

Youth, work, and mobility: a review essay¹

Getting in and getting on in the youth labour market: Governing young people's employability in regional context, by Pauline Leonard and Rachel Wilde, Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2019, 160 pp., £ 36 (hbk), ISBN 978-1-5292-0229-8

Global youth migration and gendered modalities, edited by Glenda Time Bonifacio. Bristol: Policy Press, 2019, 320 pp., £68 (hbk), ISBN: 978-1-4473-4019-5

The volumes discussed in this review take up inquiries into young people's education, work, and mobility. They are both welcome engagements that create analytical arcs that connect examinations of discursive practices and lived experiences through policymaking and social change initiatives and historical investigations to contemporary analysis. Their authors draw multiple lines of connection and continuity between the inter-discipline of youth studies, disciplinary and other interdisciplinary fields that currently orient themselves toward examinations of young people's lives under conditions of socioeconomic restructuring and economic uncertainty at local, regional, transnational or global scale.

Pauline Leonard and Rachel J. Wilde's *Getting In and Getting On in the Youth Labor Market: Governing Young People's Employability in Regional Context* stems out from new empirical research conducted between 2014 and 2017. As indicated by its title, the volume explores the question of how young people manage to enter and progress on the labour markets of different regions of the United Kingdom (UK). In answering this question, the authors examine the complex socioeconomic, policy and political processes that shape young people's transitions from education into regional labour markets side by side with the conditions that enable them to remain in employment and to progress their careers.

The structure of the book reflects Leonard and Wilde's analytical emphasis on the significance of context-specific explorations. After an introductory chapter largely dedicated to theoretically underpinning the volume, Chapters Two through Five present four select case studies, each addressing one region of the UK with their corresponding strategies for youth employment: North East England is discussed in relation to employability-related skills trainings; the South Coast, with entrepreneurial development initiatives; London, with unpaid

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internships; and the city of Glasgow in Scotland, with volunteering as employability-related skills development and on-the-job work experience. Within the analytical context of each chapter, the authors examine concepts that are relevant beyond the scope of academia, to students and practitioners of policymaking, service delivery, and youth activism. The book concludes with synthetic and critical evaluations of several frameworks markedly shaped by discourses of neoliberalism: regionality, social class, liminality, vulnerability, and risk.

The theoretical work of *Getting In and Getting On in the Youth Labor Market* is grounded by Leonard and Wilde's rich empirical data; informed by an ethnographic methodology and semi-structured interviews with young people, policy makers and practitioners in the field of youth employment, ethnography-based case studies of organisations delivering training programs for youth, and additional informal conversations with trainers in the field (20-21). Leonard and Wilde's post-Foucauldian governmentality approach is well suited for critical social policy analysis, as well as an integrated sociological exploration of how structures of gender, age, citizenship, and migration status subtly interplay with global processes and location-specific conditions. For instance, Chapter Three shows that in London, a place of high capacity for both training and employment opportunities, social class and network strengths shape not only aspirations but, most importantly, the quality of opportunities, transition velocities, and access to safety nets. Chapter Five's look at volunteering in Glasgow is particularly thought provoking. The volunteering youth encountered in two training sites were from diverse backgrounds of capability and need: international students, migrants, people with few or no educational qualifications, some partially employed, others unemployed, people with learning difficulties, or with mental health issues. They showed that the privatisation of employability and employment risk many times succeeds in fuelling unpaid work opportunities, favours profit-generating consumption and reproduces long-term unemployment and social exclusion (114, 138).

The case studies create analytical arcs that trace the articulation of neoliberal subjectivities and technologies of governance from macro-level to micro-level. From one region to the next, Leonard and Wilde carefully expose, most importantly, the fact that by framing the issue of youth unemployment in relation to skill sets, the solutions end focusing on individual fault and deficit models of employment readiness. This signals again neoliberalism's insidious capacity to shape our understanding of the socioeconomic dimensions of life and work. Finally, the authors demonstrate the limitations of supply-side and individualist explanations and policies with intricate explorations that bypass the structure versus individual agency binary.

Glenda Time Bonifacio's edited collection continues the engagement with young lives. The volume focuses on young peoples' mobilities, historically and contemporarily. The gendered articulations of aspirations and experiences of education and work migrations at crossroads of development, conflict, modernity and globalisation take the front stage of this multidisciplinary collection. As is the case of Leonard and Wilde's monograph, Bonifacio's *Global Youth Migration and Gendered Modalities* also takes on the analytical challenge of negotiating structure and agency, both theoretically and empirically. The notions of youth and gendered

modalities constitute the analytical framework that encompass explorations of context-specific articulations of gender and age with other factors that shape young peoples' decisions, trajectories, challenges, and lives as they undertake migration in search of work, education, and more sustainable futures. The geographical scope of the contributions enables the readers to grapple with a significant range of modalities in which gender vectors intersect with class, sexuality, religion, race, or ethnicity in producing discrimination, vulnerability, exploitation, and precariousness as well as opportunity for marginalised migrant youth. Equally important, the contributors document and analyse young people's aspirations, tactics and strategies while navigating global terrains of uneven opportunity. The volume approaches the subject of youth migration from a multidisciplinary angle, with the majority of the contributions demonstrating rigorous grounding in the interdisciplinary repertoires of gender studies, youth studies and mobility or migration studies. Ranging from qualitative to quantitative engagements, archival to ethnographic work, discursive to statistical analysis, the chapters are organised in four thematic parts: "Imperial Histories," "Negotiating Identities," "Work," and "Education."

"Imperial histories," foregrounds exclusively youth mobility pertaining to the British Empire and its colonial settlements. The formation of gendered subjectivities and agencies through migration, agricultural work, domestic labour under the governance of charity, education, health, and knowledge production institutions constitute an analytical thread that links the chapters in this section (Bates, 2019; Frost, 2019; and Hirschberg 2019). For instance, in Chapter Three, Ginger Frost shows that during 1870-1930, notions of social Darwinism connected illegitimacy to hereditary vice—foreclosing the access of 'illegitimate subjects' to legal rights. Immigration to the Americas or the antipodes was undertaken by unwed mothers and their children as a way to escape stigmatisation, impoverishment, and servitude.

Searches for better symbolic and material life circumstances form the empirical core of "Negotiating identities." The focus here are transformations in identities undertaken in relation to everyday experiences of exclusion, aspirations for integration, and efforts toward inclusion and citizenship. In Chapter Seven, Ina Batzke turns an intersectional lens to the politics of inclusion/exclusion that form in interstices of nowadays' undocumented youth movement and LGBTQ activism in United States. Batzke's critical engagement with their rhetorical strategies unveils erasures and invisibilities around structural inequalities shaped at the intersection of citizenship, queerness, and foreignness.

Part III addresses the complex interplay between education, mobility, economic structures, social pressures, and cultural imperatives in shaping migration outcomes. In Chapter Twelve, Pamela Aronson and Ivy Forsyth-Brown draw on interviews with second-generation Arab-American women on their college experiences in order to create an analytical continuum between orientations toward individualist cultural ideals and family-centric ones. In relation to this, they trace intricate interactions between women's roles within the household, community, or larger society, gendered and class-based norms for ownership, and gendering expectations for educational achievement and professional life, which shed light on the complex manifestations

of agency and subjectivity formation.

The volume concludes with Part IV, which foregrounds youth work migration. One of the quantitative studies included in the collection, Chapter Fourteen, deploys the analytics of “migration potential studies” (265) toward the examination of young Hungarians’ work migration attitudes, intentions, plans, processes and trends. Ibolya Czibere and Andrea Racz identify gender, age, levels of educational attainment, experiences of learning abroad, language skills, labour market status, financial factors, and relational and psychological resources as interacting factors that form incentive or restrictive assemblages. Importantly, Czibere and Racz signal the limitations of international and domestic migration statistical data, thus inviting further considerations into future research agendas in relation to youth mobility research.

Finally, given their conceptual and methodological merits, the relevance of both volumes reaches well beyond the scope of youth studies and migration studies, into the realms of sociology, anthropology, human geography, gender studies and education.

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