

The Many Ways of Knowing Career Development: A Global Perspective

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REPRINT NOTICE: This article is reprinted with permission from the *Career Planning & Adult Development Journal* Volume 37 (2), Spring 2021, written by APCDJ Editor Brian Hutchison, to introduce a special section on global career development. One section titled **Introduction to the Issue** was deleted because it identified and summarized the articles specific to that issue. Otherwise, the article from that issue is presented here in its entirety.

Scope, salience, and inclusiveness are among the components of important contributions to scholarship designed to impact professional practice. In this introductory article, I will first consider one major contribution, an editorial, to prepare the reader before then introducing the themes and articles of this section. The editorial “Many Ways of Knowing” (Hartman, 1990) is not a career-focused article, yet it speaks deeply to the important underpinnings of global career development in the 21st century. I hope that this sets the stage for engaging reading and critical analysis of the contributions by our selected scholars.

Hartman’s Many Ways of Knowing

Written as an editorial by the editor for the journal *Social Work* (Hartman, 1990), this two-page contribution prompts meaningful reflection and debate about truth, knowledge, research, and access, even today, 30 years after its publication. Citing Karger (1983, pp. 203–204), Hartman wrote, “Those who define the questions to be asked define the parameters of the answers...” (p. 203) in describing how “dialogue and debate are allowed within certain parameters, with the ultimate referee being the means of communication...” (p. 204) to describe the influence that journals have because of their editorial control of power,

subjugation, and narratives. The starting point of reading a special section in a scholarly journal thus begins with the recognition of these three elements. Where are the centers of power in the selection and presentation of the material in the article? Who might be subjugated by the power exerted in this writing? Whose narratives are included and excluded from the telling in each article?

The crux of this perspective, then, is found within the resolution of these three questions. The boundaries each create, in an active manner, determine the truth claims found in our scholarship. Stated very pragmatically, “the norms of the journals can even shape the direction of inquiry” (Hartman, 1990, p. 3) and thus the direction of inquiry can shape what is called knowledge. Scholarship, both its creation and consumption, then becomes an act of morality because it is not only done in the pursuit of science but also in the pursuit of equity and justice.

In resolving these three questions, Hartman stated that “there are many truths and there are many ways of knowing” (1990, p. 3) as “there are indeed many ways of knowing and many kinds of knowers” (1990, p. 4). Since this section is a collection of scholars from around the globe, your job as the reader of the knowledge presented within this section is to consider the truths found within, the ways these

truths have come to be known, and to what kind of knower they apply. Finally, it is equally important that you examine yourself as well, so that you can both question your assumptions and turn your own critical eye towards these data. This means not accepting all that is presented cleanly because “theories can both illuminate and obscure our vision” (Scott, 1989, p. 48). To consider these articles critically is of the utmost importance because this act of knowing constitutes a “moral intervention in the social life whose conditions of existence we seek to clarify” (Giddens, 1976, p. 8).

Applying Hartman to Our Reading

In the opening sentence of this article, I suggested that scope, salience, and inclusiveness were apt targets for critical analysis of scholarship. Aligning these three concepts with the three questions posed by Hartman, I would say that scope and salience analysis will answer the question of power centeredness, while inclusiveness is largely determined by who is subjugated and who is liberated by asking whose story is told and whose is omitted. Before encouraging you to set forth and read the section, I would like to further frame the conversation by using these four targets in an attempt to capture the broad trends of global career development as I understand them today.

Scope

The extent to which a topic is representative of global populations is my working definition of scope. It is important to consider the context of the research as well as the intended applicability of the authors. The broader importance of scope is thoroughly delineated in my own article proposing an advocating workers-within-environment approach due to three critiques of extant career theory and research (Hutchison, 2015).

Hutchison (2015) employs critical theory methods to identify three broad thematic issues with current career theory and practice. These are:

1. Career work is WEIRD, or too heavily biased towards Western, Educated, Rich, and Democratic cultural norms. This bias unintentionally creates a standard or normative client to which career approaches are applied.
2. Career work is dehumanizing in that the current employer-focused stance of most career scholarship creates a distortion “of the vocation of becoming more fully human” (Freire, 2018 p. 44). Two examples of this distortion, or attributing problems of practice to the client instead of the employer, are the ubiquitous terms *work-life balance* and *self-care*. Why is the onus of responsibility for living a good life disproportionately put on workers/clients and not put on employers?
3. Career work is colonizing in that it perpetuates the “Eurocentric paradigm of modernity” (Goodman & Gorski, 2014, p. 4) at the expense of those who are *others* within this paradigm. Ask yourself why multicultural career-fair programs are all too often focused on “teaching” persons of color to dress, eat, and speak in the dominant normative way versus companies attending to learn to create more inclusive work environments?

These critiques are not without controversy, but they do pose new problems to consider in the way we conduct career practice, research, and scholarship. While this section is a wholehearted attempt to broaden the scope of scholarship, we can only reach our highest ideals as a profession if we continue to pose the questions about scope while reading the offerings within.

Salience

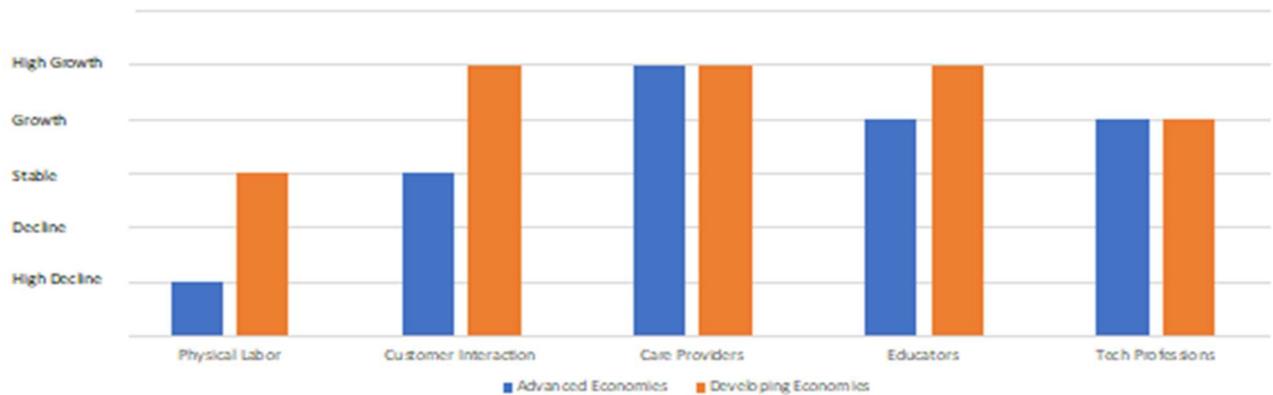
The current landscape of global career-development work does demand attunement to certain factors across all countries and populations. The “fourth industrial revolution” has been coined as the name of the current historical period as it impacts work. This period is described as a disruption of work because of

modern “smart” technologies, such as artificial intelligences, biotechnology integration, the Internet of Things, nanotechnology, quantum computers, and more (National Careers Week, 2020). The true implications of these technological advancements remain unknown, but there is broad consensus today that the global discourse about the current period in work history is unsettling for workers at best, and traumatizing at its worst (Bluestein, 2019).

Salience, then, is the quality of importance this type of information has for different people

in their own context. Fourth-industrial-revolution impacts are a perfect concept for thinking about salience because different factors will impact economies differently. Let’s, for example, take the National Careers Week report (2020) that organized projections in an attempt to predict the impact across countries with advanced economies and developing economies leading into the year 2030. Below is a table identifying some of the differences we might expect from jobs in 2030.

Figure 1.1 Projected Growth for Professions in 2030



Note. Figure 1.1: Projected Growth for Professions in 2030 (National Career Week, 2020)

Reviewing the data in Figure 1.1, it becomes clear that the context of economic development is important in understanding the salience of technology change for different workers. This suggests that one aspect of critical analysis of scholarship requires the reader to identify the economic conditions of each country as it is presented. This is one of myriad types of context that may matter when determining salience. There is a shared responsibility between the authors and the readers of career research to strive for this level of understanding so that aspects of salience can be considered.

Inclusiveness

Asking the question, “Who was not included in any article and what are the costs, both penalties and opportunity costs, of this

exclusion?” is the core aspect of critically analyzing inclusiveness. Workers-within-environment theory,

operates from the philosophical position that each human is always experiencing others, broadly defined, and is experienced by others. Within these shared experiences between self and others, the self is reliant upon one’s adaptive wits to respond to social experiences. (Lemberger, 2010, p. 133)

This approach asks us to constantly put ourselves in the role of analyst of our position. Are we within the group being referenced or outside it? The technical term for this is “alterity,” and it is more easily defined as *otherness*. As a reader of scholarship, this begs the questions, are the subjects (e.g., clients) that

any article affects more or less included than the dominant norm (WEIRD clients)? Are the subjects more or less like me?

It is the answer to these two questions that make us critical consumers of scholarship and information. It is how we incorporate scholarship into our career practice that determines whether or not we are employing our own critical consciousness and fostering it in clients as acts of advocacy. I will again reference my (Hutchison, 2015) article, where I cite McLaren's (1999) framework for using problem-posing as a method in career-services practice. We might ask the same sorts of questions (as noted in brackets below) as we evaluate the inclusiveness of the articles in this section:

1. Approach client acts of knowing as being grounded in individual experiences and contexts. [How are the research methods a fit for the cultural values of the subjects?]
2. Conceptualize the historical/cultural world of the client as a transformable reality shaped by individual and collective perceptions. [Are the authors from the culture of the subjects? If not, do they do enough to describe their positionality and that of their subjects?]
3. Help the client make connections between his or her own conditions and the socially constructed conditions comprised of the realities of others. [Are the lived conditions of the subjects described in the context of broader social and economic concerns about work?]
4. Encourage clients to consider how they can shape the collective reality through individual acts of knowing, thus creating a new collectively created reality. [Are there implications for practice that benefit the subjects as clients?]
5. Help the client develop personal agency skills to impact the environment through his or her own acts of knowing. [Are the implications for practice ones that

empower clients to advocate on their own behalf?]

6. Collaborate with the client to identify the myths propagated by the dominant social discourse so that the cycle of enslavement or oppression can be interrupted and eventually broken. (McLaren, 1999, p. 51)

Conclusion

Consuming scholarship can be an act of social justice advocacy. Offering globally focused scholarship, as we have done in this issue, is a first step towards expanding the stories or scope of career development practice within the academic literature; but it is only a first step. Social justice and inclusive praxis, or accepted practice as distinguished from theory, is the third step in using career-development practice to provide access and equity to all clients. It is the step between these two, that second step, that falls upon your shoulders as the reader of career scholarship. It is your care and concern to learn to read critically, to ask questions of scope, salience, and inclusiveness, and to do the difficult work of adapting your practice within the boundaries of your own critical thinking that will make clients' lives better.

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