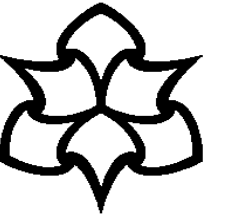


Graduate Careers in Context

Symposium

NICEC conference

16th/17th April 2019

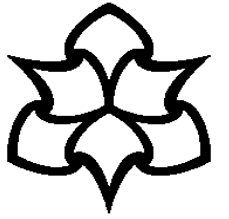


Routledge Research in Higher Education

GRADUATE CAREERS IN CONTEXT

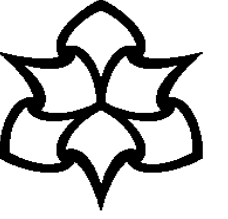
RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE

Edited by
Ciaran Burke and Fiona Christie



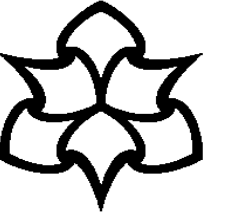
Speakers

- Dr Fiona Christie – Senior Research Associate, Decent Work and Productivity Research Centre, Manchester Metropolitan University
- Dr Andrew Morrison - Senior Lecturer in Education, Sheffield Hallam University
- Dr Charlie Ball - Head of Higher Education Intelligence, Graduate Prospects
- Dr Nalayini Thambar - Director of Careers and Employability, University of Nottingham
- Gill Frigerio - Principal Teaching Fellow, Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Warwick



Our purpose to explore today

- The book's USP – to bring together academics and practitioners
- The major themes
- Our experiences of communicating research to different audiences
- Where next for research, policy and practice?



Sections of the book

- 1. Graduate labour market: theoretical debates
- 2. Graduate careers and transitions
- 3. Professional and organisational issues relating to employability
- 4. Careers professionals evolving into researchers

Andrew Morrison

Sheffield Hallam University

Section 1: Graduate labour market: theoretical debates

Chapter Two: Investing in Your Future: The Role of capitals in graduate employment pathways

- **Ciaran Burke and Sarah Hannaford-Simpson**

Key themes and conceptual framework

- **The KBE:** Higher Education and Human Capital
- Graduate Attributes
- Networking and **social capital** skills: ECAs
- **Bourdieu:** (Habitus) (Capital) + Field = Practice
- **Capital:** Economic, Cultural and Social
- **Social capital:** hierarchical and socially reproductive
- **Fields:** dynamic and value of capital (eg scholastic) can change

The Study

- Burke's own NI-based study into graduate employment pathways and importance of social capital.
- **Middle-class 'Phil'**: able to trade on social capital to navigate vagaries of media industry job market.
- **Working-class 'Fergal'**: in low-level retail work
- Superficially similar portfolio career to Phil but driven by constraints (redundancy etc) rather than self-driven.
- Fergal's social capital only led to low-level employment.
- **Classed nature of social capital.**

Chapter Three: Whose employability? Fees, labour markets and the unequal rewards of undergraduate study

- **Andrew Morrison**

The argument

- Differentials in graduate employment
- Fees largely the same in England
- Employability not just supply-side (habitus)
- Distributive equity in labour market (field)
- A question of social justice
- **Nancy Fraser: redistribution and recognition justice from a dual-systems perspective**

The argument

- Working-class (under)graduates and cultural, social and economic capital
- The changed rules of the game
- Economic capital issues: a breach of distributive justice
- Cultural and social capital issues: a breach of recognition justice (Status Subordination)
- Fraser and Bourdieu: dual-systems analysis and intersectionality.

Chapter Four: Regional capital and 'local' graduate employment

- **Teresa Crew**

Key themes and conceptual framework

- Bourdieusian schema
- **'Regional capital'**: the resources needed to navigate demands of **regional employment field**.
- Welsh language (Cymraeg) as public-sector driven form of employment capital
- Cymraeg tied into social capital networks
- Driving licence and car as cultural capital

The Study

- Graduate and employer views on necessary employment skills in N Wales
- Bi-lingual skills 'essential' in both sectors
- **Classed** nature of Welsh: different registers
- Middle class got more useful social capital
- **Intersected** with language: bi-lingual middle-class speakers got widest social capital
- A car seen as essential
- **Transferrable** conceptual framework

Section 2: Graduate careers and transitions

The graduate employment paradox

Dr Charlie Ball

Head of HE Intelligence

Graduate Prospects

The extent of graduate employment in the UK

- 38% of the *adult population* (16-64) of the UK had a degree at the end of 2017.
- 43.4% of the UK *workforce* has a degree or equivalent qualification.
- Annual Population Survey data showed that at the end of 2017, there were 14.47m people working in professional level jobs in the UK - 45.3% of the workforce
- 136,000 UK graduates from 2017 were known to be in professional level jobs six months after graduating (73.9% of graduates)
- APS data also shows that the UK added 298,100 new professional level jobs in 2017

Occupational shortages

In many areas graduate demand currently outruns supply

Persistent warnings of shortages of graduates from industry, employer groups and stakeholder bodies

Occupations in particular shortage include

- Nurses
- Programmers and software development professionals
- HR and recruitment
- Medical practitioners
- Welfare and housing associate professionals
- Business sales executives
- IT user support technicians
- Sales accounts and business development managers
- Marketing associate professionals
- Specialist and niche engineering professionals
- Managers and directors in retail and wholesale
- Design and development engineers
- Web design and development professionals
- Veterinarians
- Chartered and certified accountants

Employer skills survey (ESS) 2017 suggests over 106,000 hard to fill vacancies at graduate level in 2017.

However

There is also significant, persistent graduate underemployment

Scurry and Blenkinsopp find that

- Some graduates remain underemployed for considerable periods
- But graduates perceive that underemployment differently
- Underemployment can lead to graduates lowering career expectations. Some adapt to their new circumstances and may not always see it as an overall negative
- Some still see the opportunity to gain skills and experience in 'non-graduate' jobs
- But being underemployed now does not mean that returns on career investment will necessarily be unrealised

The paradox

The UK experiences *both* graduate undersupply and graduate underemployment.

Significant issues matching graduate supply and demand.

How and why is this happening?

The transition from HE to work

Artess uses Futuretrack data to examine how graduates 'learn to be employable'

- Students tend to become *less* clear about career plans as they progress in study
- They tend to think they possess the skills employers are looking for – but a quarter did not
- Three fifths felt they were using their employment skills in their jobs
- Student engagement with careers provision is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction post-graduation
- Challenges the assumption that 'employability' involves HEPs correcting *lack of skills* in students/graduates and moves more towards the idea that learners can be guided and supported to use and articulate their qualities more effectively

The transition from HE to work

Vigurs examines postponed graduate transitions – looking at gap years.

Gap years often seen as a good way to boost employability and skills

4 types of gap year identified

- Those where individuals build up work experience
- Those where individuals work out their next steps
- Those where individuals take a break
- Those where individuals take an 'ordinary' job (often continuing work they did as students) to earn money

Gap years can benefit long-term careers, but not all do.

Some forms of gap year may not be beneficial

Not all transitions using this route are as smooth as might be thought

Geography

Graduates are less mobile than many believe

- 58% of graduates from 2017 went to work in the region they studied in
- 69% went to work in the region they were originally domiciled

Alexander examines geography and mobility, specifically of graduates from Orkney and Shetland.

Graduates describe themselves as *potentially* mobile but tend not to be *actually* mobile.

Challenge for institutions and advisers – should they be?

Mobilisers – encourage graduate to break local ties and seek opportunities widely?

Integrators – challenge the notion that career success can be measured by pay and status but that family life and community are also important?

Conclusions

- Occupational shortage is real, widespread and has real effects on economy and competitiveness
- *Significant* issues matching graduate supply and demand.
- We have *both* graduate oversupply and undersupply issues that are affected by industry and geography
- Talk of 'too many graduates' simplistic, need for more sophisticated conversation acknowledging available levers and willingness to use them
- Much better understanding of occupational and skills demand needed (eg STEM agenda)
- Role of good IAG absolutely central to mitigating these issues



Part 3: Professional and organisational issues relating to employability

Dr Nalayini Thambar
University of Nottingham

10. Organisational responses to the employability agenda in English Universities.

Bob Gilworth

11. A new career in higher education careers work.

Siobhan Neary and Jill Hanson

12. Contested Boundaries of professional expertise in HE careers and employability services.

Nalayini Thambar

A shared setting

- The Browne Review and increased UG fees in English HE
 - Value for Money
 - A focus on destinations and outcomes
- Institutional responses to a new environment
 - Increased profile and expectations of Careers Services and careers professionals
 - Changes to structures to reflect the institutional approach to employability
- The impact:
 - Careers Service structures and leadership (Gilworth, 2018)
 - Career Changers joining the sector (Neary and Hanson, 2018)
 - Careers Advisers and their leaders and managers (Thambar, 2018)



Organisational Responses (Gilworth 2018)

Strategic responses:

- Balance Environment, Values and Resources (Thompson and Martin, 2005)
- Respond to positional status/competition between resources
- Consider co-production between student and institution
- Reflect institutional identity and strategy

Leading to a typology of new forms of service and leadership:

- Non-extended central services
- Extended central services
- Extended and institutionally embedded
- Integrated-whole institution



A new career in higher education (Neary and Hanson)

- Career Changers

- Come into a range of roles (mainly practitioner) motivated to help, develop and support people
- Are aware (Ibarra, 2004) that they deploy a range of transferrable skills from previous roles (often recruitment or management) and “helping skills”
- Their transition reflects the experience of many students

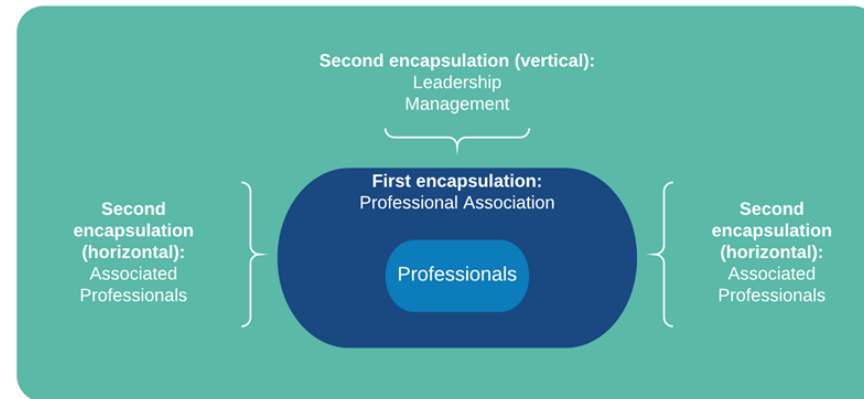
- Their Experience

- Majority happy (particularly when focussed on 1:1 or groups): “enjoy”, “autonomy”, “variety”
- Expectations exceeded, particularly if influencing service direction
- Encountered higher-than-expected levels of bureaucracy, managerial and target-focussed support

Contested boundaries of expertise (Thambar, 2018)

- HE Careers Advisers' Professional Identity:
 - Undefined
 - Locally Focussed
 - Unrecognised
 - Underconfident
 - Dedicated

Risking Professional Encapsulation (Ackroyd, 1996):



Gilworth

- The role of Careers Service Leader has shifted to a dual role of strategic leader and service manager
- Through this change, the outdated, evidence-light view of the role, scope and scale of careers services has persisted

Neary and Hanson

- New approaches to HE careers roles allow diversity, specialisms and variety
- Motivation should be sustained by avoiding bureaucracy and a management-heavy environment
- Cultural and social capital are important when fulfilling such roles

Thambar

- Careers Advisers and their Leaders should work together to :
 - Connect careers advisers with their institutional context
 - Define the role, expertise and capabilities to embed the role in a HE setting
 - Create a professional development framework that supports all aspects of the role

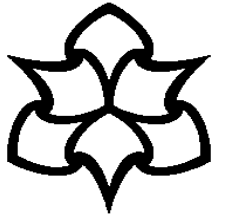
Part 4: Careers professionals evolving into researchers

Chp 13: The Rise of the Practitioner-researcher. How big data and evidence based practice requires practitioners with a research mindset. *David Winter*

Big data in Careers Services, wrt Career Service Management Systems and Career Registration projects - Volume, Velocity, Variety, Veracity, Value.

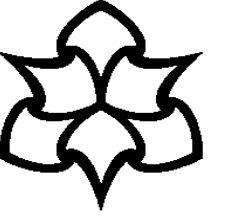
Chp 14: Making Connections through practitioner research. *Gill Frigerio*

Case studies: evaluating guidance effectiveness, career adapt-abilities in practice, research project and dissertation supervision



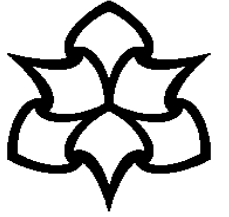
Reflections – a call to action!

- Fostering relations between academics and practitioners of mutual benefit (knowledge eco-system)
- Importance of the boundary and boundary-crossers
- The development of a body of knowledge by practitioner-researchers. Role of membership organisations is critical.
- The scope for critical research
- Questions of value. How are practitioners valued for doing research and how are academics valued for doing practitioner-oriented research?
- Future projects? What issues matter?



Reflections – how to make sense of a crowded field?

- Education
- Sociology
- Psychology
- Career guidance
- Organisation studies
- Labour market studies
- Graduate employability



My experience of communicating research

- Very diverse responses – the boundary is an uncomfortable place to be...
 - You aren't radical enough
 - You are too critical
 - You are blazing a trail...
 - You have a unique practitioner research perspective
 - How do you find the time?