Keynote 1

02-10-2025 - 09:00 - 10:00

Hall: Aðalgerði

Navigating Local-Global Tensions: Disrupting and Rethinking Career Guidance

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The interplay between local and global forces is reshaping the landscape of work, learning, and identity in profound and often paradoxical ways. In an increasingly interconnected yet fragmented world, career guidance practitioners face growing challenges as they navigate tensions between local realities and global forces. This keynote explores the dual nature of local-global tensions—the opportunities they create and the challenges they pose—for practitioners who support individuals as they navigate increasingly complex career pathways. This keynote aims to provoke critical reflection about the role of career guidance practitioners as advocates for inclusive, just, and future-ready career development. Rather than viewing these local and global tensions as problems to be resolved, the keynote will invite participants to engage with these tensions as catalysts for critical reflection and innovative practice.

Session 1A - Career guidance approaches

02-10-2025 - 10:30 - 12:00

Hall: Aðalgerði

S1A-1 Assessing the pupil in guidance counselling

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The proposed paper discusses how pupils are assessed in guidance counselling in the school context. While literature suggests that clients should not be “diagnosed” in counselling (e.g. Savickas et al., 2009; McMahon 2017), there is empirical evidence that clients are assessed in the actual counselling encounters, and that assessments (praises in particular) have an important role in managing the course of the encounters (Vehviläinen & Voutilainen, submitted, Voutilainen & Vehviläinen 2025). In the current paper, I ask how assessments as conversational actions are used in guidance counselling in the school context.

Theoretically, the paper draws from conversation analysis (Stivers and Sidnell 2012) and especially the concept of deontic stance (Stevanovic, 2013). Conversation analysis (CA) is both a theory of interaction and a method to study actual, mostly naturally-occurring interactions. In CA, talk is seen as action that creates intersubjective reality (Heritage, 1984). Deontic stance refers to how interaction participants orient to authority and power relations in interaction (Stevanovic, 2013).

Data are video recordings of actual encounters (10) between guidance counsellors and pupils in an upper comprehensive school in Finland. The method of the study is conversation analysis (Stivers and Sidnell, 2012). In CA, the focus is mostly on *how* turns of talk are formulated and timed in the course of interaction, rather than on the content of what is said. CA offers a practical tool to study different institutional contexts while maintaining a distance with professional theories that are normative in terms of, for example, how professional aims are achieved and how roles are performed through conversational actions (Peräkylä & Vehviläinen, 2003). The interactional practices found in the data-driven analysis can be linked to professional theories retrospectively (Peräkylä & Vehviläinen, 2003).

The study is in progress. The expected outcomes are interactional practices that are used in the context of assessing pupils. In particular, there is variation in terms of expressing authority. In some of the cases, the counsellors assess the pupils in a direct and straightforward manner, while in others they do interactional work to show orientation to the pupil’s agency. I will analyze the specific contexts in which these different types of assessments occur and how they are treated by the pupils. I will discuss the findings in relation to how the authority of the counsellor is described in earlier literature (e.g. Savickas et al., 2009; McMahon 2017).

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S1A-2 Adults' transitions from a life-long learning perspective. Bridging the tensions between local and global

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The contemporary era, frequently characterized as a period of crises, is distinguished by precarity, vulnerability, and uncertainty. In a post-pandemic context, we confront a global environmental crisis and observe technological transformations of existential magnitude. These crises unequivocally reveal the numerous tensions between global and local circumstances, as individuals grapple with the rapid changes occurring worldwide.

In this context people are facing constant transitions requiring from them lifelong and life-wide learning. However, learning occurs in many individuals' lives dimensions pertaining *not only* to their vocational *but also* existential dimensions. The dominant policy learning discourses often emphasize a simplified view of learning, primarily focusing on strategic aims of skills provisions through formal education for companies to maintain competitiveness in the market. When adult learning is approached, there is a tendency to either emphasize the process of workplace learning (Fenwick, 2010), represented by diverse understandings of learning processes and disciplines, or to emphasize adult learning as mainly occurring through formal education, which emphasize lifelong learning rather as *lifelong continuous education*. Furthermore, there is a notable paucity of analyses regarding the learning processes that occur during activities designed to support adults in career development and navigation, specifically career guidance. This inadequately explored domain of learning requires, in our opinion, enhanced comprehension to augment its capacity for supporting adults in career development and transitions in their lives.

Therefore, the aim of this presentation is to question these dominant positions and capture the "career" as a complex and life-long learning that requires "a dialogue" between diverse theoretical approaches to provide a deeper understanding of career complexity. This dialogue creates a bridge of understanding adults' career transitions complexity in the context of local and global tensions. Drawing from our previous research that underscores the growing significance of learning in career and vocational life (Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2024: Bilon, Minta, 2016), we propose a critical approach to current perspectives and practices of learning that occurs in career.

By integrating knowledge from diverse research fields (adult education and learning, career guidance, together with philosophy, sociology, social psychology and critical psychology) we adopt a transdisciplinary approach, and emphasize the importance of uncovering social representations of career in each context and the necessity for a transformative, biographical perspective on individual learning during transitional phases of adults lives and the learning support provided through career guidance (Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2022). By paying attention to 1) the learning processes occurring in the gaps, "the spaces in between" during a transition phase, as illustrated by Bergmo-Prvulovic (2024), and 2) the role of agency and its complex relation with learning processes (Bilon, 2020) in often-neglected learning domains in policy discourses, we offer a framework that transcends simplified views on learning. Adults'

agency is stressed as fundamentally connected to the learning processes (Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Bilon, 2020), and defined as the “temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environment (…) which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations” (Emirbayer, 1997). Therefore, our framework is built on the “dialogue” of diverse approaches. We adopt the relational nature of reality (Burkitt, 2015; Crossley, 2011) emphasizing the constitutive role of interconnectedness not only between humans but also non-humans worlds (e.g environments that interact with individuals). Our approach is also supported by Biesta's (2016) three domains of educational purposes (qualification, socialization, subjectification) as we want to stress that subjectification is strongly connected to adults’ agency.

We examine where learning takes place, what learning content is prioritized, why learning occurs, for what, and for whom learning is intended. Lastly, we discuss the implications for future career guidance practices and identify new directions for further theoretical development.

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S1A-3 Passing and Talking Over in Guidance Interactions: An Ethnographic Study on Intensified Guidance Counselling in Finnish Basic Education

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The extension of compulsory education to the age of 18 was a significant change in Finnish basic education system, bringing changes also to the field of schools' guidance counselling. With this reform, the role of guidance counselling was strengthened, and a new law on "*intensified personal guidance counselling*" was introduced. This law requires schools to provide additional support to students who need it, ensuring that every student receives adequate guidance counselling when they are making decisions about their upper secondary education.

In addition to supporting young people's educational choices, the goal of intensified guidance is to reduce inequalities between pupils and promote educational equity (Niemi 2022). However, recent studies have criticized the individual-centered nature of guidance (Hooley et. al. 2018; Vehviläinen & Souto 2022) and pointed out, that some meaningful topics for young people's educational choice-making are frequently passed in guidance counselling (Souto 2020). This study examines what kind of support young people get to their reflections on educational choices from intensified guidance counselling. More specifically, the study asks how passing and talking over each other manifest themselves in guidance interactions between counsellor and young person, and what practices are used to carry them out.

The study combines educational sociology research on young people's educational choices with studies on counselling practices and interaction. The key sociological concept is "*horizon for action*" from Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) which highlights diverse individual and societal factors that are significant for young people's educational choices. For example, young people's social networks, hobbies, gender, ethnicity, regionality, family's socioeconomic status and social class, are all meaningful and opens different positions to individuals in society. Besides of this, in the analysis of guidance practices has utilized Sanna Vehviläinen's (2014) analysis of counselling orientations which are supportive, exploratory, problem-solving and pedagogical orientation. Through these, the focus has been on examining what is concretely said and done in guidance counselling situations, as well as the types of activities and actions carried out by counsellors. The aim of the research is to participate in the discussion on social justice in guidance and in the critical development of guidance practices.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clark 2006) is based on one-year ethnographic field work in one school located at North Karelia area in Finland and observations which were made from individual counselling sessions. The observation included three different counselors' work and in total 78 days spent at school. The analysis shows how certain moments of passing and over talking are repeated in guidance practices. These formed four preliminary thematic categories which are *turning educational choice to individual's own thing*, *turning challenges into a positive, referring student to a psychologist and the form counsellors uses limits and guides the interaction*. The analysis reveals how certain guidance practices used by counsellors limit both the interaction and the topics discussed in guidance sessions. The individual dimensions of educational choice, such as young people's strengths and interests, are widely explored and discussed in guidance. While the importance of social and societal factors seem to be partially unrecognized and passed on in guidance.

The doctoral dissertation is part of the University of Eastern Finland's guidance education project "*Intensified Personal Guidance Counselling – Work Processes, Encounters and Student Agency*". The project is funded by Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland for the years 2023-2025.

Keywords

Intensified personal guidance counselling, comprehensive school, pupils

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S1A-4 Navigating Local-Global Tensions through Student Voices: A Critical Approach to Career Guidance in Danish Schools

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General description on research questions, objectives, and theoretical framework

This study explores how incorporating student voices in career education and guidance (CEG) can challenge traditional hierarchies and support more socially just educational transitions in Danish lower secondary schools. Building on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which asserts children's right to be heard and to influence matters that affect their daily lives (UNICEF, 2010), this study aims to incorporate children's voices regarding the learning-oriented guidance activities they experience. Through this approach, the global and local perspectives engage in a dialogue, as the global framework of children's rights informs the local research context, where children are invited to actively share their experiences and insights (Hart, 1992).

Our study examines the following research question: *How can meaningful student participation challenge traditional power dynamics in career guidance and enhance the relevance of CEG activities?*

The aim is to reconceptualise students as active agents rather than passive recipients of career guidance.

The theoretical framework draws on critical pedagogy, particularly Freire's (1970/2005) concepts of dialogical education and conscientization. These concepts offer a lens for understanding how educational

relationships can become more reciprocal and empowering. To assess the depth of student participation, we apply Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation, focusing on levels of meaningful engagement rather than tokenistic involvement. We also draw on Thomsen, Hooley & Mariager-Anderson's (2022) work on agency and social justice in career development, which supports a critical reading of how student voices can navigate and reshape the structural tensions between local traditions and global career expectations.

Methods/methodology

Our research employs a qualitative, participatory design conducted across 12 schools in 6 Danish municipalities, focusing on 7th-grade students before educational pathways become relatively fixed.

The primary methodological framework consists of research circles involving teachers and career counsellors, supported by municipal consultants and researchers. Within these circles, participants collaboratively developed or refined career guidance activities for the obligatory cross-curricular subject Uddannelse og Job ("Education and Job"), which is part of the Danish national curriculum but not linked to a specific timetable or subject allocation.

Data collection included multiple components:

Observations of research circle discussions focusing on possibilities and barriers to (implementing) learning-oriented career guidance.

Student feedback on proposed CEG-activities, collected before implementation and used to adjust the design.

Post-implementation interviews with three students from each school (N=36), focusing on their experiences of the activities.

Prior to engaging in activity development, teachers and career counsellors received input on Hart's model of participation, models of learning-oriented CEG, and research on how guidance influences students' opportunity horizons. This knowledge base supported a collective exploration of how student participation could become a critical, transformative element in career education.

Outcomes/results or expected outcomes

Preliminary findings indicate that engaging students meaningfully in the development of CEG activities leads to both expected and unexpected transformations:

Increased engagement and relevance: Teachers and career counsellors report finding student feedback valuable and observe increased student engagement in guidance activities when students' perspectives are actively incorporated.

Professional meaning-making:Dialogue with students fosters a renewed sense of purpose among professionals. Teachers and counsellors describe their roles as more meaningful and less hierarchical when they engage in reciprocal learning with students.

Redesign of activities: In several cases, student feedback directly led to changes in content, form, and delivery of CEG activities, resulting in more context-sensitive approaches that align better with both local school environments and the broader expectations of career readiness

These findings suggest that student participation in the design of activities should not be treated as an optional pedagogical add-on, but as a critical intervention that challenges the relationship between educational structures and individual agency. By shifting the roles and relationships embedded in guidance processes, student voice creates the conditions for more democratic, reflective, and socially just practices. This research contributes to current Nordic debates on career guidance by offering empirically grounded models for implementing student-centred approaches in everyday educational settings, and by

highlighting the ethical and professional value of working with rather than merely for students, particularly those at risk of marginalisation in educational transitions.

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Session 1B - Educational transitions and pathways

02-10-2025 - 10:30 - 12:00

Hall: Glæsigerði

S1B-1 Developing career management skills in higher education: Career practitioners' conceptions at Finnish universities of applied sciences

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The role of career guidance has evolved alongside the changing world of work, placing increasing emphasis on adaptability and managing change. Higher education institutions are gradually placing greater attention on how they prepare students for their lives beyond graduation and the world of work. The ability to navigate the changes in the world of work necessitates the acquisition of career management skills (CMS). CMS refer to the competencies that enable individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise, and organise information about themselves and potential educational, training, and occupational pathways in a structured manner. These skills include the ability to make and implement career decisions and transitions. Beyond mere decision making, this approach is grounded in theories of social learning and career learning that view CMS acquisition as a learning process that encompasses the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to enable individuals at any age to manage their learning and work lives. This emphasis on learning rather than immediate decisions refocuses career guidance on activities that include decision learning, opportunity awareness, transition learning, and self-awareness. It also involves exploring how individuals acquire and apply these skills and knowledge. Despite the demonstrated positive impact of CMS acquisition in educational settings, such as increased degree completion rates, reduced dropouts, and smoother transitions to the world of work, the potential for developing CMS acquisition remains to some extent unrealized. Guidance services often focus on supporting students' educational choices and academic growth within their chosen field, rather than enhancing the acquisition of CMS.

There is limited understanding of how career practitioners understand CMS, particularly within the context of Finnish higher education. This presentation introduces the findings from a phenomenographic study of career practitioners' varying conceptions of developing CMS at the Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS). The study addressed two research questions: What are career practitioners' conceptions of developing CMS? What are the themes that distinguish the qualitatively different conceptions of developing CMS? Phenomenographic analysis results in a structured set of categories that describe the qualitative differences in how people experience or understand a phenomenon. These categories are nested in hierarchies, with higher levels representing increasing complexity and sophistication. The categories are distinguished by themes, which are referred to as "themes of expanding awareness", and which span the entire data set.

The analysis of interview data revealed four distinct descriptive categories reflecting career practitioners' conceptions of developing CMS at UAS. Developing CMS was conceived as (1) an unplanned response, (2) situational interaction, (3) a structured intervention, and (4) comprehensive practice. The differences appeared along five themes: approach, implementation, rationale, primary focus and orientation. Results align with previous evidence that career practitioners' conceptions of CMS differ in multiple ways and vary in emphasis. Furthermore, the findings show that the developing CMS is not self-evident or fully understood by all career practitioners at UAS. The description of the variation in the conceptions aims to

broaden the understanding of the themes that may play an essential role in developing counselling practices and enhancing career practitioners' competencies in the context of higher education institutions.

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S1B-2 Causing dilemmas. School staff supporting parents of students in critical educational transitions

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Research questions, objectives, and theoretical framework

Knowledge about collaboration between school staff and parents of students who are struggling in school is essential for schools' ability to support these students' educational transitions. Research shows that parents play an important role in students' schooling and that parents from all social backgrounds are heavily involved in their children's educational transitions (see, for example, Barberis et al., 2016; Osman et al., 2021). However, the individualisation in schools, with parents being more responsible for their children's schooling, makes it harder for families from lower and marginalised classes to support their children (Ule et al., 2015), children who may face greater challenges in school and in educational transitions. In alignment, studies show the significance of schools supporting parents so that they in turn can support their children, especially parents of children with school difficulties and challenges in educational transitions (Barnes et al., 2020; Lundahl et al., 2023). Good school-parent collaboration for these students can have a significant impact on their schooling and transitions. However, schools' work with parents to students in so-called critical educational transitions (Sundelin & Lundahl, 2023) is under-researched. This abstract focuses an ongoing Swedish research project on schools' work with parents of students at risk of critical transitions.

In Sweden, the transition from primary school to upper secondary education (USE) for students not qualifying for the national programmes (NP) at USE is an example of such a critical transition. Students who do not become eligible to NP are referred to one of four individual programmes (IP), a remedial program at upper secondary level. The aim of the IP's is to prepare students to progress to a NP, other education or work. The transition to IP is often accompanied by experiences of stigmatisation and an institutional gap which causes among all, uncertainty and anxiety for both the students and their families (Lundahl et al, 2023). As this critical transition applies to approximately 15% of students in grade 9 in Sweden, there is an urgent need to increase the knowledge about schools' work with parents of these students.

The aim of this study is to explore how school staff work with parents of students at risk of not qualifying for NP at upper secondary school and the conditions under which they work with parents. Research questions include:

What are the organizational conditions for school staffs' work with parents?

What methods and strategies do school actors use?

The study draws on Michael Lipsky's (2010) theory of street-level bureaucrats which argues that although public employees have a high degree of discretion, the discretion is limited by organisational and institutional conditions. Therefore, we also use the organisational analytical concepts normative, cognitive and behavioural structures (Scott et al, 2007), to explore the relationship between school actors' discretion and organisational conditions.

Methodology

A multiple case study design with two schools has been applied with interviews, observations and document studies. The schools were selected using a purposive sampling approach (Bryman, 2018); both schools would have a higher proportion of students of year 9 students at risk of not qualifying for NP at USE. In the schools included, Suburban School and City School, approximately 25% of the students did not qualify for NP. This presentation is mainly based on semi-structured interviews with school staff but also on observations of parents' meetings. In both schools, the principals (n2), teachers (n5), career counsellors (n2) and student support staff (n4) were interviewed, a total of 13 interviews. The analysis of the transcribed interviews is carried out in several steps starting with an open reading of the transcriptions and discussions between the two researchers to identify central themes in the material. This has been followed by a thematic analysis of the interviews based on the research questions and the themes identified in the first step. The second stage of the analysis is a work in progress.

Expected outcomes

The analysis is ongoing and more final results will be presented at the conference. So far, the analysis points to ethical and professional dilemmas as well as success factors related to the organisational conditions and school actors strategies, highlighting that the organisation can lead to work with parents ‘falling through the cracks’ and students becoming responsible for the contact between school and parents. One conclusion is that the work of teachers and career counsellors with parents of students in critical transitions needs to be professionalised.

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S1B-3 Predictors of early school leaving in the Nordics – comparison of Sweden and Finland

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Completing upper secondary education is crucial for both accessing higher education and securing employment. Likewise, early school leaving is widely recognized as a key indicator of social disadvantage, such as unemployment, poverty, early retirement, exclusion from the labour market, and not participating in education in later life (Bäckman & Nilsson, 2011; Järvinen, 2020). Given these factors, non-completion of upper secondary education by the age of 22 may serve as an early indicator of an individual's risk of experiencing a lower social position later in life (cf. Kallio, Kauppinen & Erola, 2016). Early school leaving not only diminishes social growth and well-being of individuals, but also imposes substantial costs on society through increased expenditures on healthcare, social services, and reduced economic productivity (Nordström Skans et al., 2017). As a result, early leaving from education is a major concern for both scholars and policymakers, prompting a range of policy measures and initiatives designed to support young people's education and facilitate their transition from school to work (Jørgensen et al., 2019).

Early school leaving and its associated risk factors have been extensively studied at the individual, family and school levels (e.g., González-Rodriguez et al., 2019). As a novel contribution to the existing literature, this study aims to develop a comprehensive model for predicting early school leaving while emphasizing the contextual differences produced by labour markets, educational systems, and education policies. We have selected two countries that belong to the Nordic universalistic welfare regime, characterized by a comprehensive school system, widespread participation in post-compulsory education, and relatively few barriers to accessing higher education (Walther, 2006). However, over the last 30 years, Sweden and Finland have undergone policy reforms that have led to varying degrees of deviation from this universalistic model (Jørgensen et al., 2019). In Sweden, neoliberal education policies have contributed to a decline in academic performance (Statens offentliga utredningar, 2020), and while academic performance has declined somewhat in recent years, Finland has continued to maintain relatively high completion rates (Sahlberg, 2021). This growing divergence over time allows for the study of early school leaving processes and the factors influencing them within different societal contexts.

In this study, we utilize high-quality register data on Swedish and Finnish individuals born in 1974 (cohort 1) and 1996 (cohort 2) to examine the predictors of early school leaving. Since the datasets cannot be merged, analyses are conducted separately for each country using identical research designs and analytical methods. Both datasets are structured at the family level and include information on both individuals and their parents. Our dependent variable, *early school leaving*, is defined as not having attained an upper secondary diploma by the age of 21 and not being enrolled in education during that year. To study its predictors, we apply a diverse set of independent variables, including gender, migration background, parental education, parental income, grades, and the socioeconomic indicators of the residential area. To assess whether the predictors of early school leaving have changed over time, we introduce interaction terms between the cohort variable and relevant independent variables. The data will be analysed using linear probability models, as they provide unbiased estimates of average effect sizes, allowing for comparisons between Sweden and Finland (cf. Mood, 2010).

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S1B-4 The Politics of Skills: Competing Visions of Education and Social Mobility

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This research critically examines the dominant policy narratives shaping skills development in the UK by comparing two key policy documents: the Conservative government's *Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth* and the Labour Party's *Learning and Skills for Economic Recovery, Social Cohesion and a More Equal Britain*. Using Bacchi's *What's the Problem Represented to Be?* approach, the analysis explores how both policies construct the 'problem' of skills shortages, revealing a shared reliance on human capital theory and an instrumentalist framing of education that prioritises economic growth over broader social objectives.

Despite political differences, both parties maintain a technocratic approach that reinforces market-driven solutions, positioning skills as a means to enhance economic competitiveness rather than as a vehicle for social mobility or equality. This continued reliance on human capital theory, despite longstanding critiques and limited empirical evidence of its effectiveness in reducing inequalities, reflects a persistent policy orthodoxy in UK education and skills strategies.

The paper situates UK debates within wider global discussions on the evolving role of education in contemporary welfare states, particularly in the context of increased mobility, shifting labour market demands, and rising social inequalities. It considers how policy framings of 'skills shortages' interact with broader welfare and labour market policies, shaping individual career pathways and reinforcing structural inequalities. By drawing on comparative policy analysis, the paper highlights how the UK's marketised approach to skills policy contrasts with alternative models that seek to balance economic productivity with social inclusion.

Methodologically, the paper employs critical policy analysis, drawing on discourse theory to examine how political and ideological assumptions shape the framing of skills and education. The findings highlight how economic imperatives continue to dominate education policy discourse, crowding out alternative perspectives that emphasise education's role in fostering citizenship, critical thinking, and broader social development.

By critically interrogating these policy framings, this paper contributes to the wider literature on the role of human capital theory in shaping skills policies. It calls for a re-evaluation of policy assumptions and a shift towards a more holistic approach that integrates economic, social, and educational priorities. In doing so, the paper offers insights relevant not only to UK policy but also to broader discussions on the role of skills in contemporary welfare states.

Session 1C - Migration transitions and careers

02-10-2025 - 10:30 - 12:00

Hall: Stjörnugerði

S1C-1 The challenges of social inclusion and recognition for career guidance of newly arrived migrant youth

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The purpose of this paper is to discuss the professional considerations arising from the principle of recognition (Honneth, 1995) and the requirement for social inclusion (Silver, 1995) in study and career guidance for newly arrived individuals. The discussion is based on a completed study examining guidance for newly arrived individuals in Sweden. This study was grounded in interviews with counsellors, where they reflected on challenges and opportunities in working with this group of guidance seekers, as well as the pedagogical considerations that emerged from this work. To date, two articles have been published (Hertzberg, 2023, 2024), while several are under editorial review. The research from which these results emanated employed a qualitative research strategy, had a cross-sectional design, used interviews as a method, and employed a thematic analysis (Bryman, 2016)

In the first article (Hertzberg, 2023, 2024), which focus recognition several different aspects of recognition are highlighted, as a) recognition of prior learning, competencies, and experiences; b) educational and vocational aspirations; c) norms and values; d) the prospect of individual development, and the recognition of harsh and therefore noteworthy e) conditions for living. The analysis draws attention to the fact that opportunities for development, as well as the recognition of particularly difficult and thus noteworthy life circumstances, are usually acknowledged without more extensive objections, but that the recognition of previously established knowledge, skills and experiences, study and career aspirations as well as norms and values can, according to the interviewees, lead to goal conflicts in career guidance practice (although the relevance of a recognition approach was generally emphasised).

In the second article (Hertzberg, n.d.), which focus on social inclusion, it is found that the concept of social inclusion, as described by the counsellors in this study, encompasses more than just workforce participation—it extends to belonging within a community, social relationships, and access to rights. Their guidance practice aims to be inclusive, emphasizing three clear steps: 1) the introduction of an education system (providing an overview of the education system to newly arrived individuals); 2) projecting an educational path (assisting in planning of an educational trajectory), and 3) making the path feasible and reasonable (ensuring that the educational journey through the system and into the workforce is realistic.). The question of length raises complexities - should the path described above be long or short? External factors, such as institutional demands, legislation, and preferences of the counselee, can either shorten or lengthen the path. While the prevailing guidance pedagogy emphasizes long-term educational and career choices, the pursuit of social inclusion extends beyond immediate goals. Counsellors must navigate these tensions, drawing on their professional expertise and discretion while considering external constraints.

Following the empirical findings from these studies, it could be said that the adherence to principles of recognition and the strive for social inclusion directs attention to two moments in the counselling of newly arrived migrant youth: autonomy and self-realization. First, the counsellors in my study finds it necessary for didactical reasons to depart from strong definition of autonomy. Secondly, there was a conflict between demands for immediate insertion onto the labour market, fuelled by external interests and

sometimes the counselees themselves, and long-term career planning which also is defended by mainstream counselling methodology.

Outcome. The paper will outline the direction for a general discussion on the results from this research project, focusing partly on the concept of recognition, and partly on the development of career guidance counselling for newly arrived migrants. The following questions will be at the focus of my discussion: a) what is the point of focussing on recognition in the analysis of career guidance counselling for newly arrived migrants, b) which methodologically derived end goals are indispensable in this practice, and must be defended from, for example, external policy demands, c) which moments in the guiding process has to be re-evaluated and subject to change?

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S1C-2 Bridging School and Migrant Families – Multilingual Tutors as New Professionals in Finnish Schools

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When evaluating the equity of an education system, one key criterion its "capacity to respond to the challenges posed by an increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse post-modern diversity" (Mary & Young, 2018). From a social justice perspective, fostering inclusion among marginalized students is central in education. In Finland, migration over the past few decades has rapidly diversified schools both culturally and linguistically. Still, ethnic educational inequalities remain pronounced, and students from non-Finnish backgrounds often report a weaker sense of belonging to school. In Finland's largest cities, a new group of professionals—multilingual tutors—works with students from non-Finnish backgrounds and their families.

Multilingual tutors facilitate interaction between schools and families, support the learning of linguistically and culturally diverse students, and advocate for ethnically marginalized students within the school community. These tutors are often described as language and culture bridges, especially in the case of newly arrived students (Munhall et al., 2024). However, their professional role and practical work have not yet been studied in the Finnish context, despite the fact that such roles have existed in some municipalities since the early 2010s, and their number has grown over the years. Research on similar professionals in neighboring Nordic countries has found that these professionals often are excluded on the pedagogical decision-making and left at the margins of education, even though they play a crucial role as mediators of language and culture (Dávila, 2016, Hedman & Fisher, 2022). The challenges related to

well-being and inclusion of culturally diverse students and the school's strategies for supporting them, are not unique to Finland, but are shared across Nordic countries with a recent increase in immigration.

This presentation investigates the challenges and opportunities associated with the professional role of multilingual tutors in supporting the sense of belonging of culturally diverse students in Finnish schools. My research addresses two key questions, 1) How do Finnish urban schools engage with students' diverse cultural backgrounds and religions in day-to-day practices, and 2) How do multilingual tutors perceive their role in supporting the well-being, learning, and inclusion of culturally diverse students? The ethnographic research data were produced in two lower secondary schools in the Helsinki metropolitan area. This data includes field notes over the course of one school year and individual interviews with six multilingual tutors, as well as teachers and principals. The data will be analyzed using the theoretical framework of culturally responsive education (Gay, 2010).

I argue that even culturally diverse Finnish schools vary in their cultural responsiveness in pedagogy and practices. One of the schools was more organized around multicultural practices, which reflected the principal's views on student agency and inclusion. In this school, some multilingual tutors played a key role in engaging families with the school—a role acknowledged by both their colleagues and the principal. The tutors reported addressing misconceptions and prejudice among parents about the educational system, particularly concerning vocational education and training.

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S1C-3 Marketing rural education and producing rural workers? a mixed analysis on recruitment and employability within the Natural Resource programme

Elin Ennerberg [1] Janna Lundberg [1], Anna-Maria Fjellman [2]

[1] Malmö University, Sweden
[2] Gothenburg University, Sweden

Contemporary global economic and trade challenges are creating new risks in domestic food production for the Nordic welfare states. Societal resilience requires an ongoing labour and skills supply to local industries including agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry (SCB 2022:41; 2025). At the same time, upper secondary schools carrying the Natural resource programme have difficulties recruiting students for the vocational specializations directed towards jobs in these sectors (Arbetsförmedlingen 2023; 2021). The programme contains six specializations: (1) Agriculture, (2) Forestry, (3), Animal care, (4) Hippology,

(5) Nature tourism and (6) Gardening. However, the labour market outcomes for the different orientations vary in terms of employability rates, income levels and work conditions (Skolverket 2022).

The upper secondary school programme can be seen as essential for educating individuals in areas important for social resilience. At the same time, our study shows that marketing directed towards prospective students often focuses on images of rural idyll; school community and social relations as well as interests-based educational choice in relation to pets, equestrian sport or agricultural machinery. In this study we explore a potential mismatch of the potential for solving societal problems through certain educational and vocational work with the marketing of these jobs to potential students. Moreover, we consider the occupational prospects for students after completing the education. From a career guidance perspective, we also consider the professional dilemmas of navigating school marketing materials, individual guidance practices based on students' interests and societal expectations of guiding towards certain labour shortages.

Our theoretical points of departure include the marketization and commercialization of education (Ball 2006) and in particular the Swedish case of extensive dismantling of the welfare state (Dovemark et al 2018). Marketization has previously been shown to impact students' everyday life in private schools (Allelin 2019), but more research is needed in relation to how particular educational programs are presented and marketed to prospective students. Moreover, our study builds on the theoretical insights of labour market sociology which highlight the effects of "job mismatches" on school leavers following certain educational paths (Wolbers, 2003). Our study is innovative in that it considers both the narratives of school markets geared towards a particular educational programme *and* highlighting the labour market consequences of choosing specialized paths within this broader educational program.

The study utilizes several data sources and will incorporate a mixed methodology, using qualitiative content analysis and descriptive statistics paired paired with spatial visualisation The data sources include: marketing educational materials (videos, text, pictures) used for recruiting students and population-based register data from the Gothenburg Longitudinal Database (GOLD). The data contains information on students' location, grades, school choices, program affiliation and family background. A sub-sample of all students attending the Natural resource programme in upper secondary education during the years 1998-2022 was selected.

Expected outcomes include an analysis of the process of marketization directed towards prospective students at the Natural Resource Programme. We will also be able to explore and uncover changes in recruitment patterns over time and how employability differs between programme specializations. Through these different analyses we will visualize tensions and promises constructed in the marketing materials with the consequences for larger student populations.

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S1C-4 The aspirations – attainment paradox: educational transitions of immigrant youth

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In Sweden, as in many countries, immigrant youth tend to exhibit higher educational aspirations than majority and native-born youth, yet their attainment often falls short. Despite their ambitions, immigrant and minority students can encounter institutional obstacles that lead to lower academic performance and educational attainment, which in turn impacts their long-term socioeconomic prospects (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2009). Against this backdrop, the research question to be answered in this study is: How do members of a systematically disadvantaged population accept a worse outcome than they hope for? While much of the existing research on the aspirations-attainment paradox offers structural, social, and cultural explanations that account for its existence, the question of how the affected youth ultimately reconcile the mismatch between their aspirations and actual outcomes is mainly unexplored (cf. Sundelin et al. 2023, Dollman et al. 2023, Nieuwenhuis et al. 2016).

This paper examines two potential explanations for how students negotiate and come to terms with the disparity between what they want to accomplish and the options before them. The first process, “cooling out,” involves lowering aspirations as youth encounter structural or perceived barriers within the educational system, leading them to adjust their goals downward (Goffman 1952, Clark 1960). In this research, we introduce a second process, extending the commonly used concept of cooling out, by introducing its alter, “branching out.” While cooling out describes the downward adjustment of aspirations in response to lost opportunities and perceived limitations, branching out refers to a process where students become aware of new, previously unknown educational or career pathways.

In this study, our data consists of 33 qualitative individual and group interviews that included a total of 22 students and 20 teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and field notes collected in two Swedish municipalities we refer to as Riverton and Forest Hill. The interviewed students were born outside of Sweden and were in their final year in high school (generally, age 19-20). A majority of the interview participants began school in Sweden when they were 9 years or older. Participants were asked to describe their educational trajectory from starting school to finishing high school, and school personnel were asked to describe how the school organized and worked with immigrant students, particularly when it came to their educational transitions. Participation was voluntary. We informed all students in the school about the project, and those interested in participating contacted the researchers or a study counselor to arrange an interview[1]. On average, interviews lasted one hour.

Our results show that cooling-out processes often are constructed through systemic barriers, miscommunications, or misrecognition within the school system. These barriers—whether in the form of insufficient academic challenge, delayed integration into mainstream educational tracks, or language and cultural misunderstandings—can hinder students' progress. The preparatory classes and introduction program (IM), for example, exemplifies how institutional segregation creates structural delays in educational progression. The repeated miscommunication between teachers, students, and parents about academic performance and pathways further exacerbates the situation. The gap between student aspirations and the reality of their academic standing results in diminished long-term goals and attainments. However, branching out processes offers an alternative view of changing aspirations, where students adjust their aspirations not due to lowered expectations, but because of exposure to new opportunities and information. In our interpretation, this finding is part of the explanation of how foreign-

born immigrant students are about to close the attainment gap to native Swedish students (cf. Jonsson & Mood 2023). Rather than being constrained by systemic barriers, students who branch out encounter previously unknown career paths and educational possibilities that align with their strengths and interests. They are able to see a path around obstacles that insures that entering a vocational high school program is not regarded as an academic closure; it´s part of a pragmatic adjustment to the circumstances they face to achieve their long-term ambitions to enter university. This adaptability allows them to revise their goals without a sense of failure. Family and peer support networks play a critical role in this process, fostering a sense of possibility and optimism despite the challenges posed by the school system. These findings highlight the dynamic interplay between the limiting and empowering aspects of educational trajectories and transitions for immigrant-background youth. The branching out process underscores the importance of providing students with accurate information, role models, and opportunities for exploration that can help them discover diverse pathways to success.

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[1] The municipalities, the schools, and the interviewees were given pseudonyms, and the project was ethically vetted by the Ethics Committee in Sweden (Reg. no. 2023-01748-01).

Session 1D - Policy, systems and discourse

02-10-2025 - 10:30 - 12:00

Hall: Þinggerði

S1D-1 How Marketisation Works as a Driver for an Academic-Vocational Divide in Three Nordic Countries

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Aim and Research Questions

This study explores how marketisation works as a driver for an academic-vocational divide in upper secondary education (USS) across Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden. It investigates the interplay between neoliberal reforms and educational stratification, addressing three research questions:

What key trends arise from the interaction of marketisation and the academic-vocational divide in each country?What similarities and differences exist between the countries regarding these trends?Which trends are context-bound (particular) versus general across the Nordic settings?

Methods

The study employs a comparative critical meta-analysis (cf. Apple, 2004; Nylund, et. al., 2018), synthesizing data from national statistics, policy documents, curricula, and prior research (2015–2025). The analytical framework builds on Ball and Youdell's (2008) concepts of *endogenous* (e.g., New Public Management techniques) and *exogenous* (e.g., privatization, competition) marketisation concepts, alongside Bernstein's (2000) concepts of *classification* (purpose) and *framing* (control), to explore how marketisation interacts with power dynamics expressed in the arrangement of educational pathways. The tri-country comparison highlights variations in governance models, curricular structures, and social outcomes, contextualized within what often has been labeled a 'Nordic welfare model'.

Outcomes

Tentative results reveal how marketisation in different ways exacerbates the academic-vocational divide through three interconnected trends:

Curriculum Trends: Reduced emphasis on (and/ or narrowing the classification of) general subjects in vocational education and training (VET), aligning curricula with short-term labor market demands. E.g. Sweden's 2011 reform prioritized employability, shrinking general content in VET by 20%, while Denmark's dual system entrenched workplace-based VET with minimal academic overlap. Iceland's hybrid model allowed school-designed curricula but retained academic gatekeeping for higher education (HE).

Policy Trends: Decentralization and competition, through different expressions in different countries, intensified stratification. Sweden's voucher system and independent school growth (31.7% USS enrollment) widened gaps in program (and school brand) prestige. Denmark's taximeter funding tied resources to student numbers, marginalizing access to VET in peripheral municipalities. Iceland's admission policies favored academic performance, entrenching social hierarchies. All countries face

tensions between political discourse trying to expand VET participation while maintaining HE preparatory (HEPP) dominance.

Social Trends: Marketisation deepened socioeconomic and geographic divides. VET increasingly enrolls students from disadvantaged backgrounds, with urban-rural disparities in program availability. Gender polarization persists, with male and female dominated VET tracks. Despite Iceland's 2021 HE-access reforms, fewer than 7% of VET graduates transition to HE, mirroring patterns in Sweden and Denmark (the "dead-end" problem).

Cross-Country Insights

Similarities: All three nations link VET to labor market needs, limit HE access (and/ or preparation for successful transition to/ participation in HE), and reflect (and reinforce) class/gender stratification and fuel an academic-vocational divide (a market logic upholds HEPP's academic status) that also has a rural-urban component.

Differences: Sweden's integrated VET model contrasts Denmark's dual system, while Iceland blends both. Sweden's centralized curricula differ from Denmark's and Iceland's decentralized governance. Exogenous privatization dominates in Sweden; Denmark and Iceland emphasize an endogenous privatization.

Context-Bound Trends

General: Marketisation universally heightens academic-vocational stratification, driven by competition and neoliberal governance.

Particular: National models shape outcomes; Sweden's equity-legacy clashes with market reforms, Denmark's employer-led VET resists academic integration, and Iceland's hybrid system struggles with HE parity.

Contribution

The study advances understanding of marketisation's role in reinforcing educational divides within Nordic welfare states, emphasizing how neoliberal reforms interact with institutional legacies within upper-secondary school, illustrating what trends that are more context-bound (particular) versus general across Nordic settings.

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S1D-2 Career perspectives at the political level of curriculum of higher education

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General description

This study explores the intersection of career insights and higher education (HE), specifically within the context of curriculum studies. Our primary research question focuses on how the national qualification frameworks of the UK, Denmark, France, and Germany align with the goals of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) in preparing graduates for various career pathways. We also aim to understand how these frameworks reflect different interpretations of HE's societal role.

Our conference contribution highlights our research as a case study of the relationship between curriculum and career studies. As scholars in HE research who draw from career development and guidance, we have identified a significant gap: the emphasis on employability often overshadows a more holistic understanding of career. This observation aligns with Healy's (2022, 2023) findings, which similarly critiques the tendency toward a competency-oriented approach within HE.

We will present a comparative analysis of the political influences that shape HE curricula across the four European countries, shedding light on the underlying political agendas related to career preparation. Examining the connections among career preparation, HE, and curriculum research, we aim to enrich the ongoing discourse surrounding curriculum studies in this context.

To guide our analysis, we employ a curriculum theory developed by Stefan Hopmann, which categorises curricula into three interconnected levels: political, programmatic, and practical. This framework allows us to emphasise the political dimension of curricula while recognising their connections to programmatic and practical considerations. Through this theoretical lens, we conduct a document analysis using three analytical modes, facilitating a comprehensive examination of the qualification frameworks and their relation to career preparedness.

Methodology

The analytical strategy for this case study was structured around two rounds of thematic coding, guided by Stefan Hopmann's curriculum theory, which encompasses three modes of curriculum: order, sequence, and choice. These modes are interrelated, influencing each other rather than existing in a strict hierarchy.

According to Hopmann (Hopmann et al., 1995), the mode of order in education pertains to the content that should be taught, rooted in traditions. The mode of sequence involves the structuring and teaching methods that determine how students engage with this content and the order in which they learn. Lastly, choice emphasises aligning content and methods with students' interests, political agendas, and curricular frameworks, highlighting the social dynamics of educational selection and its influence on future expectations.

In the initial coding round, these three modes served as analytical categories. In the subsequent thematic coding, the mode of choice was further divided, by the researchers, into four subcodes reflecting different career perspectives:

The Academic System: This subcode focuses on educational and research structures, including curricula, research activities, and career pathways within academia.

The Society/Non-Specialist: This highlights the necessity of communicating complex information to diverse audiences while addressing societal and ethical considerations.

The Student Self: This pertains to personal attributes such as responsibility, decision-making, autonomous learning, and adaptability.

The Professional System: This involves students or graduates engaging in the labor market or acting as specialists in various professions.

Collectively, these subcodes clarify the target audience for the mode of choice—whether focused on individuals inside or outside academia—and identify the stakeholders involved, whether they are students or society at large. This reflects the interconnectedness between the educational system and the broader societal context.

Outcomes

The research outcomes reveal significant insights into the interplay between curriculum frameworks and career development within HE across the four European nations. By utilising Hopmann's curriculum theory, the study highlights notable variations in how each country interprets the purpose of HE and its role in career preparation.

Specifically, the analysis indicates that the German and French frameworks lean more towards a professional system, prioritising vocational preparedness. In contrast, the Danish framework emphasises an academic system focused on broader educational outcomes. In contrast, the UK framework offers a unique perspective centring on the individual student experience.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that current qualification frameworks primarily emphasise discipline-specific and generic skills, often neglecting the broader competencies necessary for comprehensive career development. This gap underscores the necessity for an integrated approach, demonstrating how the fusion of career research with curriculum analysis can yield new insights into the political dimensions of educational policy.

This research significantly contributes to career- and HE research by integrating career development theory with curriculum theory, creating a novel framework for understanding how career development is conceptualised within national qualification frameworks. Our findings advocate for further programmatic and practical exploration, providing valuable implications for policymakers and HE institutions aiming to align education with career readiness better.

Ultimately, we hope this study not only bridges existing gaps but also sparks ongoing dialogue and innovation at the intersection of education and career research. Our findings emphasise the importance of continued research and collaboration to ensure that educational programs remain relevant and responsive to the changing needs of both students, employers in HE and society, and we hope to discuss this at the NoRNet conference.

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S1D-3 How the Student Union Reproduced or Challenged the Idea of the Technologist during the 20th Century

Petronella Rosenquist [1]

[1] Malmö university, Malmö, Sweden

Individual paper

How the Student Union Reproduced or Challenged the Idea of the Technologist during the 20th Century

Author: Petronella Rosenquist, Ph.D. student in history and history didactic at Malmö university, petronella.rosenquist@mau.se

Keywords: Technology education, gender, student union, digital methods, image analysis.

A technologist is an aspiring engineer in training. The concept is thus part of the engineering profession's “childhood” and is rooted in an educational environment to which not everyone has access. Previous research has shown that technology education, both in the Nordic region and globally, is perceived as male-coded (Guerrero Cantarell, 2022; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2021; Fisher, Mendoza-Denton et al., 2019). Despite significant investments, achieving a balanced gender representation remains challenging, which can significantly impact women's opportunities in the field (Nordvall, 2023; Eccles, 2014).

To expand the understanding of the idea and perception of the technologist, this study explores the phenomenon historically, based on how the student union at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden contributed to shaping the idea of the engineering student during the 20th century. In 1927, the Chalmers Comrades' Association joined the Swedish National Union of Students (SFS). This meant that the interests of both female and male students were to be represented by the student union. During the 1960s and 1970s, SFS was given a political agenda and raised issues of gender equality and democracy in the educational environment (Skoglund, 2020; Skoglund, 1994). Thus, the Student Union serves as a good entry point into understanding how student representatives have reproduced or challenged the idea of the technologist.

The study employs quantitative comparative analysis to trace patterns throughout history. The three periods selected for the study — 1948–1952, 1968–1972, and 1988–1992 — provide the opportunity to examine the phenomenon from different social contexts and its development over time. The source material used for the study is Chalmers' student magazine, *Tofsen*, where photographs and editorial cartoons from the three periods are analysed using digital methods. The study utilises the digital tool NVivo to analyse a large amount of data, comprising approximately 2,000 images. However, the study does not employ traditional image analysis, which typically focuses on the composition, purpose, and context of the image. Rather, the focus in this study is on patterns and trends. By combining image analysis and digital methods, the opportunity is provided to interpret and analyse images comparatively and from different perspectives, gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that surrounded and constructed the ideas and perceptions of what constitutes a technologist.

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S1D-4 Career guidance as social practice: Counsellors’ strategies and dilemmas in the Danish Municipal Youth Initiative

Bo Klindt Poulsen [1]

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General description on research questions, objectives, and theoretical framework

This paper examines how career guidance is enacted in practice within a specific policy context in Denmark: the Municipal Youth Initiative (KUI). Introduced in 2019, KUI aims to support young people (aged 15–25) in making successful transitions from compulsory education into upper secondary education or employment. As part of the Danish welfare state’s effort to ensure educational retention and labour market integration, KUI reflects broader Nordic ideals of equality, early intervention, and institutional trust. However, this initiative also embodies emerging tensions between such ideals and the realities of organisational life in a globalised and performance-oriented policy environment.

The paper asks: *How do career guidance counsellors in KUI navigate their roles amid institutional demands, resource constraints, and ethical commitments to youth support?* In answering this, the paper explores the everyday practices of guidance work, particularly as they relate to young people deemed “at risk” of exclusion. It highlights how local practices are shaped by – and respond to – global pressures for efficiency, accountability, and labour market responsiveness.

KUI has intensified the work of guidance counsellors, especially with youth requiring additional support during transitions between school and employment. Despite this, limited research has examined how counsellors perceive, negotiate, and perform their roles in such complex and dynamic contexts. This paper seeks to illuminate the practical norms, values, and strategies that shape Danish counsellors’ actions, particularly in their work with vulnerable youth.

Rather than viewing guidance as a neutral or individualised activity, the study employs practice theory (Schatzki, 2002; Nicolini, 2009; Buch, 2021) to conceptualise guidance as socially and materially embedded. This analytical lens focuses on the doings, sayings, and normative logics that constitute

guidance as a collective and situated practice, shaped by both local routines and broader institutional logics. In the field of career guidance, practice theory remains underutilised, yet it offers a promising perspective for exploring how guidance is actually performed – not just prescribed.

KUI presents an ideal site for such an investigation, as it represents a convergence of welfare-state ideals with increasingly goal-driven governance. Within this initiative, career counsellors are tasked with delivering collective guidance to all pupils in lower secondary school, while simultaneously offering intensive, individualised support to youth categorised as particularly vulnerable. These dual mandates reflect a broader shift across Nordic welfare systems, where inclusive educational policies coexist with targeted interventions – often under conditions of limited resources and rising expectations.

Methods/methodology

The empirical material derives from an ongoing qualitative study. To investigate how guidance is enacted, the study uses the Interview to the Double method (Nicolini, 2009), which asks professionals to describe their everyday tasks in such detail that a fictional double could carry out the work. This method is particularly suited to exploring the practical and often tacit dimensions of professional practices, offering insight into how practitioners navigate their organisational contexts.

Twelve career counsellors from four Danish municipalities participated in interviews, each lasting approximately one hour. Participants were asked to focus on specific elements of their work, such as collective guidance, interdisciplinary collaboration, or one-on-one counselling with vulnerable youth. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematically coded in alignment with the research question and central concepts from practice theory.

Outcomes/results or expected outcomes

Preliminary findings point to three interrelated themes:

*Balancing collective and individual demands:*Counsellors are caught between the formal requirement to deliver standardised guidance to all students and their personal commitment to supporting at-risk youth. This tension produces dilemmas in prioritisation and professional self-understanding.

*Local norms under systemic pressure:*The practices of guidance are heavily shaped by municipal objectives, administrative systems, and resource constraints. Counsellors often find themselves negotiating between what they perceive as ethically sound guidance and what is organisationally feasible or required.

*Informal communities of practice:*Collegial relationships and informal peer support emerge as crucial resources for navigating complexity. Counsellors frequently rely on each other to make sense of ambiguous expectations and to sustain a sense of professional integrity.

Together, these findings suggest that career guidance in the Danish welfare state is not a straightforward implementation of policy but a complex, negotiated practice shaped by institutional logics, professional values, and everyday constraints.

The paper offers a grounded exploration of how local practices are situated within, and shaped by, broader local–global tensions. It illustrates how a welfare-oriented guidance initiative is influenced by international educational trends, including performativity, datafication, and targeted interventions. Furthermore, the paper contributes a critical perspective on the Nordic model, showing how institutional ideals of inclusion and equality coexist with structural inequalities and professional dilemmas. It thus contributes to ongoing debates about whether and how Nordic education systems live up to their promises of equal opportunity and social mobility.

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Symposium A

02-10-2025 - 13:00 - 14:30

Hall: Aðalgerði

FinnFram (Finna vägar i en tid av stora framtidsutmaningar), Research School in Transitions, Careers and Guidance

Peter Gladoic Håkansson [1]Anna Pallin [2], Kicki Hägggblom [3], M. Ammar Syed [4], Elisabeth Berg [4], Ramajana Halilovic [2], Mahtab Eshaghbeigi-Hosseini [2], Mato Bošnjak [1], Rida Nasri [5], Petronella Rosenquist [1]

[1] Malmö University, Sweden
[2] Umeå University, Sweden
[3] Åbo Akademi University, Finland
[4] University of Gothenburg, Sweden
[5] Stockholm University, Sweden

FinnFram research school started in February 2022 with two aims. The first was to develop teacher educators' ability to analyse to what extent and how career guidance is directly or indirectly involved in all-school-activities [hela skolans ansvar]. Career paths have become more complex and risky, which has particularly affected individuals who do not have an upper secondary education, whose parents are low-educated, who have a non-Nordic background and for individuals with disabilities. The second goal was to make a substantial contribution to the international research field in career learning, guidance and transitions between school, further education and work. The field of research is generally small, and a community that involves international collaborations broadens the opportunities for knowledge exchange and thus the opportunities to push the research front forward.

Ten doctoral students participate in the research school. Their doctoral projects demonstrate a great variety in subjects and disciplines, which demonstrates the broadness of the field. In autumn 2025, their projects are beginning to be completed. In this symposium, 9 doctoral students will shortly present their doctoral projects.

The symposium will be organized as a roundtable, where the moderator will lead the talk. Each PhD Student will have a few minutes to present the main essence of their PhD-project. The conversation will be about methods, results and process, but also on the utility of the results, i.e., how study- and career counsellors can put the results into practice.

The 90 minutes symposium will be disposed of as follows:

Each participant will answer the following questions:

What is you PhD-project about (hiss pitch). Why is this important? (3 min each, total 27 minutes)

Method: How have you done? What did you find new, exciting, challenging in your method? (3 min each, total 27 minutes)

How can your findings be used practically? What new knowledge would you specifically like to pass on to practitioners? (2 minutes each, total 18 minutes)

Summing up, 5 minutes

Moderator: Peter Gladoic Håkansson, associate professor, Malmö University, and member of the FinnFram steering committee.

Participants:

Anna Pallin, PhD Student, Umeå University.

PhD Project: *Open doors to career learning? Swedish upper secondary students' access to career information in various online and physical social spaces*

Kicki Häggblom, Doctoral researcher, Åbo Akademi University

PhD Project: *Career Learning in Upper Secondary Education*

Ammar Syed, PhD. Student, University of Gothenburg

PhD Project: *What is out there for me? An ethnographic study of class, ethnicity and transitions from lower to upper secondary education in an urban Swedish context*

Elisabeth Berg, PhD. Student, University of Gothenburg

PhD Project: *A qualitative study on the factors that affect how schools in structurally disadvantaged areas provide study and career guidance*. [En kvalitativ studie om vilka faktorer som påverkar hur skolor i strukturellt missgynnade områden gör studie- och yrkesvägledning]

Ramajana Halilovic, PhD Student, Umeå University

PhD Project: *Navigating the transition gap - A narrative study focusing on the stories of young adults and guidance counsellors living and working in the transition gap*

Mahtab Eshaghbeigi-Hosseini, PhD-student, Umeå University

PhD Project: *Young people's career learning through work experience placements – material, embodied and affective encounters with the world of work.*

Mato Bošnjak, PhD Student, Malmö University

PhD Project: *For the benefit of the state; Socialist Yugoslavia's institutional efforts to control, shape, and utilise labour emigration.*

Rida Nasri, PhD Student, Stockholm University

PhD Project: *A dream of a "bright" future.*

Petronella Rosenquist, PhD Student, Malmö University

PhD Project: *Renegotiating the Image of the Technologist: Gender Representation and Women´s Organisation at the Chalmers University of Technology 1944-1999*

Symposium B

02-10-2025 - 13:00 - 14:30

Hall: Glæsigerði

Critical perspectives on the Finnish guidance and counselling policies and practices

Miika Petteri Kekki [1]Anne-Mari Souto [2], Kalle Vihtari [3], Hannele Pitkänen [4], Kirsi Raetsaari [5], Mira Kalalahti [4], Toni Kosonen [4], Janne Varjo [6]

[1] University of Derby, Derby, United Kingdom
[2] University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland
[3] Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Finland
[4] University of Jyväskylä, Finland
[5] University of Oulu, Finland
[6] University of Helsinki, Finland

The Finnish guidance and counselling system is considered to be of high quality and to encompass various life phases, promoting both equality and social mobility (Toni & Vuorinen, 2020). However, as in all Nordic welfare states, the Finnish system is facing a changing context for guidance due to an ageing population and cuts in public spending. Guidance and counselling research has drawn attention to critical perspectives within the Finnish system, consisting of blind spots that may go unnoticed in the general discussion. This concerns issues particularly related to equal access, minorities, migration, and various inequalities that the guidance and counselling participants face, as well as vague understanding of various guidance practitioners' duties. These blind spots often fall short of an ideally functioning guidance system and turn into cracks that shed light into the challenges that the guidance and counselling practitioners are facing. Also, although guidance and counselling has strong political and legal foundations in Finland, the guidance practices are poorly managed and supported. This results in varying and uneven quality, the level of which is dependent on the contribution of individual practitioners and on local guidance solutions. Our symposium discusses how these cracks and tensions inform the guidance and counselling profession and the guidance practitioner's professional identity by bringing forward examples from different guidance contexts, including a discussion on the issues related to lifelong guidance policies. By looking at lessons learned from the Finnish examples and their potential relevance for other national contexts we wish to engage symposium participants in a discussion on how to develop lifelong guidance practices in cooperation.

Chair, presenters, titles of their presentations and discussant(s)

Chairs:

Dr Miika Kekki, University of Derby and

Dr Anne-Mari Souto, University of Eastern Finland

Presenters:

Dr Mira Kalalahti & Dr Toni Kosonen & Dr Janne Varjo: *Threads with cracks and tensions? Outlining the impact processes of guidance policies and practices*

Dr Kirsi Raetsaari: *Critical Perspectives on Career Guidance Provided by Subject Teachers*

Dr Anne-Mari Souto & Dr Miika Kekki: *Discretionary approaches of career counsellors working with clients in vulnerable positions*

Dr Hannele Pitkänen & Dr Kalle Vihtari: *Tension-loaded quality? How does the "quality" in guidance policy meet the guidance and counselling actor's views on quality?*

Discussants:

Randi Boelskifte Skovhus, VIA University College, Denmark

Ingela Bergmo-Prvulovic, Jönköping University, Sweden

Author(s) of proposal including affiliations

Mira Kalalahti, University of Jyväskylä

Miika Kekki, University of Derby

Toni Kosonen, University of Jyväskylä

Hannele Pitkänen, University of Jyväskylä

Kirsi Raetsaari, University of Oulu

Anne-Mari Souto, University of Eastern Finland

Janne Varjo, University of Helsinki

Kalle Vihtari, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

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Symposium C

02-10-2025 - 13:00 - 14:30

Hall: Þinggerði

Co-creation symposium: Local-global and more-than-human entanglements in guidance practice

Mahtab Eshaghbeigi-Hosseini [1] Sanna Pauliina Toiviainen [2], Anna Bilon-Píorko [3], Sara Peltola [4], Miriam Dimsits [5]

[1] Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden
[2] University of South-Eastern Norway, Notodden, Norway
[3] University of Lower Silesia, Wrocław, Poland
[4] University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland
[5] VIA University College, Aarhus, Denmark

Environmental and social sustainability and developments in artificial intelligence challenges us to rethink how career-related activities, while rooted in local contexts, are participating in larger global and planetary processes and systems. Calls have been made to move away from the universal/ising (Western, middle-class, white) career theories and we need to develop new ways of thinking that go beyond the individual level and contribute to both social and environmental sustainability (Robertson, 2021). It is urgent to look for new conceptual and methodological approaches on how to connect global themes to local levels in meaningful ways in career-related activities.

Drawing on concepts inspired by relational and more-than-human perspectives, this symposium will explore how these perspectives enable us to grasp the local-global entanglements in people's careers and the entangled and relational nature of all being and doing, connecting mundane activities relating to the world around us to global and planetary issues. Recognizing our profound interconnectedness to other humans,living organisms and technology in our localised daily lives.

The Symposium is part of a larger exploration of relational and more-than-human perspectives to career education and guidance started by a collective of guidance educators and PhD-students from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Poland.

This is a co-creational symposium where we welcome all participants from research, policy and practice contexts to a joint exploration of the various ways that local-global entanglements manifest in career-related activities. The aim is to leave the Symposium with new concepts and insights which are applicable in one’s own practice.

Presenters:

Miriam Dimsits: *The Zone of Interest* as a metaphor and concept for advancing sustainable career guidance practice

Mahtab Eshaghbeigi-Hosseini “Feeding the untamable beast? - Career education and Guidance and the question of more-than-social justice”

Sara Peltola: “Matters of facts and care - What and who matters in guidance for sustainable futures”

Sanna Toiviainen & Anna Bilon-Píorko: “Developing the notion of relationality in understanding careers in precarious and vulnerable times”

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Symposium D

02-10-2025 - 13:00 - 14:30

Hall: Sáttagerði

Career education on thin ice at the edge of the world: Greenland, Faroe Islands and Iceland.

Jónína Kárdal [1]Julianna Deirdre Hansen [2], Sif Einarsdóttir [1], Kulunnguaq Korneliussen [3], Lene Andersen [3]

[1] University of Iceland, Iceland
[2] Kambsdal College, Fuglafjørður, Faroe Islands
[3] Aqquat, Nationalt vejledningscenter, Greenland

Symposium

Chair: Jónína Kárdal

Title: *Career education on thin ice at the edge of the world: Greenland, Faroe Islands and Iceland*,

Recent comparative studies on career education and work experience placements (Kettunen, et al, 2023; Einarsdóttir et al., 2023) indicate the smaller countries have weak legal and curricular framing of career education as a systematic educational strategy (Niles & Harris-Bowlsby, 2009) in compulsory education. Nevertheless career education is provided to some students and work experience placements are an option. This symposium presents how career education is framed and implemented within the educational systems of Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland, small, geographically peripheral countries in the Nordic communities.

As in the other Nordic countries the students have the legal entitlement to career counseling but career education as an entity is addressed to different degrees in the national laws and policies. The legislation and curriculum often use career guidance and education interchangeably, adding to the confusion. In the national curriculum career education is not timetabled as separate subjects and specific subject curriculum is yet to be developed, except in Greenland where career education topics are a part of personal development courses. Organization of career education is not clearly specified in most cases and there are few descriptions for the roles of teachers, career guidance counselors, administrators, and labor market partners in implementing the legally mandated career support services. In general quality frameworks are not in place and systematic multilevel evaluations have not been conducted (Einarsdóttir, et al. 2023). There are many similarities also in the structural challenges, for example the lack of services to children with personal and social problems. An issue that often falls in the hands of the career counselors who work in the schools taking time from the loosely framed but legally mandated career education activities.

Greenland, Iceland, and Faroe Islands have developed their career education practices under different educational policies and influences. The education systems are similar but policy emphasis, structure, and resources for other services to children and families does also provide unique context in each country. The bottom-up efforts and challenges in implementing career education are discussed within each country. The level of professionalization of career guidance counselors varies also. Higher educational degrees are not yet continuously offered for career guidance counselors in Greenland and Faroe Islands but in Iceland for over 30 years. On the other hand, both Greenland and Faroe Islands have paid more attention to career education and guidance in their policies than Iceland. Recent developments in legislation, policy and implementations are emerging in these small countries often lacking in resources and critical mass to organize and implement services.

In this symposium the development, status, and future direction of career education in each of the three countries will be presented as described in individual paper proposals submitted. Finally, research on the effectiveness and economic benefits of career education is discussed.

Jónína Kárdal presents: Career Education in Iceland: Legal Frameworks, Curricular Shifts, and Implementation Challenges

Deirdre Hansen presents Faroe Islands: Small State - still in need of Education Policy

Kulunnguaq Korneliussen presents Career education in Greenland: Policy changes for the future.

Sif Einarsdóttir presents Effectiveness and economic benefit of career education. Outcome studies and cost benefit analysis in Iceland

Bibilography

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Interactive Practice session

02-10-2025 - 13:00 - 14:30

Hall: Stjörnugerði

Guidance in pathways towards career development – integration/inclusion of immigrants – interactive session

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In this interactive session the focus will be on identifying challenges faced by immigrants and explore how service providers, systems and the society can respond to facilitate inclusion and support the career development of immigrants. The immigrant population in Iceland has increased significantly, from 3.2% in 2000 to over 20% in 2025.

The session will start with two short introductions of projects that have aimed at identifying or developing solutions or pathways for immigrants into work, learning and society. Followed by Q&A from the session participants and basic theme questions:

What are the main challenges of immigrant groups (can they be different based on groups/countries/aim of stay)

What can systems and service providers do to facilitate career development and transitions?

What is the role and capacity of career guidance?

Inputs – short description of two projects

From research to impact: Amplifying the voices of young adult immigrants to shape services.

The "Voices of Young Immigrants – Inclusion in Education, Work, and Society" project, coordinated by the Education and Training Service Centre (ETSC) in Iceland and the Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL), focuses on the inclusion and empowerment of young adult immigrants in the realms of education, working life, and broader societal engagement. This initiative was executed in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and the Ministry of Education and Children. It is a crucial component of Iceland's agenda during its Nordic Council of Ministers presidency in 2023.

The Nordic Council of Ministers, Education and Research (EK-U) and Labor (EK-A) funded the project.

The primary objectives of the project were to:

-Amplify the voices of young adult immigrants

-Illuminate the challenges they currently face

-Propose and develop practical solutions to these challenges

-Involve a vast network of stakeholders.

The project delivered identified challenges and solutions linked to inclusion and represents a significant step towards a more inclusive Iceland, ensuring that young immigrants have the necessary support and opportunities to thrive and contribute to the country's development. Design based research was applied through participation of a large stakeholder network.

Developing pathways for learners at the Lifelong Learning Centre in Suðurnes (MSS)

The Lifelong Learning Centre in Suðurnes, in collaboration with stakeholders in the region, has been developing/designing guidance and education for immigrants. The centre serves a diverse group of individuals focused on the needs of the target group.

In Suðurnes, around 30% of the population are immigrants, and therefore a great need for diverse services and adaptability. The centre employs a diverse group, which makes it possible to approach the project with an interdisciplinary approach as a guiding principle. There has been extensive collaboration with stakeholders such as the Directorate of Labour, the social services of the Suðurnes Rural Communities, VIRK, Suðurnes Fjölbrautarskóli and the Suðurnes Health Institute.

The group faces various challenges in relation to skills development, job search, cultural differences, language barriers and more. The individual goals can be different, but it is important to promote routine, broaden horizons, create networks and promote their integration into society.

Focus areas to respond to needs are:

-Needs analyes interviews;

-Learning paths/courses, and

-Development of new resources:

Addressing the empowerment of Arab women; poor literacy and writing among immigrants (in own language), unaccompanied youth and screening and career guidance for the Polish population.

Session 2A - Professional competences of career guidance councelors

02-10-2025 - 15:00 - 16:30

Hall: Aðalgerði

S2A-1 School Placement in Educational Guidance Counselling Training: A Model for Professional Growth

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Trainee guidance counsellors begin to form their professional identities during their training. For this reason, guidance counselling education providers aim to create opportunities where theoretical learning is experienced in practice, in ways that support both the cognitive and emotional development of trainees (Lambie & Sias, 2009; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003). School placement (SP) is a pivotal element in guidance counsellor training, bridging theoretical knowledge with practice in authentic educational contexts (Woodside, Ziegler & Paulus, 2009). Despite its centrality, there remains limited structured, evidence-based research exploring effective SP models, their implementation, and their impact on the professional competencies of trainee guidance counsellors in Ireland. Addressing this gap, our study critically evaluates an innovative SP model implemented within an Irish postgraduate programme in Educational Guidance Counselling. Underpinned by supervised experiential learning, adult learning theories, and structured feedback mechanisms, the model moves beyond mere experience-sharing towards a robust, assessable framework.

This longitudinal convergent parallel mixed methods research explores the design, implementation, and effectiveness of the SP model, addressing professional competency development, identity formation, and the long-term impacts of SP experiences on guidance counsellors' professional practices. Data collection involves questionnaires containing both quantitative and qualitative questions distributed to all trainees post-placement, in-depth individual interviews with randomly selected trainees, and follow-up questionnaires administered one year into professional practice to evaluate the sustainability of professional competencies. Data analysis adopts an integrative approach in which quantitative and qualitative data sets are analysed independently and subsequently brought together for a holistic interpretation. Quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive statistical methods and qualitative data will be explored through inductive content analysis to capture themes emerging from participants' lived experiences.

This study is expected to: (a) provide an evidence-informed school placement model that incorporates structured observation and evaluation processes; (b) propose a comprehensive assessment framework for measuring the professional growth of trainee guidance counsellors;(c) offer replicable and adaptable recommendations for institutions seeking to strengthen the practice-based elements of guidance counselling education. By examining a locally grounded training model with global relevance, the study contributes to the ongoing dialogue on how guidance counselling education can navigate the tensions between national practices and international standards.

Keywords: School placement, guidance counsellor training, professional development

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S2A-2 Professional Competence in an Era of Complex Tensions: The Significance of Counselors' Emotional Competence

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Professional Competence in an Era of Complex Tensions: The Significance of Counselors' Emotional Competence

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Keywords: Emotional competence, career counselors, professionalism

In light of the global tensions and complex interconnections created by both ecological and social challenges in our time, many important discussions have emerged regarding how career guidance can contribute to addressing the various challenges in people's lives (Hooley et al., 2019). Concurrently, the challenges faced by career counselors, as they deal with clients' increasing despair and more complex narratives, receive less attention. Previous research indicates that career counselors relate differently to emotions (Dalene, 2023). However, emotional competence among career counselors is absent in both international (NICE, 2016) and Norwegian competence standards for career counselors (Dalene, 2024; Bakke et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the European research project STRENGTh (Weber et al., 2021) has brought this topic to the forefront. This paper will proceed with the research question: What role does career counselors' emotional competence have in the understandings of their professional competence?

Emotional competence is defined in this paper as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions (Tountopoulou et al., 2022; Skoe & Bølstad, 2022; Grelland, 2020). Utilizing a theoretical and conceptual research methodological approach (Watts, 2011; Jaakkola, 2020), the article discusses the role of career counselors' emotional competence in the understandings of professional competence by examining sub-competencies such as relational competence, ethical competence, reflective ability, role performance, and self-insight (Bakke et al., 2020; Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2019; Universitets- og høgskolerådet, 2018; Skau, 2024). The discussion reveals that, although emotional competence is not explicitly present in competency models or national guidelines for counselor education, career counselors' emotions are implicitly present in the execution of sub-competencies. It is argued that career counselors' professional competence would benefit from making emotional competence explicit and prioritizing it over other sub-competences. This is based on the understanding that emotions express people's values and underlie thoughts, reflections, and actions., and that emotional competence is fundamental to working with people. The article outlines practical implications for both individual career counselors and counselor

education, presents examples of activities to strengthen career counselors' emotional competence, and discusses potential critical objections.

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S2A-3 Green career guidance: Professional competencies, challenges and approaches

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There is a global consensus which recognises that our planet faces existential threat in the form of environmental destruction and climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, n.d.). Addressing this issue requires a global effort across many spheres, including the systems and places within which people pursue their life and work. The term green career guidance has been used to describe an approach to career guidance practice that is aligned to environmental concerns.

Career guidance practitioners employ one-to-one conversations, assessments, group sessions and learning programmes to offer information and support clients with their careers. Green career guidance imbues these activities with a conscious focus on the environmental impacts of individuals' life, learning and work choices (Di Fabio and Buccu, 2016; Guichard & Di Fabio, 2015). Aims for green guidance include raising awareness of the environmental impacts of career decisions, consciously balancing the needs of the planet with the needs of the labour market and encouraging practitioners to help individuals to make sustainably focused career decisions. Practice in this area has been and is currently being explored in a number of ways (Bakke et al., 2024; Grant, 2024; Plant, 2020) but is not yet imbued within our professional competency frameworks.

This presentation will explore professional frameworks (Schiersmann et al, 2016 and Skills England, n.d.) and consider to what extent knowledge skills and behaviours needed for a green guidance approach are represented. It will surface potential challenges and posit ideas for future research within this emerging area.

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S2A-4 Career guidance counsellors' experiences of the transition from higher education to professional practice in Sweden

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General description on research questions, objectives, and theoretical framework Career guidance and counselling (CGC) entails providing individuals with competence required for making well-informed choices related to their career, in the educational system and in the labour market (Lovén, 2020).

Career guidance counsellors are faced with a dilemma in their professional role of integrating expectations from different actors. The expectations are associated to different perspectives on what CGC is and should be and what professional competence the career guidance counsellors are expected to have (Nilsson & Bengtsson, 2024; Nilsson & Hertzberg, 2022).

The aim of the paper is to describe and analyse how professionalism and professional competence in career guidance and counselling (CGC) is shaped in the education program, in the transition to the world of work, and the first years as professional practitioners. The following research questions will be addressed:

• What qualification demands are encountered by novice career guidance counsellors in professional practice and what competence is required to do the work?

• How do career guidance counsellors interpret and negotiate perceived demands from different actors in the implementation of career guidance and counselling?

• What are the perceived needs and opportunities for learning and further development in professional practice?

• What are the students' perceptions of the profession and central professional competence?

The transition from education and work is a journey between two distinct social practices characterised different rationalities and languages (Eraut, 2004). The graduates need to decode a new context and recontextualize or resituate knowledge obtained from the education setting in professional practice. Learning is associated to the social and cultural context in which the knowledge is embedded (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009). Professional competence is understood a readiness for action in relation to a specific

context (Ellström, 1998), while professionalism relates to the qualitative dimensions of professional practice (Evetts, 2014). The over-arching competence concept includes two different dimensions, i.e. competence and qualifications (Ellström, 1998).

In the analyses of the interviews, learning and professional competence will be used as sensitising concepts for exploring the relationship between education and the world of work and the transition processes between these social practices in order to understand the shaping of professional competence and professionalism in CGC.

MethodsThe study has a longitudinal design where the data has been collected through recurrent interviews with students from the professional education program in CGC. Interviews were conducted with a selection of students enrolled in the third and last year of the education program in career guidance counselling from all three higher education institutions providing programme in Sweden. A total of 22 students participated in the initial interviews conducted remotely via Zoom between December 2021 and March 2022: Seven from Malmö University, eight from Stockholm University, and seven from Umeå University. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 12 students 2.5–3 years after the initial interviews were conducted, between September and October of 2024, with three from Malmö University, four from Stockholm University, and five from Umeå University.

The analyses of the interviews focused on participants' understandings and interpretations of the studied phenomenon through concentration of meaning. To identify key themes within the empirical data, the study employed template analysis(Brooks et al., 2015).

Tentative results Theory and practice are intimately integrated in the career guidance counsellors' professional education. Tentative results indicate that the counsellors are engaged in a wide variety of tasks and face a broad range of qualification demands in their professional practice. The counsellors included in the follow-up interviews are dispersed relatively widely over the labour market, working in, for example, public and publicly funded private schools, municipalities, the Swedish employment office and other labour-market intermediaries.

The counsellors argue for the need of both generic and specialist competence in the everyday tasks of their professional practice. The professional practice entails conversations with pupils and clients, a wide range of administrative tasks, collaborating with other professional groups, working with different actors, such as government agencies, etc.

Some counsellors describe the transition from higher education to the world of work as a smooth process and others as requiring transformative learning, i.e. adapting to new ways of doing things and thinking.

The counsellors view the need for continuous learning and professional development as an important aspect of professional practice. Their role demands the ongoing acquisition of new knowledge, staying up to date, and consistently refreshing their understanding of areas such as eligibility and selection criteria.

The counsellors generally consider themselves to be relatively well prepared for interacting with pupils or clients. They consider their competence in conversation methodology as well-anchored in practice and theory. However, there are other aspects of professional practice that they feel less prepared for.

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Session 2B - Integration and diversity in transitions and careers

02-10-2025 - 15:00 - 16:30

Hall: Glæsigerði

S2B-1 Building Migration Industry: Socialist Yugoslavia's approach to labour migrants' pre-departure trainings

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Like other labour sending countries, socialist Yugoslavia supported temporary labour emigration primarily to export unqualified and unemployable workforce and economically capitalise through their remittances and eventual return as qualified and experienced in modern production means (Rass, 2012). In a constant effort to achieve these goals, the Yugoslav government designed and successively expanded a bulk of institutional, economic, and social mechanisms which operated both domestically and beyond countries borders (Ivanović, 2012; Baković, 2014; 2015; Bošnjak, 2025). From the late 1960s, in light of further galvanised labour emigration and emerging imbalances in the Yugoslav labour market, modifications and expansion of these mechanisms increasingly served to mitigate the emigration of qualified and highly qualified workforce and to organise the return migration of these categories to Yugoslavia (Bernard, 2019).

Yugoslavia's strategies and practices in recruiting and dispatching labour migrants have only recently received scholarly attention, showing Yugoslavia's employment authorities' consistent adherence to the state's labour emigration policy as well as their often limited success in meeting the policy's overarching aims (Bošnjak, 2025). This paper makes a modest contribution to this largely overlooked subject by examining the programme of pre-departure trainings of labour migrants which was one of the mechanisms advanced by the Yugoslav government in the late 1960s and early 1970s to structure, manage, and shape labour emigration.

The ambition behind pre-departure training programmes and efforts to expand them was driven by the Yugoslav government, the Federal Bureau of Employment, and the Alliance of Workers' Unions, with the endorsement of the country's president, while the trainings' practical organisation was managed by the Federal Bureau of Employment in collaboration with municipal employment offices. This paper draws upon written archived sources produced by these principal stakeholders. The sources are retrieved from several collections in Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade and Croatian State Archives in Zagreb. The sources are composed of the government's internal reports, directives, and suggestions regarding labour emigration and directives and instructions issued by the office of Yugoslavia's president. Furthermore, the sources include internal reports from the Federal Bureau of Employment, municipal employment authorities, and the Alliance of Workers' Unions of Yugoslavia.

The analysis is informed by the theory of institutional change (North, 1990; Scott 2014), primarily utilising the concept of institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio, 1988). DiMaggio (1988) introduced the concept of institutional entrepreneurship to encompass intentional and strategic activities of state and non-state actors that lead to the establishment of new forms of institutions. According to DiMaggio (1988, 14), new institutions arise when organised actors use available opportunities and leverage resources, such as financial, social, and political capital, to support their initiatives of institution building, perceiving new institutions as opportunities to realise their interests. The concept was further developed by scholars studying institutional evolution and change, elaborating its applicability even on modest institutional modifications. Scholars have argued that the impetus for institutional constructions and modifications is the development, recognition, and naming of a recurrent problem to which existing institution or

institutional framework does not provide a satisfactory repertoire of responses (Suchman, 1995). To address such problems, institutional entrepreneurs gather information, develop the necessary knowledge, and leverage necessary resources to increase their chances for a successful change of institutional framework (North, 1990), employ social skills necessary for successful institutional entrepreneurship (Fligstein, 2001), and actively participate in institutional change they initiate (Battilana et al., 2009).

Drawing on this theoretical framework, this paper advances two arguments. First, the Yugoslav government designed, organised, and aimed to expand pre-departure training programmes to facilitate its overarching objective of profiting from labour emigration. The notion of profit in this context encompasses immediate financial gains as well as broader economic benefits, achieved through mechanisms such as reduced unemployment and brain drain, increased inflow of remittances, and the enhanced capacity of migrant workers to contribute to Yugoslavia's economy and development. Second, the pre-departure training programme remained limited in scope due to the Yugoslav government's reluctance to invest all the necessary resources for its institutional and organisational evolution.

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S2B-2 Immigrant adult students talking back against their marginalized identification in University of Applied Sciences studies

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Keywords: agency, capabilities, narrative positioning, immigrant students, higher education

In the degree programmes of universities of applied sciences (UAS) studied in Finnish, immigrant students are a growing and diverse group, recognised as an exception to the 'ideal or normal' UAS student (Souto & Lappalainen, 2024). Autio's dissertation research examines the agency and capabilities of educated adult migrant UAS students in their educational and career pathways. The research is situated in the fields of critical career guidance research and sociology of education. The data was generated through a participatory focus group process and individual biographical interviews which represent collective and individual narrative contexts. The normative framework of the study is based on the capability approach (Sen 2010, Robeyns 2017) to approach relational agency (Vanhalakka-Ruoho 2014, Toiviainen 2019) and related issues of social justice (e.g. Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen 2018).

The focus of the paper presentation will be on the second sub-study of the dissertation, which is based on the empirical data from the focus group process. The focus group formed a collective narrative context for a joint and reciprocal knowledge production. As a collective narrative process, the focus group enabled participants to explore the questions of agency and capabilities through shared discourses, and to negotiate which experiences or memories are collectively meaningful and shared, which are more individually diverse (Davies & Gannon 2006). The research questions are:

How do participants negotiate their agency as UAS students? How do tellers position themselves in joint narratives and how the positions of "I" and "we" become constructed? What cultural master narratives do the positions negotiate with?

Methodology

The analysis is based on Michael Bamberg's (2011; 2020) narrative practice approach. The theoretical concept of agency is approached through narrative positioning (Bamberg 1997; 2011) and talking back (Juhila 2004). Bamberg's narrative practice approach analyses how people as agentive actors position themselves in narratives, and as tellers in here-and-now storytelling situations. And how in doing so become positioned. "The agency-dilemma" - contradiction between the teller as positioning herself as agent and the societal constraints positioning "the subject" – is recognized and gives means to analyse agency in relation to the societal contexts. The narrative practice approach emphasises the way the referential world is constructed and how tellers "want to be understood". (Bamberg, 2011.)

Kirsi Juhila's (2004, 263) concept 'talking back' involves engaging in dialogue with culturally dominant categorizations, and it's applied as a tool to analyse the relation of the positions in situated narratives to

socially shared discourses. Talking back exists because of these dominant meanings and serves to comment on and resist stigmatized or marginalised identities associated with them. The primary function is to highlight the differences between one's own identity or group and the dominant definitions. Rather than outright denying the stigmatized identity, talking back subtly negotiates and questions these dominant categorizations, suggesting the possibility of alternative identities.

The focus group consisted of six adult students who had immigrated to Finland for reasons other than higher education studies, and the researcher-facilitator. The group met five times every two weeks. Among the participants were five women aged between 35 and over 55, and one man under 30 years old. The group represented six different nationalities from five different countries. All participants were in their second or third year of studies, enrolled in five different education programs. The themes of the focus group work were developed using participatory methods together with the group and creative methods were applied during the process.

Expected outcomes

Preliminary findings show an othered and ambivalent social position of “us”. The negotiations about “we” relate to diverse way the tellers become positioned as others in Finnish society and higher education context. On the other hand, the diversity between tellers is negotiated and highlighted as well. There is no consensus of “us” and in the narratives “we” becomes constructed as an external categorisation. The collective narrative includes talking back against reifying “us” formation both in social encounters and structural practices of higher education.

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S2B-3 Can a Role Model Intervention Decrease Inequality in Access to Higher Education? First Results from a Comparative Randomized Controlled Trial

Markus Kohlmeier [1]Heiður Hrund Jónsdóttir [1], Lenette Jensen [2], Tamás Keller [3], Ulrich Kohler [4], Till Jacobi [4], Astrid Olsen [2], Laura Boldvai-Pethes [3], Francisco Flores [4], David Reimer [1]

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Educational inequality remains a significant challenge in many countries, affecting access to higher education for students from non-academic backgrounds. While extensive research has analyzed the mechanisms behind educational inequalities in decision-making based on observational data, a recent wave of experimental research from sociology, economics, and psychology provides more rigorous tests of interventions aimed at reducing these disparities (French and Oreopoulo, 2017; Barone & Solga, 2020). This paper presents initial findings from the EDUCHANGE project, which contributes to this experimental approach by implementing an intervention designed to support students transitioning from academic upper secondary school to higher education. Through role-model videos with first-generation university students combined with a structured counseling session, the project aims to enhance university aspirations and enrollment rates, particularly among first-generation students, i.e. students from non-academic backgrounds. The study is one of the first ever to be implemented as a harmonized randomized controlled trial (RCT) in four European countries (Denmark, Germany, Hungary, and Iceland) that differ in key institutional characteristics governing access to higher education. In this paper, we assess the effectiveness of the role model intervention on students' aspirations to attend university.

Methods:

Students are randomly assigned to a treatment group (T1), which receives a series of role-model videos in conjunction with a counselling session, or the control group (T0). Furthermore, a subset of first-generation students in T1 receives an additional one-on-one counseling session (T1+). The main intervention is delivered via an online survey program (Qualtrics) via mobile devices or laptops, in addition to selected group-counselling elements facilitated by a guidance counselor. The study was conducted across the four countries in the period from autumn 2024 to spring 2025. Initial results presented in this paper will be based on students' enrolment intentions that are collected immediately following the intervention.

Hypotheses:

H1: Students in T1 will have a higher university aspirations compared to those in T0.

H2: First-generation students in T1 will show increased university aspirations compared to those in T0. Additionally, first-generation students receiving individual counseling (T1+) will have higher enrollment rates than those in T1 without individual counseling and those in T0.

H3: The intervention effects will be higher among students with above-average grades, as academic achievement is a key determinant of higher education access.

H4: The study examines differences in educational system structures by comparing early-tracking countries (Germany and Hungary) to late-tracking countries (Denmark and Iceland). Two competing hypotheses are tested: (i) greater treatment effects in early-tracking systems due to higher inequality in transitions to higher education, or (ii) stronger effects in late-tracking systems due to less restrictive access (see Buis 2017, Jackson, 2013).

Results: While data collection across the four countries will be concluded in May 2025 , the anticipated results will provide insights into the potential effectiveness of targeted interventions for first-generation

students. Furthermore, the paper will also discuss the comparative results as well as challenges and opportunities connected to conducting harmonized randomized trials across different national contexts.

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S2B-4 Voices of Transition: Newly Arrived Students' Experiences of Career Guidance in Sweden

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This study examines the career guidance experiences of newly arrived students (NAS) in Stockholm, Sweden, during their critical transition from primary school to upper secondary school. The Swedish educational system is decentralized and funded by a school choice based structure. Opportunities in this system have socio-economic and linguistic divides and NAS encounter distinct challenges in navigating school choice. The research explores how current career guidance and counseling (CGC) policies and practices support, or fail to support, these students in making informed educational and career decisions, and what role other educators play in mitigating these challenges.

Grounded in a theoretical framework that incorporates concepts of multiculturalism, recognition, and justice, the study critically explores the interaction between structural policies, market dynamics, and the individualized needs of NAS (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). It examines the assumption that CGC can serve as an inclusive tool by investigating the gap between policy ideals and actual practice (Hertzberg, 2017). The research particularly highlights the impact of language barriers, cultural differences, and the often reactive and inconsistent nature of guidance provision, which frequently leaves NAS underserved during a critical phase in their educational and career decision-making processes (Munhall, 2024).

The study utilizes qualitative data derived from semi-structured interviews with twenty-two Year 9 NAS across the Stockholm region. The interviews, analyzed through thematic analysis, reveal a nuanced picture of student experiences. Findings indicate significant disparities in the accessibility and quality of CGC, with many students reporting inconsistent interactions, inadequate communication, and a reliance on informal guidance sources such as subject teachers and study tutors. These compensatory mechanisms, while beneficial, underscore the systemic shortfalls in formal career guidance practices.

The study's outcomes suggest that to better support NAS, CGC practices must evolve toward a more proactive, culturally sensitive, and coordinated approach. This involves improved communication strategies, appropriate language support, and further cooperation of all educators involved in the transition process. By illuminating the disconnect between policy and practice, this research contributes to

the broader discourse on educational equity and offers practical insights for reforming career guidance systems to better meet the diverse needs of newly arrived students in Sweden.

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Session 2C - Serving people in a vulnerable position

02-10-2025 - 15:00 - 16:30

Hall: Stjörnugerði

S2C-1 Together for the Youth – Interdisciplinary Collaboration Between One-Stop Guidance Centers and Educational Institutions in Finland

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Objectives, research questions, and theoretical framework

One-Stop Guidance Centers have been operating in Finland since 2015. Their significance as part of the youth service system has been recognized, and currently, there are more than 60 One-Stop Guidance Centers in Finland. These centers are based on interdisciplinary collaboration, bringing together professionals and practitioners from various services and organizations. The goal of the One-Stop Guidance Centers is to provide low-threshold interdisciplinary service for everyone under the age of 30. They provide free, youth-centered guidance and services to promote young people's educational opportunities, employment, functional capacity, and well-being. (European Commission, 2018; Määttä, 2018)

Guidance concerning educational opportunities and career planning requires in-depth knowledge from the professionals working in One-Stop Guidance Centers. However, there is currently no comprehensive information on how this is implemented in collaboration between One-Stop Guidance Centers and educational institutions. This study examines how One-Stop Guidance Centers and educational institutions organize their collaboration to provide study and career guidance. Additionally, the study describes the collaboration during the different phases of the clients' educational path.

The research questions are:

How is the collaboration between One-Stop Guidance Centers and educational institutions organized?

What levels of interdisciplinary collaboration between One-Stop Guidance Centers and educational institutions can be identified?

What kind of collaboration exists between One-Stop Guidance Centers and educational institutions during the phases of study application, studies, and after graduation?

The theoretical framework is based on definitions and levels of interdisciplinary collaboration. We apply a structured framework of different levels of interdisciplinary collaboration derived from an extensive literature review (Pukkila, 2023). Additionally, the theoretical framework includes understanding guidance as a client-centered process with various phases during the client's educational pathway (Helander, 2017).

Data and methods

The study's data consists of field notes from the researchers during the workshops, which were attended by 91 participants from four different regions of Finland. At the time of data analysis, 2–3 workshops had been held per region. The participants included both employees of One-Stop Guidance Centers and their network partners, such as youth work and employment services (n=49), as well as guidance and career

counselors from educational institutions (n=42). The data was collected between August 2024 and January 2025 and consists of 48 pages of text.

The data was analyzed using theory-guided qualitative content analysis (Dey, 1995; Silverman, 2000). It was categorized according to expressions describing the levels of collaboration, using a classification of interdisciplinary collaboration levels (Pukkila, 2023). Furthermore, the data was classified based on expressions describing the different stages of the educational pathway. The data also revealed new categories named in a way that reflected their content.

Expected results and conclusions

The preliminary results of the study show that the One-Stop Guidance Centers and educational institutions collaborate in five different ways: 1) There is no collaboration or shared knowledge about common clients between the employees of the One-Stop Guidance Center and the educational institution, 2)There is no collaboration between the employees of the One-Stop Guidance Center and the educational institution, even though they have knowledge of common clients, 3) The employees of the One-Stop Guidance Center and the educational institution have regular communication and exchange information about services, 4) The One-Stop Guidance Center and the educational institution engage in client work together on a one-time or occasional basis, 5) Employees from educational institution work at the One-Stop Guidance Center and/or employees from the One-Stop Guidance Center work at the educational institution in client work.

Reflected through the levels of interdisciplinary collaboration, the results indicate that cooperation between One-Stop Guidance Centers and educational institutions varies from very loose cooperation to more intensive collaboration. Notably, the deepest level of collaboration was not represented in the data.

The One-Stop Guidance Centers and educational institutions share common needs to promote young people's educational opportunities and employment. They must collaborate to raise awareness of their collaboration and interdisciplinary guidance for young people. Currently, the collaboration focuses on guidance during studies. The One-Stop Guidance Centers and educational institutions should strengthen their collaboration, particularly during the application phase and beginning of studies, to ensure young people are more intensely engaged in education. It is also essential to identify, together and in time, those young people who are at risk of dropping out of education.

Based on the results, One-Stop Guidance Centers and educational institutions need each other and cannot function separately without mutual connection. However, collaboration between them requires strengthening. Connections need to be established, and a structure for good interdisciplinary collaboration must be built according to the clients' needs.

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S2C-2 The Future Laboratory Method and Its Impact Assessment in Youth Work

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In this paper I will present our article on the Future Laboratory (Tulevaisuuspaja) method, developed in collaboration between the Lahti Diaconia Foundation and the Finland Futures Research Centre at the University of Turku, and its impact assessment. The method was created as part of the *Future Laboratory – Towards Inclusion through Future Work* project (2022–2024). Designed for group-based youth guidance, the method integrates participatory approaches from future guidance and youth work and can be utilized in both individual and group counselling.

The goal of the Future Laboratory method is to strengthen the future orientation, life management skills, and sense of inclusion among young people under the age of 29 who are not in education or employment (NEET), as well as to enhance their ability to envision and plan their future. Between 2022 and 2024, a total of 14 Future Laboratories were organized in Lahti, with 59 young participants. An impact assessment was carried out using self-assessment surveys and interviews.

The theoretical framework of this work is based on futures studies (individual future orientation, futures guidance, future cognition) and social leaning theory and self-efficacy.

Based on the results of self-assessment surveys and the inclusion indicator, the Future Workshop method is also suitable for working with vulnerable youth. Participation in the workshops can support young people's sense of inclusion and well-being, their relationship with the future, and their ability to set personal future goals.

The research article is under review for publication. Co-writer: Carmen Tomás Martínez, Finland Futures Research Centre, University of Turku

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S2C-3 The Highways of Choice?

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The educational choices in Finland are seemingly open for everyone. This research examines those choices from the point of view of the students in need for intense special support in vocational education and training (VET). The processes of making educational choices were analyzed according to Bandura's (2001) insight that agency can be divided into three perspectives, individual, proxy and collective agency. The research question is: how do students describe their agency when making educational choices?

Individual agency refers to an individual's ability and readiness to make decisions concerning themselves (Bandura 2001). A key factor in educational choices is how individuals perceive themselves and what they believe they can achieve (Welsh and Schmitt-Wilson 2013). Among students requiring special support, self-efficacy in education and decision-making situations is often weaker than that of their peers (Klassen 2016; Shattuck et al. 2014). In educational decision-making, young people act within existing structures by participating in curriculum-based career counseling in basic education and applying for upper secondary education through the Finnish joint application system. Individuals generally trust the functionality of various educational structures but remain only proxy agents in the process (Bandura 2001). These structures include educational documents, such as teaching and implementation plans that guide students' educational paths and choices. Collective agency does not eliminate the individual agency, but rather agencies work together to build a socio-cultural basis for individual decision-making (Bandura 2001).

The research data consists of 20 thematic interviews gathered in Spring 2020, when the students were about to graduate from VET. The analysis was conducted as a deductive content analysis (Pearse 2019). In the analysis of the research data, it was of paramount importance to detect possible specific features of the need for special support in the realisation of different levels of agency in educational choices, and the analysis examined the phenomenon of agency from the perspectives of both guidance and special education. I will present the results of this research on how agency is portrayed in students' experiences. From the findings, I will discuss the expectations of VET-students with intense special needs when making educational choices, and the by far destinations of their educational paths. The debate considers also whether the same choices are available to all.

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S2C-4 Navigating remedial and compensatory trajectories through the Swedish Introduction programme: how disadvantaged students make sense of their transitions

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Research questions, objectives, and theoretical framework Nowadays, completing upper secondary education is regarded as the minimum requirement for successful labor-market participation and full integration into society (OECD, 2022). Transitions are highly country-specific and depend on context, education system and established practices (Varsik, 2025). In Sweden, almost all 16-year-olds enroll in upper secondary education (USE), which consists of eighteen three-year national vocational and higher education preparatory programs (NP) – and an introductory program (IP), a remedial program for those lacking eligibility to NP. In international comparison (Schmid, 2020), Sweden has a high level of youths leaving compulsory school lacking eligibility to a 3-year program – appr 15 percent of all 9-graders during the last decade. This group, often having experiences of school failure, absenteeism, mental health issues, and psychiatric disorders, are directed to the IP. The IP has four tracks: the Individual Alternative (IA), Language Introduction (LI), Vocational Preparation (VP), and Program-Oriented Choice (PC). Passing the IP and continued education and training (normally a NP or adult education) is often a complex and long process. Of the students starting at the IA in 2020, 34 percent had continued to a national program within three years, two-thirds of them to a vocational program (SAE 2023). Hence, they face critical transitions.

We revisit data from a larger research project (2018 – 2022) that examined the support provided to young people attending or likely to be referred to the LI and IA. The aim is to investigate young people's experiences and how they navigate critical transitions. We ask:

How do students facing or attending IP make sense of themselves and their situation?

How do they navigate remedial and compensatory trajectories?

Employing an interactionist lens, we understand the relationship between structure and agency in education as a connection "between the institutionalized life course and subjective biographies" (Walther et al., 2015, p. 350). We are particularly interested in how our informants navigate risky transitions and seek to construct "a self of dignity and worth" (Quick, 2023). We draw on sociological concepts like careership (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997) and trajectory (Walther et al., 2015), highlighting students' agency, and school experiences resulting from a dynamic interaction between structural factors and individual choices, encompassing pragmatic, rational decision-making (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997) and emotional considerations (Barbalet, 2001). The remedial and intermediate (here called compensatory) trajectory (Walther et al. 2015) denotes patterns of destination, disruption, and choice in the lives of disadvantaged young people. Early experiences of disruption are common and often linked to e.g. school absenteeism and lacking appropriate education and training opportunities. Young people from low socio-

economic backgrounds, those with migration or ethnic minority status and experiences of migration trauma, and/or those struggling with addiction, health issues, or psychiatric conditions are disproportionately represented. While remedial and compensatory programs may enhance qualifications and facilitate a return to regular education and training, this trajectory can also serve as a "holding area," where young people are marginalized and stigmatized (Walther et al., 2015). We found it useful distinguishing between remedial and compensatory trajectories in our analysis.

MethodologyThe research included interviews and observations in one compulsory school and one upper secondary school from each of six municipalities, which varied significantly in terms of geography, demographics, and socio-economic factors. The article is based on semi-structured, audio-recorded, and fully transcribed interviews conducted between 2018 and 2020. A first set of interviews included 95 students, and a set of follow-up interviews was conducted with 32 students about one year after the first interview. A two-step analysis started with an open reading of the interviews, followed by a theory-driven, thematically structuring reading. The latter step included a comparison between students mainly following a remedial trajectory and a compensatory one.

OutcomesBoth IP student groups are highly heterogeneous. While a majority describe the support provided at the IA and LI as clearly positive compared to previous school experiences, there are large differences between them regarding e.g. life-histories, self-images and hopes. IA students are often considerably scarred by their life and school experiences, resulting in low self-confidence as learners, but also in blaming their school failure on themselves. Their future plans are modest. LI students do not tend to regard themselves as failures, and their narratives are based on a belief that hard struggle will help them succeed in getting an education and a decent life in Sweden (Lundahl et al. 2023).

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Session 2D - Social justice in higher education

02-10-2025 - 15:00 - 16:30

Hall: Þinggerði

S2D-1 The Influence of Habitus on Philosophers' Educational and Career Paths: Social Mobility in the Shifting Educational System in Iceland

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According to Bourdieu (1983) philosophers reflect on the condition of everything except the conditions of the philosophical institution itself. In various studies Bourdieu analysed the conditions of the philosophical establishment through his theory of the interrelation between habitus and field.

This study employs Bourdieu's theory to examine cases of disjuncture in terms of social class. In his theory, social agents are endowed with habitus, inscribed in their bodies by past experiences, and social class is understood as a lived condition, a set of practices and values, distributions of and the enactment and deployment of differently valued capitals.

Our research is a qualitative case study involving interviews with professors who teach or have taught philosophy at universities in Iceland. The semi-structured interviews, conducted in early 2025, lasted about an hour each. The analysis was made using qualitative content analysis. The interviewees include three philosophers representing distinct types: a first-generation academic, an academic from a family with considerable cultural and symbolic capital, and a female academic with significant cultural capital.

We use Bourdieu's sociology of choice to analyse their educational pathways (both local and global) and career trajectories. The study examines whether the composition of their cultural, social, and economic capital and habitus influences their choice of study and career fortunes. We also analyse how their habitus fits into or adjusts to the culturally elitist field of philosophy, identifying moments of fitting in, disjuncture, and transformation. How does gender and various forms of capital (cultural, financial, social, and symbolic) impact their chances of success in this field? We also consider the extent to which their capital and habitus influence their thematic and social positions within the field of philosophy, i.e. to what extend is the harmony between a person's habitus and that of his gate keeper a career-factor?

Furthermore, we use the analysis of these three different cases along with some statistics from University of Iceland to reflect on whether there are signs of increased social class mobility in recent decades in Iceland within the cultural elite subject of advanced studies in philosophy. Our expected outcomes suggest that while gender equality has significantly improved in Icelandic philosophy in recent decades, there are limited signs of increased class diversity concerning the background of representatives in this elite field of higher education. During the first twenty-five years of the philosophical faculty established at the University of Iceland in 1972, the department was predominantly composed of socially privileged individuals, sons of government ministers, professors, deans, painters etc. – except for one son of a rural worker. In recent decades, there has been little evidence of increased social mobility in academic philosophy as a career in Iceland, the parents being professors, painters, central bank managers, etc. – with exceptions that seem just as explicable as in the early years. However, the proportion of female philosophy professors has risen significantly since the first woman was appointed in 1997. This indicates that the rate of 'gender capital' has fallen in the field of Icelandic philosophy whereas the value of inherited cultural capital doesn't seem to change. Does this point to the fact that gender diversification is easier to accomplish than social background diversification among philosophy professors? This calls for

further investigation into the different effects of social habitus and gender in the realm of choice in higher education.

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S2D-2 Disappearing Dreams

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Regardless of the perceived advantage of an international experience, it is not always easy for international students to acquire jobs in the host country, soon after graduation. This creates anxiety, frustration and also restlessness as the students feel like their life is kept on hold while they wait to figure out what the next step in their academic and career trajectory can be. The next step can often be determined by the structural factors, such as the support provided by the universities when the students start to look for jobs in the job market. The specific needs of the international students navigating the job market of the host country can be different from the rudimentary support provided to all students by the universities, in the form of resume making support for instance. When it comes to Swedish universities, 30 percent of them are seen to be closely involved in providing international student support according to their needs (Berquist et al., 2019). Another structural aspect impacting the decision of the students to stay, move back or move further, can be the migration policies of the host country which can determine how long after graduation, can the students stay in the country to look for jobs. In case of Sweden, students after completing their education can apply for a job search visa that is valid for one year. Among the specific requirements to obtain the visa, the migration agency expects the students would be able to sustain living in Sweden for that one year (*Residence Permit*, n.d.).

Visas then become a source of control, particularly for students from non-European backgrounds, where amidst the rapidly changing policies, they deal with the uncertain circumstances and the associated anxiety while they search for jobs. This research is part of the doctoral research project that explores student perceptions of Pakistani students who come to Sweden to pursue their higher education and the specific cultural and social context in which they make the decision to move here. A longitudinal study was carried out where 11 Pakistani students who were studying in different Swedish universities were interviewed first in 2023 and then later in 2024. “Disappearing dreams” is one aspect of the project that deals with the impact the state of liminality (Tomlinson, 2023) has on the interviewed Pakistani students that makes them reflect over their choice of coming to Sweden, of the ample sum of resources they use up in the process and also, how the sense of ambiguity and fear of failure at times prevents them from taking a step to either stay, go back to Pakistan or move further to another country. The latter aspect is also controlled by the specific visa requirements of the countries as it is not easy for people from the global south to access most of the countries in the world without a visa (Erdal & Midtbøen, 2023). Though not intentionally planned, sometimes circumstances in the host country can prompt students for multiple migration (Paul & Yeoh, 2020) where their past and present circumstances shape the decisions, they make for themselves for their own future and for the associated family members. Here, Bourdieu’s (1986, 1990, 2000, 2020) concepts of capital, habitus and also illusio come in to elucidate how the change in strategies of the participants regarding their future goes hand in hand with the lurking anxieties they encounter in the host country and how determined they stay in the process of achieving the goals they had set out to obtain. This research is crucial because it looks at the individual experiences of the Pakistani students interviewed who seem stuck in a limbo as they cling to hope to stay in Sweden which in turn is dependent on finding a job. On the other hand, going back to Pakistan in some cases can mean acceptance of failure and judgement and moving onward to a new country is not short of its own risks.

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S2D-3 Tracking Student Trajectories in Higher Education: A Longitudinal Analysis of Degree Completion at the University of Iceland

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This study examines degree completion patterns among undergraduate students at the University of Iceland over a 13-year period, from 2008 to 2021. Using complete administrative registry data covering more than 30,000 individuals, the study applies a longitudinal design with event history analysis to model time to graduation and differences across demographic and academic subgroups. The theoretical foundation draws primarily on student retention theories—especially Tinto's model of academic and social integration—and is complemented by Bean and Metzner's framework, which helps account for the experiences of non-traditional students, such as older learners or those enrolled part-time. Kaplan-Meier estimates and competing risks models are used to explore how student characteristics (such as age and gender), field of study, and cohort year influence graduation likelihoods over time.

The Icelandic context—marked by tuition-free higher education, open access, and flexible programme switching—offers a particular institutional setting in which to apply and further test these theories. Concepts from institutional theory, including institutional isomorphism and normative pressures, are used to interpret how universities may respond to policy shifts and public expectations. In this case, rising graduation rates after 2014, as well as persistent differences between academic disciplines and gender groups, are discussed in light of both individual agency and institutional adaptation.

The findings confirm that women consistently graduate at higher rates than men across all faculties, and that students who enter university at a younger age are more likely to complete their degrees within the observation period. The highest graduation rates are observed in the School of Education and the School of Health Sciences, while the School of Humanities shows the lowest. These differences reflect both disciplinary cultures and structural factors that influence academic engagement and persistence. The event history approach offers particular value by identifying critical time points in the student lifecycle where dropout risk is higher and interventions may be most effective.

By integrating theoretical frameworks with robust longitudinal methods and national registry data, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of student progression within a small Nordic higher education system. It adds to the literature on equity and efficiency in higher education, showing how completion is shaped by the interaction of student backgrounds, institutional practices, and broader policy environments. The findings are relevant for scholars in educational research, as well as for university leaders and policymakers seeking to improve retention and graduation outcomes without compromising access.

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S2D-4 ‘We’re Human Beings, Not Robots’: Cruel Optimism and the Education-to-Work Fantasy in the Career-Related Narration of Non-EU Students in Finnish Universities

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Finland strives to triple the number of international students in higher education during the 2020’s and to integrate as many as possible into the Finnish workforce (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). We use the term “international students” to refer to non-Finnish individuals who have been accepted into an English-speaking degree education in a Finnish university and have moved to Finland from abroad to study.

In their international student marketing, Finnish universities present international students as proverbial “good immigrants”, who are humble, hardworking, and eager to contribute to the Finnish society. Furthermore, the universities market their education as a commodified service that ensures a smooth transition into the Finnish labor market, leading to career fulfillment and a better life. (Immonen, 2024) However, structural barriers and recruitment discrimination often hinder these students from finding employment that matches their education (see Ahmad, 2020, 2025; Kanninen et al., 2022; Ndomo, 2024). This dichotomy presents challenges for both the students and the universities' career guidance services.

This study employs a small stories approach and positioning analysis (Bamberg, 2011; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008) to explore how international students in Finnish universities negotiate their identity and agency vis-à-vis the neoliberal “good life fantasy” (Berlant, 2006, 2011) constructed in Finnish universities’ international student marketing, referred to as “The Happy Ever After”. The material

comprises 15 semi-structured narrative interviews with non-EU master's degree students from the University of Helsinki and the University of Eastern Finland, who are considering or have at some point during their studies considered staying in Finland after graduation.

Using Lauren Berlant's (2006, 2011) theoretical concepts of cruel optimism and the impasse of crisis ordinariness, we highlight the tensions and stress evident in the participants' narration. The findings reveal that The Happy Ever After is closely intertwined with the participants' career-related narration. Cruel optimism manifests in the tension between maintaining an optimistic attachment to The Happy Ever After and navigating the ongoing impasse of crisis ordinariness. This is particularly evident when discussing career expectations outside academia. Pursuing a PhD is construed as a strategy to navigate one's career in Finland, serving as a site for academic identity construction and a means to sustain an optimistic relation to The Happy Ever After.

In career guidance literature, international students are an understudied group despite the globally growing rate of international student mobility (Arthur & Nunes, 2014, p. 587). This study contributes to the discussion by examining the identity work of international university students in Finland from a narrative-discursive perspective. Literature about career development and guidance is also heavily focused on the notion of progress (Gee et al., 2023). By adopting cruel optimism and the impasse of crisis ordinariness (Berlant, 2006, 2011) as ontological frames for analysis, we contest the narrow focus on progress by focusing on the tensions between progress and stagnation in individuals' career-related identity work.

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Session 2E - Labour market transitions and careers

02-10-2025 - 15:00 - 16:30

Hall: Sáttagerði

S2E-1 Negotiating creative futures - Career orientations and professional identity formation of 'behind and around the scenes' students in Sweden and Denmark

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The study explores how performing arts students studying for careers 'behind and around the scenes' (BAS) negotiate future career orientations and professional identity formation in relation to symbolically constructed meaning structures related to artistic work. The empirical data consists of semi-structured biographical interviews with 20 BAS students from Sweden and Denmark who, at the interview time, were enrolled within the subject areas of scenography, production and stage management, costume design, playwriting, theatre directing, as well as light and sound design.

Grounded in biographical methodology (Merrill & West, 2009) and cultural sociological epistemology (Reed, 2011), the interpretations centres around how the participants, from their present perspectives as students, negotiate future careers and professional identities. Theoretically, I draw on pragmatic sociology of critique (Boltanski, 2011) and interactionist identity theory (Mead, 1934) to explore these relations as an ongoing negotiation process.

The results of the study point to ambiguities in the students' identity negotiations and their relations to artistic work. On the one hand, they were adapting to ideals of the artist as a 'bohemian' and/or an 'entrepreneur' when imagining future working lives. At the same time, however, the students also resisted and challenged the symbolically constructed meaning structure related to working as an artist. Through interpreting the students' ways of challenging such meaning structures, the study proposes three alternative identity ideals:

'the flexible creative', describing a counter position to the romantic stereotype of the artist as a sovereign, autonomous genius. In contrast, 'the flexible creative' is orientated towards collective work and is able to adapt to changing roles in relation to different contexts of work.

'the socially conscious performing artist', describing a counter position to the notion of the world of theatre as 'elitist' and 'world distanced'. In contrast, 'the socially conscious performing artist aims to make art relevant for broader audience groups and wants to bring societal issues to the forefront of the artistic work.

'the sustainable artist worker', describing a counter position to the precarious artworker who is vulnerable to burnout and (self) exploitation. In contrast, 'the sustainable artist' pays attention to the physical and mental working environment and well-being of themselves and others and attempts to establish boundaries between work and the private sphere.

In relation to the conference theme, I argue that the study holds relevance to studies of transitions and careers beyond the field of artistic work. Where creative and artistic work commonly is considered as distinctively different from other types of work, the results of the study propose more expanded and blurred professional identities that can be of relevance for researchers studying freelancing and 'protean' careers in Nordic, as well as global perspectives.

I also argue that the study contributes new theoretical perspectives on transitions that can be of interest to the broader research fields of transitions, careers and guidance. By theorizing empirical data through perspectives of pragmatic sociology of critique and interactionist identity theory, the study argues that *future oriented negotiations of the self* in relation to symbolically constructed meaning structures of a given field of work constitutes an important dimension in students' professional identity formation processes. Following this, a central claim in the study is that education-to-work transitions, from the perspective of individuals, need to be understood as dynamic and ongoing processes rather than objective events fixed in time and place.

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S2E-2 Recent graduates' employability and job satisfaction

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In today's rapidly evolving job market, building career prospects and the successful transition from university to the workforce is more difficult than ever. To successfully navigate this transition, graduates must possess a diverse array of capitals – human (knowledge and skills), psychological (adaptability and self-efficacy), social (contacts, networks, and work experience), cultural (understanding of one's field labor market), and identity (recognizing one's own strengths and weaknesses). These capitals are essential in enhancing employability and ensuring career success (Tomlinson, 2017; Tuononen & Hyytinen, 2022).

Previous studies indicate that several employability factors such as perceived competences, high self-efficacy beliefs in terms of success in working life, work experience and networks are related to later job satisfaction (Tuononen & Hyytinen, 2022). Affective job satisfaction refers to how much people subjectively and emotively like their job as a whole (Thompson & Phua, 2012). It has been found that graduates job satisfaction tends to be quite high (Koilias et al., 2012). Overeducation strongly decreases job satisfaction among master's degree graduates (Tarvid, 2015), emphasizing the importance of ensuring that employment corresponds to their level of education.

There is a lack of research on how recent graduates perceive employability capitals and how these capitals are associated with their job satisfaction at the time of graduation. Additionally, there is no single definition of what a successful transition to working life means and this may vary among individuals. Therefore, in the present study, we investigate how recent graduates define a successful transition. The research questions are:

How do recent graduates perceive their employability?

How are employability capitals related to their job satisfaction at the time of their graduation?

What does a successful transition mean for graduates?

Methodology

Context

The study is conducted at two research intensive universities in different regions of Finland. The University of Helsinki (UH), the largest university in Finland, is located in the metropolitan area. The University of Eastern Finland (UEF) has campuses in Joensuu and Kuopio, cities in the eastern part of Finland. In 2021, approximately 2,439 students completed their master's degrees at UH, and 780 at UEF.

Participants

A total of 102 master's graduates completed the online survey at the time of graduation. The data collection is still ongoing, and the size of the data in the presentation will be larger. Graduates were contacted when they requested their diploma from their faculty and were asked to complete an electronic questionnaire. Participation in the research was voluntary. Of these graduates, 76 graduated from the University of Helsinki and 24 from the University of Eastern Finland. They represent different disciplines: humanities, sciences, social sciences, and medicine. A total of 62% of the graduates were employed at the time of graduation, 13% were postgraduate students (doctoral candidates), and 14% were unemployed job seekers. Additionally, 13% held other positions, such as internships, were full-time undergraduate students, on family leave, in military service, or retired.

Survey and analysis

Graduates' employability was measured using the Graduate Capital Scale (Tomlinson et al., 2022), which consists of 53 items assessing various forms of capital, including human, social, cultural, psychological, and identity capitals. Job satisfaction was measured by four items (e.g. I really enjoy my work) (Thompson & Phua, 2012). In addition, their current work situation was asked. There was also an open-ended question: "Describe in your own words, what a successful transition to working life means to you."

First, exploratory factor analysis was conducted for the items measuring the employability capitals. To answer the research questions, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and regression analysis were conducted using SPSS. The open-ended question was analysed using inductive content analysis.

Results

First, the results revealed that graduates perceive all forms of capital quite positively. Graduates scored the highest on human capital (M=3.93, SD=0.68) and psychological capital (M=3.86, SD=0.72. Social capital (M=3.55, SD=0.70) and cultural capital (M=3.59, SD=0.75) received the lowest scores, suggesting that networks and cultural knowledge are perceived as less developed compared to individual competencies and capitals. Identity capital was rated relatively high (M=3.71, SD=0.67).

Second, the results showed that graduates were generally satisfied with their jobs (M=3.65, SD=1.00) and that all forms of capital correlated significantly with job satisfaction. Regression analysis further revealed that, among all the capitals, only human capital was statistically significantly related to job satisfaction.

Third, the open-ended responses showed that graduates describe a successful transition to working life as securing employment that corresponds with their field of study, offers job satisfaction and meaning, provides stability and security, and includes opportunities for professional development. They also value work-life balance and the ability to build professional connections.

In conclusion, this study enhances our understanding of recent graduates' employability and its relationship to job satisfaction at the time of graduation. It emphasises the importance of human capital as a crucial factor of job satisfaction while also highlighting the need for greater emphasis on social and cultural capital. The insights gained from this research can help support graduates in achieving not only employment but also fulfilling and meaningful careers.

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S2E-3 Navigating career guidance: Balancing individual aspirations with labour market needs

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Balancing between the needs of individual interests and skills with labour market needs can be seen as one of the foundational skills of the career guidance profession (Parsons,1909). In previous decades, individualization of life biographies and more complex routes to the labour market can be seen as having led to a prioritization of individual needs over labour shortages (Lovén, 2015). Moreover, career guidance students about to enter the profession highlight the importance of providing individual support that is primarily motivational and confirming individual preferences (Rehn, 2024). In Sweden, the growth of marketization of upper secondary education has further enhanced the trend towards providing youth with attractive and interesting educational choice (Dovermark, et al 2018). Meanwhile, Nordic welfare states are facing significant labour shortages in areas such as health care, IT and manufacturing (OECD, 2023).

As a response to this dilemma, new regulations have recently been adopted in the Swedish Education Act, stipulating that labour market needs must be considered in the planning and structuring of upper secondary education (SFS 2010:800). The legislative proposal came into effect on January 1, 2025, requiring municipalities and regions to take greater account of regional labour needs when planning the offerings of various upper secondary education programs. Consequently, some upper secondary programs will have fewer available places, while programs targeting shortage occupations are expected to expand (Skolverket, 2025).

In this study, I will explore the potential impact of this new legislation of career guidance counsellors' work with clients. By using "vignettes", i.e. case study descriptions, interviews with career guidance counsellors working in secondary schools are conducted (Sampson & Johanesson, 2019). Through the vignettes the study explores questions regarding professional dilemmas that encompass the balance between societal and regional labour market needs with individuals' hopes and aspirations. By using a theoretical framework of professional identity (Bimrose & Brown, 2019), different potential ethical dilemmas involved

in these career guidance counsellors' potential shift towards being assumed to take on a stronger labour market focus will be analysed.

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S2E-4 From closed to open, to closed again. Recruitment practices and the local/global world

Peter Gladoic Håkansson [1]

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Recruitment practices play a crucial role in the efficiency of labour markets. Historically, we may hypothesize a shift from more informal and closed recruitment practices, based on personal networks, to more formal, open, and transparent ones, such as the use of ads in newspapers or mediation through employment offices. Such a shift can be understood in light of changing transaction costs and would align with more general changes in society. Over the last 20 years, we have seen a shift back to informal and closed recruitment practices in the form of an increased amount of network recruitment (see e.g., Håkansson & Tovatt 2017; Håkansson & Nilsson 2019). From a local/global perspective, there are three concerns regarding the shift back to informal labour markets: 1) closed recruitment (e.g., network recruitment) disfavours mobility and impersonal transactions, 2) closed recruitment disfavours migrants who normally have less social capital in the local labour market (see e.g., Behtoui 2008; 2026), and 3) closed recruitment favours translocality and chain migration when immigrants in the new country provide information to their old neighbours back home and act as 'bridgeheads' for them (see e.g., Böcker 1994; Jandrić, Gladoić Håkansson & Lundin, forthcoming).

The aim of this paper is to investigate how recruitment practices changed from closed practices, relying on contacts (social capital), to open practices in the form of newspaper job ads and the Swedish Public Employment Agency (SPEA), to the contemporary situation where a majority of employments are mediated through informal (and closed) recruitment practices. The research questions are:

RQ1: How do recruitment practices change? How can this change be explained?

RQ2: What kind of employment (high-skill vs. low-skill) has been mediated by the different recruitment channels?

RQ3: In what way are recruitment practices connected to mobility and the local/global perspective?

For this, I will analyze three main sources: 1) Newspaper job ads, which developed as a recruitment practice from the late 19th century onwards. For this, I use the new Job Ads Database (JADB) (see https://JobAdsData.github.io/HISCOTrend/) where job titles retrieved from digitized Swedish newspapers are compiled. With JADB, it is possible to study how the frequency and content of ads changed over time and discuss the role of newspapers for recruitment in relation to previous practices and to employment offices. 2) SPEA data on notified vacancies and filled positions at the Swedish Public Employment Office, 1916–2005. 3) Lämnatundersökningen [Leavers survey] 2006–2020, conducted by SPEA. This survey contains information about people who left SPEA after unemployment and how they got information about their new employment. These sources are all quantitative data and will be analysed by various quantitative methods.

The theoretical framework used is New Institutional Economics (NIE) (see e.g., Williamson 2000; North & Wallis 1994). Recruitment can be understood as an institutional arrangement, and as all institutional arrangements it carries transaction costs. The most obvious transaction cost is likely information (search cost) and risk. The existence of transaction costs can explain recruitment practices. For example, risk can explain why networks are used as a recruitment channel, just as search costs (both the job seeker's and the employer's) can explain why newspaper job ads or SPEA are used as mediators of vacancies. When the structure of transaction costs changes, recruitment practices change. For example, innovation changes the relative price of a specific recruitment tool. The breakthrough of mass media led to a new channel to mediate vacancies.

In 1934, a new law on public employment offices came into force. This institutional reform led to an increase in the number of vacancies mediated by SPEA (Håkansson & Tovatt 2017). The number of jobs mediated by SPEA boomed during the 1950s. Today (2006–2020), only around 20% of all jobs are mediated through SPEA, and the majority of jobs are mediated through informal channels (Håkansson & Nilsson 2019; Lämnat). One way to explain this change is that the labour market has become individualized with high demand for specialized skills, social capabilities, and creativity, which increased the risk factor in the recruitment process. Furthermore, the high unemployment after the 1991 recession and the 1992 financial crisis increased the search costs for both employers and job seekers using formal and open recruitment practices. This led to the role of formal recruitment practices decreasing by the end of the twentieth century, and networks becoming more important. Analysis of the Lämnat data shows that newspaper job ads also changed their target group. At the beginning of the new millennium, a majority of job seekers who got information about their new job via the few newspaper job ads were highly educated. This was different from the 1950s and 1960s when newspaper job ads were also directed towards unskilled labour.

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Keynote 2

03-10-2025 - **09:00 - 10:00**

Hall: Aðalgerði

The Role of Career Guidance in Transforming (or Perpetuating) Educational Inequalities

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A substantial body of social science research has shown that students from less privileged backgrounds tend to perform less well in school and pursue less ambitious educational pathways than their more advantaged peers. While numerous theoretical frameworks have been proposed to explain these disparities, there is still limited understanding of which practical interventions can effectively address them.

Recent studies using rigorous experimental designs have begun to identify the causal effects of career guidance in reducing educational inequality. However, it remains challenging to isolate which specific guidance tools are most effective and whether these approaches can be successfully adapted across different national and institutional contexts.

This keynote will explore the conceptual and methodological tensions between research on social inequality and the field of career guidance, review recent impactful studies that highlight the potential of guidance interventions to reduce disparities, and present new findings from the *EDUCHANGE* project. This project evaluates a combined role-model and student advising intervention aimed at reducing inequality in educational decision-making across four countries: Iceland, Denmark, Germany, and Hungary.

Session 3A - Career education and learning

03-10-2025 - **10:30 - 12:00**

Hall: Aðalgerði

S3A-1 Career education in preschool – Why and what?

Maria Lindblom Jonsson [1]

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IntroductionThe preschool curriculum, introduced in 1998, integrated preschool into Sweden's educational system. In June 2010, the Swedish Parliament passed a new Education Act (SFS 2010:800, 2010). Preschool education is from this date its own form of schooling and encompassed by the concepts of *education* and *teaching*. Preschool is not compulsory. However, it is where children are supposed to take their first steps towards a lifelong desire to learn (*Lpfö 18*, 2019).

Career guidance is rarely talked about in relation to preschool education and there is nothing explicit written about it in the curriculum for the preschool (2019). There are however parts in the curriculum and career education contributions being made by preschool-educators that can be directly linked to the subject and the intentions of career guidance in Sweden.

Why should preschool education be concerned with career education and guidance? Preschool children are not expected to commit to specific jobs at this stage in their lives, but it can be beneficial to address this question in relation to the word career (Godden et al., 2024). The concept of career has a broader meaning in the context of guidance, research and education, both in the Nordic countries and internationally (Thomsen, 2014). Career is about life (life course), learning and work. For this reason, career is relevant to everyone and encompasses the learning we undertake from birth throughout life (Godden et al., 2024; Lundahl et al., 2020; Thomsen, 2014).

Description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework The overall purpose of the PhD study is to develop knowledge about how the work with career education and guidance can be expressed in preschools located in different localities and social contexts. This study focuses on the “proven experience” (*Lpfö 18*, 2019, pp. 10–11). Proposed research questions:

* What is being done in preschools regarding career education and guidance?

* Who initiates career education activities and why – the focus and purpose?

* Who is responsible for deciding and implementing this work – who is working with this and why, continuous work and follow up?

* How does preschool staff understand career education and guidance in preschool – or what it can be?

* How can differences between preschools with different localities profiles be understood?

Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) argue that career decisions are shaped through the interplay between the individual and the fields they inhabit, drawing their theory *Careership* on Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*. This perspective is particularly relevant within the policy discourse of career planning, when assumed that individuals make career decisions as “free agents”. However, decisions are invariably influenced by one’s habitus, “so decision-making can never be context-free” (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997, p. 34).

Gottfredson’s (1981) theory of *Circumscription and compromise*, suggests that the individual career decisions are being made from compromises based on socially constructed pictures of reality and that the

“cognitive maps” guiding career decisions are formed during early childhood. “Occupation is one of the most important and observable differentiators of people in our society, so it is not surprising that even the youngest children use occupational images in their thinking about themselves” (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 556).

It is crucial to address career-related questions early on to prevent children from limiting their “horizons for action” based on social, geographical and gender related factors, which later influence educational and occupational choices (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997; Lundahl (red.), 2010; Wikstrand & Lindberg, 2015). Furthermore, making informed and sustainable choices regarding education and occupation has significant implications for both individual and societal economic and social costs (Heckman, 2011; Lundahl et al., 2020)

MethodologyFor the overall study, ethnographic methods (primary participant observations, contextual conversations and interviews) will be used (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Diversity regarding the selection of preschools in different social contexts, concerning place and foreign background becomes relevant. This study will focus on conducting interviews based on a purposive and selective sampling in recruiting participants, who can provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon being studied. The selection is partly based on municipal plans on how to address and work with career education and guidance in different forms of schooling in Sweden. Some municipalities choose to highlight preschool in these plans – *why and for what purpose*?

Results or expected outcomesI hope that my research will contribute to a better understanding for the importance of career education and guidance in relation to preschool education. The anticipated results will identify different contributions on how the work with career education can be expressed in preschools located in different localities and social contexts. My aim is to highlight some good examples and establish the red thread in relation to seeing career guidance as “the whole school’s responsibility”. The idea is to construct a first article on: *Career education in preschool – Why and what?*

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S3A-2 How we learn about careers: An Illerisian approach to career learning

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We would like to present our work, submitted to the British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, that establishes Knud Illeris' learning theory as a perspective in career guidance and a meta-theoretical framework for career guidance professional education. Career development involves integrating various inputs to inform career identity and direction, a dynamic process of meaning-making through learning activities such as exploration, self-development, purposeful actions, and reflection. Understanding how we learn about and for our careers is crucial for theorizing career development and strategizing effective career guidance.

Many career learning theories offer insights, including those by Kolb and Plovnick (1974), Krumboltz et al. (1976), Law (1981; 1996), Lent et al. (1994), and McIlveen (2012). These theories build on broader learning theories from Bandura (1986), Dewey (1916), Maslow (1954), and Mezirow (2000). However, key learning theorists, such as the Danish theorist Illeris (2017), have been largely overlooked in the career development field.

Illeris maps various learning theories related to developmental psychology, activity theory, and socialization theory. Although the career development field has utilized these theories, it has not systematically examined many key learning theorists identified by Illeris. His integrative approach offers a solid foundation for further exploration.

Outside Scandinavia, Illeris has been mostly ignored in the career development field, with notable exceptions (Law, 2006; Fahlström & Åström, 2023; Haug, 2023; Jynge, 2021; Langström, 2017; Poulsen et al., 2016; Sandlie, 2018). We argue that Illeris' theory is deeply engaged with career learning and provides a robust foundation for analyzing and developing career learning theory.

Method

This article involves a theoretical analysis and mapping of existing career learning theories to Illerisian concepts, selecting texts frequently included in career theory courses (Andreassen et al., 2019; Arthur et al., 2019; Hooley & Schulstok, 2021). The analysis emerged from reading these theories, incorporating Illeris' framework into our teaching, and discussions with peers and students.

Conclusions

Our exploration suggests various future experiments in theory, research, teaching, and practice. There is potential to build a detailed Illerisian theory of career learning, use integrative tools for a stronger metatheoretical approach, and examine other learning theorists similarly. Using Illeris as a metatheoretical framework in teaching has proved valuable and should be documented.

Ultimately, this exercise encourages the career development field to think deeply about Illeris' question of 'how we learn' and apply these insights to career learning.

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S3A-3 Life skills education and career learning in schools

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This paper aims to enlighten our knowledge of possibilities for synergy effects in the implementation of life skills education and career learning in schools. Globally, life skills education is part of the 21st-century skills agenda, and education programs with different profiles are offered to increase life skills education (UiS, 2023). In Norway, “health and life skills” were introduced in 2020 as one of three interdisciplinary topics in the new Norwegian national curriculum. Among the challenges expected to be met by life skills education are identity issues, success and failure, gender, media, consumption, meaning in life and making good choices now and for the future. In 2020 a quality framework for career guidance was published in Norway (Bakke et al., 2020), which proposed a model for career learning in context. This model emphasises that career learning always happens in a context and consists of five oxymorons that can be used to reflect over career and life choices. These are: Me – Context, Change – Stability, Adaption – Resistance, Choice – Chance, and Opportunities – Limitations. Several elements in life skills education overlap with the aims for career learning in schools. The research question is: How can schools effectively implement life skills education and career learning to create synergy effects?

According to Fullan, ‘Implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, programme, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change’ (Fullan, 2016, 67). Central themes in the implementation process pertain to understanding and working with the core components of the intervention (what to do?) (Domitrovich et al., 2012) as well as the drivers of implementation within the organization (how to do it?) (Fixsen et al., 2019; Hsueh et al., 2020). Core components represent the main content of change work (Domitrovich et al., 2012) and often focus on major topics, e.g., in this case, responsiveness, demandingness and the combination of these two factors. Importantly, core components are characterized by clarity and derived from the underlying theory (Blase et al., 2012; Fixsen et al., 2019). Three main types of implementation drivers generate energy in the context of professional learning processes: competency, organizational and leadership drivers (Fixsen et al., 2019). Competency drivers focus on training, coaching and selection (e.g., organizing project groups). Organisational drivers include system intervention (e.g., strategies for working with external systems), facilitative administration (e.g., providing support, organizing to promote development, and decision making) and decision support data systems (e.g., assessing key aspects of the intervention). Leadership drivers include both technical leadership (which involves a high degree of agreement and security) and adaptive leadership (which involves a low degree of agreement and insecurity) (Fixsen et al., 2019).

The thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2024) focuses on how life skills education and career guidance can be seen in connection. The study is part of the LIFE-project (UiS, 2023), where 18 case studies (Yin, 2018) in Norwegian primary, lower and upper secondary schools were conducted. The cases encompassed focus group interviews (Morgan, 2019) with pupils, teachers, counsellors, leaders, and school owners. The current study is based on lower and upper secondary schools data.

The primary finding is that using a career reflection framework (Bakke et al., 2020) can enhance life skills education and career learning, providing greater coherence for students. In conclusion, this paper

demonstrates a strong connection between career learning and life skills education, suggesting that specific implementation strategies may effectively support both objectives. This has implications for policy implementation regarding career learning and life skills education, particularly in how these two policies can be effectively integrated in schools to empower one another.

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Session 3B - Education of career professionals

03-10-2025 - 10:30 - 12:00

Hall: Glæsigerði

S3B-1 Understanding career guidance in the context of the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration

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Understanding career guidance in the context of the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration

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Keywords: Career guidance, Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, Competence and Professional Development

Research questions and objectives

This research project seeks to advance knowledge about career guidance within the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration. The central research question driving the study is: *How are perspectives on career guidance reflected in Nav counsellors' descriptions of their roles, competencies, and practices?*

Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (Nav) plays a crucial role in providing support and guidance to marginalized groups striving to achieve or regain inclusion in education or in the workforce. These efforts may involve both short- and long-term guidance services. As a cornerstone of Norway's welfare system, Nav significantly impacts these populations. The professional role of Nav counsellors is increasingly shaped by challenges such as migration, discrimination, inequality, and a dynamic labor market, highlighting the need to deepen understanding of career guidance. Policy documents such as NOU 2016:7 underscore its potential to reduce social exclusion and foster workforce inclusion. Despite its importance, the competence relating specifically to career guidance is given limited emphasis in Nav's strategy documents (Nav, n.d; Paulsen, 2025), in job advertisements (Jynge, 2024) and in the allocation letter to Nav (Ministry of Labour and Social Incusion, 2024), where competencies in general guidance, work inclusion, labor market dynamics and public policy are more frequently emphasized. Competence is central to the professionalization of career guidance (Bakke et al., 2024). By generating deeper insights, the project aims to contribute to the development of competence-building initiatives for Nav counsellors and to expand the theoretical framework for their practice.

Theoretical framework

Theory grounded in emancipatory career guidance (Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen, 2018) and Lipsky’s street-level bureaucracy (Maynard-Moody & Portillo, 2011) offers a valuable lens for analyzing career guidance practices in the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration. Emancipatory career guidance emphasizes social justice, aiming to empower individuals to challenge structural barriers. When combined with Lipsky’s theory (1980), it highlights how guidance is shaped by frontline professionals who must interpret and implement policy under resource constraints and competing demands. Career counsellors act as street-level bureaucrats, navigating tensions between institutional goals and clients’ needs. This

integrated framework clarifies how policy is enacted through everyday counselling practice at the intersection of service delivery and systemic constraints.

Methods/methodology

The present study is designed as a qualitative research project, with the objective of gaining insight into the informants' life world and their experiences, reflections and thoughts on their own practice and competence towards career guidance. The data material consists of four focus group interviews with 3-5 participants in each group and was conducted in January-March of 2025. The informants were recruited from two distinct sources: first, students enrolled in the course entitled 'Guidance in the Labour and Welfare Administration (Nav)', and second, employees from various Nav offices across Norway. The analysis was approached using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2023).

Outcomes/results or expected outcomes

A preliminary review of the data revealed tensions between counsellors' perceived competence and their practice in Nav. Their identity as counsellors, not career guidance professionals, limits alignment with the career guidance field. Uneven opportunities for competence development and local, time-constrained learning structures hinder professional growth in career guidance practices. We will present a more thorough analysis of the tensions in terms of the theoretical framework and the data in the presentation.

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S3B-2 Who is responsible for ensuring that students receive career counselling? A study on schools in socio-economically vulnerable contexts

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Research purpose

In school, there are various roles that work with preparing students for future study and career choices. According to the curriculum for compulsory school (Skolverket 2024), it is stated that everyone who works in the school must contribute to ensuring that the students' study and career choices are not limited, and everyone must work to develop contacts outside the school. Preparing young people for their future applies to all students regardless of their social context. However, the curriculum does not specify who is responsible for ensuring that this work is carried out., which makes it an interesting empirical question to explore. It is particularly interesting to study how schools located in socio-economically vulnerable contexts prepare students for the future, as there is a lack of previous research in this area.

Thus, the aim of this study is to examine the perspectives of teachers, principals, and career counsellors regarding the purpose and responsibility of career guidance. The study aims to create knowledge about how policies on career counselling are transformed in different school contexts, specifically those that can be categorized as socio-economically vulnerable.

Methodology

The data analysed consist of interviews with nine teachers, nine principals and ten career counsellors from nine different compulsory schools in Sweden. The schools differ in terms of catchment area linked, which is linked to socio-economic factors such as education level, the local labor market and the merit value of grades.

Theoretical framework

The analysis is based on a two-step process. (1) A thematic analysis (Braun & Clark 2006) of transcripts from semi-structed interviews. (2) The concepts classification and framing (Bernstein 1990) were then applied to study how boundaries and control arrangements (e.g., between roles within the school) affect the understanding of the purpose and responsibility of career guidance.

Research Questions

Two research questions guide the study:

How do the teachers, principals' and career counsellors describe the core purpose and responsibility of career counselling, and how is this responsibility visible in their work?What are the similarities and differences between teachers', principals and career counsellors' perceptions of the purpose and responsibility?

Expected results

Preliminary results indicate that the interviewees' accounts of who is responsible for career guidance are similar and consistent with the curriculum. What differs between schools is how the responsibility is expressed in the visible work and how the responsibility is carried out. The formal responsibility for this work lies with the principal, but it is theindividual career counsellor who formalizes and carries out the

work. The results also indicate that schools in socio-economically vulnerable areas more often engage in projects related to preparing students for the future. According to teachers, principals and career counsellors, two key socio- economic arguments for arguments for working with career counselling are a) to increase students' motivation to study and b) to ensure that parents do not influence their child's future choices.

In the interviews, career counsellors mention that they work differently compared to colleagues in schools in other types of areas, arguing that the local school context plays a significant role.

Relevance to Nordic educational research

The results will be of interest to other Nordic countries, as the questions and phenomena explored are not specific to Sweden but have broader relevance in a Nordic welfare context (Blossing et al., 2014).

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S3B-3 Phenomena impacting curriculum design in guidance and career counsellor education

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Keywords: guidance and career counsellor education, curriculum design, future guidance

General description and objectives

This study examines the detected future push for career and guidance counsellor education. We study the pivotal phenomena perceived as forces for change in today's and future guidance counselling. We explore the main perspectives of future guidance practices that, according the guidance counselling professionals should be included in guidance counsellor education and curriculum. We also investigate how future guidance is implemented in the guidance counsellor education curriculum.

The research questions

What are the key phenomena recognized as forces for change in guidance counselling in today's and future changing world?

What are and should be the perspectives on future guidance according to practitioners?

How future guidance perspectives are reflected in the curriculum?

Theoretical framework

The curriculum for the guidance counselor training in Finland is based on national and international legislation and recommendations for guidance counseling (e.g., Cedefop, ELGPN, IAEVG, NICE) (Andreassen et al., 2019). The curriculum is developed through network collaboration with a focus on working life and based on student feedback. In Finland, the strategy for lifelong guidance and the new competency framework for career professionals (Vuorinen et al., 2024) serve as a noteworthy background for curriculum development.

Today´s society is facing constant changes resulting from a series of social ecological and economic crises. In a rapidly changing world, career guidance plays a vital role in helping individuals navigate transitions between education throughout their lives. Cancittu (2022) proposes a theoretical model applicable for lifelong career and life construction. The VUCA model describes an environment characterized by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity. The model is based on four key concepts: the VUCA world, life design, lifelong guidance and learning, and guidance-oriented learning. The aim of the VUCA model is to help individuals build their professional lives and support actions that promote equality and social justice in schools and the labor market. It highlights the challenges of navigating situations that change rapidly, are unpredictable, involve multiple interconnected factors, and lack clear guidelines.

Andreassen et al. (2019) evaluated Nordic career guidance and counselling programs against the NICE curricular model. They emphasize that some programmes place a greater focus on developing competences for individual career guidance, rather than on those needed for working at organizational and societal levels. Hooley (2018) highlights the challenge of defining the quality of guidance due to its intangible nature and how it is tailored for different clients.

Inayatullah (2008) presents a suitable approach and methods to study today's and future challenges. He states that in an increasingly complex and heterogeneous world, futures studies help people to recover their agency and help them to create the world in which they wish to live. He describes foundational concepts and methods to apply in designing future orientated curricula.

Methods

This is a mixed method study and collects both quantitative and qualitative data. The study is conducted in university of applied sciences in Finland. The data is collected from the Finnish guidance counsellors, guidance counsellor students and stakeholders in the guidance counselling discipline (n=60).

The main data is collected by the future workshop. The participants take part on this research purpose designed one hour future workshop intended for guidance counsellor education curriculum (60 ECT) development. The future workshop is based on Howspace – digital platform. The workshop can be carried out together in face-to-face classroom or independently online. The workshops are held during the spring 2025.

The workshop includes information about the future studies and three types of future guidance methods: 1) Thinking of future - questionnaire (nine moderated arguments, Likert –scale), 2) Megatrend scanner (open-ended answers), 3) The Futures Triangle (weight of the past, push of the present, pull of the future; open- ended answers), developed by the futurist Sohail Inayatullah (2008). The used procedure is modified and described by researchers from Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra (Dufva & Rekola, 2023).

As another data collection method, we examine the guidance counsellor education curriculum (years 2013-2025) to capture the changes in future guidance studies. The quantitative data is analyzed by statistical methods and qualitative data by qualitative content analysis method.

Expected outcomes

We expect to find out the crucial phenomena driving change in guidance counselling in today's and near future counselling work. We aim to understand how changes and globally identified megatrends are occurring in Finnish guidance counselling practices. How guidance counsellors experience them in their daily work and in the field, they are working in. The preliminary results refer to themes related to digitalization, social justice, maintaining hope for the future, multiculturalism, labour market perspective, readiness for change in guidance, and personal skill recognition.

To be prepared for appropriate guidance counselling education and competent professionals, we will make recommendations on the perspectives to consider in guidance counselling education and curriculum design. We will describe the innovations we suggest for guidance counsellor education curriculum.

We will also experiment with our innovative research method, a new data collection method, that can be used and developed further.

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S3B-4 The Career Development Handbook: groundwork and goals

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In this paper the authors will present the research undertaken to support the production of 'The Career Development Handbook', a new textbook for career development practitioners and trainees published in the UK in 2024.

In developing the textbook proposal the authors tested ideas about scope, emphasis and priority for the book by surveying course providers in the UK and beyond. An online survey received 22 valid responses and gave detailed information about the nature, level, emphasis and delivery of each programme. We explored content areas planned in the book that were already covered as well as priorities for new course material and areas viewed as not relevant.

Beyond this descriptive account of our data we have also been able to identify key themes relevant to the whole career development profession and the initial and continuing training needs of all practitioners. These themes demonstrate that an extensive focus on the skills and practice of working with clients on a one-to-one basis leaves plenty of room to develop a wider range of competencies that are needed to engage at a systemic level, working with a wider range of other professionals to effect greater change. The relationships between national policy contexts and training content are also explored, demonstrating where a functional emphasis on distinct roles within the profession has worked against a preferred model, where a career development professional is equipped to work across the widest possible range of 'activities of guidance'.

The presenters will reflect on the process of writing the content and discussing the potential uses of the book with advanced practitioners and educators, sharing recommendations from the data as well as ideas for future use of the book.

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Session 3C - Meeting needs of challenged youth

03-10-2025 - 10:30 - 12:00

Hall: Stjörnugerði

S3C-1 Dialogical skills and competences in interdisciplinary collaboration – case: One-Stop Guidance Centres

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Objectives, research questions, and theoretical framework

The aim of our study was to investigate what kind of interaction is needed in interdisciplinary collaboration to support the youth's guidance and counselling services. Given that interaction as a concept and phenomenon is complex and multifaceted, we are exploring how the framework of dialogical skills and competences could be useful when researching interdisciplinary collaboration interaction skills. This study builds on prior research on interdisciplinary collaboration in guidance and counselling services. It is part of the development project OODI (Ode), which aims is to bring together practitioners from various organizations working with the youth, focusing especially on the collaboration between One-Stop Guidance Centres (Ohjaamo) and educational institutions, to encourage and improve the educational pathways of the youth.

One-Stop Guidance Centres have been operating in Finland since 2015. Their significance as part of the youth service system has been recognized, and currently, there are more than 60 One-Stop Guidance Centres in Finland. These centres are based on interdisciplinary collaboration, where guidance is organized by practitioners from various services and organizations. The goal of the One-Stop Guidance Centres is to provide low-threshold interdisciplinary services for everyone under the age of 30. They provide free, youth-centered guidance and services to promote young people's educational opportunities, employment, everyday management and well-being.

The research is based on prior research on interdisciplinary collaboration (e.g., Pukkila, 2023) and continues to further investigate what kind of interaction and interaction skills foster interdisciplinary collaboration. Dialogical skills and competences (Aarnio, 1999, 2012) are introduced as a new way to frame the sometimes ambiguous concept of interaction. Additionally, the aim is to clarify what kind of thoughts, attitudes and actions concerning interaction can be distinguished from the views of the interviewees.

The research question is: *What kind of interaction and dialogical skills and competences are central in interdisciplinary collaboration?*

Data and methods

The data consists of seven interviews of One-Stop Guidance Centres' employees. The interviews were conducted in February 2025 following the empathy-based story methodology (Härkönen, 2022). The interviewees were presented with either a positive or a negative story of an interdisciplinary meeting where the aim was to foster the study paths of the youth living in that region. The interviewees were then asked to describe what kind of interaction had happened in the meeting. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview procedure where the interviewers asked follow-up questions concerning interaction in the imagined meeting and/or the interviewees' thoughts on what kind of interaction (skills) enhance interdisciplinary collaboration. The interviews were recorded on the Teams platform and

transcribed, comprising 42 pages (Arial, 12 pt, 1.5 spacing). The data were then coded in the ATLAS.ti program by two researchers, and the categorizations were finalized using the Excel program. Then, the data was analyzed using theory-guided qualitative content analysis (Silverman, 2001; Patton, 2002).

Preliminary results

"[In order to foster interdisciplinary collaboration] *you should be present, discuss actively, listen to others, be open in the discussion and on the other hand, also critical."*

The preliminary results indicate that interaction was a difficult topic for the interviewees, and they also talked about other matters than interaction. Therefore, the interviewers asked specifying follow-up questions. Nevertheless, the data shows that key dialogical skills and competences can be found both in the interdisciplinary collaboration literature and in the data. Preliminary findings indicate 14 different dialogical skills and competences. These can be expressed following the dialogical skills and competences framework developed by Aarnio (1999; 2012) in three main categories: 1) dialogical attitude, 2) dialogical activities in a discussion, 3) dialogical outcomes.

Dialogical attitude consists of a) respecting collaboration partners as equals, b) a friendly approach towards collaboration partners, and c) reciprocal actions and trust. Additionally, the *dialogical activities in a discussion* are intertwined with dialogical attitudes and can be stated as a) open communication and b) participation. The third category was named as *dialogical outcomes,* meaning that the interviewees emphasized that the goal of the dialogues should be to build a common and/or new understanding, and where everybody bears the responsibility and takes part in implementing the actions that have been agreed upon. The interviewees captured interestingly the kind of interaction that either hinders or enhances interdisciplinary collaboration. The preliminary results show that the dialogical skills and competences framework works well also in the context of interdisciplinary collaboration and can be utilized in supporting and educating multidisciplinary collaboration.

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S3C-2 Navigating the transition gap - stories of young adults and guidance counselors living and working in the transition gap

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The aim of this project is to understand the subjective world of human experience, which is embodied through the purpose of exploring the 'transition gap' and the reflections of young adults (without a high school diploma) regarding their career options and future career paths, while contemplating horizons of action and turning points. This also extends to the exploration of policies and the practice of guidance counsellors who work with these young adults. The interpretations and experiences of the target group yield insights into people's behavior and why they are saying what they are saying and doing what they are doing. The exploration of policy at the intersection between municipal and national policymaking, the experiences of professionals and young adults' stories, and decision-making processes, also concern the interpretations and experiences of the target group. Policies can both serve as a promoting and/or deterring mechanism concerning participation in education as more generous welfare policies usually offer broader opportunities for participation.

What then, is a transition gap? A transition gap is, simply put, the space between transitions. The gaps can be voluntary or mandatory, or a combination of both, and can arise throughout life. For young adults without a high school diploma who find themselves in the gap between what has been, the present, and what will be, numerous choices, potential actors and future paths have to be considered. The receiving and sending actors that young adults encounter at different stages in life also work with the transition process in different ways. Each municipality works according to different local regulations that are based on resources and political ambitions, among other things, and therefore the availability of transition bridges and support functions to young adults varies. A transition gap is therefore complex and entails multiple interconnected factors. To be able to grasp and nuance this complexity, life story interviews along with lifeline interviews have been conducted with young adults without a high school diploma, while focus groups were employed with guidance counselors/professionals. The guidance counsellors were working in municipal activity responsibility, adult education, and upper secondary school across five northern municipalities in Sweden. A biographical narrative approach has therefore been applied to fulfill the aims of the thesis, with careership theory and institutional theory as theoretical frameworks.

Some of the early results concerning the study with professionals are that the practice of guidance counselors varies immensely depending on where they are employed, which consequently affects the support given to young adults. The biographical study with the young adults suggests that caring professionals and extended support throughout the whole transition chain are of great importance for young adults who are navigating and exiting their transition gaps.

S3C-3 Seeking social justice: cocreation with autistic students to create inclusive careers and employability provision

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Introduction and Research questions:

A recent study of the destinations of graduates found that of all disabled graduates from UK universities, autistic individuals are least likely to be employed (AGCAS 2024). These findings are widely recognised in literature (Vincent 2024, Remington & Pellicano 2019) and highlight the way in which autistic people are marginalised. As a university careers practitioner-researcher, I wanted to explore what individuals in a role like mine could do to reduce this disadvantage. I am now nearing the end of a PhD which has explored the following questions: 1.What tailored careers provision could be implemented in order to support autistic students to transition to employment when they graduate? 2. How could a participatory action research approach be used to provide understanding and to inform this provision?

Theoretical concepts:

This research study is underpinned by the philosophical stance I take towards social research, which sits within an emancipatory paradigm. This paradigm is concerned with not only understanding phenomena, but with transforming them; there is a particular focus on emancipating the disempowered, redressing inequality and promoting individual freedoms (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Mertens (2007) proposes that participatory action research (PAR) is a necessary component of this emancipatory paradigm; concurring with this, I have opted for this approach in this study. This concept of a reflective type of research involving autistic students as equal members in the process, working collaboratively to seek to understand the current situation, with the idea of eventual greater impact, is suitable for this research topic. There is an emerging school of thought around the concept of ‘career guidance for social justice’ (Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen, 2021), which is suitable as a framework for this study and will be used as a lens with which to consider what has been achieved.

Methodology, data collection and subsequent steps:

The participatory action research project was conducted at a UK university in three cycles over the three years and involved recruiting a series of autistic students to act as ‘consultants’ on a project that aimed to develop employability provision for autistic students. These autistic student consultants were involved in all stages, from designing and subsequently evaluating the employability provision in the first year, to developing plans for the second year, then finally co-creating resources and the development of new products. This collaborative research has been the most enjoyable project the practitioner-researcher has ever been involved in! Not only has there been a real improvement in the employability support available to autistic students at the university, but there is evidence of an emancipatory impact on some of the student consultants. In addition, there are tangible signs of positive change both within the institution and beyond, as the practitioner-researcher and consultants have disseminated the success of the project. It is hoped that the findings from this collaborative research could be used to bring about change even beyond educational institutions, resulting in more positive employment outcomes and the advancement of social justice for autistic individuals.

S3C-4 Young NEET gamers in a supported employment program in Norway

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NEET status is generally associated with several negative factors, including a lack of social mobility, poverty, negative socioeconomic status, and persistent exclusion from education and the workforce (Wrigley, 2017). This paper is part of a larger research project where we developed and studied a tailored occupational training and guidance program (AFT-program) aimed at young 'gamers' outside of work and education, where guidance counsellors in the local welfare administration (NAV) had asked for help to deal with what they felt was an especially difficult group. From the perspective of career guidance, we wanted to know more about whether competencies and skills from gaming can be used to develop career competencies and skills that are attractive for the world of work, as well as how to work with clients that find themselves in this group (Snipstad, Bakke, Jynge & Vibeto, 2024). Career guidance theory as well as experience underscores the need to find the clients where they are and start the process of career guidance there. Hence, the question we ask in this paper comes from reviewing the process we have been through together with our participants and the learning that came from it, and it is formulated as *"How do young gamers outside of work and education understand themselves in light of the demands and expectations existing in the labour market"?*

The AFT-program is based on a standard framework offered to work clearance benefit recipients, where mapping, training and work practice are the central elements. It is designed to be a flexible framework that can be adapted and applied to various complex issues clients encounter, and it can be used in either a highly individual or group-based setting (OsloEconomics, 2020). For our project, we designed an action-research intervention (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2010; Johnson & Christensen, 2014) to meet the needs of our clients and established a situation that allowed us to follow them and conduct research.

At the offset of the AFT, the program leader, the researchers and the participants discussed the content of the program, and it was decided that the participants were to come in three days a week from 10 am to 2 pm and that the activities should consist of group and individual guidance, joint presentations and discussion of employment related topics, and that they would use gaming both for building social cohesion of the group but also in career guidance related activities. This means that discussions and guidance focused on exploring competencies and skills, as well as employability training such as interview training and discussing CVs, could occur in-game. The participants would also be presented with job opportunities and receive follow-up support from the program leader and the group when in practice with an employer. By the participants' consent, the researchers followed the group using participatory observation (1-2 days a week) in the program and in-game, and conducted both individual and group interviews during a course of 9 months.

We have analysed observation and interview data by a collective approach to thematic analysis (Eggebø, 2020), and through abductive analysis the first research question that we have explored is how the participants understand themselves in light of the demands and expectations existing in the labour market as a starting point for career guidance interventions. We have used Shakespeare's (2014) relational model of exclusion to analyse our results. Inspired by the Nordic approach on disability, Shakespeare he defined disability as the relation between intrinsic factors, e.g biological and psychological factors, and extrinsic factors, e.g social barriers. In this model, the combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors represents, according to Shakespeare (2014), a person's disability. In our research, 'disability' refers to the participant's perceived inability to function in education and work.

The most striking finding is the considerable diversity in the challenges that have led participants to be participants being outside of education and work. They range from autism, anxiety and depression, to experiences of psycho-social exclusion from not 'fitting in', but they have in common that gaming has been an arena for positive experiences of learning, mastery and social community. For many, this has led

to a detachment from the ‘ordinary’, and continued experiences of failing to master education and work exacerbate the problem. The participants also experience that even though they have acquired many competencies and skills from gaming, e.g. problem-solving, leadership, co-ordination, knowledge of systems, motor-skills, etc., employers do not recognise their abilities because of stigma and stereotypes connected to gaming.

In other words, from a career guidance perspective, positive learning from the world of work is lacking, but have been replaced by mastery and an experience of personal development within the world of games, and transitioning into education or employment entails careful design of career learning interventions. According to Shakespeare’s model, intrinsic and extrinsic factors form reasons for exclusion. Still, while parts of the problem are individual and lasting (diagnosed) and needs special attention and facilitation, another part of the problem concerns career guidance, learning and support in the transition to work or education.

We look forward to detailing the analysis and our possible career guidance interventions at the paper presentation.

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Session 3D - Social Justice and emancipation in transition and guidance

03-10-2025 - 10:30 - 12:00

Hall: Þinggerði

S3D-1 Enactment of class and ethnicity in different school contexts in an urban Swedish environment.

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Introduction:

Class and ethnicity are social structure that are often discussed within the field of educational research. Research studies have frequently examined both individually and in combination (Ghaill, 1988; Willis, 1981). Studies explore topics such as how educational aspirations and choices are shaped by these structures as well as how pupils class and ethnic background enacts during their schooling (Carlhed Ydhag et al., 2021). The study design includes three lower secondary schools in an urban Swedish environemt that represent diverse student populations, reflecting variations in class status and ethnic backgrounds. In addition to examining the enactment of class and ethnicity in different school contexts, the research also focuses on the role of class and ethnicity in relation to the transition from lower to upper secondary education.

Research Aim:

The aim of this study is twofold. Firstly, the aim of this research is to understand how class and ethnicity as social structures are enacted in different school contexts. Secondly, and more specifically, the study seeks to explore how class and ethnicity as social structures influence the pupils' experiences and opportunities during the transition from lower to upper secondary education.

Research Question.

How is class and ethnicity enacted in different school contexts, where youths are navigating their transition from lower to upper secondary education?

Theoretical framework:

This study applies Bourdieu's theoretical concepts—capital, habitus, and field—to analytically discuss how ethnicity and class are constructed (Bourdieu, 1987) within three different school contexts in a Swedish urban area and how they influence students' transitions from lower to upper-secondary education. While class and ethnicity can be analytically distinguished, they often intersect and interact in complex ways (Crompton, 2008), making them challenging to understand due to their multifaceted nature. By utilizing Bourdieu's framework, this study offers a deeper understanding of how these social dimensions operate in practice. Furthermore, Bourdieu's theoretical approach provides a strong foundation for achieving the study's objectives, which are to understanding the enactment of class and ethnicity in three different school contexts, as well as the role of class and ethnicity in relation to the transition from lower to upper secondary education.

Methodology:

This study employs an ethnographic approach (Jeffrey, 2018), incorporating participatory observations (Seim, 2021) and semi-structured interviews at three lower secondary schools in an urban area of

Sweden, each representing a distinct contextual setting. Ethnography has been widely recognized in previous research on class and ethnicity as a valuable and frequently used methodology. The focus of the observations has been to see how the enactment of class and ethnicity have played out in the schools, whilst the semi-structured interviews have been more fruitful in relation to discuss the aspects of transitions, as well as how the different parties in the schools discuss the enactment of class and ethnicity in relation to the transition. The primary reason behind adopting an ethnographic approach is to gain closer proximity to the students and their daily experiences in relation to class and ethnicity, providing a rich, in-depth understanding (Walford & Delamont, 2008) of their interactions and transitions.

Results:

This study explores how class and ethnicity as social constructs are enacted across three different school setting in an urban environment in the Swedish contexts, and how class and ethnicity influence young people's navigation from lower to upper secondary education. Although still a "work-in-progress," the findings suggest that class and ethnicity are enacted in each school setting in different ways, confirming the fact that both class and ethnicity as social constructs are context dependent. However, the role of class and ethnicity varies depending on subjective habitus of the individuals, the field where the habitus is outplayed, and capital of the individuals in relation to individuals' field and habitus, which is the reason why the theoretical framework of the study has a Borudieusean approach. This indicates that while both class and ethnicity shape students' educational transitions, their influence is heavily context-dependent, as demonstrated by the three school contexts examined in this study.

Relevance to Nordic educational research:

Different school contexts depending on their environments function as institutions of social reproduction, making both class and ethnicity key aspects that influence this reproduction. In other words, both class and ethnicity manifest as driving forces that create possibilities or limitations for youths navigating their transition from lower to upper secondary education, which is a common phenomenon of relevance in all Nordic countries.

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S3D-2 Perspectives on Social Justice in Career Guidance: A Comparative Study of Catalonia and Sweden

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One of the multiple challenges in education is the post-compulsory choices and career path conformation of young people. This priority is linked to a growing interest on a combating and preventing early school leaving (Eurostat, 2024). However, it also has to do with promoting social mobility, increasing the participation of migrant population in education and addressing gender stereotypes among other challenges (Curran and Tarabini, 2022; Skovhus and Thomsen, 2022). Despite those are global and worldwide challenges all the regions are facing, there are only a few transnational comparisons in career guidance, and normally the existing ones compare countries or territories within the same region (Sultana, 2018; Thomsen et al., 2024). Therefore, these comparisons rarely mix countries from different regions which may share common characteristics and issues related to the career education implemented.

There is a consensus that all northern countries promote some form of guidance activities throughout compulsory education (Thomsen et al., 2024; Einarsdóttir et al., 2023). However, this agreement is not observed within Mediterranean countries (Sultana, 2018; Martínez-Muñoz and Martínez-Roca, 2017). This paper is relevant not only due to the lack of comparisons among regions, but also because of some common characteristics between the two case studies, Catalonia and Sweden. These related features include similar population sizes, the decentralization of educational competencies and policies from central governments, and high levels of school segregation rates based on school-choice systems (Statistics Sweden, 2024; Statistical Institute of Catalonia, 2024; International Institute for Educational Planning, 2019; Helms Jørgensen et al., 2019).

Based on Watts' (1996) suggested socio-political ideologies in guidance and the conception of agency and social justice held by scholars such as Hooley et al. (2017) and Thomsen et al. (2022), we explore two main research questions: What are the notions of career guidance experienced by career guidance practitioners, and how can these be related to social justice? Additionally, what are their experiences of promoting social justice through their practice? This paper is relevant because we aim to analyse how career practitioners position themselves towards social justice and which notions of social justice they hold, based on the historical, social conditions, and cultural values. We examine this from the perspective of two different welfare state models, yet within a supranational context (at least in middle-high income countries) where career guidance is still defined as an individualistic concept closely associated with economic growth and labor market needs (OECD, 2021).

Semi-structured interviews with career guidance counsellors and practitioners were conducted in Sweden and Catalonia between the period November 2023 and November 2024. Whilst in Sweden 25 career guidance counsellors working in upper secondary schools across the country were included in the study, in Catalonia 11 career counsellors were interviewed. Considering that data were originally collected from two different research projects, two interview scripts were designed. Nonetheless, both have similar questions included regarding planning, implementation and execution of career learning activities within the schools, focusing on the career guidance counsellors' beliefs and motivations in the job of supporting young people's career development. A qualitative method's approach was used to analyse the data, in particular, thematic analysis was used to identify initial codes and common themes.

The results indicate certain similarities and differences between the two compared regions, with fundamental values in guidance appearing to be particularly similar among counselors in Sweden and Catalonia. However, the implementation of guidance activities appears to differ both within and between the regions.

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S3D-3 Career practitioners as social justice advocates?

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Keywords: career counselling, migrants, social justice, integration, street-level bureaucracy

The question of migrant integration is a pressing issue in many societies of the Global North. In this context, career guidance is potentially an activity that contributes to social inclusion, participation, and recognition of migrants (Fraser, 2000; Hooley et al., 2018). Further, career practitioners dealing with these clients act as street-level workers (Lipsky, 2010), positioned between integration, education and employment policies and career practices. In this role, they are potentially promoting social change as advocates assisting in acting on behalf of the less privileged (Watts, 1996). However, the current guidance and counselling systems emanate strongly from the philosophy of lifelong learning (Sultana, 2021), in which counselling is supposed to enhance the acquisition of formal qualifications, leaning on the formal educational structure. When it comes to migrants, this is combined with the assumption that they enter the country with few or no skills relevant to the national labour market (see e.g. Yosso, 2005).

In my doctoral research, the main research question was how career counsellors implement integration policy through their daily counselling work and practices. I have investigated how Finnish career practitioners working within the national public employment services contribute to integration measures and services for migrants through their own decisions and actions and, further, how a counselling approach based on the idea of social justice could contribute to such integration measures.

The research includes three sub-studies, each addressing a more specific research question: firstly, what kinds of topics do the students in an integration training programme wish to address in their counselling discussions, and how do their counsellors react to those topics; secondly, how does providing counselling for students with a migration background inform the counsellors' professional agency; and thirdly, how does a stereotyping perspective inform their discretionary action? The first sub-study draws from non-decision-making theory (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970): the second from Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing (Bernstein, 2000); and the third from street-level bureaucracy approach (Lipsky, 2010).

The research is based on qualitative data, gathered in 2019-2020, drawing from thematical analysis (Braun et al., 2019) on two inter-related datasets of 18 video-recorded counselling discussions and 18 semi-structured practitioner interviews. The practitioners in question were working for the national integration programme targeted for adult, unemployed migrants. The practitioner interviews were carried out by leaning on stimulated recall method (Bloom, 1953) where the participants were shown their own video-recorded counselling discussions, which they were then asked to comment and analyse.

The findings suggest that practitioners balance between the anticipated integration goals derived from integration policy and their daily practices when working with migrants. In general, counsellors apply a set of rules in their own favour and rely on various ideals to facilitate their own duties and challenges. They also make use of power when working with migrant-clients and produce a certain kind of expanded agency, combined with coping strategies that enable them to tackle the emotional and affective burdens included in counselling. A holistic counselling approach would underline the importance of client-centredness and the consideration of a person's whole life in the counselling context. However, the counselling of migrants is strongly subordinated to and framed by the integration policy, with its emphasis on employment. Therefore, integration policy ideals are de facto turning career counselling into assimilative and employment-oriented practices, instead of leaning on the principles of social justice and creating a more sustainable integration policy. Yet, due to the unique role of career counsellors, career counselling of migrants has a crucial role to play in integration processes, a role that could be enhanced, supported and strengthened.

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S3D-4 Conceptualising Social Justice in Rural Career Guidance

Rosie Alexander [1]

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General description on research questions, objectives, and theoretical framework

In increasingly global societies, local conditions remain highly significant in the life chances of young people (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). Indeed, despite narratives of an increasingly homogenous 'global' world, the evidence is that there are significant, and growing, issues of spatial inequality (between rural and urban areas, or central and peripheral areas) in the Nordic region, and beyond. Specific concerns have focused on spatial inequalities in access to education and employment which can pose significant challenges especially for the career development of young people in rural areas with small educational and labour markets. To equalise access, career guidance is often understood as having a role in raising aspirations and increasing progression rates. However, in rural communities, if increasing access means increasing outmigration of young people, then we can ask if this is a 'good' outcome for a local community. Further, recognising that young people hold multiple aspirations that are not just work or career related (Hart, 2016), then it is also the case that leaving a community may not always be the best thing for a young person either. This raises critical questions about the purposes, functions and practices of career guidance in rural areas.

One way of understanding the challenges of rural career guidance practice can be through the lens of social justice. The concept of social justice has been increasingly mobilised in the field of career guidance to critically review the purposes and practices of career guidance (Hooley et al., 2018; Irving, 2005).

However, existing scholarship on the spatial dimensions of social justice in career guidance, and specifically career guidance in rural areas remains in its infancy (Alexander, 2018; Kalalahti, 2023). This paper seeks to significantly extend conceptualisations of social justice in rural career guidance practice. It does this through identifying how the role and purpose of career guidance in rural communities can be understood through a social justice lens, and explicitly interrogating the challenges of understanding social justice in rural communities, where critical questions are raised about social justice, such as, social justice for whom and for what? (Cuervo, 2016).

Methods/methodology

This is a conceptual paper which draws on multiple sources of evidence and synthesises these to offer a conceptual elaboration of the concept of social justice in rural career guidance. The paper starts with a review and synthesis of the conceptual literature on social justice and career guidance (Hooley et al., 2018; Irving, 2005) and the conceptual literature from the field of rural education and social justice (Cuervo, 2016). It then applies the conceptual framework to the existing academic literature focused on rural career guidance, drawing on previous literature reviews of scholarship in this area (Alexander & Fuqua, 2024). It finishes by drawing out a conceptual elaboration of the concept of social justice in rural career guidance based on the preceding evidence.

Outcomes/results or expected outcomes

The paper builds on emergent conceptual work in social justice and place (Alexander, 2018; Kalalahti, 2023) by presenting a rigorous analysis of the concept of social justice as it applies to rural career guidance practice. It demonstrates the competing and sometimes directly opposed ways in which social justice is conceptualised in existing rural career guidance research and practice and provides a framework for understanding these different conceptualisations. It also opens new and innovative conceptualisations of social justice in rural career education and guidance practices. Through exposing the problematics of conceptualisations of social justice in rural guidance practices, this paper also contributes to understanding issues of place / space, and local / global dynamics in approaches to social justice in career guidance more widely.

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Session 3E - Lifelong learning and guidance

03-10-2025 - 10:30 - 12:00

Hall: Sáttagerði

S3E-1 Navigating uncertainty: Adult learners' access to educational and career guidance in the face of societal and personal challenges in Iceland

Helgi Þorbjörn Svavarsson [1] Berglind Rós Magnúsdóttir [1]

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Today, adult learners face a rapidly evolving societal landscape shaped by diverse and profound challenges, including sustainability concerns, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, climate change, and significant transformations within the labor market. In such a context, access to timely and relevant educational and career guidance becomes not merely beneficial but essential. Adult learners, who must navigate complex life scenarios and evolving professional demands, often require robust support structures to adapt effectively and sustainably to these changes. Furthermore, educational and career guidance becomes particularly critical when individuals experience personal crises that impact their educational and vocational decisions.

The core research questions addressed in this presentation are:

How accessible is educational and career guidance to adult learners in Iceland?

What institutional and systemic factors influence the availability of educational and career guidance services for adults in Iceland?

How effectively does current guidance provision support adults in navigating complex societal transformations and personal crises?

This study draws upon theoretical frameworks that consider adult learning from multiple perspectives. Lima and Guimarães's (2011) categorization of lifelong learning strategies—democratic-emancipatory, modernization, and human resource management approaches—provides a critical lens through which the orientation of educational and career guidance in Iceland is examined. Gareth Rees's (2013) perspectives on the political economy of adult learning further inform our analysis, highlighting tensions between economic imperatives and broader democratic and personal development goals.

Methods/methodology:

A qualitative approach forms the basis of this inquiry, involving document analysis and review of policy texts, legislative frameworks, and institutional reports. Data sources include:

Icelandic policy documents and legislative texts related to adult education and career guidance.

Annual reports and strategic documents from educational institutions and agencies providing educational and career guidance.

Additionally, the study includes secondary analysis of stakeholder inputs collected during recent policy formation processes, enabling in-depth exploration of current institutional discourse and practices surrounding guidance for adult learners.

Outcomes/results or expected outcomes:

Preliminary analyses suggest that while Iceland's adult education system demonstrates significant flexibility, ambition and innovation, there are notable challenges regarding coherent and systematic support for educational and career guidance services for adult learners. Initial findings indicate that current guidance provision in Iceland may be disproportionately oriented toward short-term labor market objectives, potentially neglecting the broader democratic, emancipatory, and developmental dimensions critical for helping individuals adapt to long-term societal transformations and personal crises.

Moreover, institutional fragmentation and funding structures appear to limit the system's ability to provide comprehensive and accessible guidance services consistently. Thus, enhancing the accessibility and quality of guidance services requires concerted policy efforts that balance immediate labor market needs with individual empowerment and resilience, particularly amidst rapidly changing societal conditions.

Through this research, we aim to offer actionable insights for policy development, highlighting necessary adjustments to better equip the Icelandic adult education system and its guidance services to meet the diverse and dynamic needs of adult learners effectively.

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S3E-2 Lifelong learning - A potent concept in transitional times

Hróbjartur Árnason [1]

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People intuitively see learning and training as an approach to meet challenges. Transitions in personal life and in society reveal discrepancies between current competencies and those needed to address new situations a person or a group face. This is becoming even more apparent in a society where the pace of change has increased exponentially compared to what we experienced in the last century, tumultuous as it was. Thus we regularly see politicians, leaders and managers call on people and society for education or "increased their skills" in order to overcome challenges. "Lifelong learning" is a concept and even an ideology introduced into the adult education discussion around 1980 that has influenced the discussion on learning, education and counselling since.

Nordic states have a tradition of creating educational systems which offer a variety of paths for learning and education, however with the increasing influx of migrants, AI and other effects of automation on jobs, our societies need to support relevant and meaningful structures to support everyone's lifelong learning.

In Iceland there have regularly arisen discussions where the ideology of lifelong learning has been championed, however practice has focused on raising the educational level of people with short formal educational backgrounds and upskilling for the benefit of the work market. Understandably the concept of Lifelong learning has experienced a development in use and meaning. In the Icelandic discourse at least two concepts have been In use to express this idea. Influence on educational policy is most prominent

from OECD and from the European Union. But a clear exposé of the use and meanings of the concept of lifelong learning is necessary for current policy discussions around adult education and counselling, and to support practice. In this paper/presentation we will examine the concept's reception and use in Icelandic documents and between 1990 and 2025 and extrapolate on its usefulness for policy, addressing transitions and predict individual motivations to learn.

The research questions directing our research are:

* How has the concept Lifelong learning ("Símenntun" and "Ævimenntun") been used in recent policy documents in Iceland.?

* How has the concept influenced policy, law and implementation?

* How do most recent policy documents in Iceland imagine the future of education, working life and thriving in view of the most pertinent international discourse on lifelong learning?

To answer these questions policy documents, research papers, magazine articles from the said time span will be analysed with the methods of critical discourse analysis, depicting its influence on policy, laws, structures and practice of adult education and counselling in Iceland.

Among the documents analysed will be

* Bills, Laws, regulations and position papers published in conjunction with political discussions concerning the passing of bills and regulations connected to adult education in Iceland.

* Research papers and theses on adult education published in Icelandic during the last 20 years

* Newspaper and magazine articles on adult education and counselling

* Documents created in policy work connected with the field.

The analysis will reveal the appeal and usefulness of the idea of a lifelong learning society its potential and promises, while also unveil problems and contradictions connected to the use of the concept. A deeper understanding of the current standing of the idea of lifelong learning in the Icelandic discourse can support adult educators and especially counsellors in their support of adult learners hoping to navigate the complex and turbulent times we have upon us.

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Hróbjartur Árnason. (2023). Fimmta stoðin í menntakerfi sem styður við ævinám: Yfirlit um íslenskar rannsóknir og stefnuskjöl um málefnið. *Netla*. https://doi.org/10.24270/serritnetla.2023.17

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S3E-3 Constructing approaches to client work in public employment services: a Luhmannian systems theoretical perspective

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[2] University of Eastern Finland, Joensu, Finland
[3] University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland

Organisational contexts where career guidance is practiced can often rather be described as 'polyphonic', characterised by the presence of multiple organisational objectives stemming from different institutional logics, than 'homophonic', governed by a single primary objective (Villadsen, 2008). In practical terms, career guidance practitioners find themselves facing conflicting expectations regarding what their client work should achieve. This paper focuses on the context of public employment services (PES) where practitioners may simultaneously be expected to *control* their clients by steering them effectively towards the labour market, on one hand, and *empower* their clients by providing holistic support and fostering their independent agency, on the other hand (Sultana & Watts, 2006; Whelan et al., 2021). The position of guidance as professional practice in this context is fluid and needs to be constantly negotiated. While the key dilemmas embedded in PES guidance practice are well-documented in previous studies, our paper seeks to provide a new kind of an approach and a theoretical perspective to analyse how conflicting institutional and systemic expectations are dealt with and translated into approaches to practice in client work.

For this task, the paper adopts a systems theoretical approach inspired by sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1995). Luhmann-inspired approaches to analysing professional practice have been utilised relatively extensively e.g. in educational (Vanderstraeten, 2002) and social work research (Rodger, 2021; Villadsen, 2008), but very little in career guidance research (Felby, 2022). There are well-established traditions of accounting for the systemic dimension in the context of career development and counselling as well as guidance policy (see Patton & McMahon, 2021; Kettunen, 2024). However, according to our estimation, many of the adopted approaches to systems theory and thinking draw on understandings of the systemic dimension as an external context for action, or as a source of external influences upon actors. A Luhmannian approach, on its part, does not perceive systems as external, higher-level structures but rather as embedded in all social operations, including organisational operations and client interaction.

From a Luhmannian perspective, society consists of different kinds of social systems, which include most importantly functional systems (e.g. economy, education, health) but also organisational and interaction systems. The systems operate self-referentially according to their specific operational logics and ways of engaging with their environment. Organisations are formed to 'run' functional systems, as it were, because they produce decisions based on specific functional logics. For instance, the function system of economy 'sees' the world as consisting of economic operations and excludes other considerations. In the PES organisation, this kind of a perspective can be observed, for instance, when labour market outcomes are prioritised in decision-making processes over other considerations, like ones linked to organising time and space for a client's personal development and learning. While some organisations are predominantly based on a singular functional logic – like courts representing the legal system – human services, including career guidance, can often be considered 'polyphonic' as they deal with different, sometimes conflicting logics (Villadsen, 2008). It is, to a large extent, an empirical question what the systemic nature of career guidance is like in different contexts, and this is what our paper seeks to explore.

Our research question is: *how do career guidance practitioners in public employment services deal with different expectations placed on client practice stemming from different systemic logics?* The empirical investigation draws on a data set consisting of practitioners' classroom discussions in the context of a series of training workshops that focused on developing practitioners' skills in guidance and counselling. Two regional service networks in Eastern Finland were followed over a series of four workshop meetings. The analysis focuses on practitioners' accounts about decisions that are taken in client work and on how they legitimate those decisions. These accounts can be related e.g. to courses of action taken in interaction situations, or to broader decisions regarding the choice of working approaches. Decisions represent operations through which the PES organisation attaches itself to different functional systems as it seeks to process the client. The organisation utilises practitioners' interpretative capacities to come up with solutions that incorporate different functional logics into a decision

The analysis of practitioner discourse provides a window into processes where solutions to client work dilemmas are achieved and approaches to work constructed. The study seeks to shed light on these processes and on the value of a Luhmannian approach in making sense of them. Understanding these processes is crucial also in practical terms from the perspective of building practitioners' critical capabilities to deal with various ethically challenging situations faced in everyday client work.

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Session 4A - Theoretical perspectives on careers and transitions

03-10-2025 - 13:00 - 14:30

Hall: Aðalgerði

S4A-1 Validating the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) in Norway

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3–5 keywords: Career Adapt-Abilities Scale, Validation, Norway

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

The paper describes the process of adapting and validating the CAAS (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) to the Norwegian context.

The CAAS was launched in 2012 and is based on Savickas (2005) theory of career construction which propose that the ability to navigate and manage careers successfully can be related to four strengths or personal resources: concern, control, curiosity and confidence. Since its launch, the CAAS has been adapted to and validated in a range of countries, and has informed research on various topics related to career outcomes and predictors for career outcomes, both interpersonal, intrapersonal and contextually based/contingent (Johnston, 2018), like dual careers (Ojala et al., 2023) socio-economic differences (Hou & Liu, 2021), the urban-rural dimension (Albien et al., 2020) – and the list goes on.

Our aim is to adapt and validate the CAAS instrument to apply in research on career resources and outcomes in the Norwegian context, and we are especially looking at the Icelandic CAAS version (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015; Vilhjálmsdóttir et al., 2012) for comparison. One reason for this is the conclusion from the Icelandic validation research to be particularly mindful of culture sensitivity, as this research showed that the US CAAS showed some weaknesses in the Icelandic sample that could be related to culture specific phenomena. As Norway and Iceland are comparable on a range of what we can see as essential cultural dimensions, e.g. political economy, work- and education system, socio-economic distribution, urban/rural issues, the conclusions from this research are important starting points. In addition, research on the career concept in Norway (Bakke, 2021) as well as research on the application of career construction in Norway (Dalene, 2022) has shown that central concepts in career guidance can be contested and variably understood, and using the CAAS on a Norwegian sample gives the opportunity to delve deeper into components of career theory through the lens of internationally reliable and validated science.

We have added two dimensions to the Norwegian version that we have tested on upper secondary students. In addition to gender, we have added an urban /rural dimension by asking if respondents go to school in their own municipality, because a majority of students in rural areas of Norway do not have upper secondary available where they live. We have also added a question that relates to the specificity of the Norwegian educational system and the streaming of students into vocational or academic education after lower secondary school. We added a question asking whether they are doing a vocational education or an academically preparatory upper education, based on the presumption that students that are doing vocational education are more settled in their career aspirations. We are also interested in whether this will interact with the urban/rural and the gender dimension.

Methods/methodology We have translated and adapted the 24-item original US CAAS into Norwegian through a translation-backtranslation process, and added 3 question on gender, place of study, and stream of study. We piloted the Norwegian translation on 10 individuals in our target group and amended the translation before distributing the survey. In the fall of 2024, we distributed the survey to upper secondary students through our nationwide networks of career guidance counsellors and career teachers and received 362 responses from 5 counties in Norway.

Outcomes/results or expected outcomes The data has been through a first round of analysis, and shows that the Norwegian sample on an overall level has an acceptable fit to the CAAS-model and the sub-constructs, but we are in the process of doing further analysis on the urban/rural and streaming dimensions that we have added.

We will present more results and visualisations from the analysis in the presentation.

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S4A-2 "You Should Not Remain Here": Opting for Rural Upper-Secondary Schools and Challenging the Meritocratic Ideal

Berglind Ros Magnusdottir [1]Unnur Edda Garðarsdóttir [1]

[1] University of Iceland, Iceland

The Nordic higher education system has been expanding (Isopahkala-Bouret et al., 2018), reflecting a global trend driven in part by the evaluation of national competitiveness based on the number of secondary and higher education degrees in each country. With increased access to higher education and a certain saturation within the middle class, parental concerns about their children's futures have intensified (Brown et al., 2013). It has become increasingly challenging to achieve respect and prosperity in manual, care, and service occupations that do not require higher education. Additionally, unemployment among university graduates has risen, and as the number of university-educated individuals grows, competition for available professional white-collar jobs has also intensified.

The meritocratic ideal through education refers to the belief that individuals should advance and achieve success based on their abilities and merits, rather than on their social class, wealth, or other external factors. In a meritocratic system, education is seen as a key mechanism for identifying and nurturing talent, providing equal opportunities for all individuals to succeed based on their performance and achievements. As the education system has transitioned into a mass system, the gap between the educated and the "well-educated" has widened (Power, S., Edwards, T., Whitty, G., & Wigfall, V. 2003). In an open education market, schools have become akin to brands, providing students with a particular image and contributing to cultural differentiation among groups (Berglind Rós Magnúsdóttir & Unnur Edda Garðarsdóttir, 2018; Dovemark & Holm, 2017). These policies are rooted in neoliberal ideology, which posits that individuals are entirely responsible for their life opportunities and academic success. In Iceland, the evaluation of youth status, particularly among the most prominent students according to the meritocratic ideal, is largely based on their school choice—specifically, attendance at highly ranked or elite schools—and their selection of prestigious or canonical disciplines at the university level (Magnúsdóttir & Kosunen, 2022).

The general aim of this paper is to examine whether and how these trends and policies apply in Iceland regarding rural students' choices and aspirations by exploring:

What factors influenced the choice of rural students who opted for their local upper-secondary school with a special focus on them that did have the financial and academic ability to participate in the meritocratic ideal? What did the family, friends and guidance counselors advise them to do?

How did their choice of upper-secondary education shape their psycho-social well-being, political values, educational possibilities and future aspirations compared to other rural students who chose to leave their homes and opt for the selective schools?

The research is grounded in Bourdieu's theoretical framework, positing that choices are shaped by habitus, capital, and their interplay within the field. A total of 48 interviews were conducted, with 4-5 students from each participating school. Among these, 14 students attended small upper-secondary schools primarily serving the local population in rural Iceland. Notably, several of these students had the qualifications to apply to top-tier schools but chose not to. The study will particularly focus on this group.

The results indicate that different types of capital have varying success depending on the school in question. The myth of a "better life" and school quality varies according to the values and standards upheld in each school field. The branding of high schools and the idea of individual responsibility for one's career are pervasive, but rural students also engage in different discourses and possess different types of capital, which influence their choices and values and are linked to geographical and social location.

According to the meritocratic ideal, academically excellent students are expected to choose highly selective schools, with school counselors playing a pivotal role in facilitating this process. What is the ethical course of action in guiding these students? This will be discussed in light of the main results of this study.

S4A-3 Working with Calling in Context

Gill Frigerio [1]Torild Schulstok [2]

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[2] Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Lillehammer, Norway

The work as calling literature, whilst having its historical roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition and the European Protestant Reformation, has largely developed within the USA. The explosion in academic attention over the last thirty years responds to the limitations of rational models to explain career decision making: people can and do experience 'calling' to a particular occupation. Dik and Duffy (2009) have argued the concept of calling is comprised of transcendent summons, purposeful work and prosocial motivation and have focused on its measurement using the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ), as well as developing a comprehensive theory of work as calling (Duffy et al, 2019). Others have sought to understand through qualitative studies the sensemaking process of perceiving and following a calling, or not, over the lifespan (e.g. Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Lysova & Khapova, 2019; Schabram & Maitlis, 2017)

The paper looks at how understandings of calling differ in two particular contexts outside the US and need to be understood in relation to distinct cultures in order to be integrated with practice. The significance of the rolep of religion in public life in each context is considered. In the UK, Frigerio (2023) undertook 11 semi structured interviews with mid-life women who understood calling from a Christian perspective and identified several contextual tensions which affected the process. In Norway, Schulstok et al (2024) attempted to validate the CVQ with a sample of 143 Norwegian career guidance practitioners, finding that it did not meaningfully describe and measure calling for this group. Through the process, they identified the potential to build a culturally relevant concept (tentatively called meningsfull karriere) which could capture a more indigenous Norwegian sense of calling.

In the paper we will set out a programme of quantitative and qualitative work that could support the development of such a new concept in the UK and Norway, or indeed any other context, and reflect on how this could be used in practice.

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S4A-4 The emancipation of career

Tristram Hooley [1], Rie Thomsen [2]

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In this presentation Rie Thomsen and Tristram Hooley will attempt to outline a new and critical theory of career. This presentation is part of a longer term project which will hopefully be published 2026. Its aim is to reconceptualise careers in a way that is conducive to the good life and to social justice.

People's lives are made up of a complex mess of working, learning, caring and living. Historically the concept of career has been used to align these different elements of a life project in ways that privilege paid work. The centrality of (the right) employment to the idea of what constitutes a good career has meant that all too often people live to work, rather than work to live. The key metaphor that has underpinned this concept of career has been that of ladder, which suggests that 'good' careers should be based in the workplace and be ordered, meritocratic, and move progressively upwards.

The concept of the ladder suggest that careers should follow a preordained path in which the individual just has to discern what the next step is, develop their capacity and make the move upwards. Indeed, this idea of finding the right 'fit' was central to the emergence of career guidance in the early twentieth century as a technology which could lubricate this process of fitting round pegs into round holes. This a fundamentally social conception of careers as being in service to a greater good (economic efficiency).

Yet, since the 1980s and 1990s this traditional vision of career has been problematicised and replaced with the idea that careers are individual projects which have to built alone. Such careers remain important to the functioning of the increasingly global economy, but the concept of finding a fit has gradually been abandoned. Contemporary careers are defined not by fit, but by adaption, and by individuals who have the capacity to adapt and remain resilient in the face of repeated changes of career.

Even though its nature has changed alongside wider changes in the political economy, the concept of career has always been important to the operation of the global economy. It has provided an organising structure to link individual's aspirations and psychology to the global narratives of capitalism. The idea that we are building a career, that we have agency and that we can shape our lives is at once a genuine act of individual meaning making and a story that obscures the fact that our lives are frequently organised for the benefit of capital rather than our own happiness and self-actualisation.

This presentation will explore the development of the concept of career and the environment for careers within contemporary capitalism. Through an analysis of contemporary forms and rhetorics of career, it will go on to present a reconceptualisation of career in in which we examine how career can be used to help

people to cope in the contemporary world, to rethink their lives and what they derive meaning from, to imagine better worlds, and build and live in new forms of society.

We will argue that this reconceptualised idea of career is relevant to the way that people live their lives, to researchers' attempts to understand this, to policymakers and to those practitioners on the front line in the education and employment system who are trying to help people to build better careers every day.

Session 4B - Inclusion and belonging in education and labor market

03-10-2025 - 13:00 - 14:30

Hall: Glæsigerði

S4B-1 Everyday Racisms in Swedish School: Upper secondary student's experience and Educational Practices

Hassan Sharif [1]

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Everyday Racisms in Swedish School: Upper secondary student's experience and Educational Practices

The relationship between education and racism has been central to global and national debates on combatting racism and promoting democracy, globally as well as in Sweden (Leonardo and Grubb, 2014). Education is often defined as key to combatting racism and discrimination. At the same time, research has shown that racism is a part of everyday life in Swedish schools, and that local everyday racisms both reproduce and re-negotiate racisms expressed in global and national settings (Lundström, 2022; León Rosales & Johnson, 2019; Arneback & Jämte, 2022).

This study present findings from a pilot study conducted between September 2022 to May 2023 based on qualitative interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018) with upper secondary school students enrolled in the Language Introduction Program for newly arrived migrants (LIP). The aim of the study is to analyse how different forms of everyday racism is experienced, enabled, practiced and potentially countered by students and school staff in an upper-secondary school in Stockholm. The presentation focuses on results from interviews with students about their experience off racism in their everyday school life and its impact om their educational transition from LIP to National upper secondary programs. The interviews show, inter alia, that students avoid applying to certain schools in fear of being exposed to racism – which confirm studies that show that racism in education risk furthering segregation across Sweden (e.g. Behtoui, et.al. 2019).

Keywords: Everyday Racisms, Education, discrimination, transition

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S4B-2 Analysing activities of migrant women´s solidarity network though the lenses of career support and relational co-agency

Sanna Pauliina Toiviainen [1]

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General description on research objectives theoretical framework

Although migrant grassroots organisations have been recognised as an important arena for integration, their function as a means of support for migrants´ career development remains underexplored. Migrant organisations can be broadly defined as migrant-led associations or social enterprises which offer practical and social support to people with migrant backgrounds. Having attracted growing interest in recent years, migrant organisations are generally considered important means of support and integration for ethnic minorities, particularly for first-generation and newly arrived migrants and refugees (eg. Thompson et al., 2022). This study examines migrant grassroots organisations as contexts for community-based guidance and career support (eg. Frigerio & Nasimi, 2019), using an ethnographic case study of a migrant women's solidarity network in Norway.

Guidance is broadly defined as a joint efforts of meaning-making and action which are relevant to individual career situations (Vehviläinen & Souto, 2020). Guidance can contribute to an individual´s or group´s learning or work processes, or other personally or collectively relevant growth or development processes that positively contribute to an individual´s quality of life, their place in the community, or society at large (eg. empowerment, raising critical consciousness). With the concept of career, I broadly refer to work, learning, or other relevant life projects of individuals which connect them in meaningful ways to their surrounding world, significant others, families, social communities, and broader society (McCash et al., 2021).

Guidance processes aim to broaden the space of agency for the participants. The concept of co-agency has been developed to undestand the relational nature of agency construction and highlight the multiple dimensions of agency construction in guidance processes (Toiviainen, 2022). The smallest unit of co-agency is the dyadic relation of counsellor and counsellee, where both participants bring in their life-historically accumulated, embodied resources, and socially formed discourses they have had access to and engage in joint action and meaning-making. Another dimension of relational co-agency construction is collective and group context, where the collective is the entity in determining the forms and trajectories of guidance processes. Hence, guidance situations can emerge also spontaneously in different social spaces, where people come together to process their career-related issues (including work, learning, leisure, etc.). The third dimension of co-agency refers to engagement with systems, cultures, and discourses as a means to broaden the space for agency for individuals and groups. It entails both critical thinking and collective action that bridges the situational and localised experiences to broader societal and political issues (Toiviainen, 2022.) Localised experiences are understood in the light of intersecting social locations in society, and connected to cultural and societal power relations which lead to privileging other identities/bodies/subjectivities while marginalising others (Crenshaw, 1989).

Methods/methodology

The data includes participant observations (40 days), interviews with key organisation figures (n=3), and life-history interviews with 12 women involved in the network's social activities and/or work training. The interview and field notes were analysed abductively, combining thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020) with a theory-informed framework of co-agency (Toiviainen 2022) in guidance practice and intersectionality (Creshaw 1989). An intersectional lens allows us to unpack the interplay of factors such as socioeconomic background, ethnicity, gender, disability, and age in the study participants´ experiences (Souto & Sotkasiira 2022).

Outcomes/results or expected outcomes

According to the results, the women's network provided meaningful career support for members and demonstrated all levels of co-agency construction. Women participating in network activities were valued as key resources. Informants emphasized being met with empathy "for the first time" in Norway by network members. The network addressed immediate needs and the network activists also helped members navigate complex bureaucracy through advocacy and personal contacts. They provided social support to "fellow sisters" and bonding capital, with the key slogan "we lift each other." The network offered social activities (knitting, dancing, artwork, hiking) and work opportunities in its facilities along with tailored language courses.

The network reduced social isolation by offering a low-threshold social meeting place, though its location near welfare services created trust barriers for some. Educational themes emerged based on member needs (domestic violence, women's rights, voting, employee rights). It promoted women's basic human rights, questioned patriarchal gender norms, and reduced family over-reliance through independent economy and social networks. On a system-level he organisation complemented and often compensated for support offered by the public welfare system which was often experienced as distant. Some informants´ histories highlight the prevailing systemic barriers and discrimination that older migrant women experience. In sum, migrant grassroots organisations provide meaningful support for ethnic minority groups but could play a more active role promoting social justice and raising awareness about systemic barriers that specific groups, like older women with limited education and refugee backgrounds, face. These organisations could be more equal actors in local integration systems, facilitating tailored learning pathways and collective spaces for agency through local democratic participation.

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S4B-3 Vocational education for women and transitions in a historical perspective: The rise and fall of domestic education

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This paper examines the development of vocational education (VET) for women in Sweden from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, with a special focus on the emergence, professionalization, and eventual marginalization of "domestic education." Although historical research on VET often foregrounds male-dominated fields linked to industrial and technical development, this paper argues that female-dominated VET and domestic education has been both shaped by – and integral to – broader societal changes (Broberg, 2022; Broberg, Lindberg & Wärvik, 2021, 2022; Lundh Nilsson, 2022). By analyzing how domestic education rose to prominence and later declined under state-led school reforms, the paper points to women's possibilities for transitions in the interplay between changing family structures, shifting labor market demands, emergence of new educational fields and gender norms.

A key premise of this study is that formalizing domestic education for women in traditionally feminized work sectors can be seen as a response to diverse societal needs that have evolved through history and culture, and manifested in various goals and practices (Billett, 2011). Thus, societal needs, and their connections to VET, vary across different periods and between different labour market sectors.

The research questions are:

How was domestic vocational education targeting or enrolling women organized from the 19th century to the present?

How was this organization motivated in relation to societal development, which actors were involved and with what consequences

The analysis is based on policy documents, statistics and previous research.

We have identified four key turning points that illuminate the changing role of domestic education:

The first turning point occured around the 1850s, when small-scale local initiatives such as dairy schools and domestic education at the at then-emerging folk high schools where established. These schools formally trained women in tasks and domestic subjects traditionally carried out within the family sphere. This period reflected Sweden's transition from a poor agrarian country to an emerging industrial society, in which the family began to lose its position as the primary unit of production.

The second turning was the 1918 VET reform, when the national government assumed broader responsibility for VET – including domestic education – on a par with technical or industrial fields. As industrialization advanced and urban populations grew, domestic education expanded to address the social and health challenges of urban living, outside the sphere of the traditional family. It thus became linked to the broader modernization of society, aiming to instill "scientific" household management, nutrition, and hygiene.

The third turning point was the post-World War II period, when domestic education met the welfare state. The growing welfare state relied on female labor in new public-sector services such as healthcare, childcare, and social work; many of these occupations evolved from the knowledge base of domestic education. Yet, by the mid-century, tensions emerged: on one hand, the housewife role was idealized; on the other, women increasingly entered waged employment.

The fourth turning point was the 1970 upper secondary school reform, which integrated vocational and general education under a single organizational umbrella. "VET for women" was removed from

educational policy as a separate category; domestic education was either subsumed under general home economics or reframed as health- and social-care tracks. However, gender segregation persisted; women continued (and continue) to predominate in vocational programs tied to care, social services, and administration, while men remain overrepresented in technical and industrial fields. In addition, the 1977 higher education reform saw an emerging higher education sector focused on these areas.

To conclude, changes in women's vocational pathways are shaped not only by broader economic, social and political forces but also by increasing educational differentiation and specialization. The new pathways opened up for women were based on domestic education and were closely linked to the building of a nation-state and, later, a welfare state. By the end of the 1970s, transitions to higher education in these sectors were possible, at the same time as the role of domestic education had become obsolete.

The rise and fall of domestic education in Sweden reveal a complex narrative of how gender norms and social policy shape both the curriculum design of VET for women and the formation of a labor market. We argue that understanding these processes, and their consequences for women's transitions to the labor market and within the educational system, is important, as they continue to affect women's lives today. Swedish women, for instance, have higher educational attainment than men but still face lower average salaries.

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S4B-4 The transitions and belonging of Swedish-speaking young people with learning disabilities in Finland

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This presentation draws on our ongoing ÖVERSAM-research project in which we investigate, what kind of belonging in the local community the transitions after upper secondary education enable for Swedish-speaking young people with learning disabilities. Despite the general disability policy goals, the lives of individuals with learning disabilities are often shaped by the transition from education to service systems. Consequently, the service system determines how individuals with learning disabilities can participate in societal activities.

Swedish-speaking young people with learning disabilities constitute a small minority in Finland. The educational transitions for this group are influenced by many factors such as institutional practices, as

well as regionalism and restricted educational opportunities in their first language. Access to services in Swedish mainly means that Swedish-speaking young people with learning disabilities face long distances to access services or that their linguistic rights remain secondary when organizing the services. Long distances also apply to Swedish-language vocational education at the upper secondary level.

The research task of the project is to examine (1) how the transitions after upper secondary education are planned and implemented, and (2) what kind of belonging in the local community these transitions enable for young people. We understand the local community as a person's living environment and social relations and networks (Sivula 2021). Some of the networks can be physically closer or more distant than the others and belonging in the local community can either be freely chosen or constrained.

The central concepts of our study are transitions and belonging. Educational and working life transitions of young people with learning disabilities are typically controlled and guided by many structural factors such as institutional practices and local, regional supply of support services. According to statistics, these young people generally go to school in special education schools or classes and follow adjusted curriculum in learning. After compulsory education, young people with learning disabilities participate mainly in vocational special education, either in programmes that lead to vocational qualifications in assisting tasks or in a preparatory programme that prepares the students for independent living and does not offer any qualifications. Overall, the transitions of this small minority are usually planned in multi-professional meetings discussing the topics such as what kind of services will each student need after and in transition from upper secondary education. In our study, we are particularly interested in transition negotiations because these evidently structure the young people's every day after education.

Belonging can be understood as a deep, emotional and personal experience of existence (Antonsich, 2010, 647) which is a prerequisite for the person's wellbeing and participation in various communities. We examine the two dimensions of belonging: the politics of belonging and the sense of belonging. The politics of belonging refer to societal arrangements and structures that determine how the individual can or cannot belong to a certain community, in certain time and location (Vaahtera 2019). The sense of belonging, in turn, can refer to a feeling of being at home in a certain location, community or relationship (see Niemi 2024; Antonsich 2010; Yuval-Davis 2011). In our project, we explore these two dimensions of belonging of Swedish-speaking young people with learning disabilities. The politics of belonging is examined through mapping what kinds of local communities and what kind of belonging do the service system enable for young people. The sense of belonging is then investigated by analyzing young people's experiences and viewpoints about service solutions, transitions and transition negotiations.

Our methodology is multi-sited ethnography and the data production is under way. An essential part of the fieldwork is the tracing of research participants, which has been quite challenging, and we will discuss it in our presentation. We conduct interviews with young people, their guardians, teachers and other professionals in education and social services and when possible, do participant observations along the interview meetings. We aim at producing data that allows us to analyse, how young people's lives change after upper secondary education, what kind of possibilities they are offered and what the service system enables them and how is it to weave one's way in that system. In terms of the conference topic, local practices and variations is one important aspect in our study.

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Session 4C - Interactive discussion session

03-10-2025 - 13:00 - 14:30

Hall: Stjörnugerði

Critical perspectives on career and career guidance (COCAG)

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This session will introduce participants to the Critical perspectives on career and career guidance (COCAG) project. It will explain how to get involved in the project and then encourage participants to explore the emerging issues relating to the project's three working groups.

(1) How can the challenges and changes that are happening to careers in the contemporary world be understood?

(2) How can policymakers respond to contemporary challenges to individual’s careers?

(3) How can career guidance practice adopt a more critical stance to address the changing world more effectively?

In the workshop we will foster debate around these questions by exploring the implications for policy, practice and research and supporting the development of new ideas and collaborations.

Session 4D - Interactive discussion session

03-10-2025 - 13:00 - 14:30

Hall: Þinggerði

Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance: Opportunities for Early Career Researchers

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This interactive session is dedicated to introducing early career researchers to the *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance* (NJTCG). Our aim is to support young scholars in understanding the publishing process and to encourage them to submit their work to NJTCG.

We will begin by presenting the journal's mission, scope, and recent publications, emphasizing opportunities for early career researchers to contribute. Special attention will be given to our "special collections" initiatives, which offer thematic calls that may be particularly relevant for researchers at the start of their academic journey.

The session will then focus on practical guidance for prospective authors:

How to prepare and submit a manuscript to NJTCG

What the editorial team looks for in submissions

Common challenges in academic writing and how to navigate them

Insights into the peer review process and how it supports scholarly development

Participants will also gain a clearer understanding of how publishing with NJTCG can help establish their academic profile and contribute to broader conversations on career development, transitions, and guidance across Nordic and international contexts.

About the Journal:

Established in 2020, the *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance* publishes research on individuals' relations to education and work, with a focus on career transitions and guidance in institutional, social, and policy contexts. NJTCG welcomes contributions from a wide range of disciplines including pedagogy, sociology, psychology, political science, ethnology, history, and anthropology. The journal is published by Stockholm University Press, with NorNet as the principal partner.