

Critical perspectives on international business

Call for papers

Critical perspectives on global careers

There is very little critique of globalization in the managerialist literature. It is generally accepted as a business driven inevitability, which will eventually (if not already) draw all parts of the world into a system of global capitalism. This view of globalization is largely reflected in the careers literature. In this context a 'global career', where an individual spends some or all of his or her working life in countries outside of their 'home' country, is often viewed as an organizational phenomenon that is likely to increase, particularly among the professional and managerial class, as global business expands (e.g., Dickmann and Baruch, 2011; Thomas, Inkson, and Lazarova, 2005). Critical questions underpinning these assumptions remain unasked and it is taken-for-granted that the world needs 'cosmopolitans', 'career-oriented cadres of global managers' and 'mobile elites, middle managers and professionals' who will operate to coordinate and control the globalization of business and pursue successful global careers (Banai and Harry, 2004; Cappellen and Janssens, 2010; Hasleberger and Brewster, 2009; Morley and Heraty, 2004; Suutari, 2003; Tung, 1998). Contributions to this debate have argued that the 'global careerist' is somewhat different from the traditional organizational expatriate; the individual who is sent on an assignment for a defined period and who then returns to their 'home' country (Cappellen and Janssens, 2005; Mayrhofer and Reiche, 2014). In this special issue we seek to problematize the idea of a 'global career' through theoretical and empirical papers offering critical, innovative and imaginative ways of thinking about this concept.

Careers scholarship generally and global careers research specifically has received limited attention from a critical management perspective (for exceptions see e.g., Currie, Tempest, and Starkey, 2006; Grey, 1994; Hassard, Morris, and McCann, 2012; Pringle and Mallon, 2003; Roper, Ganesh, and Inkson, 2010; Scurry, Blenkinsopp, and Hay, 2013). Furthermore, there is little evidence provided in much of the global careers literature as to whether, indeed, 'global careers' are actually a feature of the modern business world. This may be partly due to the fact that there is an absence of a helpful definition of what a 'global career' might be other than the idea that some portion of a person's working life is spent outside of their home country. In this sense a 'global career' may simply be rhetoric and hyperbole created to advance an agenda or fad, which is in itself a topic for useful investigation. Yet increasingly there is a sense of a global career being something of value – a form of symbolic capital that can help individuals to accrue career capital and advance their careers (Doherty and Dickmann, 2009).

Global working and specifically a global career is often portrayed as a glamorous international opportunity for young ambitious aspirants (Dickmann and Baruch, 2011), yet it is likely that it is far from glamorous and subject to significant constraints and boundaries (Costas, 2013). It is important to investigate the personal and psychological costs that may arise from the pursuit of a

global career as well as recognize the potential inequalities and power asymmetries that can shape the experiences of 'being global'. While scholarship has highlighted the personal 'dark sides' of global careers and global working, it would be helpful to understand more the broader organizational and societal 'dark sides' of the pursuit of global opportunities (Lee, 2005; Richardson and Zikic, 2007; Shaffer and Harrison, 1998).

The focus on the careers of privileged groups from the metropolitan centres has dominated work on global careers; although some recent work has begun to look at skilled migrants from the periphery or global south (Al Ariss, Koall, Özbilgin, and Suutari, 2012; Hilde and Mills, 2015; Thomson and Jones, 2015). In addition, there is a need to critically consider the relationship between geographic and social spaces, since as a consequence of increased mobility, transnational social spaces are becoming more significant. When thinking about global careers we need also to consider how an individual's social position and values have roots in nationally bounded social structures as well as transnational arrangements of social practices (Pries, 2001). Further research could usefully be undertaken on these issues and topics from a critical perspective.

There are additionally, opportunities to investigate more critically the idea of a global career from the viewpoint of class, race, sexuality and gender using appropriate critical frames of analysis and appropriate methodologies. For example, some career scholars have attempted to develop typologies of global careers (Baruch, Dickmann, Altman, and Bournois, 2013). A feature of such typologies is the argument that any type of 'international work' might be constitutive of a career. Thus, illegal immigrants, asylum seekers and temporary immigrants are all understood in some way to be pursuing an 'international career'. We would wish to problematize such frameworks and encourage a broader, more critical investigation of marginalized groups and whether they can be considered to have a 'career' at all. It is likely that such investigation will derive its interpretive tools from outside of the field of career theory itself.

We believe that there are many and various directions that can be taken in developing more critical approaches to global careers, only a very few of which we have outlined above. We aim to publish primarily critically and theoretically informed empirical studies, and we are open to diverse and innovative methodological approaches. The following themes are suggestive of our interests, but are not intended to restrict imaginative submissions.

- What is a career in globalized capitalism? What is a global career? How might a global career be more critically associated with the context of global capitalism? How does the idea of a global career connect with types of expatriation in critical ways?
- Is the idea of a global career a myth? Is the idea of a global career elitist?

- How can we problematize managerialist perspectives on the global career? What functions, purposes and interests might be served through the rhetoric and discourse of a global career?
- How can we trace the history of the development of the idea of a global career? How might the contemporary idea of a global career be a colonial legacy? How might a postcolonial lens throw light on the global career? Is there 'Southern Theory' relevant to global career?
- How might we think critically about gender, race and sexuality in the context of a global career? How do dimensions of disadvantage or difference intersect to shape the experience of global careers?
- How can we connect and understand more critically the relationship between global mobility, migration and careers? How might we think critically about inclusion and exclusion in relation to global careers?
- How do institutional/structural influences, e.g. localisation policies/ immigration regulation, shape global careers? How might we consider the interaction with insecurity and precariousness?
- What is global careerism? To what do individuals conform when they enact and perform a global career? Who establishes the normative elements of global careerism and how might this connect to forms of identity regulation and control? What interpretative schema/scripts are drawn upon to evaluate global careers? How can we problematize the 'War for Talent'?
- What are the personal, professional, psychological and identity 'dark sides' of a global career?

Submission process and deadlines:

Submissions should follow the author guidelines for critical perspectives on international business which can be found at: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/cpoib.htm>

The submission deadline is 31st August 2015, with initial reviewing to be completed by 31st November 2015, revisions due by 31st January 2016, final decisions by 1st May 2016, and anticipated publication in 2017.

Submissions should be via the Scholar One Manuscripts online submission system (<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cpoib>). If authors have any questions about the special issue they should contact the special issue guest editors; Steve McKenna (smckenna@yorku.ca) or Tracy Scurry (tracy.scurry@ncl.ac.uk).

About the guest editors:

Steve McKenna is Professor of Global HRM in the School of HRM at York University, Toronto. He became a 'serious' academic at 45 after many years working around the world in the private and public sectors. He is unsure if this constitutes a 'global career'. He has published on global mobility and networks, HRM and ethics and postcolonialism in *Organization*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *British Journal of Management* and *International Journal of Human Resource Management* among other journals. His current research interests revolve around critical approaches to global human resource management in general and global careers in particular.

Tracy Scurry is a Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management at Newcastle University Business School, UK. Her current research explores global careers, graduate careers, and extended working lives. She is also a Co-Investigator on an ESRC Seminar Series exploring Regulation, Work and Employment. Tracy's research has been published in international peer reviewed journals including *Career Development International*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management* and *Personnel Review*.

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