Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery

Self-actualisation, social justice and the politics of career education

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Publication information

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A history of the Centre is available in the book

Hyde, C. (2014). *A Beacon for Guidance*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies. University of Derby.

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Abstract

This paper is an extended text of Tristram Hooley's inaugural lecture: *Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery: Self-actualisation, social justice and the politics of career education*. The lecture was given on the 17th September 2015 at the University of Derby.

The lecture explores the interrelationship between politics, social justice and career guidance. The paper argues that our careers emerge out of social and economic conditions. In unequal societies our position within the economic and social system is central to our chance of having a successful career and realising our potential (self-actualising).

The lecture explores the role that career education and guidance can have in supporting individuals to self-actualise and notes that career education and guidance is in itself embedded in social, economic and political relationships. The ideal of the lifelong guidance system is advanced and it is argued that this could be part of a new kind of society. A society in which a lifelong guidance system was realised could be more socially just and would signal a new kind of relationship between paid work, citizenship and leisure.

The lecture concludes with a consideration of the role that career education can play in bringing about a new kind of society. The paper proposes a pedagogic framework for a radical career education and guidance.

This framework argues that radical career education and guidance should be seeking to help us to:

(1) explore ourselves and the world where we live, learn and work;
(2) examine how our experience connects to broader historical, political and social systems;
(3) develop strategies that allow us individually to make the most of our current situation;
(4) develop strategies that allow us collectively to make the most of our current situations; and
(5) consider how the current situation and structures should be changed.

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Prelude – Redemption songs

Old pirates, yes, they rob I;
Sold I to the merchant ships,
Minutes after they took I
From the bottomless pit.
But my hand was made strong
By the 'and of the Almighty.
We forward in this generation
Triumphantly.

Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all I ever have:
Redemption songs;
Redemption songs.

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery;
None but ourselves can free our minds.
Have no fear for atomic energy,
'Cause none of them can stop the time.
How long shall they kill our prophets,
While we stand aside and look? Ooh!
Some say it's just a part of it:
We've got to fulfill the book.

Won't you help to sing…
Bob Marley, Redemption Song (1979).[1]

Bob Marley's 1979 hymn of liberation theology, *Redemption Song*, has been poorly attended to by the generations of undergraduates who have treated it as wallpaper for their dope smoking. Close attention to the words transport us to a different time when both social justice and the active pursuit of social transformation were important in popular culture.

Marley's song addressed his contemporary audience and looked back across history to explore the intertwined stories of racism, imperialism and capitalist oppression. Marley borrowed the line 'emancipate yourselves from mental slavery' from an earlier radical thinker, Marcus Garvey, who also made the link between how people think about themselves and political change.

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[1] You can see Marley performing this song on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFGgbT_VasI.

> *We are going to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery because whilst others might free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind. Mind is your only ruler, sovereign. The man who is not able to develop and use his mind is bound to be the slave of the other man who uses his mind.*
> **Marcus Garvey (1938).**

In our society we are not bound in chains like the slaves on Marley's pirate ships. It is our worldview, our 'horizons for action' and our 'common sense' about what is possible and desirable which serve as our bindings. As Garvey and Marley both argue it is only when we engage with the limitations of our own thinking about what we can, should and must achieve that we have any chance of fulfilling our potential as human beings and of bringing about the social and political changes required to both enable this self-actualisation and to deliver a broader form of social justice.

Figures like Marcus Garvey, or even Bob Marley, can seem like ancient history to my generation. Our hero was Kurt Cobain, the tragic lead singer of Nirvana. His life, career and music speak to the futility of hoping for change (see Cross, 2002). Life is unfair, creativity is squashed and the capitalist machine will grind you up and leave you hopeless – even when you have Cobain's talent, fame and money. Nirvana gave powerful and poetic voice to the underbelly of late capitalism but they offered us no redemption songs.

My generation has been told repeatedly, in the words of Mrs Thatcher, "there is no (real) alternative" (TINA) (Thatcher, 1980). The politics of the neoliberal right have been embraced in different ways and to a different extent in countries across the world, but they have been influential everywhere and within parties across the political spectrum. However, in recent months and years we've also seen the re-emergence of an alternative narrative. Syrisa in Greece, Bernie Sanders in the USA and Jeremy Corbyn in the UK have all lead me to think that TINA might be wobbling a bit.

Returning to Bob Marley it is worth noticing how his argument is made. He highlights inequality and oppression and locates the experience of his audience within a historical context. He offers personal strategies to manage this by valuing the contribution of spiritual faith to personal resilience and then argues that people should come together and change the world: '*Won't you help to sing these songs of freedom?*' So, notice people's experience, locate it historically, offer personal opportunities to manage life as it is, encourage the development of collective solutions and struggle to bring about a new society.

During the period that Marley was writing and recording other people were saying remarkably similar things. In 1970's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (2005) set out a method for the critical educator. He describes how curriculum can be developed out of the needs and interests of learners and how it can provide them with tools to advance their lives both individually and collectively. He argues for the centrality of context and highlights the possibility of transforming this context. Again we can restate the essence of this method as, notice people's experience, locate it historically and contextually, offer personal resources to manage life as it is,

encourage the development of collective solutions and the transformation of oppressive structures.

It has been my privilege to work with Lyn Barham on an edited version of the writings of Tony Watts. Tony's work provides the foundation for much of my thinking and I have benefitted enormously from his support and mentoring. As I worked on the edition I returned to many of Tony's older writings to rethink their implications. It also allowed me to notice a hitherto unobserved parallel between the work of Tony Watts and Bob Marley which I'll now illustrate.

Writing in 1977 Tony Watts (see Watts, 2015a) grappled with many of the same issues as Friere in considering how to address a socially unjust context within the education system. In 1977 Britain faced growing structural youth unemployment which threated to transform the core assumption of career education; that there was a job for everyone and everyone could exercise some choice in their occupation.

Writing in the same year as Watts, the sociologist Paul Willis (1977) had demonstrated the role that the education system played in preparing young people for uninspiring work. He argued that that they were 'learning to labour' and showed how the routine of school led young people into acceptance of the norms of low skilled work and their place in the class system (in both senses). However these school to work transitions were being disrupted by rising unemployment (Denman and McDonald, 1996) and an associated growth in youth unemployment.

It is one thing for school to prepare us for a life of drudgery, but what is the responsibility of schools when even this may not be available? Watts argues that schools must prepare students for the reality of the world into which they are transitioning. I think that this is right. As educators we have a duty to represent the facts and to help people to interpret them. Where unemployment is high career education must discuss this and help students to understand the economic and political forces that may result in them spending periods unemployed.

Watts set out a wide array of strategies that career education can introduce individuals to in order to help them to manage periods of unemployment. These include helping people to think about how to survive while on benefits and how to maintain their employability while they are not working. It also includes helping people to think about how they can productively spend their time in their families and communities doing things which may not pay a wage. This kind of thinking is radical as it suggests that things other than money might be important and worth valuing. Together communities may be able to access the good life through co-operation, even when capital is in short supply. Watts also argues that such programmes must offer young people an '*awareness of possible economic and political solutions to unemployment*' and an '*awareness of possible alternative patterns of work and leisure*' (p.193). Again the approach is to understand context, locate it politically and historically, offer individual and collective ways forwards and consider how things need to change.

But, we are getting ahead of ourselves here. This is just a prelude. So let us begin in earnest. What has social justice got to do with career?

Act 1: Old pirates, yes, they rob I

It is important to start with definitions. When Tony Watts (2015b) founded the Centre that I now lead he was careful to clearly define what our central concept would be. Career, he argued, must not be an elite concept which is only attainable for the lucky few. If we argue for 'careers for all' we need to redefine career as describing the individual's passage through life, learning and work. We all have one career although we may have many jobs and fulfill many roles.

At the heart of this kind of concept of 'careers for all' is the concept of self-actualisation. Writing in the 1960s Carl Rodgers (1995) defined self-actualisation as '*the mainspring of life… it is the urge which is evident in all organic and human life – to expand, extend, become autonomous, develop, mature.*' (p.35). The humanistic conception that systems should be organised to allow people to reach their potential lies at the heart of the ideology of career guidance. Our careers should not be characterised by drudgery and disappointment, but rather by autonomy, optimism and fulfillment.

Inevitably our need to self-actualise must be held in tension with wider social needs; we cannot all do what we want all of the time. However, I think that we should design systems which allow the greatest number of people to get as close to self-actualisation as possible.

Social justice is rather more slippery. As Ronald Sultana (2014) has pointed out it is possible to define social justice in a number of ways. Drawing on four distinct traditions of political philosophy he asks can we define social justice as that which contributes to:

(1) social harmony;
(2) equality;
(3) equity; or
(4) pluralism and difference.

Irving (2009) offers four similar, but conceptually distinct, definitions:

(1) retributive social justice;
(2) distributive social justice;
(3) recognitive social justice; and
(4) critical social justice.

Social justice clearly means different things to different people.

Julia Yates, Beth Cutts and I have been looking at the issue of appearance and attractiveness in career (Cutts, Hooley and Yates, 2015; Hooley and Yates, 2015). We have been regularly running up against questions about what constitutes socially just behaviour. Imagine a young man who has tattooed a spider's web onto his face and is now experiencing discrimination from employers. Is the just thing to do to advise him to conform to social norms to preserve social harmony and to urge him to remove the tattoo? To argue that his equality of treatment must be respected by

employers regardless of the way he looks? To argue that because of the way in which his aesthetic choices have disadvantaged him he must be supported to achieve an equitable outcome by being positively advantaged in the recruitment process? Or should we argue that he should be actively campaigning for a greater social acceptance of differences in appearance, perhaps by publically shaming employers for their prejudice? Some of these definitions of justice for the individual may be perceived as unjust by others or even require us to challenge the way in which power operates in our society.

Marley's slave ships provide us with a more acute test for different conceptions of social justice. Preserving social harmony in such a case seems to act in direct contravention of what many of us would conceive as justice. Furthermore as black people in the United States have discovered, neither emancipation nor the provision of formal equality under law have resulted in equity of outcomes. Such examples demonstrate the way in which careers (people's learning, work and wider lives) emerge from their context and in relation to prevailing societal ideas about what constitutes social justice.

How we define social justice is highly political and bound up with perceptions about the legitimacy of current social structures and the feasibility of changing them. The term social justice provides us with a common terminology but beneath the words lie different political traditions which invest them with very different meanings. In their study of the attitudes of Canadian career development practitioners Arthur *et al.* (2009) found that while the majority of their respondents reportedly understood the term 'social justice' they went on to define what this meant for their practice in a wide range of different ways.

So how are we defining it here? I am using social justice as shorthand for two things: firstly the recognition that society is unequal and unfair on a number of levels; secondly the belief that this inequality is neither natural nor necessary and can be changed (made more just). So when I am talking about social justice I am arguing that more people should have the opportunity to self-actualise and have a better career whilst recognising that in order to achieve this we are going to need to change the way in which we organise society (maybe quite a bit).

The lack of social justice is not something that I've invented to make a political point. In Britain in 2015 the way your life, learning and work unfold is strongly influenced by a wide range of social and demographic factors.

In *The Spirit Level*, Pickett and Wilkinson (2009) explain how important the level of income inequality is to the functioning of a society. Income inequality is found in all societies, but is much greater in some countries than others (the UK generally scores pretty poorly on this). The book makes two critical points: firstly that income inequality is not fixed or natural but is dependent on political and cultural factors within each country; secondly that income inequality has a negative effect on people's health, wellbeing, life chances, social mobility and educational attainment. Our careers are detrimentally affected by a set of social and political relationships that it is not only possible to change, but that it is possible to see being done differently in other countries similar to our own. It appears that there have been alternatives all along.

In the UK we have been moving towards a more unequal society since the mid-1970s (Dorling, 2014). When Tony Watts was worrying about the growth of structural unemployment he was actually living in one of the most equal periods of modern British history. Things were going to get a lot worse over the next 30-40 years. Danny Dorling highlights how in the UK this increase in inequality has resulted in the growth of the superrich and notes that this top one per cent are unlike the rest of us because they can pay for schools, healthcare and other services that we can only access collectively. Choosing to disengage from public services increases the one percent's cultural distance from the 99 per cent. As Owen Jones (2012) has argued this cultural distance allows the rich to demonise the poor, blame them for their place in an unequal society and even more perniciously, to encourage them to blame themselves.

Dorling (2014) traces how this inequality impacts on individual's careers. He highlights structural youth unemployment, falling incomes, the growth of the informal labour market, inequality in access to university and poor social mobility as evidence that there is something unjust in the UK's political economy. The Sutton Trust have made a major contribution to the evidence base in this area, funding a wide range of research which has demonstrated that social background, wealth and schooling (particularly attending a fee paying school) all exert a continuing influence on young people's attainment at school, progression to university, transition into work and their incomes (e.g. Allen, 2015; Anders, 2015; and Sammons, Toth and Sylva, 2015).

The unsurprising conclusion that we can draw from this is that our social and economic position are critical to our careers. The UK has become a society within which there is more inequality and this inequality matters more than almost anywhere else in the developed world other than the United States. It seems to me impossible to talk meaningfully about career without addressing this context.

The picture that I have painted so far is highly focused on income inequality and social class. However, it is important to recognise that this is just one of the dimensions on which power is organised in the UK. We could also talk about gender, sexuality, race, religion, appearance and a range of other characteristics. The distribution of power is unequal and society is frequently structured in ways which advantage the powerful against the less powerful.

David Cameron told the Conservative Party Conference in 2012 '*I'm not here to defend privilege, I'm here to spread it.*' This clearly misses the point altogether. Privilege is a relative concept which is based on inequality of outcomes. *The Spirit Level* tells us privilege creates disfunctional societies which are bad not just for the poor, but also for the rich and for the whole of society. I think that if we seek to support peoples' careers, we cannot avoid taking an interest in these broader questions of power, equality and social justice.

Act 2: From the bottomless pit

So far I have argued that our careers are enmeshed in a set of social and economic relations that mean that it is impossible to talk about them without talking about politics. But it is also important to recognise that the education system is in itself political and bound up with different conceptions of social justice. Thankfully the current government and its predecessors have created a perfect case study for us in this in relation to career education and guidance.

Again to definitions: Career education and guidance describes a wide range of activities which support people to think about and progress into their futures. It helps people to answer five questions that I believe are at the heart of all education.

- Who am I?
- How does the world work?
- Where do I fit into the world?
- How can I live with others in the world?
- How do I go about changing the world?

These questions broadly fit with the structure that I introduced in the prologue: understand context, locate it politically and historically, offer individual and collective ways forwards and struggle to bring about a new society. In practice career education and guidance tend to focus on the first three of these questions and often ignores the final two. As a consequence it can be viewed primarily as an individual good which helps people to get on and win the rat race. However it can also be seen as a social good which benefits society collectively. The OECD (2004) argues that it supports the effective functioning of the labour market, the education system and contributes to a range of social goals.

Underpinning the OECD's argument for the impact of career guidance is the conception of a lifelong guidance system. Such a system would seek to ensure that all citizens have access to support across their life course. It should help people to make effective transitions to their first job, but also support progression during a career and help people to make shifts and changes throughout life. As a consequence it would need to burst out of the education system, where career guidance has traditionally had its , and support working people, those on career breaks (for example during periods of caring responsibilities), and those considering the tapering of their work as they move towards retirement.

If such a system was genuinely to be lifelong it would also have to be lifewide and attend to the range of roles that individuals can play in the labour market, community and family. This was what Donald Super (1980) called the life-career rainbow, using this metaphor to describe how we move across nine roles (child, student, worker, partner, parent, citizen, homemaker, leisurite and pensioner) across our life and showing how many of these can co-exist with each other. All of these roles and particularly the negotiation of the tensions between them can be seen as the stuff of which careers are built.

In other words, a lifelong guidance system is a component of a socially just society. One which helps individuals to self-actualise but also serves broader social goals including how can we best allocate human capital within the formal economy, how can we raise our children, care for our sick and allow our population to live fulfilling lives.

A fully realised lifelong guidance system does not currently exist anywhere in the world. However, most of the components of such a system do exist somewhere. The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network has done some very important work in fleshing out what such a system might look like and working through its practical implications with a wide range of European countries (e.g. ELGPN, 2012; Gravina and Lovšin, 2012; Sultana, 2012).

In all countries where career guidance has a substantial footprint the public policy rationales for its existence predominate. In general career guidance is funded from public money. Where this is not the case it is usually embedded into some other services such as education, employment or professional association or trade union membership. While it may offer individuals considerable value, it is not generally something that most people are willing to pay for. There is some value in the field thinking more seriously about how to grow this private market in the face of current public policy neglect. However the growth of a private market would not solve many of the social injustices that I have already discussed. A private market in career guidance would be most available to those who could pay rather than those who need it most. If not balanced by a universal entitlement to support it would potentially strengthen the capacity of the rich to maintain their positional advantage.

Career guidance is particularly important for a number of groups who would find it difficult to participate in a private market. This includes those at the start of their career, those who are unemployed, those who are low skilled or poorly qualified and those who are under-employed. The question of whether career guidance can be a servant of social justice is therefore bound up with the question of who pays for it and why.

This question is at the heart of my interest in the interface between career guidance and public policy. Much of the work that iCeGS has been involved in has been about trying to clarify the public policy interest in career guidance and to make a clear case that it has a public policy value (see for example Borbély-Pecze and Hutchinson, 2014; Hooley, 2014a; McCarthy and Hooley, 2015). In a recent paper (2015) Vanessa Dodd and I argued that career guidance could support the economic aims of the current government by aiding the development of human capital, social capital and supporting transitions, with these in turn leading to a range of primary (e.g. reduced unemployment) and secondary economic outcomes (e.g. improved public health).

It is possible to make a strong case as to why career guidance should be publicly funded. To at least some extent the current government has accepted this in principle and has begun to reverse some of the major attacks that took place on the field whilst Michael Gove was education secretary (Watts, 2013a). I have written extensively about the failure of careers policy under the last government and will not

rehash it all here (see for example Hooley, Matheson and Watts, 2014). Suffice to say that the actions of the previous government were in direct contravention of their manifesto commitments, served to substantially weaken the career guidance profession and to reduce access to career support for young people.

Much of the critique of government policy during this period has focused on its inconsistencies, incoherence and lack of practical grounding. It is tempting to view it as simply a moment when expediency, incompetence and the prejudice of a particular politician combined to devastating effect. However, while I think that there is some truth in this I do not think that it tells the whole story. Tony Watts (2013b) has argued that career guidance is frequently buffeted by the larger winds of policy. During the last Labour government it was re-engineered to serve the government's interest in addressing social exclusion, whilst during the Coalition it was a casualty of the government's policy of 'school autonomy'.

I think that this desire to drive through school autonomy is only one of the ideological strands that explain why career guidance unexpectedly became a target for the last government. It is also possible to link the loss of the Connexions Service to attempts to narrow access to public services and to reduce their legitimacy. The narrative that has grown up around Connexions is of another failed government initiative rather than a recognition of the specific, and apparent, design faults in the service.

Another important policy theme that impacted on Connexions was the movement of power and resource away from democratic local authority control towards central government agencies, unelected LEPs and schools. This process of removing power from local authorities has been going on for at least 25 years under governments of all types but received new impetus on both financial and political levels during the Coalition (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012; Stewart, 2014) . These wider political shifts have been to the detriment of the careers field and ultimately, I believe, to the detriment of society as a whole.

The new education secretary and the new government have begun a slight shift of direction with the revision of the statutory guidance (see Hooley, 2015 for a commentary on this) and the launch of a new Career and Enterprise Company. The scale of this shift is rather smaller than we might like (putting back approximately 10% of the resources that were lost in 2010/2011). There are big questions about how much it is possible to expect from such a modest investment. The new company, like Connexions, contains a number of design faults that are apparent to many in the field, not least the undervaluing of the role of professionals. Nonetheless it is instructive to examine the motivation behind the new policy. Nicky Morgan (DfE and Morgan, 2014) articulated it as follows.

> *This will benefit young people across the country and ensure they leave school fully prepared for life in modern Britain. We know that the ultimate success of our long-term economic plan for this country rests on their shoulders and we are backing them every step of the way.*

Careers work is justified in largely utilitarian terms. Schools need to turn out willing workers and enthusiastic entrepreneurs who can drive UK PLC forwards. Young

people are still 'learning to labour' it seems. This is not to say that the government is disinterested in social justice, for example the statutory guidance (DfE, 2015) highlights the importance of challenging stereotypes about the kinds of jobs that are appropriate for men and women. Career guidance is understood by the current UK government as an activity that can support the kinds of economic, educational and social policy goals that were highlighted by the OECD (2004). However, the vision of social justice that is advanced is extremely limited and is based around a deficit model which focuses on what some young people do not have. The existence of structural barriers to social mobility is not really acknowledged and the solution is largely seen as an individual one whereby young people's opportunity awareness is developed sufficiently to encourage them to work hard and transcend their immediate circumstances.

This is a flawed solution. While access to career guidance may help some people to be a little more successful in their career than they would otherwise be the policy falls short in four main ways. Firstly the level of resourcing and accountability in current government policy is insufficient to realise much of the rhetoric. Secondly policy across government departments is poorly coordinated. Thirdly it is not reasonable to expect that any educational intervention can deliver social mobility in the absence of wider reforms around the distribution of power in society. Fourthly a limited conception of social mobility such as that adopted by the government assumes that wider social structures stay largely static and that while we may "rescue" a talented poorer kid from a life of impoverished servitude as a consequence we damn a less talented richer kid to the same fate. While meritocracy might be more desirable than plutocracy it does not meet all definitions of social justice. Nor does it help to resolve the broader social problems caused by substantial inequalities of wealth and power.

Act 3: Won't you help to sing?

So far I have argued that our careers are bound up with social and economic systems and that as a consequence it is impossible to develop theories of career development without attending to context. I have also argued that career guidance can contribute positively to a range of different conceptions of social justice and link with their wider articulation through government policies. At its most fully realised career guidance is not simply a vehicle by which individuals might get themselves a piece of the pie, but is rather part of the infrastructure of a new kind of society. A government which committed to realising a lifelong guidance system would be signaling a new kind of relationship between citizenship, paid work and leisure that would put people at the heart of the economy.

This idealism seems out of step with the political economy of TINA and governments cutting career guidance services. There is a need for a change in social structures if we are to realise the dream of careers for all. A key question therefore remains. What is the role of career guidance in actually delivering this change?

Much career guidance practice bypasses this question altogether. Although career practitioners operate where individual aspirations meet the social structures neither practice nor theory have fully explored how best to address this interface. My stories of careers frustrated by structural disadvantage sit in stark contrast to many of the upbeat messages that are offered by the careers industry. For example, the American career magazine *Careerealism* offered '*21 inspirational career quotes*' (Coombs, 2015). They include:

> '*If you can DREAM it, you can DO it.*' Walt Disney

> '*Dreams are extremely important. You can't do it unless you imagine it.*' George Lucas

> '*Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom.*' General George Patton

> '*Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.*' Thomas A. Edison

These kinds of quotes are in fairly common usage in the careers field. They typically endorse agency, proactivity and resilience and bypass the kind of contextual factors that I have discussed so far. In addition they tend to individualise the experience of work and career.

Career guidance practice can often construct our career building in highly individualistic terms. An invitation to students to engage with a university careers service (taken from their website) provides a good example of this (my emphasis).

*Our aim is to ensure that **you** are equipped for a lifetime of career success through providing **you** with invaluable experiences that will enhance **your** CV and boost **your** skills.*

*Whether **you** have a clear career path in mind, or **you're** still working things out, we can help get **you** to where **you** want to be. Our experts will be on hand to guide **you** through **your** personal journey, allowing **you** to reach **your** desired destination. Whichever route **you** follow, we'll help make the most of **you**.*

Career is constructed here as a personal journey in which the individual enhances their capital to win positional advantage. Clearly there is a very real level on which this constitutes wise advice in a highly unequal society. Doing better than the people around you offers one of the best strategies to access the good life. Free market economists would be cheered by this, career educators are encouraging people to act in their own interests and this will ultimately ensure the effective working of the market system.

Chang (2010) highlights how free market economists are keen on quoting Adam Smith to demonstrate that self-interest is both inevitable and ultimately in all of our interests.

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker than we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. (p.41).

Chang goes on to argue that while self-interest may be a powerful human driver it is not the only one. We also have drives to be sociable, collaborative and have empathy for others. These are important aspects of human behaviour that need to be acknowledged in our thinking about the economy and the way in which individuals interface with it through their careers. A system which pretends that only self-interest matters it therefore likely to be a bad system which distorts human behaviour and encourages us to act selfishly.

Psychologists of work also suggest that we need a more sophisticated way of thinking about why people work and what constitutes career success. David Blustein argues that work serves three main functions for people. Firstly it allows people to survive and to gain money, power and status. Secondly it offers people a way of connecting to others and to their broader social context. Thirdly it offers people an opportunity for self-determination through which they can self-actualise.

Blustein's typology provides us with a nuanced understanding of why people work and what a career can offer people beyond satisfying their basis needs. Career is not just how we position ourselves within hierarchies, but also how we build relationships with others and act on our social world. Should career practitioners be trying to broaden their students' and clients' conception of career in this way? Should those accessing career guidance be encouraged to think about the implications of their career choices on other people and wider society? For example labour market information routinely includes information about salary and promotion opportunities but rarely includes information on the happiness of people within those careers, social interactions within the job, whether you can join a trade union or the social,

environmental and political implications of particular career choices. Should career practitioners start talking about these things which will inevitably involve them talking about politics and social justice?

Once again Tony Watts (2015c) got here before me, arguing that the answer to these questions will depend on the socio-political position that career guidance seeks to take. Just as we can define social justice in a variety of different ways, the objectives of career guidance are various and dependent on the ideological position that is adopted. Guidance practitioners can be: conservative, seeking to serve the interests of a stable society; liberal, following the lead of their clients; progressive, challenging clients to transcend their social situation; or radical, arguing for a reorganisation of the structures of society.

It is challenging to find many models of career guidance that are genuinely radical. They do exist. The Schools Council 'Careers' Project that took place in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s provides one example (Bates, 1990) and Ratnam's (2011) practices in rural India offers another. Both of these examples sought to frame career decision making contextually and to open up both individual and collective solutions for learners. There are undoubtedly many more examples that have not been documented or have not come to my attention, but it is clear that no systematic attempt to build a theory of practice which addresses this concern about context and social justice has been attempted.

In recent years there are a number of people who have started to talk about this (again). For example, Ronald Sultana (2014), Barry Irving (Irving, 2009; Irving and Malik, 2004) and Nancy Arthur and colleagues (Arthur *et al.*, 2009; Arthur *et al.*, 2013) have all explored the relationship between career education and guidance and social justice. Others including David Blustein (2006), Rie Thomsen (2012), Bill Law (2013) and Patton and McMahon (2006) have been working to increase our understanding of the way in which career education and guidance fit into the social systems within which they take place. I have been influenced by all of this work and hope that it represents a collective shift in the careers field to place context, social justice and politics more centrally.

At present the thinking about career education and guidance and social justice has largely stopped short of the development of models of practice. Practitioners are justified in arguing that despite the increased interest in this area we have yet to answer the question "what is to be done?". Arthur *et al.* (2013) have begun an exciting process of exploring what socially just careers work looks like and how it might differ from more established forms of practice. I also found a recent workshop delivered by Kristin Midttun (2015) extremely stimulating in this respect as it was addressed precisely to the question about how to talk about social justice with practitioners. However, developing a politically engaged model of practice in this field remains extremely challenging for practical and ideological reasons as well as reasons of power.

Practically the development of new models is difficult. Such models have to remain rooted in the actual experience of career professionals and offer them tools for addressing the kind of issues that they are confronted with in the circumstances that

they find themselves. A careers adviser may have to offer a 15 minute appointment and then be presented with a client who wants '*a bit of help with a CV*'. Promises to awaken a clients' political consciousness are likely to fall flat when someone is in the middle of applying for a job. We should also be wary about blaming all problems on capitalism or promising that all problems will be solved '*come the glorious day*'.[2] In developing new models of practice it is important to recognise the limitations that are placed on practice in the real situations where it takes place and the need for such practice to address people's immediate career concerns. In their study in Canada Arthur *et al.* (2009) found that many careers workers articulated these kinds of practical issues. The most commonly cited reason for not engaging with social justice was '*lack of time*'.

Ideologically, many career professionals (and other educational professionals) are skeptical of overtly political education. Political education has a chequered history and can easily be associated with the kind of 're-education' programmes pursued by totalitarian regimes. Practitioners may feel unsure about adopting a political position and concerned about the ethics of passing on their own beliefs to clients. These concerns about undermining independence and impartiality offer important and legitimate barriers to the development of more political forms of career education and guidance. Answering such concerns requires the development of subtle forms of practice which educate and empower clients rather than providing them with new dogma.

There are also substantial questions of power and autonomy which will challenge the development of new forms of practice. Most practitioners work in target driven contexts, underpinned by short-term funding contracts and where they experience limited professional autonomy. If career practitioners encourage people to ask difficult questions, to become community activists or join trade unions they may find that they attract attention from their paymasters in the government. The development of radical forms of guidance are likely to require practitioners to address these limitations on their autonomy, to improve their professional status and to improve their conditions of employment. Critical to this is the profession's own capacity to organise industrially and politically and to generate and defend counter-cultural practices that are in the interests of their clients.

There are clearly substantial challenges involved in developing more radical conceptions of career education and guidance. What this lecture has tried to do is to suggest that there is a need to acknowledge the importance of context in the career education and guidance that we deliver. Such a recognition of context is inevitably political because power and wealth are so important to career. The careers field needs to continue to grapple with the implications of this realisation as it develops over the next few years.

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[2] The phrase 'come the glorious day' was frequently used by Wolfie Smith the hapless revolutionary hero of 1970s British situation comedy Citizen Smith. Its use usually highlighted both the distance that Wolfie and his comrades were from any kind of political change and his uncritical expectations about the post-revolutionary society that he was seeking to create.

I do not claim to have the answer to this, but I think that I've got some good questions and the beginning of a framework for career education that I would be interested in trialing with some practitioners and their students.

Figure 1 sets out this framework. It is based around five key learning areas that could be used to structure a radical or emancipatory career education programme. It identifies a key question related to each and highlights an example of what this might look like in practice.

Figure 1: A framework for emancipatory career education

Learning areas	Key question	Example
Exploring ourselves and the world where we live, learn and work.	Who am I?	A conventional career education programme.
Examining how our experience connects to broader historical, political and social systems.	How does the world work?	Building a link between the careers curriculum and the citizenship curriculum and inviting visiting speakers who support these links e.g. trade unionists, campaigners on employment law.
Developing strategies that allow us individually to make the most of our current situation.	Where do I fit into the world?	Conventional career guidance practice. Working with people to help them to see and make the most of opportunities that are available to them and to create new opportunities.
Developing strategies that allow us collectively to make the most of our current situations.	How can I live with others?	Providing a group with space and support to develop a business, social business or community project as an alternative to unemployment.
Considering how the current situation and structures should be changed.	How do I go about changing the world?	Encouraging people to explore their role as citizens through voting, campaigning and discussing social and political change.

I think that this framework could provide a way forward for practitioners that would be practical in a range of circumstances, could be squared with professional ethics and which would not need to be immediately threatening to those in power.

There is much practical and conceptual work to be done, but there are valuable resources to draw on. Perhaps most notably the tradition of critical pedagogy which emerged in the mid-twentieth century and is associated with the writings of Paulo Friere, Ivan Illich, Henry Giroux and others offers both practical and theoretical

lessons about how to link education to movements for social justice (see Darder, Baltodano and Torres, 2008). These ideas have informed much of the thinking in this lecture and I think should be engaged with as part of the training of all career practitioners. They do not offer us a silver bullet, but they do demonstrate that the desire to support social justice through educational practice can be realised.

Career education and guidance has been through a tough time in Britain over recent years. Politicians have turned the area into a political football. In part this has been because we are small, weak and poorly understood, but in part this has been because career is intensely political. As a result career guidance is inevitably swept up into any attempt to make wider social, economic and political changes. For the most part practitioners have been resilient but accepting of any new roles that they have been asked to take on. Perhaps it is time to speak truth to our clients and to those in power and to argue that if we truly want careers for all, if we truly want social justice, there is a need to change structures and reorganise power.

Epilogue - We've got to fulfill the book

I'm going to end with two quotes. The first is from an interview (Hooley, 2014b) that I conducted with Tony Watts last year.

> *I think in the end it comes down to a social mission. It was the social mission that we started CRAC with: that people making choices and developing their careers is really important, both for their lives and for the wider society. No-one was doing anything very serious about this. We wanted to change that particular part of the world. (Tony Watts, 2014)*

Careers are important. They are central to people's ability to self-actualise and at the core of a socially just society. Career education and guidance is not just a peripheral activity which smooths over a few cracks. It is a social mission and as such can contribute to bringing about a new kind of society and making it work in the interests of all.

My second quote takes us back to where we started. I hope that it speaks to careers practitioners and researchers and gives them confidence that they have the right and the duty to speak up for what they believe in through both their practice and their role as citizens.

> *Well… You say dabble in Politics? I don't know what that is. You say stand up and talk fi my rights? I know that that is. See? And I don't care who the guy is… because my right is my right. Like my life. You know? All I have is my life. That means that I can say I don't want that or I don't want this. (Bob Marley, 1979)*

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