instability

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The possibilities and boundaries of the memory work in a multi-ethnic and multi-language data collection setting

I'm looking for insights and shared thinking about the boundaries and possibilities of applying the feminist memory work method and/or collective biography method in a multiethnic and multi-language data collection setting. I'm studying the interpretations of relational agency, essential capabilities, and future career prospects of immigrant-background UAS students in Finnish-language study programs. The students have themselves migrated to Finland or have a foreign language as their mother tongue. One essential element of the memory work method has been the shared (bodily) experience; the researcher is part of the group sharing also her memories on the issue. How I, as a white, native-Finnish speaking, non-migrant UAS lecturer, would be able to create a dialogical group setting with the group members, so that individual and collective memories are possible to be developed and shared? And more widely, what would be the possibilities of the method in career research and understanding social justice?

Keywords: high education, migration, memory work

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Hoping to transcend contextualisation: A democratic career concept, a model and “where do we go from here?”

The disjunction between “everyday” and “scholarly” understandings of the career concept can affect career guidance and learning, as different understandings can make the career concept hard to understand and use in the practice setting. Using cultural content and values connected to the Norwegian/Nordic welfare culture, I propose a democratic career concept to encompass this disjunction. By interviewing tenth graders and counsellors, discussing concepts of culture and career, and using Koselleck (2004); Koselleck and White (2002)'s theory of conceptualisation I have developed a model for understanding how the concept of career “lives” and develops in the interaction between career theory and lived experience. By using the model, I ask how can we understand career and how it works in our lives? Further, I ask what are the implications of this model and a democratic career concept for career guidance practice and theory?

Keywords: democratic career, contextualising career, conceptualising career

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Municipal steering discourses on Equitable Career Guidance in the Swedish post-welfare society

The increased complexity of the education and labor systems makes it difficult for students to get an overview of the consequences of their study choices in the future. Moreover, equity in career guidance is a prerequisite for preventing study breaks and increasing social cost. Starting from the theoretical concept of policy in action, this research explores the enactment of national policies on equitable careers guidance at the municipal level. Based on a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, this research analyzes educational policy documents concerning career guidance at the national and municipal levels. By focusing on entrepreneurship as “the receipt” for equitable career guidance, the selected municipal documents risk to limit teachers’ and career counselors’ autonomy. This interpretation of equity in career guidance difficulties to deal with the increased complexity of education and labor market existing in the Swedish post-welfare society.

Keywords: career guidance, career counselors, equity, policy, CDA.

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Adapting career guidance for adults in the Nordic Region – How should career guidance be adapted for adults specifically? A definition of career guidance for adults is up for debate.

The purpose of this workshop is to gain feedback from the participants on our recently established definition of career guidance for adults, to further develop the definition accordingly. First, NVL and the Guidance Network will be briefly introduced. Second, the [definition of career guidance for adults](#) will be presented. Third, specific questions will be raised during a discussion which hopefully can inspire further adjustment of the definition presented.

Keywords: Career guidance for adults, lifelong guidance, career guidance definition, transitions, Nordic Cooperation

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Educational and career guidance as governance of individuals – the produced subject positions of guidance work

In knowledge-based economies, requirements for new skills, changing labour market and the demand for lifelong learning are linked to precarious educational and work paths of young people. Transitions from school to work have become unpredictable. Career guidance has been offered as a solution to these issues, as it can assist individuals on their paths and support transitions. The role of career guidance has changed to conform the needs of knowledge-based economies and lifelong learning as it focuses largely on the individual's employability. I see career guidance as a form of governance which can dictate certain positions to individuals. I study career guidance professionals' discourses (n=15) about their counselees to discover what kinds of subject positions are given to young people in career guidance services. I'm interested in how these positions are formed in relation to the current objectives of guidance which derive from the needs of labour market and lifelong learning.

Keywords: Career guidance, knowledge-based economy, lifelong learning, governance

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Transition to Higher Education in the post-welfare society: Impact of Educational Reforms and Covid-19 in Finland

The main objective of the study is to examine the educational transition from upper secondary education to higher education (HE) and how these transitions are constructed within the frames of three policy reforms in Finland. The reforms under the scope are the HE admission reform, reform of vocational education and training (VET reform), and the reform of general upper secondary education.

The approach is based on governmentality studies and studies of policy analyses (see e.g. Bacchi 2009) and positioning (Niemi&Mietola 2017; Niemi&Kurki 2014). I study the politics of transition, and how applicants in transition from upper secondary education to HE position themselves in relation to the politics of transition. As the reforms were carried through in exceptional circumstances of the global pandemic in spring 2020, I also examine how these circumstances interrelate with the politics of transition and the applicants in the admission process.

Keywords: Educational transition, education politics, higher education, politics of transition

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The relational agency of career guidance and counsellors

Multiple studies on educational trajectories and career guidance have produced the images of mismatches and misrecognition of the young people's views on their opportunity structures and the means to advance them with guidance. Career guidance practices are bounded by structural factors (e.g. official aims for it), institutional settings (e.g. practices) and counsellor's expertise (e.g. experience and education). I address these boundaries with the concept of relational agency of career guidance professionals. Relational agency helps me to analyse how the professionals interpret and problematize the aims and concepts of guidance and how they respond to their problematizations and definitions. The data comprises ~45 experts on career guidance from different institutions (e.g. counsellors at different educational institutions, youth and social workers, principals, local and national level administrators). As an outcome, my study helps us to find tools to enhance the co-operation and develop the shared comprehension of the careers and guidance.

Keywords: relational agency, career guidance and counselling, cooperation, shared expertise

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Gender, masculinities and politics of masculinity informing practitioners' pedagogical approaches in doing men-specific work

This study investigates men-specific interactive support work related to welfare, employment, career and educational issues in Finland. Men-specific work, taking place in social sector and education, has been studied very little in Finland and also international research is scarce. This paper focuses on professional practitioners' perspectives in this field of activity. The analysis focuses on how gender, notions of manhood and masculinity as well as other dimensions of social and cultural difference inform practitioners' approaches to defining men's problems and their men-specificity, and their pedagogical approaches to interactive work with individual men and male groups. The results highlight how practitioners' descriptions of their pedagogical approaches and solutions are linked to different kinds of gender political stances with regards to politics of masculinity and intersectionality. In fashioning how to do work with men and legitimating this work, different kinds of moral and political questions need to be simultaneously answered.

Keywords: men-specific work, gender-sensitive pedagogies, gender-sensitive counselling, masculinity, intersectionality

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Navigating future between recognition, justice and difference - Narratives of young Sami people in Sweden on transitions between school to work

Knowledge about young Sami and their transitions from school to work is almost non-existent. Departing from Careership theory (Hodkinson & Sparks 1997), the theory of "Othering" (Hall 1990) this study aims to deepen the understanding of young Sami people's careers. Based on narrative research, supported by indigenous methodology (Smith, 1999) the empirical material comprises life stories of eight young men and women.

All with a self-evident Sami identity, most with multi-ethnic parentage had colonial experiences of being Sami, self-experienced or through their families. Their narratives portray, through their career choices, their will to contribute to the Sami community; to develop Sami languages, cultural expressions and reindeer herding or improved psychosocial health. The importance of recognition, justice and possibilities for ethnic openness are discussed as factors for agency and a collective horizon of action, a collective ethos, in their career paths.

Keywords: School-to-work transition, young Sami, life story, career development, indigenous

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"There is work but maybe not everyone wants that kind of work" - Career counsellors' professional agency when working with migrants

This paper analyses the professional agency of career counsellors working with migrants. We look into the career counsellors' role in migrants' transition and integration processes. Our analysis draws on ten interviews with career counsellors working at the integration training programme of unemployed adult migrants in Finland, and at the language introduction programme in upper secondary school in Sweden. We use Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing to analyse the professional agency of the counsellors. Our empirical findings indicate that the societal structures are reflected in the counselling practices, and that the counsellors assume similar professional agency in both settings. Our study also shows the vulnerability of the counselling practices as they are subjected to political influences and labour markets.

Keywords: migration, professional agency, career counselling, transitions, integration

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“It’s about making them end up as right as possible from the start” Local politicians and officials on supporting youth transitions

The paper aims at identifying common denominators and dividing lines in local youth policies by analyzing problem representations and strategies of Swedish local politicians and leading officials in varying local contexts over a 20-year period of time (1999 – 2019). The paper builds on interviews from four research projects addressing youth and school-to work transition policies. In all four studies, leading local politicians and officials describe the situation of youth and young people’s future prospects in their municipality and region, and the municipal strategies and measures applied for supporting transitions, in particular for young people at risk of not completing lower and/or upper secondary education. The municipalities cover a broad variety of local contexts. The analysis of the interviews applies the analytical approach “What’s the problem represented to be?” (Bacchi 2009), and a socio-spatial framework developed by Bob Jessop et al (2008) and further developed by Kazepov et al (2013).

Keywords: youth transitions, local policies, municipal strategies

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Free-lance musicians in pandemic times

This paper is about professional freelance musicians in the classical genre. The aim of the paper is to understand what career means for freelance musicians, in a lifelong perspective and in relation to Covid-19. The research questions are: What does it mean to be a freelance musician? How come freelance musicians make this relatively uncertain career choice, and what has contributed to this? What strategies are formed, to deal with the challenges of career, and how can these strategies be understood in relation to professional identity and habitus? The empirical study, conducted during the winter of 2021, consists of thirteen life history interviews with Swedish freelance musicians. The preliminary results indicate that the occupational choice, as well as the strategies for dealing with the challenges of career, can be understood as the result of a complex process of socialization. The musicians are used to enduring, but the pressure added during lockdowns of Covid-19 is a huge risk in an already precarious trade.

Keywords: freelance musicians, career, socialization, habitus, precariat

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Group guidance as retention strategy and dropout prevention – the untapped potentials of group guidance

While there is extensive research into school guidance and counselling services, group counselling and of course educational dropout, there seems to be less research on the specific combination of group guidance as a strategy to reduce dropout. This paper explores how guidance and counselling practitioners in Danish upper secondary school experience the implementation of group guidance as a strategy to retain students and prevent drop out. As part of a study of retention practices in upper secondary schools, we analyse eight narrative interviews practitioners and managers. Based on the research question, What makes group guidance and counselling meaningful in relation to reducing dropout – why and how, the reflexive thematic analysis conceptualise three themes: a) Role of a guidance practitioner and aim b) Student roles and possibilities for participation, and c) Organisational changes. We discuss these themes in relation to the role of guidance in upper secondary education in Denmark.

Keywords: Group guidance, dropout prevention, upper secondary education, careers guidance, agency

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Contextualisation and operationalization of the time resources for counselling in Norwegian basic education

This quantitative study based on a survey to counsellors and leaders in Norwegian schools explores the counsellor's time resources and the context in which these are operationalised. Counsellors hold a potentially important role in youth's future careers. There is a contractual minimum time resource available for conducting counselling in schools. The survey shows that a clear majority (68.9%) of our sample spends more than the contractual minimum resource. The minimum resource is often perceived as insufficient to perform the tasks assigned. The counsellor often experiences stress and time constraint in meetings with the students, and while conducting other tasks. A majority believes that the minimum resource should be increased. We explore how the contractual time resource is in relation to the actual use of resources and how the counsellors assess this.

Keywords: Counseling, school, time resources, career guidance

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Resources within reach. Young adults' life-historical narration and sense of agency

This presentation concentrates on the ethnographically inspired longitudinal interview narration of ten young adults living in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The analytical interest of the paper is in sense of agency (Gordon 2005) and the resources on which the interviewees draw in their narration. We discussed how the dimensions of the differences and the various life situations along the educational paths of these young adults both restrict and enable their sense of agency, as well as direct the possibilities for resistance and change (see Bansel 2015; Mirza & Meeto 2017). The analysis suggests that the significant resource of the interviewees is the ability to widen their perspective from the individual level and to learn to see the social practices and attachments that frame their lives. The presentation is based on an ongoing longitudinal study of young adults who, during their upper secondary studies, participated in an earlier ethnographic research project (Niemi & Jahnuainen 2019; Niemi & Laaksonen 2020).

Keywords: young adults, longitudinal study, narrative research, agency, resources

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How to strengthen Career Guidance as a welfare profession? Developing a bridging career guidance approach for sustainable careers in times of precariousness.

This paper addresses the need to characterize and strengthen career guidance as being a welfare profession. The past decades' influences of neoliberal ideas and the dominance of market principles as the overriding societal goals, have challenged the welfare society, including the underlying logics of welfare professions and their autonomy. Such challenges also go for the career guidance professionals, and their core mission. Based on several empirical studies exploring the transformation of the meaning of career in working life and in public debates and transnational policies, along with demographic changes, and its effects on peoples' careers, and for career guidance professionals', this paper develops a bridging guidance approach to support people in times of transitions. Such bridging guidance approach addresses the need to clarify what type of learning content that is in focus within the guidance mission, what meaning of the concept and phenomenon of learning, that such approach mainly entails, and for whom career learning is supported.

Keywords: Career guidance, welfare profession, career, bridging guidance approach, learning

Geographical differences: Facilitating transitions for students not eligible for a national upper secondary programme

Education is more and more important in order to support life chances. However, all students do not get the merits to advance to the next level from compulsory education. All European countries have some kind of remedial programmes for those students in order to support transitions. In this paper I analyse differences in outcomes between municipalities with different characteristics in supporting students not eligible for a national programme to get a degree or study certificate in Sweden. The analysis is based on in statistical and ethnographically produced data. A starting point is that rural areas often are described in a deficit discourse as in lack of resources and lack of access to education. However, statistics show that more students starting an Introductory programme in rural areas has a degree within 4 years compared to students in other areas. Some explanations seem to be associated to closeness in the rural municipalities.

Keywords: School location, site analysis, at risk students, remedial programmes, mixed methods research

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"From fast-track education program to work" - Newly arrived adults' transitions from the introduction programme to the Swedish labour market.

In this paper, we would like to present findings from a study (Obrenovic-Johansson & Sharif forthcoming) with newly arrived adults enrolled in introduction program called Fast track education program – Social work (Snabspår socionom/socialt arbete, in Swedish) and their view on the transition to further studies or work in the Swedish labour market.

The purpose of the study is to contribute deeper knowledge about how the adult newcomers describe the transition to further education or work in the Swedish labour market and its significance for their future career development. Knowledge of adults' descriptions of the transition from the program to further education and/or work is particularly important for study and career counselors working with newly arrived migrants, as their work is central to the groups continued educational and career paths (Lindblad & Lundahl 2020; Ferrari, Sundelin & Hertzberg 2019; Sundelin 2019).

The analysis of adult's attitudes towards their studies and the transition to national programs is based on the concepts of capital, habitus and strategies taken from Pierre Bourdieu's sociology (Bourdieu 1984; 1992). Methodologically, the study is done through semi-structured interviews (Bryman 2016) in the greater Stockholm area.

Keywords: Newly arrived, transition, educational capital, sociology of education

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Supervisors' Reasons for Hosting Students in Work Experience Placements

Work experience placements are among the initiatives used to help provide students with real-life experiences of the world of work. This presentation focuses on the reasons given by placement supervisors who have hosted lower secondary students in work experience placements for opening their doors and placing themselves and their company at the students' disposal. The presentation is based on an empirical study and presents five categories of reasons: providing an insight into the world of work; expanding young people's horizons for choosing an educational and vocational path; recruiting apprentices and employees to the company and the field of work; a sense of community responsibility; added value for the company's/institution's activities. It is suggested that supervisors' reasons for hosting work experience placements for lower secondary students are largely aligned with the understandings expressed in an emancipatory approach to careers education, as well as perspectives concerning how students can contribute to the company or institution.

Keywords: Work experience placements, careers education, career guidance, career learning

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Towards an anti-racist ethos in career guidance?

Several studies have shown that career counsellors are hesitant to intervene in the ethnic, racialized, and gendered divisions in educational and labour market transitions in Finland. This is alarming, especially in the light of the research outcomes showing that ethnicity and racism shape people's career choices in many ways. In this presentation, I ask how to approach things differently in career guidance processes - how to dismantle ethnic and racial normativities shaping educational and labour market transitions and how to promote an anti-racist ethos in career guidance?

To be able to scrutinize this task, I have interviewed career counsellors whose aim has been to recognize societal inequalities in their clients' life and to provide socially just and culturally sensitive guidance. In addition to the critical ethnic and race studies, I have used Ronald Sultana's (2018) framework of different discourses informing career guidance practices in my analysis.

Keywords: migration, anti-racism, career guidance, social justice

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Finding ways. Career guidance in schools for migrant youths' career transitions and inclusion

This proposal presents a work in progress about Swedish schools' work with career guidance and counselling (CGC) to support newly arrived students' career transitions and meaning-making about the future. The study is part of a research project with the aim to study the importance of inclusion and recognition in the organization and design of CGC. Specifically, this study examines how newly arrived students learn about education and working life, and what opportunities for meaning-making about career issues the students are given. The study has an ethnographic approach and has been conducted at the language introductory program (LIP), whose target group is newly arrived students, at four upper secondary schools. The analysis is ongoing but so far it points to that without a comprehensive work based on knowledge and understanding of both career issues and inclusion challenges, the students are at risk of being left to manage their inclusion on their own.

Keywords: Career guidance, migrant youth, inclusion, transitions

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Managing critical transitions. Career guidance and support for youth at risk of not being eligible for upper secondary school

This proposal addresses a study of the support to students at risk of leaving Swedish compulsory education without complete grades in their transition to upper secondary education (USE). Students that are not eligible for USE are referred to remedial programs. The study aims to provide increased knowledge about school actors' work and strategies in order to facilitate this critical transition. The study is primarily based on interviews with 18 career counsellors and teachers in six municipalities, and departs from theoretical frameworks on agency of professionals in welfare organizations and on educational transitions. A first analysis indicates inter alia that the school actors' micro choices have a major impact on the support the students are given and that the transition seems to be at risk of becoming overly fragile unless the support is characterized of collaboration between different school actors.

Keywords: Compulsory school, transitions, youth at risk, career guidance, remedial program

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“Model for problem-solving in transition phases”

Throughout our lives in the post-welfare society, we transition between many phases that may entail challenges that need to be solved. Some challenges involve few and not so challenging changes while others demand several big changes at the same time, contributing to making the transition more difficult. Transitions may be statutory and normative, or non-statutory and quasi-normative. Initially, quasinormative transitions are voluntary, but can be perceived as normative because one feels pressure from others to implement them. Our roles can also change as we move from one phase in life to another.

Keywords: History and development of the model, the parts of the model, transitions – change curve, theories connected to the model, how to use the model

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Emerging Multi-Professional Assemblages of Precision Guidance Producing the Resilient and Future-Oriented Citizen

In this paper, we examined how transnational policies such as the EU-initiated ‘integrated approach’ to youth social exclusion is manifested in local contexts and in the ways in which youth problems and solutions come to be defined in particular schemes of thought. Inspired by assemblage theory we looked at local multi-professional youth guidance networks as assemblages consisting of multiple organisations, interests, policy steering, discourses, and knowledge formations. In this article we were especially interested in seeing which ‘lines’, understood as trajectories of assemblage components, produce both ‘problems’ and ‘solutions’ for seemingly complex life situations of young people considered at risk. This article is based on the analysis of policy and interview data produced in the context of an ongoing Academy of Finland project exploring cross-sectoral policies and practices of youth support systems in the ethos of vulnerability. Based on our analysis, the new assemblages framing multi-professional guidance and support have given rise to more precise neoliberal governing mechanisms that we have named precision guidance. Precision guidance focuses on young people’s vulnerability, resilience and future potentiality while leaving societal and structural problems largely unaddressed.

Keywords: Youth guidance, multi-actor networks, youth at risk, youth governance, assemblage

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Crafting for precariousness

This qualitative pilot study was conducted among thirteen purposefully selected self-employed crafters in Iceland in 2019. It aimed at detecting participants expressed meaning and motivations for constructing a career in crafts. Participants social media sites and studios were visited for observation and semi-standardized interviews were taken along with fieldnotes. Constant comparison method was used in the analytical process for a clear sense of themes emerging from the data (Charmaz, 2014) and shared meanings were hermenautically interpreted (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). Findings show two main pulling motivational factors, interest and autonomy. Somewhat unexpected pushing factors were also detected. Ten out of thirteen participants told a story of precarious work or life-changing turning points in their career. Participants also confirmed three interpreted aspects of shared meaning; Crafting stands for being able and true, for communital relatedness and for slower and more sustainable living through pragmatic use of skills, knowledge and recycling.

Keywords: precarious world of work, self-employed craft entrepreneurs, meaningful career, self-determination, sustainability

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Actantial construction of career guidance as part of Finland's education policy

The paper examines the objectives and meanings for the career guidance provided in basic education as set out in education policy discussions by the Parliament of Finland. The topic is approached by exploring parliamentary sessions concerning three major legislative proposals for reforming compulsory education in Finland.

The premise is that the parliamentary discussions concerning guidance provided in basic education reflect the objectives set for guidance in different eras and related justifications, both in Finland and elsewhere. Examining these rationalities provides a way to explore the principles which provide the framework for career guidance policy in Finland. Using the actantial model as a methodological tool, the analysis aims to discover the actantial positions contained by the parliamentary discussions and the interactions that emerge between these.

Keywords: Career guidance, rationalities, actantial analysis, Parliament of Finland

Crossroad positions at the outskirts of the normal study pace – dropout, ability and commitment among overdue teacher training students

The aim is to explore student experiences that lies behind an administrative categorisation of university students being “at-risk” for dropping out, which is implied by a non-registration in the student-record. Interviews were done with thirty-one students (21 female and 10 male teacher students) who were targeted due to being not registered as active in their third semester. The analysis unfolds the student experience into students’ negotiation of meaning in their educational choice and their ability and commitment in current investments in university studies and possible gains in their future careers. The concepts of habitus and illusio are used to make sense of how the students are coping with the cultural values in academia and learning to play the game becoming and being a student in university. A typology of four crossroad positions is constructed based on two dimensions; commitment to and ability to pursue their studies, other results are in progress.

Keywords: dropouts, habitus, illusion, higher education, student persistence

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