



Embedded Liberal Education in a Risk Society: Exploring the Relationship between Education and Work



林曾 著

在风险社会寻求自由教育
与专业教育之间的微妙平衡：
从大学生毕业到大学生就业



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS
武汉大学出版社

G649.711

4

Embedded Liberal Education in a Risk Society: Exploring the Relationship between Education and Work

林曾 著

在风险社会寻求自由教育
与专业教育之间的微妙平衡：
从大学生毕业到大学生就业



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

武汉大学出版社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

在风险社会寻求自由教育与专业教育之间的微妙平衡:从大学生毕业到大学生就业/林曾著. —武汉:武汉大学出版社,2015.4

书名原文:Embedded liberal education in a risk society :exploring the relationship between education and work

ISBN 978-7-307-15350-9

I. 在… II. 林… III. 大学生—职业选择—研究—加拿大
IV. G649.711

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2015)第 039965 号

责任编辑:胡程立

责任校对:汪欣怡

版式设计:马 佳

出版发行:武汉大学出版社 (430072 武昌 珞珈山)

(电子邮件: cbs22@whu.edu.cn 网址: www.wdp.com.cn)

印刷:武汉中远印务有限公司

开本: 720 × 1000 1/16 印张:14.25 字数:261 千字 插页:1

版次: 2015 年 4 月第 1 版 2015 年 4 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN 978-7-307-15350-9 定价:49.00 元

版权所有,不得翻印;凡购我社的图书,如有质量问题,请与当地图书销售部门联系调换。

Acknowledgements

This book is largely based on my Ph. D. dissertation which I spent almost seven years completing while I was on the job. After 25 years' study and working oversea, I returned to Wuhan University from which I graduated. I'd like to first dedicate this book to my parents, Lin Xiantan and Zeng Muying, who are now standing on the other side of the world, anxiously awaiting news of their son's accomplishments. I would also like to dedicate this book to my wife Sheng Kena and daughter Lin Shan who are always with me and witness the hardworking of my book's writing. Without their emotional support, I could not have finished the book, Thanks also to my advisor, Professor Paul Anisef, for the many hours he devoted to his critical reading of the book and the suggestions he made for its improvement. Enormous help was offered by Professor Clifford Jansen and Lawrence Lam, who provided valuable instructions and emotional support. As well, I would like to extend many thanks to Professors Michael Skolnik, Harry Smaller and Paul Axelrod, the former Dean of the College of Education at York University. Special thanks go to Professor Robert Sweet for his instructions, understanding and encouragement. His unconditional support was one of the most important sources of inspiration in the completion of this work. I would like to thank Anthea Kyle, who kindly edited and proofread the book. Finally, I would like to thank my graduate assistant Hao Juan, who helped me to finalize the book.

Abstract

University graduates in Canada have been significantly stratified by fields of study (FOS) in terms of income, unemployment rates, work prospects and job satisfaction. Debates over the differential outcomes afforded by a university education focus on the tension between cultural and instrumental values, or the tension between liberal and vocational education. This book, under an assumption that liberal education and vocational education are compatible, argues that an embedded liberal education, which reconciles liberal and vocational education, will more effectively prepare Canadian university graduate for the new century.

To argue for the thesis, FOS choice is considered an important expression of risk-taking in the university context. Managing risk involves a variety of initiatives: engaging in part-time or full-time study, making a decision to minimise student debt load, or gaining relevant work experience through a co-op education program. Such risk management strategies are designed to alter returns to the investment in education that four (or more) years of university represent. The study focuses on theoretical examination and potential policy implications in light of students choosing liberal or vocational fields. The theory involves the notion of structure and agency and has a particular derivative “structured individualism”. The policy aspect of the thesis involves the debate between liberal and vocational education which reflects on the debate about curricular utility or, more simply, the link between education and work. Empirically, the book is actually dealing with two situations. The first situation is the school-to-school transition

(university entry). The antecedent coping strategies, whose purpose is to optimise the FOS choice, are first explored. Contemporaneous coping strategies that students use aim to enhance the value of their FOS choice during their four-year programs are studied empirically. The second situation is the school-to-work transition two years after graduation. Risk management associated with the FOS choice is examined through returns from labour market and the graduates' personal satisfaction. Finally, the coping strategies subsequent to graduation, mainly concerned with continuing education as a means to minimise employment risk, are explored.

Through empirical analyses, I have observed that the existing university curricula, to a large extent, separate life skills from skills for the world of work. As a consequence of this separation, the labour market outcomes (LMO) for liberal graduates are less promising than for vocational graduates. Inversely, educational outcomes for vocational graduates are less positive than for liberal graduates. The strengths and weaknesses of both liberal and vocational education invite us to appeal for an embedded liberal education to better prepare university graduates for the 21st century.

This research is based on Canadian national university graduate survey, but it has much wide implications. China in the past decades entered the stage of mass higher education. Many issues discussed in this book, such as multiple transitions from school to work, unemployment, underemployment and students' debt will become important social and educational problems. The assumption is that what has happened in Canada, will soon or late happen in China. Hope this book can provide Canadian experience to, at least partially, help solve China's problems in the near future.

Table of Contents

Chapter One	Introduction	1
1.1	Objectives of the Book	1
1.2	The University and the New Economy	7
1.3	A “Mass Education” Mandate	8
1.4	The Liberal Education Debate	10
1.5	The Individual’s Response	12
1.6	The FOS-Outcomes Model	15
1.7	Significance and Implications of the Study	17
1.7.1	<i>Significance</i>	17
1.7.2	<i>Implications</i>	17
1.8	Delimitation of the Study	18
1.9	Organisation of the Book	19
Chapter Two	Field of Study in a Risk Society	21
2.1	Theory of Risk Society	22
2.1.1	<i>Core Concepts of the Theory of Risk Society</i>	22
2.1.2	<i>Characteristics of the Risk</i>	24
2.1.3	<i>Why Do We Feel More Risky?</i>	25
2.1.4	<i>Individualization</i>	26
2.1.4a	Logic of Individualization	27
2.1.4b	Role Played by Education in the Process of Individualization	28
2.1.4c	Implication of Individualization	30

2.1.4d	Beyond Linear Progress	31
2.2	The Changing Workplace and Individual Response	33
2.2.1	<i>The Changing Workplace</i>	34
2.2.1a	Changing Occupational Structure	34
2.2.1b	Changing Nature of the Workplace	35
2.2.1c	Declining Work Hours	36
2.2.1d	Non-standard Employment	37
2.2.2	<i>Risks and Opportunities</i>	38
2.2.2a	Risks	38
2.2.2b	Opportunities	44
2.2.3	<i>Individual Response to the New Economy</i>	47
2.2.3a	Response Based on Social Structural Positions	48
2.2.3b	Response Based on Personal Agency	48
2.2.4	<i>FOS Choice and Policy Implications</i>	50
2.3	The Expansion of Mass Education	51
2.3.1	<i>Mass Education and Modernization</i>	52
2.3.2	<i>Three Waves of Expansion of Mass Public Education</i>	54
2.3.3	<i>Meaning of Mass University Education</i>	57

Chapter Three Historical Perspectives on Liberal and

	Vocational Education	60
3.1	Plato's Liberal Education	61
3.1.1	<i>Greek Society and its Elite Education</i>	61
3.1.2	<i>Idealist Philosophy</i>	63
3.1.3	<i>From Philosophy to Education</i>	65
3.2	The Origin of Modern Liberal Education	69
3.2.1	<i>The Enlightenment and Modern Liberal Education</i>	69
3.2.2	<i>Romantic Movement and Conservative Tradition</i>	71
3.3	Dewey's Progressive Education	72
3.3.1	<i>Framework and Sources</i>	73

3.3.2	<i>Criticism</i>	74
3.4	Contemporary Debates over Liberal Education	75
Chapter Four	Data Description and Research Methods	80
4.1	Data Source	80
4.1.1	<i>National Graduate Survey (NGS)</i>	80
4.1.2	<i>Sample Selection and Data Limitations</i>	81
4.1.2.a	Sample selection	81
4.1.2.b	Data Limitations	82
4.2	Objectives, Research Questions and Research Methods	83
4.2.1	<i>Objectives</i>	83
4.2.2	<i>Research Questions and Research Methods</i>	83
4.3	Case Selection and FOS Classification	88
4.3.1	<i>Case Selection</i>	88
4.3.2	<i>Classification of FOS</i>	89
4.4	Description of Variables	90
4.4.1	<i>Social Structure Variables</i>	90
4.4.2	<i>Agency Variables</i>	92
4.4.3	<i>Outcome Variables</i>	94
4.4.4	<i>Relevance of Education and Work</i>	95
Chapter Five	Risk Management and Educational Choice	98
5.1	FOS Choice and LMO	98
5.2	Social Structure, Personal Agency and FOS Choice	101
5.2.1	<i>Logistic Regression</i>	101
5.2.2	<i>Social Structural Position and Educational Choice</i>	105
5.2.3	<i>Pathways of Schooling and Educational Choice</i>	107
5.3	Educational Choice and Strategies of Managing Risks	109
5.3.1	<i>Educational Choice and Coping Strategies</i>	110
5.3.2	<i>Coping Strategies and LMO</i>	112
5.3.2.a	Second Major	114

5.3.2.b	Co-op Programs	118
5.3.2.c	Part Time Study	121
5.3.2.d	Education Upgrading and Recycling	124
5.3.3	<i>Structure and LMO</i>	131
5.3.3.a	Gender	131
5.3.3.b	Age	134
5.3.3.c	Ethnicity	137
5.3.3.d	Mother's Education	139
5.3.3.e	Father's Education	142
5.3.3.f	Region of Origin	145
5.3.3.g	Summary	148
5.4	Relevance of Education and Work	149
5.4.1	<i>Underemployment</i>	149
5.4.2	<i>Job-Education Linkage and LMO</i>	152
5.4.3	<i>Educational Choice and Educational Outcomes</i>	162
5.4.4	<i>Employment Skills</i>	164
5.5	Summary	166
Chapter Six	Discussion and Conclusion	168
6.1	Conclusion	168
6.1.1	<i>From FOS to LMO</i>	168
6.1.2	<i>Structure, Agency and the Choice of FOS</i>	169
6.1.3	<i>Structure, Agency and LMO</i>	171
6.1.4	<i>The FOS choice and Educational Return</i>	175
6.2	Implications	178
6.3	Embedded Liberal Education in a Risk Society	178
6.3.1	<i>What is an embedded liberal education?</i>	178
6.3.2	<i>Why is the liberal education embedded?</i>	179
6.3.3	<i>How is an embedded liberal education supported?</i>	182
6.4	Future Needed Research	187

Appendix	Coding Scheme of Logistic Regressions	189
References		197

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Objectives of the Book

University education plays a key role in the life course of many individuals in advanced societies. The competencies and associated credentials received from a post-secondary education confer a distinct advantage in the labour market and perhaps also in establishing a graduate as a community member and citizen (Little & Lapierre, 1996). The university experience itself is characterised by a series of transitions—from school entry, to enrolment in a particular field of study (FOS), then to graduation into the world of work.

Relationships between university education and work are complex and difficult to predict, especially in the emerging “post-industrial” economy where human resources, technology and work-organisation forms change rapidly and combine in a multitude of novel ways. There nevertheless exists a growing literature on the period immediately following university during which graduates strive to establish themselves in a job (Don & Lapierre, 1996; Anise et al. , 1999). These analyses of the school-to-work transition process demonstrate its increasingly uncertain nature. The last two decades have witnessed a declining youth (and young adult) labour market and a corresponding disinclination by government and the private sector to involve themselves in stabilising linkages between educational institutions and the labour market (Allen, 1998; Betcherman & Lowe, 1997). As these transitions between

education and work have become less regulated, individuals have assumed more responsibilities in accumulating the skills and credentials required. Describing the movement of youth from school to labour market, Heinz (1999) suggests they now must organise such “status passages” with greater attention to the utilisation of educational resources and the acquisition of relevant qualifications.

A strong connection between education and work is aided by various personal initiatives, among which, the choice of FOS is especially important, as graduates in Canada are clearly stratified by FOS in terms of income, employment stability and continuity and job satisfaction (Minister of Human Resources Development Canada, 1996). Differential labour market outcomes (LMO), then, suggest that FOS choice has a significant impact on one’s future economic prospects and general wellbeing. The results of choosing well highlight the importance of this relationship and the gravity of the risks associated with FOS decisions.

Recent work in Canada with provincial data suggests that while agency is important in school-to-work transitions, so are social structure factors. Social economic status (SES), gender and ethnicity continue to exert a significant influence, so do more immediate situational factors such as region and ethnicity (Anisef et al., 1999; Allen, 1999; Krahn & Lowe, 1999). However, the principal limitations of the existing research on FOS choice and its consequences are:

1. Comparisons are made between undifferentiated “general” and “specific” skill sets;
2. Comparisons are made between graduates of colleges and universities;
3. Returns to investment in education or training are limited to wage differentials;
4. Analyses are limited to econometric predictions;
5. Research is typically under-theorised—most studies invoke well-established economic principles;
6. Analyses typically have employed provincial and cross-sectional data.

With all these limitations, there is a need to examine further the relative influence of structure and agency in post-secondary transitions and to expand the scope of existing analyses beyond provincial contexts and economic returns.

While FOS choice is an important expression of risk in the post-secondary context, the actual management of risk best represents the needed autonomous or agentic behaviour required of post-secondary students. Managing risk may involve a variety of initiatives from engaging in part-time or full time study, making a decision to minimise student debt load, or gaining relevant work experience through a co-op education program. Such risk management strategies are designed to alter returns to the investment in education that four (or more) years of university represent. The school-to-work transition or, more specifically, the linkage between FOS choice and desired LMO, defines the nature of the risk involved. However, attempts to manage risk associated with FOS choice both anticipate that choice and extend beyond the immediate school-to-work transition process. It is necessary to distinguish between coping strategies that facilitate entry into a particular FOS and those specifically designed to enhance the link between FOS choice and LMO. While the former strategies are clearly antecedent to enrolment and FOS choice, the latter strategies are contemporaneous with study in the chosen field and, in some cases, subsequent to study and graduation. Risk management is thus seen to comprise three stages in the progression to employment, involving planning and decision-making behaviours that are antecedent, contemporaneous and subsequent to FOS choice.

These initiatives demonstrate the individual's ability to exercise a measure of personal agency and are consistent with the recent emphasis on individualization—traceable to the theoretical work of Beck (1992), whose notion of the risk society has been applied to the analysis of uncertain and fragmented life course transitions experienced by young people. Individualization is part of the dissolution of traditional parameters of industrial society including class, culture and

consciousness, gender and family roles. In Beck's (1992, p. 135) view, individuals must conceive of themselves as the centre of action, as the "planning office" with respect to their own biography.

In few situations, however, are individual actions (and their consequences) wholly autonomous undertakings. Most are constrained by social positions, personal histories, and the individual's immediate situation. The exercise of personal agency and the constraining influence of social structure underlie recent discussions in the literature on the life course in general and on school-work transitions in particular. Beck (1992) and Giddens (1994) raise the issue of emerging individualism in the risk society and this is further developed by Rudd (1997), Furlong and Cartmel (1997), and others who suggest that:

In order to get a better understanding of the way in which young people's lives are shaped, it is necessary to explore the relationship between structural and individual factors in more detail. In particular, we need to assess the extent to which opportunity structures contribute to experiences as well as the extent to which individuals assess risk and negotiate opportunities on a subjective level. (Evans & Furlong, 1996, p. 2)

Rudd and Evans (1998) further use the term "structured individualization" (SI) to describe such transitions as outcomes of both individual choice and activity and structural influences. In Rudd and Evans' SI model, structure continues to demonstrate its influence with traditional meanings (e. g., social class, gender, ethnicity and region), but reserves an important role to be played by agency. As a consequence, structure interacts with agency in which structure constrains the effects of agency on the one hand, and the constraints imposed by structure are at an increasing speed overcome by agency on the other hand, especially at the life stage of university learning.

The derivative notion of SI and the difficulties encountered in

dealing with this construct are discussed by Lowe and Krahn (1995) who indicate that agency and structure are embedded in each other. Therefore, the relationship between structure and agency (individualism) is best understood by encapsulating structure-agency dynamics in a particular place and time. Anisef et al. (1999) assert that structure and agency have a “combined” influence on decisions and actions in life course. To extend the context of the structure agency configuration, we set the time in the 1992 National Graduate Survey (NGS) of 1990 graduates. The place is the university^①, where school-to-work transitions mark one of the more important of these life course events; and, more specifically, serve to map the terrain over which issues of agency and structure combine in determining FOS choice and its consequences.

Table 1.1 maps the contention of the study, which focuses on theoretical

Table 1.1 **Diagram of the Literature Review
and the Empirical Analysis**

Theoretical Literature	Transition Literature	Policy Literature	
Structured Individualisation	Life Course	FOS-LMO Link	
Situation 1	School-to-school transition (university entry)	Coping strategy 1 (Antecedent) Purpose; optimise choice (anticipate risk)	Choice; FOS (liberal-vocational)
Time 1	Roughly four years before 1990 graduation	Coping strategy 2 (Contemporaneous) Purpose; enhance value of choice (reduce risk)	

① This study consists of one cohort and it is difficult to use SI in a manner that clearly separates the effects of structure and agency, since time and place are fixed.

Continue

Theoretical Literature	Transition Literature	Policy Literature
Situation 2	School-to-work transition	Returns: FOS (liberal-vocational)-LMO Coping strategy 3 (Subsequent)
Time 2	Two years after graduation	Purpose: endure lifelong learning (reduce risk)

examination and policy implication. The theory involves the notion of structure and agency and has a particular derivative “structured individualism” (theoretical literature). The policy aspect of the thesis involves the debate between liberal and vocational education (policy literature) which further reflects the debate around curricular utility or, more simply, the link between education and work. In the university context, we see this expressed in the literature on FOS choice and its consequences in the labour market (transition literature). Empirically, we are actually dealing with two situations. The first situation is the school-to-school transition (university entry). We explore antecedent coping strategies, whose purpose is to optimise choice, in relation to FOS choice. After university entry, the contemporaneous coping strategies aim to enhance the value of their FOS choice during a four-year study. The second situation is the school-to-work transition two years after graduation. The management of risk associated with the FOS choice is examined through returns from labour market and the graduates’ personal satisfaction. Finally, the coping strategies subsequent to graduation are explored, and are mainly concerned with continuing education as a means to minimise employment risk.

To summarise, the mapping starts with the theoretical issue of individualism where the perspective of SI is adopted. We situate this first in the school-to-school transition, which is defined as university entry with FOS choice, and second in the school-to-work transition, which is