

Enhancing the Life Chances and Social Participation of Young Adults through Workplace Learning

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INTRODUCTION

The role of workplace and vocationally oriented learning in fostering the inclusion, employability and civic engagement of young adults has been increasingly recognized by policy, practice and research (Saar et al., 2013; Jarvis, 2012; European Commission, 1998, 2000, 2016). Various configurations of work-related learning have become important components of national and international strategies for Lifelong Learning (LLL) aiming to contribute to the development of various forms of human capital and to bring about higher participation and inclusion of young people and adults, in the context of contemporary social and economic developments (European Commission, 2000). The body of literature related to the issues of (re)-integration through learning and work (e.g. Evans and Niemeyer, 2004; Kersh and Huegler, 2018) suggests that engaging young adults through the world of work provides opportunities not only for performing work-related and vocationally oriented

tasks but also for personal development, social engagement and lifelong learning (Evans and Niemeyer, 2004; Evans and Kersh, 2014; Aspin et al., 2012). Drawing on this body of literature, in this chapter we would like to extend the understanding of the ways engaging in learning in, for and through the workplace (Evans et al, 2006), motivates young adults to perceive themselves as more active and socially engaged in their social and community contexts. In doing so, we argue that work-related learning provides opportunities for their civic engagement, thus enabling young adults to become active citizens.

Over the past two decades the problem of the social and civic disengagement of young adults has been among the most significant problems affecting political, economic and social developments in Europe and beyond (European Youth Forum, 2016). The unstable social, economic and political situations affecting Europe and its neighboring countries have resulted in a number of societal implications, such as the influx of refugees

and migrants, unemployment and societal and civic disaffection. Recent research on young adults' inclusion has been strongly underpinned by the discussion on how to facilitate their integration, social participation and civic engagement (Jarvis, 2012; Toiviainen et al., 2019) and to contribute to their capacity to take an active role as citizens within their societal contexts (e.g. Evans and Niemeyer, 2004; Holford et al., 2008). The central question we are posing in chapter is – to what extent do engaging in work-related learning and making choices about career trajectories help young adults to improve their life chances and inclusion as well as promoting social and human capital, and what factors may facilitate or undermine this process?

In this chapter we will start by considering some implications of the current social discourses on learning in, for and through the workplace and human capital, specifically in terms of both equipping young adults with occupational skills and facilitating their inclusion and social engagement. This further brings us to a discussion of the concept of active citizenship and its relevance to workplace learning. In particular, we will draw on the interpretation of the notion of active participatory citizenship (Kersh and Toiviainen, 2017) to embrace social (socio-cultural), economic (socio-economic) and political (political-legal) dimensions of participation, inclusion and social capital (Kersh and Toiviainen, 2017). The consideration of socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions of active (participatory) citizenship provides the conceptual lens to explore young adults' participation in different work-related contexts, including both workplace learning spaces and school-to-work transition contexts. The discussion will be illustrated with examples of the ways young people make choices for their professional and career routes (examples from Russia) and foster social inclusion through work-related engagement (examples from the Netherlands and UK). The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the

potential of learning through working life and beyond, for promoting active citizenship and human capital.

THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DISCOURSES: IMPLICATIONS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING, EMPLOYABILITY AND HUMAN CAPITAL

The context of the promotion of lifelong learning, active citizenship and inclusion of young adults has been strongly related to the contemporary demands of the policy, economic and social challenges affecting Europe and its neighboring countries (Evans, 2009; Kersh and Toiviainen, 2017). The development of the knowledge economy and contemporary workplace requirements have contributed to changes in the perception of workplace learning, human capital and skills related to the new demands of labor markets. The influence of political, social and economic discourses has, in many ways, defined the directions and agenda for the promotion of active citizenship and social inclusion for young adults. One powerful discourse has been strongly influenced by neoliberal trends emphasizing the economic value of learning through the life course and inclusion (Evans, 2009). Another influential discourse has been related to current social and political challenges, migration and the influx of refugees across Europe (Evans & Niemeyer, 2004; Hoskins et al., 2012; Kersh and Toiviainen, 2017). Both discourses have highlighted the significance of human and social capital in the context of learning in, for and through the workplace, linked to the need to provide opportunities to enable young adults to acquire labor market skills and to adapt to their new or existing environments and overcome political, economic and social challenges through social and economic inclusion.

Human Capital and Learning in, for and through the Workplace

Learning in, for and through the workplace as a means to integrate young people into society and especially into the labor market has become one of the most integral configurations of LLL, fostering social inclusion through equipping young people with a range of skills, both personal and job-related. The LLL agenda of the 21st century, underpinned by a number of policy documents (e.g. European Commission, 2000, 2016; Eurydice, 2015), has reinforced the role in contemporary societies of human capital, lifelong learning and work. In response to this agenda, the driving force behind various government policies has been concerned with a range of related issues such as employability and adaptability to various economic shifts and demands where the employability skills of individuals are expected to play a crucial role (GRALE III, 2016; GRALE IV, 2019; Holford and Mleczo, 2013).

The debate on the role and perception of human capital has been strongly underpinned by the discussion on the changing nature of education, workplace training and employability. The new social demands and requirements of the labor market have contributed to factors such as unpredictable career paths for young people and adults, where the concept of boundaryless careers consists of sequences of opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of a single employment setting (Inkson, 2004). Such factors have become prevalent and they often presuppose new standards and challenges that affect the personal development of young adults. In this process, the role of human and social capital is of crucial importance.

Various configurations of the notion of 'capital', i.e. human and social, have some implications for the concept of LLL. Becker (1964) brings attention to the interplay between education, training and human

capital, and, furthermore, Mincer (1983) describes human capital as related to a range of capabilities which could be developed through various experiences, such as formal and informal education, training, and other learning experiences. Human capital has been described as strongly related to knowledge, skills and (to some extent) health (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), and is also considered as an investment undertaken by individuals on their own behalf or by society on behalf of its members. Despite many different types of investments that could be relevant to human capital, education remains one of the central focuses of research in this field (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). In addition, the issue of inclusion has been emphasized as a related factor. The OECD helpfully defines human capital as the knowledge, skills and competence important for social as well as economic well-being (OECD, 1997, 2001), and this highlights the link between human capital and social and economic inclusion.

Whereas social capital has a much broader range of definitions and may offer a helpful theoretical framework, at the same time the concept of social capital may provide a means to foster lifelong and career development in the workplace and beyond (Burt, 1992; Gabbay & Zukerman, 1998; Podolny & Baron, 1997). Social capital has been conceptualized in terms of various dimensions, such as interrelations between people and networks (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), sharing support and resources (Boxman, De Graaf, & Flap, 1991) and developing social relationships within communities. It has been noted that social capital may contribute to employability (Lin & Dumin, 1996), professional development, innovation (Gabbay & Zukerman, 1998) and entrepreneurship (Chong & Gibbons, 1997). It may further contribute to a culture of trust, tolerance and mutual understanding (Inglehart, 1997). As noted by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), social capital is characterized by actual and potential resources embedded within, available

through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit, comprising both the network and the assets that may be mobilized through that network.

When looking at different social capital concepts in a range of contexts it is helpful to consider (1) the relations an actor maintains with other actors and (2) the structure of the relations among actors within a collectivity (Adler & Kwon, 2002). A good example of the influence of social capital on learning as a prerequisite for successful career construction may be observed in advanced education systems (e.g., Finland, Shanghai, Singapore) where peer reviewing and mentoring are the main tools for teachers' professional development. Learning from each other within the network of professionals in the mentioned systems provides opportunities for building a new image of the teaching profession when it is seen as a collaborative (rather than isolated) occupation and also extends quality practices system-wide in a way that fosters mutual care and trust among the actors (Darling-Hammond & Oakes, 2019; Loogma et al., 2010).

Close ties between both forms of capital – social and human – and their implications for lifelong learning can be seen as one of the most prevalent issues in discussions of the world of work today. Research on communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), mid-career learning (Eraut, 2007) competence development and workplace learning (Kersh et al., 2012; Evans and Kersh, 2017), which show the importance of informal learning, personal development and social engagement (Evans, 2009) within the workplace, can be taken as a helpful illustration of human and social capital interdependencies. Such interdependencies become important configurations in the context of *learning, in, for and through the workplace*, facilitating the connection between human and social capital, specifically through providing opportunities for social inclusion, employability and adaptability.

LEARNING IN, FOR AND THROUGH THE WORKPLACE: ENHANCING SOCIAL CAPITAL, INCLUSION AND EMPLOYABILITY

Fostering social inclusion specifically through equipping young people with a range of employability skills as well as enhancing their human and social capital within their social contexts have become important configurations of learning at work. The consideration of the complex interdependencies between LLL, inclusion and work-related learning contributes to a better understanding of the ways different discourses of learning *through, in and for the workplace* (Evans et al, 2006) facilitate young adults' engagement and enhance their life chances and social capital. The LLL vision of VET and workplace learning is that not only should vocationally related programmes equip young adults with occupationally related skills but they should also be aiming to facilitate their transferrable skills, improve life chances and facilitate social inclusion (Kersh and Huegler, 2018). Engaging young adults to be lifelong learners through learning in, for and through the workplace, and facilitating the inclusion of those who are considered to be disadvantaged and at risk of social exclusion, have become significant elements of VET-related and work-based learning provision (Hutchinson et al., 2016; Chung et al., 2012; Evans, 1991). In the research literature, facilitating LLL and inclusion through VET and workplace learning has been identified as related to a range of dimensions, including the significance of learning contexts and spaces (Kersh, 2015), skills and competence development (Evans and Kersh, 2017) and encouraging young adults to become active citizens (Toiviainen et al., 2019).

The conceptual overlap between the terms 'workplace', 'work-related' and 'work-based' learning has been recognized in the literature (e.g. Unwin and Fuller, 2003; Evans et al., 2006). In this chapter we draw on the conceptualizations of Unwin and Fuller (2003)

and Evans et al. (2006). Unwin and Fuller's (2003) definitions helpfully embrace all types of learning generated from or stimulated by the needs of the workplace, including formal on-the-job training, informal learning and work-related off-the-job education and training. Evans et al. (2006) have further drawn on this definition in their formulation of workplace learning as that learning which derives its purpose from the context of employment, that is, *learning in, for and through the workplace*. The conceptualization of *learning in, for and through the workplace* (Evans et al., 2006) provides a framework for better understanding how individuals learn at work, and to what extent their work-related learning contributes to improving their life chances and facilitates their competence development. In Evans et al.'s (2006) approach, *learning in the workplace* relates to different types of learning, including both formal or informal learning modes, where learning is perceived here as something that enables individuals to acquire and develop their skills, both personal and professional. The significance of learning opportunities that are accessed as part of the employment relationship has been further emphasized by Evans et al. (2006), and conceptualized as *learning through the workplace*, which is accessed by employees through their relationships with the employer. Finally, *learning for the workplace* refers to learning opportunities that may be directly or indirectly related to the job, such as general education or job-specific training, which may take place outside the workplace in a range of contexts and settings, for example in upper secondary or vocational schools. The formulation by Evans et al. (2006) of workplace learning as *learning in, for and through the workplace* brings together and underpins a range of factors which contribute to individuals exercising their agency, social and human capital, as well as personal and professional skills, thus contributing to inclusion and integration through work. Drawing on this conceptual interpretation, the following discussion will aim to consider the extent to

which *learning in, for and through* the workplace contributes to social and economic inclusion encompassing the development of social competences and social capital, as well as human capital and skills related to the changing requirements of the labor market. In this context, the role of workplace learning becomes twofold: to provide knowledge and skills related to a specific occupational area or a particular requirement of the workplace, and to contribute to social integration, thus encouraging individuals to take a more active role as citizens in their immediate as well as wider social contexts.

Towards Active Citizenship through Learning in, for and through the Workplace

The notion of active citizenship and the perception of different forms of taking an active role as citizens have been considered through different conceptual perspectives and approaches with different purposes. In this chapter we consider the role of work-related learning in contributing to young adults' inclusion and civic engagement in their social contexts. Going beyond the understanding of citizenship as a legal status relating primarily to civic and political dimensions (Marshall, 1977), in this chapter we support the view of expanding the concept of active citizenship to include not only political but also socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects, thus aiming to address new social demands such as the need for economic adaptability, lifelong learning and social cohesion (Toivainen et al., 2019).

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND YOUNG ADULTS: DEVELOPING CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

- The consideration of how young adults develop and exercise their integration, social inclusion and active citizenship is strongly related to

opportunities and affordances that enable individuals to engage in diverse activities in their social contexts. The development of the active citizenship outlook has been interpreted as a multidimensional process, which is both shaped and influenced by social, political and economic factors (Toiviainen et al., 2019). In this process, the development of the social, political and economic capabilities of young adults can take place through different configurations of LLL, including vocational and work-related settings (Evans, 2009; Jarvis, 2012; Saar et al., 2013; Kersh & Toiviainen, 2017). The exploration of the complexity of relationships between work-related learning, active citizenship and social inclusion suggests that not only does *learning in, for and through the workplace* equip young adults with work-related skills but it also contributes to facilitating their transferrable skills and social engagement. Engaging young adults to be lifelong learners through their working lives, and facilitating the inclusion of those who are considered to be disadvantaged and at risk of social exclusion have become significant elements of VET-related and work-based learning provision. Learning through the world of work has been employed increasingly as a tool to fulfil the socio-economic and political agendas of governments (Toiviainen et al., 2019). Such visions of workplace learning have emphasized the provision of skills that would enable adults to adapt to their new or existing environments and overcome political, economic or social challenges through social and economic participation, which presupposes engagement as an active citizen. In the research literature, facilitating LLL and inclusion through adult education and workplace learning has been identified as related to social, political and economic dimensions (Kersh et al., 2021). The concept of 'active participatory citizenship' (APC) conceptualized by Kersh and Toiviainen (2017), brings attention to the notion of participation in various contexts, which facilitate social (socio-cultural), economic (socio-economic) and political (political-legal) dimensions of participation, inclusion and social capital. In this chapter the consideration of socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions of APC provides a conceptual lens through which to explore young adults' participation in different work-related contexts, including both workplace learning spaces and school-to-work transition. These dimensions,

that characterize young adults' participation, include as follows: The socio-cultural dimension that focuses on the development of social competences and social capital;

- The socio-economic dimension that relates to employment (e.g. developing employability skills) and access to social benefits;
- The political dimension that encourages civic and political participation, running for boards, neighborhood activities.

Exercising the three-dimensional interpretation of active citizenship can take place through different social and community contexts. Field and Schemmann's (2017: 172) consideration of citizenships pinpoints the importance of community, specifically in the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the processes which enables them to be actively engaged *in* a community. Workplace communities provide affordances for assuming a more active role, as individuals and citizens. The potential of workplace learning for promoting active citizenship lies in providing the learners with both economic and social skills in a LLL perspective, and facilitating their career aspirations and life chances, as well as progression towards and transition into employment (Kersh and Toiviainen, 2017). The expansion of human capabilities rather than merely economic development should be the central aim of this process, which extends beyond the economic dimension, and emphasizes the importance of social and political participation as well as the responsibilities of participation, developing capabilities and the rights to participate (Evans, 2009).

ENHANCING THE LIFE CHANCES AND PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG ADULTS: ILLUSTRATIONS FROM INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS

The consideration of the ways young adults engage with work and learning in different international contexts contributes to a better

understanding of the role and significance of learning in, through and for the workplace, for enhancing the social inclusion and civic engagement of individuals. Country-specific illustrations highlight some common cross-cutting themes related to the cases considered below.

Enhancing Active Citizenship and Inclusion of Vulnerable Young Adults through work-Related Learning: Drawing on a Horizon 2020 Project

Research undertaken as part of the EduMAP¹ project (Kersh and Toiviainen, 2017) supported the view that the development of social, political and economic skills can take place through different types of work-related learning. The potential for promoting social capital, active citizenship and inclusion lies in providing the learners with both economic and social skills in a LLL perspective, and facilitating their career aspirations and life chances, as well as transition to employment. Engaging in work-related learning enables young adults to become more active within their communities and social contexts (Kersh and Toiviainen, 2017). The case, studied in the Netherlands, presents an example of a VET program (coding skills development), aiming to support young adults at risk of social exclusion (specifically focusing on refugees, migrants and other young adults at risk of social exclusion). The vision of the program, as described by one of the co-funders, is about giving young adults a second chance and enabling them to have a successful career. The program has a strong focus on the development of socio-economic competences (emphasizing skills development). Accomplishing something that will 'later serve the community' characterizes the program vision of being an active citizen. There is a strong sense of 'duty and giving back to the community and society' within the program (including paying back taxes).

Cultivating active citizenship through equipping young adults with job-related skills and connecting them to work has been perceived as critical elements of active citizenship. Within the program, socio-economic citizenship is also enhanced through the provision of workshops on interview preparation. Other country cases studied within this project, have also underpinned the importance of socio-economic and socio-cultural skills. Across the UK-based cases, socio-economic participation has been considered as an important aspect of being more engaged as citizens – through earning a living and achieving economic independence (from parents or from state benefits). Working, engaging in training, volunteering, or developing entrepreneurship ideas have been regarded as something which makes young adult learners feel they can be more active in their lives overall and which boosts their confidence levels. Exploring the case of a pre-vocational program leading either to further training (e.g. an apprenticeship) or employment, has indicated that socio-economic competencies are at the forefront in both vocational pathway subjects, through career advice and employment skills teaching, and through educators being mindful of addressing learners' 'next steps' in class and in tutorials. At a wider level, preparing young people to either enter the world of work or engage in further training after their course ends, is seen to contribute to the wider aim of improving their life chances and developing their social capital and confidence. Promoting confidence, giving young people a sense of being listened to and being appreciated, supports their feelings of self-worth, leading to a sense of achievement.

Overall, the significant potentials of work-related learning in contributing to inclusion and promoting active participatory citizenship point towards strong interdependencies between work, learning and citizenship: as much as the practical focus of workplace learning can contribute to citizenship education, at the same time the perceptions of being

a citizen can support workplace learning, and facilitate young adults' motivation and positive attitudes towards engaging with the world of work. (Kersh and Huegler, 2018).

Career Trajectories, Perceptions of School Youth through the Lens of Human and Social Capital: Insights from Russia

The example from Russia, is a case explored within an HSE² research project. The case illustrates the ways the vocational preparation of young adults (14–15 years old) provides opportunities to develop their employability and labor market mobility skills, thus enabling them to reflect on their career choices and life chances. In the context of Russia, developing the strategy of labor market mobility for young adults may be discussed within the interplay between the framework of Lifelong Learning and professional practice. School age youth have a conception of their career as not only moving upwards, or a vertical career with positional and social advancement and engagement, but as also moving horizontally, implying professional progression and contributing to the improvement of particular skills required in the world of work, especially when encountering possible pitfalls in their vertical development.

The period of school adolescence (14–15 years of age) – is a time for the development of both personal identity and career trajectories, and this may involve transition from 'learning to learning' (academic track) and/or from 'learning to work' (vocationally-oriented track). In the context of the Russian education system this is an important period for young adults, as while graduating from the general secondary school they are making their first career choice between these two learning pathways: an 'academic' path which implies transition to high school education (upper secondary) and a 'non-academic' or vocationally-oriented route. The transition

from school to work or further learning is an important milestone that provides crucial decision-making opportunities for young adults, enabling them to make active choices about their future professional and learning pathways and careers routes.

The ways young adults navigate their learning and career opportunities at this stage of their lives, vary between the so-called 'academically-motivated' and the 'non-academically-motivated' graduates of secondary school (9th grade). On the one hand a more direct 'route to professional learning' through the 'non-academic' track is often perceived as a rather low-status professional stratum, which has been defined by some researchers as a 'diversity effect' (Shavit and Muller, 2000). On the other hand, one's choice may be derived from the 'safety effect' as a rationale for protecting oneself from a potential failure and other risks associated with the landscape of higher education (Shavit and Muller, 2000). In 2018 some 36% of the secondary school graduates in Russian urban regions made this 'safe' decision, and 53% of them in rural districts.³ This 'safe' route also provide opportunities for future academic and professional development. A survey of college graduates demonstrated that some 43% of vocational colleges students considered higher education as a potential future option for their career development (Alexandrov, Tenisheva & Saveliyeva, 2015) as well as their parents (Savitskaya, 2021). Similarly, a study carried out in the Russian macro-region of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad district has revealed that secondary school graduates form their learning path from a pattern of 'playing it safe' (Alexandrov, Tenisheva & Saveliyeva, 2015). The graduates choose this 'guaranteed strategy' as a safety net which also allows them to select educational programs for a middle-ranking specialists degree.⁴ This choice may guarantee double safety measures, as it both enhances their chances for employability and offers opportunities to enter higher education as their next step in career and professional development.

Therefore, this track, as an alternative to an academic track, provides an alternative safe route to enhance social mobility, specifically for the social cohorts with limited financial resources. The route is largely associated with reduced risks (e.g. applying to a college doesn't require providing the unified state examination results upon entry). In addition, the middle-ranking specialist status may facilitate earlier entrance into the labor market.

On the other hand, so called 'academically-inclined' school youth follow a different route, which sometimes results in a somewhat 'lengthy way' to acquire human and social capital. In order to tailor the route to some specific purposes, the young adults in 'academic cohorts' are offered a number of alternatives – either field-oriented classes or other schools specializing in different vocational fields. This contributes to both the development of social capital and making informed career choices.

This environment is characterized by the high levels of creativity and engagement of the school teachers in the learning process, where its quality can be measured by individual achievements as well as by the advanced level of teaching, mentoring, pastoral work and informal pedagogical practices (Mihalkina, Kosolapova, & Mihalkina, 2014; Zaichenko & Vinokurov, 2018).

If a high-school graduate makes an informed choice in favor of either a 'from learning to work' or a 'from learning to learning' career transition, we may hypothesize a positive correlation between the perceptions of young adults of their career trajectories and the quality of their human and social capitals. To test this hypothesis, fairly obvious at first sight, we will introduce the case study from the Russian megalopolis 'St. Petersburg – the Leningrad Region', which highlights the ambivalence of this presumption.

The hypothesis had been tested by the survey held in the Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg Campus (Zaichenko & Vinokurov, 2018). To make correlations

between the extent and the nature of high school students' career trajectories perceptions and their accumulated human and social capital, their academic outcomes indicators were used (as the markers of their human capital level) with the application of the correlational relationship relaxation method (Spearman's rank correlation coefficient).

The study found that:

- 1 The manifestation of career trajectory perceptions among the school adults did not correlate positively with their accumulated human capital, which was measured by the unified state examination results.
- 2 High-school students' perceptions about any kind of career trajectory – either vertical or horizontal did not serve as a stimulus for human capital accumulation in the final year of high school.
- 3 High-school students opting for comfort as a priority in their future professional career (comfortable environment, flexible hours, etc.) were incurious about professional promotion and were not by in human capital accumulation, externalized through the explicit evaluation of success at the higher grade level.
- 4 The higher the school graduate's accumulated experience of personal interaction with others (social capital), the more often his/her future career perceptions are associated with a horizontal trajectory – or attainment of a higher level of individual professional competence.
- 5 Future career choices in the majority of cases (73%) were made under the influence of parents and with scant information about the professions highly sought after in the regional economy. Field-oriented learning by and large was not linked with the future career choice in this field. Among the field-oriented learners, the majority (67%) did not plan to master skills and competences in the chosen field, and, therefore, did not see it as their future career.

Thus, we may summarize that from the educational policy perspective the current practice of pre-profile training and field-oriented learning in the macro-region (St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region) does not correlate with the quality of school graduates' human capital, which highlights the urgency of re-arranging the existing format of such training.

Career trajectories of the school youth: Macro-region of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region case

The topic of school youth and their career trajectories perceptions' in Russian schools has been a significant focus of research in the last decade. One of the recent studies (Zaichenko & Vinokurov, 2018) has been conducted at the macro-regional level across St. Petersburg and the Leningrad District with the sample of 978 high school students in 32 heterogeneous urban and rural schools (including advanced status schools – gymnasiums and lyceums, as well as regular general education schools). As a survey tool, the readapted questionnaire Career Orientations Inventory by E. Schein, has been applied (Schein, 1990).

Drawing on the heterogeneous sample representing different school types in both central and remote districts of the macro-region, the study highlights the significance of social capital accumulation among school youth. The findings suggest that the promotion of social capital among high school pupils is strongly relevant to the implementation of various types of professionally oriented classes and schools. 'Field-oriented educational environment' involves school and classes which provide affordances for meaningful professional learning, specifically through developing partnerships with universities and businesses. This distinguishes this environment from the typical context of a regular school with a 'one-size-fits-all' profile. However, comparing the samples of high school students from the advanced status and the regular schools indicates that there is no conceptual difference between them in terms of commitment to a competence-based professional career, i.e. a horizontal career trajectory (Figure 30.1). The data, therefore, indicate that the pre-profile training and field-oriented learning simulation is typical for both field-oriented classes and specialized schools. But in the

real educational practice of high-school students either their class or school specialization would not usually influence their future career trajectory choice. Schein's (1990) career anchors of 'technical/functional competence' and 'entrepreneurial creativity' are equally highly significant for both cohorts of high school students – both those from the specialized (field-oriented) school and from the regular schools. Differences between the 'field-oriented' and 'regular' cohorts of scholars can be distinguished relating to the 'security/stability' category: answers of the first cohort signify their social capital as being of a higher quality – they appear to have a more flexible mindset in terms of their selection of hypothetical future places to live and work.

The 'comfort motivation' career trajectory, which may also include 'lifestyles integration' is typical for the school youth from rural areas, who also show a preference for a horizontal career trajectory with a competence-based focus. The school youth from urban areas also feel more inclined towards a horizontal type of trajectory, where, among the other priorities, the 'place of residence stability' is highly rated (Figure 30.2).

The 'migrational motivation' of the school graduates from the Leningrad Region is highly likely to be connected with their aspirations to attain a quality education in a different geographical area of the country or even abroad, as this is perceived as a possible guarantee of a successful career construction (as we have seen the career trajectory linked with the 'place of residence stability' among the advanced status school students is also less noticeable – Figure 30.1).

The 'comfort motivation trajectory' among the school youth (including 'place of work stability', 'lifestyles integration' and 'autonomy') has not been seen as connected with the perceptions of deliberate career trajectories associated with professional and competence development. The process of

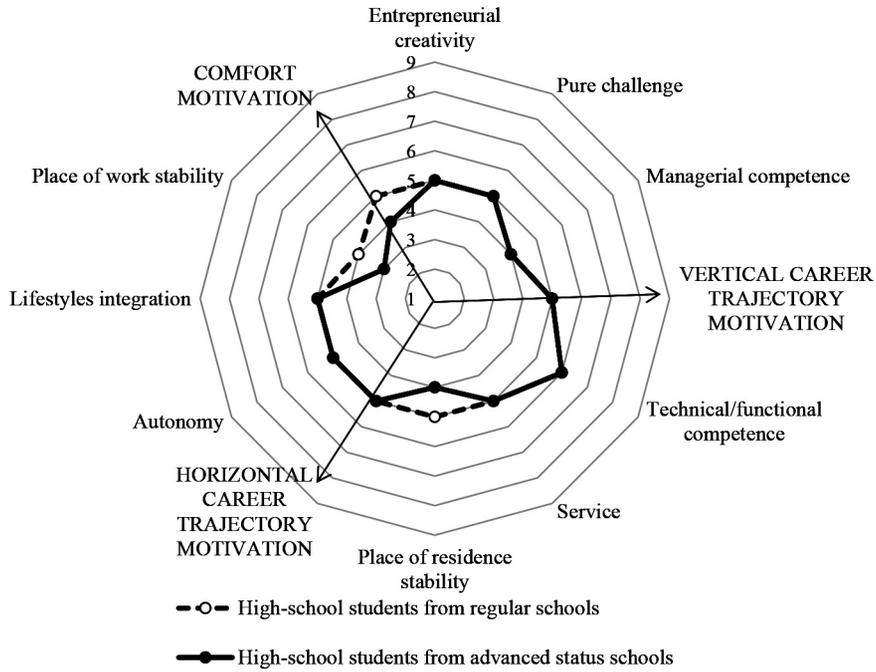


Figure 30.1 Stanines of career trajectories perceptions among high-school students by types of school

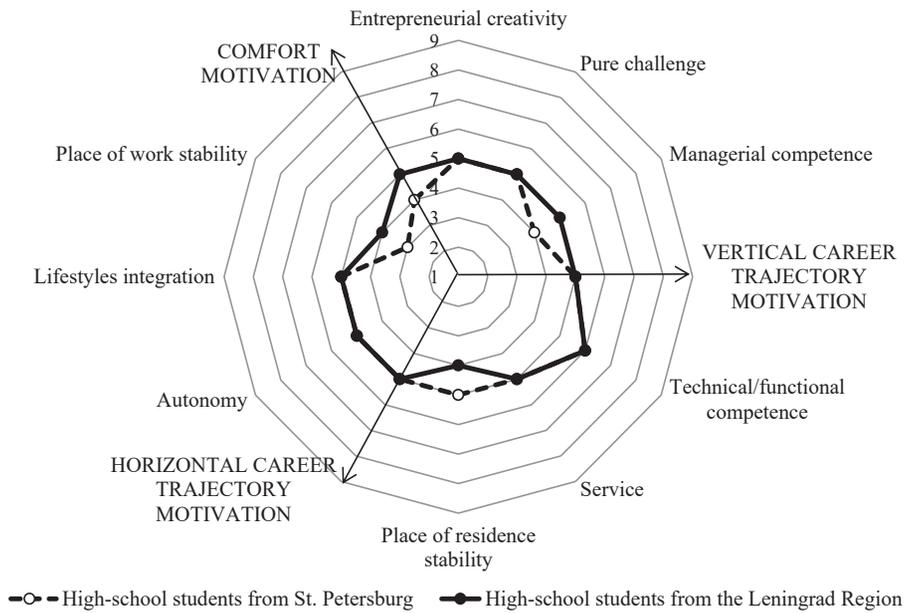


Figure 30.2 Stanines of career trajectories perceptions among high-school students by region

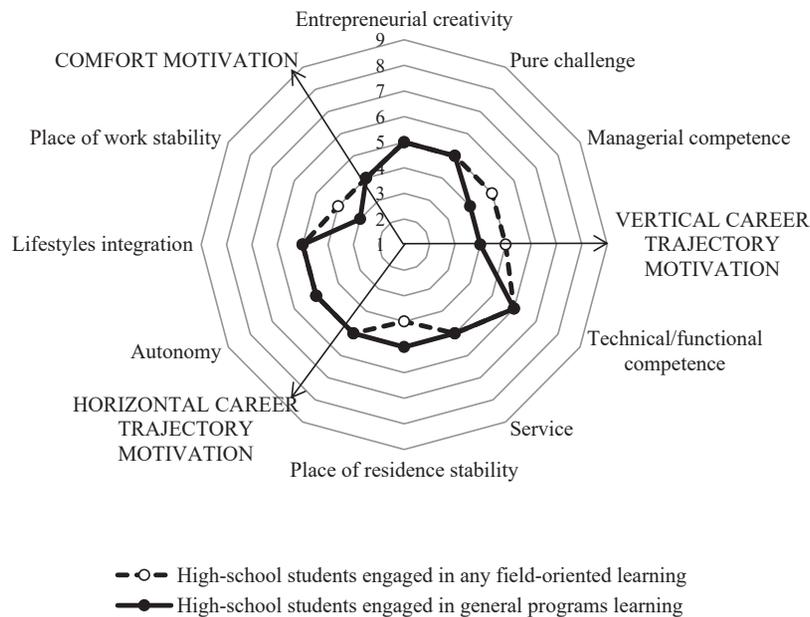


Figure 30.3 Stanines of career trajectories perceptions among the high-school students by the type of learning

human capital accumulation by high-school students, measured through their academic progress, negatively correlates with their vision of future career given their general impersonal posture towards perception of any career progression. The type of career is being imagined as stable, involving different kinds of flexible facilities, and sustaining both personal and family values.

The established practice of pre-profile training and field-oriented learning in the St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region contests its efficacy in terms of influence on the school graduates' human capital accumulation. This is particularly illustrated by the data on the career trajectories perceptions of young adults engaged in field-oriented learning (Figure 30.3).

We may evidence the fact that any field-oriented program to a larger extent than a general program will motivate the school youth to choose a 'vertical career trajectory' (mostly due to the managerial competence manifestation in this case) (Figure 30.3).

Results of this case study on the career trajectories perceptions of high-school students in the macro-regional scope of the St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region, make no pretense of exhaustive conclusions about the inefficiency of field-oriented high-school programs in terms of students' social capital accumulation and development. However, in the light of the evidence, we may conclude that field-oriented learning in school does not contribute to the provision of adequate accumulation of students' social capital, required for informed career trajectory choice. Choosing career trajectories provides young adults with early opportunities to make important decisions about their lives, and the ways they will contribute to and engage with their community and social contexts. The examples considered above have suggested that choosing a career path is a multidimensional process which might be affected by a range of factors (for example school settings, either rural or urban, academic progress and family influence).

Making informed choices about professional career paths, involves engaging with different elements of active citizenship, specifically socio-cultural (e.g. social capital) and socio-economic (development of professional/job-related skills accumulation of human capital). The example demonstrates that this process might be influenced (either positively or negatively) by both students' own motivations and aspirations and various support structures available within their educational and other settings.

CONCLUSIONS

The consideration of workplace learning, civic engagement and the promotion of human and social capital for young adults, has underpinned the complexities between work, learning, agency, human capital and active citizenship. These developments have been strongly underpinned by the market or economically associated discourses of LLL affecting young adults' engagement through work and learning, specifically by neoliberal trends emphasizing the economic value of learning through the life course and inclusion (Evans, 2009). Another influential discourse has been related to current social and political challenges, migration and the influx of refugees across Europe (Evans & Niemeyer, 2004; Hoskins et al., 2012; Kersh and Toiviainen, 2017). The central question we are posing in this chapter is: to what extent does the workplace help young adults to become and feel more engaged as citizens and make career choices, improving their life chances as well as promoting social and human capital, and what factors may facilitate or undermine this process? The theoretical considerations discussed in this chapter (Evans et al, 2006; Toiviainen et al., 2019; Kersh and Huegler, 2018) support the findings from the cross-national cases, which suggest that engaging with vocational learning and making choices about career

progression help young adults to become and feel more engaged as citizens, improving their life chances and promoting social and human capital (Becker, 1994; Zaichenko and Vinokurov, 2018). The cases presented in this chapter have demonstrated the multifaceted influence of learning in, for and through the workplace, in terms of engaging young adults and promoting human and social capital, demonstrating the ways active citizenship, participation and social inclusion for young adults are framed and promoted in different adult education contexts (and countries). The case from the Netherlands illustrates how a VET-oriented program promotes early integration into educational and work contexts, bringing attention to the influence of neoliberalism and 'economic' discourses (Evans, 2009) which focus on the perceived need for excluded young people to be 'activated' to participate socio-economically and socio-culturally (Toiviainen et al., 2019).

The chapter has highlighted the role of workplace learning in motivating young adults to become more engaged within their communities and wider society. The complexities of work-related learning have been reflected in the changing requirements for employability skills and its interplay with the changing nature of the learning in, for and through the workplace. This interplay is not restricted to the workplace but involves the overlap of the learning spaces and other contexts that extend way beyond the workplace. It is important to mention that the recruiters' demands in the contemporary labor market characterized by high volatility and non-transparency have significantly changed towards the new human capital aspects. In the past century the labor market gave preference to the classical form of human capital and specific (unique) human skills in employment functions performance, whereas the contemporary labor market requests some general human skills where rapid adaptation to changes, stress resistance, cooperation and collaboration

skills are becoming the most highly sought components of human capital.

Social research held in the Russian macro-region (St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region) revealed that the school youth tend to choose career tracks associated with a 'playing it safe' situation rather than with a particular job function. More importantly, Russian school youth living in the megalopolis, with increasing frequency, opt for a career trajectory associated with comfortable conditions in life and work, which would provide greater identity formation, confidence and career orientation.

That being said, it is evident that a conscious choice can be made by a school graduate only in the case of their owning a certain margin of social capital which would allow for making an appropriate choice of education trajectory for a future career.

Research findings on the future career perceptions of the megalopolis school youth indicate the following: (1) young people's career trajectories don't correlate with their accumulated human capital; (2) the higher a school graduate's experience of collaboration with others (social capital), the more often his or her career perceptions would be envisioned as a horizontal career and the acquisition of a higher level of expertise (rather than a vertical career); (3) future career choices in the majority of cases (73%) would be influenced by parents in a situation characterized by a lack of information about labor market conditions, including the 'most-in-demand' professions in the region; (4) field-oriented learning in high school doesn't influence further career choices in a specific field – among those who learn a specific field (major) in school, 67% don't intend to follow this professional field in the future.

The new dynamic world of work leads to a new trend in youth employment behavior, focusing on graduates' practice of choosing their first placement outside of their acquired degree or profession. From this perspective the main hands-on task for school can

be articulated as an accumulation of a student's social capital, adequate for primary socialization translated into ability to opt for initial professional trajectory and career perception which can be later converted into an accomplished professional path. *Learning, in, for and through the workplace* (Evans et al, 2006) facilitates the connection between human and social capital, specifically through providing opportunities for social inclusion, employability and adaptability. Furthermore, making career choices plays an important part in this process, and thus attends to the social processes that shape young adults' perceptions and attitudes towards engagement and active citizenship, thus influencing their professional and personal development and life chances within the workplace and beyond.

Notes

- 1 *Adult Education as a Means to Active Participatory Citizenship (EduMap)*. European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme (EduMAP, H2020-YOUNG-2014-2015/H2020-YOUNG-SOCIETY-2015), Grant Agreement number 693388
- 2 Higher School of Economics, St Petersburg, Russia.
- 3 Please see <https://www.nakanune.ru/articles/113907/> [last accessed 2.10.2019].
- 4 Please see <https://www.nakanune.ru/articles/113907/> [last accessed 2.10.2019].

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