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Synthesis Paper

Theme 1.

Understanding how work opportunities are changing

Synthesizers:

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Understanding How work opportunity is changing

A synthesis of the perspectives of countries and international organisations attending the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy Symposium 2017

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1. Introduction

This paper synthesises and summarises the perspectives articulated by the 26 countries and 6 international organisations (only 5 submitted papers) attending the International Centre for Career Development Symposium in South-Korea in 2017. The paper focuses on theme one of the symposium which addresses *how work opportunity is changing*.

There are a wide range of countries attending the symposium with six continents represented. This symposium promises to be the most geographically diverse since the 1999 symposium in Canada. It features contributions from countries which have never attended before such as Cambodia and Senegal. However, the symposium continues to be dominated by the traditional homes of career development in the English-speaking world and Europe.

The production of country papers and then thematic syntheses are at the core of the methodology used in the international symposia (Watts, Bezanson, and McCarthy, 2014). This synthesis and the other three thematic syntheses (covering *the content and delivery of career development programmes*, *improving career practitioner training and practice* and r*eforming careers services in education and the labour market*) will be made available prior to the 2017 symposium and will be used to underpin discussion during the four-day event and inform the development of country action plans and the 2017 communique.

2. How is work changing?

This synthesis addresses the broad context within which career development public policy is being formed. Critical to this is the consideration of how the labour market is changing and how the different stances taken by governments, non-governmental bodies and individuals can shape these changes. Inevitably there is disagreement about this relating to different political, economic and sociological perspectives. Many of these different perspectives are played out in the approaches taken by the country papers discussed in the rest of the paper.

We felt some context for these discussions could be usefully provided a brief overview of how the research and policy literature suggests work is changing. It is not our intention to provide a comprehensive account of the changing nature of work. For those interested in examining this issue in more depth there are a range of recent sources that likely to be helpful including the work of Donkin (2009), Ford (2015), Méda (2016), Srnicek and Williams (2015), Susskind and Susskind (2015)

and many others. The level of divergence in such accounts of the present and future of the labour market show how difficult it is to describe and predict the future of a system in change.

The labour market and the nature of work is dynamic and continually influenced by social, economic, political, technological and environmental factors. This is not a new phenomenon, the past offers us plenty of examples of radical shifts in the nature of work such as the move from Feudalism to Capitalism or the changes associated with the industrial revolution (Thomsen, 1963). The growth of urbanisation and automation in the early twentieth century provides another example which created a need for rapid reskilling and reorganisation of the working population and stimulated the emergence of the modern career development field (Plant and Kjaergård, 2016). The development of the internet provides a more recent example which has resulted in a wide range of changes including the rise of the technologically enabled sharing (or gig) economy (Preston, 2012; Lehdonvirta, 2015; Zhuo, 2015) with tools such as Airbnb and Uber challenging existing employment structures and business models. Each of these changes in the labour market results in shifts in the: i) social status of the worker; ii) the role of work in the individuals' identity; and iii) the living-standards of the worker (Castle, 1995). Such changes in turn pose questions for the individual and for public policy and consequently demand different responses from the career development field.

The contemporary labour market is being shaped by a range of factors (Gregosz, 2012; ILO, 2016a).

Table 1: Key trends influencing work opportunity

Factors	Key trends
Political	The establishment of a **neoliberal consensus** amongst policy makers which has framed public policy responses 'within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade' Harvey (2005:2). Although there are some political shifts e.g. the Brexit vote in the UK, the election of Trump in the USA or Erdoğan in Turkey which suggest that this consensus may be being challenged or mutating into new forms (Hooley, 2017).
Economic	Shifts in global political and economic power leading to the **emergence of new economic centres**. According to calculations by PwC (2015), by 2050 the five largest economies of the world will be the four BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) plus the USA. The "Next 11" countries, comprising Mexico, South-Korea, Indonesia, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines and Vietnam, will then jointly generate a higher gross domestic product than the USA; and their combined GDP will be twice the size of that of Europe.
Social	**Continued population growth** with the global population anticipated to rise to 7,9 billion by 2050 (UN, 2015). This means that populations in many regions are seeing a **youth bulge**. In Africa, children under age 15 account for 41 percent of the population in 2015 and young persons aged 15 to 24 accounts for a further 19 percent. The percentages are similar in Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia. Due to **rising longevity,** we are also seeing the population aged 60 or above growing at a rate of 3.26 percent per year. Currently, Europe has the greatest percentage of its population aged 60 or over (24 percent), but rapid ageing will occur in other parts of the world as well. (UN, 2015) **Increasing international mobility and migration** especially from the Global South to the north. While there are many reasons for migration the relative availability

Factors	Key trends
	of work is an important factor as are the desires to access career opportunities and the good life (IOM and UNDESA, 2012). The continued growth of **urbanisation** and the shift towards the majority of the world's population living in cities (Davis, 2006).
Technological	The increasing significance of the Internet and **of information technology** on global economic structures, the way politics is conducted (e.g. new transparency and forms of participation, new lines of conflict between online and offline worlds), our working environment (e.g. permanent accessibility, remote working) and our leisure activities. The ongoing development of **automation** and its potential to shift the nature of work and displace human workers (Ford, 2015; Srnicek and Williams, 2015).
Environmental	Increasing recognition of the **interaction between the environment and the economy**. For example, there is concern about the continuing rises in carbon emissions which is associated with both economic growth and climate change (Fankhausera and Sternab, 2016).

These wider trends have had considerable influence on the nature of work although these changes have played out in different way across different contexts and for different actors. Many have experienced a growth in the precarity of their work (Standing, 2016) including the growth of forms of work based around piece work (various kinds of payment by results approaches to employment) and low remuneration self-employment (what the ILO (2016a) calls 'vulnerable employment'). The ILO argues that such vulnerable work accounts for 1.5 billion people (46 percent of total global employment and notes that in both Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, over 70 percent of workers are in vulnerable employment.

Other workers have experienced these changes as a shift in the nature of the employment contract and the psychological contract between the employer and the employee. Voß (1994) and Pongratz and Voß (2003) argue that there has been an individualisation of work accompanied by the shrinking of organisational responsibility and state social protection.

All of the shifts described so far have implications for the way individuals build their careers. We use the term 'career' broadly in this paper to describe the individual's passage through life, learning and work. Many modern career theories have sought to describe career as a process, managed and designed by individuals and argued that responsibility for careers has moved away from organisations and the state and been placed solely with individuals (Hall, 2004, Savickas, 2012). Such theories argue that career was previously defined by hierarchical progression within a single organisation but is increasingly characterised by a lack of sectoral and organisational boundaries. Such ideas draw on Arthur and Rousseu's (1996) concept of the "boundaryless career" and Hall's (1996, 2004) concept of the "protean career" that focuses responsibility for employability and career development on the individual.

This narrative around boundary less and protean careers has not gone uncontested. Inkson *et al.* (2012) and Leach (2015) challenge these theories, arguing that boundaries (organisational, national and geographical) remain of critical importance to people's careers. They also caution against

attempts to individualise careers as a protean undertaking and highlight the way in which careers are embedded in the social and economic structures. Tholen (2012) suggest that this critical position is more in tune with most social research, which highlights the ways in which structures and the exercise of power limit and shape the exercise of 'protean' agency. Many policy makers and commentators also challenge this narrative of boundarylessness through a variety of initiatives which continue to imagine critical labour market roles for the state and the social partners (employers and trade unions) as well as for wider civil society.

As the shape of individuals' careers shifts under influences from the wider political economy the policies and systems which exist to support and manage career development also need to develop and change. Many countries have adopted policies which have: (1) sought labour market flexibility; (2) used a range of active labour market (tools and services) approaches, including career guidance, to support this; and (3) underpinned the system with a supportive welfare system. This is often described as the labour market triangle (de Beer & Schils, 2009) and has its origins in Denmark in the late 19th century (Labour Market Constitution, 1899). Contemporary manifestations of the labour market triangle combine the three elements of the triangle in a variety of different ways. Some countries have sought to pursue highly liberalised approaches to the labour market for example cutting benefits, increasing conditionality and using active labour market interventions as a form of coercion (Bonoli, 2010, Dingeldey, 2007). In other contexts, there has been an attempt to maintain forms of security for workers within the changing organisation of work by strengthening lifelong learning and guidance policies and combining them with policy approaches such as flexicurity (Sultana, 2011). Flexicurity seeks to achieve increased labour market flexibility through a social contract which places responsibilities and protections on the individual, the employer and the state.

3. How do countries and international organisations understand the changing world of work?

In their papers, the countries and international organisations reproduced many of the themes identified by the literature in this area. While not all countries discussed all of the themes and trends it was clear that countries felt that they were going through political, economic, social, technological and environmental changes. Some countries have commissioned or identified research on how these issues are manifesting within their country (e.g. Australia). Countries identified the following issues as contributing to the changes in work organisation.

Table 2: Key trends identified in the country papers

Factors	Key trends
Political	**Austerity**. Following the 2008 economic crash many countries have pursued policies of austerity. Some country papers (e.g. Finland) note that such policies have often exacerbated the problems caused by wider changes in the organisation of work.
Economic	**Industrial change and a lack of clarity about skills and employment needs.** Changes in both the way that industries work and the sectoral balance between industries has made it more difficult to predict skills needs (WEF, 2016). For example, the increasing use of advanced digital technology in the car industry is reshaping all jobs within the industry in ways that are difficult to predict (Gao-

Factors	Key trends
	Hensley-Zielke, 2014). This has been particularly marked in countries which have gone through periods of rapid economic growth (e.g. Cambodia), decline (e.g. Finland) or are experiencing low growth and stagnation (e.g. South Africa). Other countries (e.g. Luxembourg, Norway) are seeking to anticipate changes and adapt accordingly. **Youth transitions into the workforce**. Many countries expressed concerns about the ability of their economies to successfully transition young people from education to work (e.g. Austria, England). Early school leaving exacerbates this problem (e.g. Cambodia) as it results in unskilled young people. However, some countries (e.g. Canada, South Africa, Tunisia) also raised concern about the ability of their economies to integrate high skilled graduates into work. Some countries (e.g. Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa) are experiencing rapid growth in their youth population and consequently face more acute challenges in rapidly integrating these youth 'bulges' into their labour markets. **Unemployment**. Some countries (e.g. Chile, South-Africa, the Philippines, South Africa) are facing high level of unemployment and of youth unemployment. Even in countries where unemployment is not high in global terms there was still concern about growing unemployment (e.g. Austria, Canada). Many countries reported that a range of social factors (e.g. migration and integration of women into the workforce) had contributed to the growth in unemployment. **Vulnerability and precarity**. There was a recognition in many papers that workers were experiencing vulnerable and precarious jobs. This was strongly emphasised in papers from established economies like Canada or Japan but was also echoed in the country papers of emerging economics such as Cambodia, the Philippines or South Africa. In some cases vulnerable employment is connected to labour market liberalisation (e.g. zero hours contracts in the USA or United Kingdom). In other countries (e.g. Cambodia, Nigeria, South Africa) vulnerability often describes the large informal economic that exists outside of policy regulation.
Social	**Migration**. Many countries reported issues with migration. Rapid population growth in some countries (e.g. Cambodia, Nigeria, the Philippines) and declining population in others (e.g. Finland, Denmark, Japan, South-Korea) as well as economic inequality and political instability has resulted in large scale global migration. Some countries also highlighted large scale internal migration (e.g. Nigeria, Cambodia, South-Africa). Several country papers (e.g. Denmark, England, USA) noted that migrants are critical to meeting the demand for low-skilled and semi-skilled labour. While others (e.g. Austria) expressed concerns about the impact of large scale migration on the ability of the labour market to provide decent work for domestic workers (also evidenced by the UKs withdrawal from the European Union). Conversely some countries (e.g. South Africa) highlighted concerns about a 'brain drain' caused by international migration. **Aging populations.** Several countries highlighted the challenges of an aging population (e.g. Japan, South-Korea, many of the European countries). This leads to concerns about the loss of skills from the labour market as these workers retire or become economically inactive.
Technological	**Automation and technological change**. Many countries (e.g. Austria) highlight the way in which new technologies are transforming the world of work. Some (e.g.

Factors	Key trends
	Canada, Denmark, South Africa, USA) also reported that the increasing importance of technology also led to a growing **demand for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills**.
Environmental	**Climate change and sustainable development**. Some countries (e.g. Canada, Japan) raised the importance of climate change and highlighted the ways in which they believed that this would shape the organisation of work within their country through the development of new industries. This was a particularly important issue for countries whose economy is based around oil such as Norway and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Hooley, 2017).

4. What policies have been employed to address the changing world of work?

Countries have sought to address the changing organisation of work in a range of ways. The strategies employed reflect ideological differences about how far the state is understood to have a role to intervene in the labour market and what role it is seen as most usefully playing. Rearranging existing active labour market policy tools (ILO, 2008) is an ongoing process in every country. According the International Labour Organisation active labour market policy measures are: i) different-wage subsidies/ tax and social contribution reliefs; ii) training/ retraining; iii) public works; and iv) supporting self-employment. Such policies are supported by labour market services including: i) placement services; and ii) career guidance (ILO, 1964).

Countries identified the following policy approaches to addressing changes in work organisation.

- **Skills policies and plans.** The OECD (2011) has promoted the value of strategic responses to changing work organisation which combine traditional education, employment and social welfare policies. The European Union is also setting up its own Skills Policy Agenda (EC, 2016) and it has different building blocks for such policies which range from reshaping education via adult and lifelong learning towards digital skills and digital labour market. Some countries have tried to implement policies based on this vision (e.g. South-Korea (OECD, 2015), Norway (OECD, 2014)) while others have developed other kinds of education and labour market strategies and plans (e.g. Cambodia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, South Africa, United Kingdom). These strategies seek to articulate the skills that citizens and industry needs and to develop a range of policy interventions to bring this about. They are sometimes supported by initiatives to improve inter-ministerial co-operation as they typically cross-across the domains of multiple ministries (e.g. Norway).
- **Educational reform.** Many countries have sought to reform their educational systems (e.g. Denmark, England, Finland, Japan, the Philippines, South-Korea, Tunisia). Approaches have included enhancing basic education (e.g. the Philippines) raising the age of educational participation (e.g. Austria), reshaping the outcomes of education to meet current labour market needs (e.g. Denmark, Finland, New Zealand), investing in teacher development (New Zealand), developing adult education (e.g. Austria, Denmark, South-Korea) and establishing or reforming qualification frameworks (e.g. Chile, South Africa). Almost every county paper listed the importance of **developing, promoting and reforming Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems** as a key part of their response to changing work organisation and concerns about skills under-supply. For example, the European Commission has launched a campaign called Vocational Skills Week (EC, 2016b). Changes to the VET system are often accompanies by a desire to **reshape the borders between VET and academic education** for example some countries (e.g. Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, South-Korea and the USA) were seeking to integrate or reorganise the distinction between academic and vocational pathways.

- **Bringing education and employment closer together.** Some countries are introducing policies designed to bring education and employment closer together. In South-Korea the public employment service was established after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, it brings labour market activation activities together with skills development (Korean Polytechnics) (ILO, 2015). Others countries (e.g. Canada, England, New Zealand, the Philippines, Scotland) also reported a range of initiatives designed to bring together education and employment.
- **Promotion of entrepreneurship.** Some countries (e.g. Chile) have developed strategies to promote entrepreneurship.
- **Initiatives to integrate migrants.** Some countries (e.g. Finland) have developed processes to try and make the best use of migrants skills.
- **Basic income and wage subsidies.** Finland is currently trying a policy experiment to explore the viability of moving to a basic income system (De Wispelaere and Stirton, 2004). South Africa has developed an Employment Tax Incentive to subsidise youth wages.

5. How has career development been included as part of the policy response to the changing world of work?

All countries attending felt that career development was a vital component of policies to address changing work organisation. A number of rationales or anticipated outcomes were identified for career development. These included:

- reducing unemployment, underemployment and vulnerable employment by reengaging people in the labour market and supporting career progression;
- bridging supply and demand in the labour market and increasing skills alignment;
- reducing social inequality and improving social inclusion;
- developing new strategies to address changes in industrial and work organisation and supporting re-industrialisation;
- building the resilience of the working population to address changes in the global labour market;
- helping migrants to integrate into the labour market and ensuring that their skills were most effectively utilised; and
- increasing engagement with VET.

This had led to the further development of a number of types of career development policy.

- **National career development strategies** have been created or renewed in a number of countries (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, South-Korea) to co-ordinate and improve career development provision and align it to current policy needs. In some countries, these are developed as stand-alone career development policies, while in other countries they are embedded in wider skills strategies or initiatives around the relationship between education and employment (see section 4). Sometimes these strategies are supported by approaches to cross-ministerial working (e.g. the Philippines) or national fora for guidance (e.g. Ireland). Ensuring co-ordinated strategy and delivery for career development is a perennial problem which has been discussed at previous symposia (McCarthy and Hooley, 2015).
- **Privatisation and deregulation of careers and employment services** has been pursued in some countries (e.g. Finland).
- **Improving access** to career guidance services through the establishment of: one-stop shop approaches to delivery (Luxembourg, Japan); a citizens' entitlement to guidance (Austria); or a national careers service (England).
- **Embedding career development within the education system** (e.g. Denmark, the Philippines, South-Korea) to ensure that all young people learn career management skills. This often includes

initiatives to ensure that young people gain direct access to the world of work through encounters and experiences (e.g. England, the Philippines, Scotland).

- **Targeting services** to those sections of the population who are seen as being most in need (e.g. Chile).
- **Improving the quality of labour market information** to support better career decision making (e.g. Canada, England).
- **Online career development tools** (e.g. Chile, Denmark, Scotland, South-Korea) to broaden access and make use of the cultural importance of the internet.

6. Conclusions

The papers submitted for the symposium demonstrate that there is a strong agreement amongst participating countries and organisations that the organisation of work is changing. As a consequence, there is a need to develop new policies to enable societies and economies to address these changes. Within these policies career development continues to be seen as a key component of such public policy initiatives.

There was also a recognition in many of the papers that career development itself will need to change to effectively respond to the changing organisation of work. Career development needs to move away from a concentration on vocational choice towards a focus on lifelong career management.

At the policy level career guidance systems are usually conceived as part of broader employment/ social inclusion or education policies. However, they are also playing an important role in a new generation of strategies and policies designed to address sustainable development, migration and demographic challenges. In a few countries and in the thinking of some international organisations career *guidance policy* is now a core integrative element that can help to draw these diverse policy areas together into a new generation of holistic skills strategies.

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