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Employment Expectations: Post-secondary education and next steps for students in Harstad Norway and Letterkenny Ireland

presented at ADAPT conference:

**THE FUTURE OF WORK: A Matter of Sustainability**

Nov 11-12, 2016 in Bergamo, Italy

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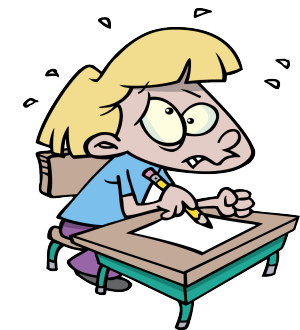
# Agenda

- Purpose/Interest
- Background Information
- Methodological Highlights
- Findings
- Wrap-up



# Purpose/Interest

- Purpose:
  - to explore the expectations and preferences that rural post-secondary education (PSE) students have in terms of future employment plans
  - Looking at relative importance of location vs. other factors for young, 'rural' adults.
  - Looking at the proximity of one's post-secondary education (PSE) institution relative to one's 'hometown'.



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# Background Information (1 of 2): Labour market issues

- Current and future of work: see Betcherman and Lowe (1997)!
  - Polarization of working conditions. Deterioration, real and/or perceived, for many, but opportunities are good for those with labour market power (i.e. those highly skilled or in booming industries and jurisdictions)
- Jobs in rural areas are more likely to be non-standard and lower quality (i.e. seasonal, temporary, on-call, part-time, and lower paid, less upward mobility, etc.)
- Less diverse economies in rural areas, on average. Sometimes struggling to adapt from primary industries to new technologies & service-based economies.
- Rural regions tend to consist more of older workers (since rural populations are shrinking and aging, and young people are more likely to out-migrate)



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# Background Information (2 of 2): Letterkenny

## Ireland & Harstad Norway

- Ireland's 'Celtic Tiger' ended with a thud in 2008, but boom did not fully reach County Donegal and the Northwest corner of the Island of Ireland. The area continues to suffer from relatively high unemployment low labour force participation, and out-migration of young people.
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) is in Letterkenny, County Donegal. Letterkenny is a small city of about 20,000 people, hours from metro centers. Surveys were also collected from the smaller LYIT campus in the much smaller, more remote community of Killybegs.
- Due to prudent development of its energy discoveries, Norway has transformed itself into an economic powerhouse on a per capita basis. Norway has been able to achieve a high level of labour force participation, generous social services, and yet unemployment at or below 5% for the past two decades
- Harstad, with a population of about 20,000, is located in Troms, which is the second most northerly county within Norway. Harstad is north of the Arctic Circle, and is the largest community, by road or ferry, for at least two hours of travel.



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# Methodological Highlights

- Through investigation, these two communities were chosen to be studied because of their size, relative level of rurality and remoteness, and presence of a PSE institution.
- 330 surveys collected from LYIT students in Letterkenny and Killybegs in January 2013.
- 123 surveys collected from HUC students in Harstad in April 2015.
- Paper surveys distributed in class, and then folded and collected to protect anonymity.
- At this point, simply using descriptive statistics to try to understand the general mood among these students.



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## Findings (1): Some Observations...

- 7% of the students surveyed at LYIT were international (i.e. having a hometown outside of the country), compared to 15% of those surveyed at HUC.
  - These proportions are important, because a sizable minority of international students (i.e. about 30%) are now expecting and preferring to stay and work in their host country, although not necessarily in or around Donegal or Troms in particular. Thus, from a rural community perspective, the more international students that can be attracted to attend, the more of this source of skilled workers (and citizens) can be retained.
  - That said, the expectations and preferences of domestic students can be somewhat different. Roughly speaking, about two thirds of local students expect to work locally (i.e. in or around Donegal or Troms) after completing their post-secondary education, but a sizable minority expect and/or prefer to out-migrate. On the other hand, that is offset by the other cohort of domestic students (with a 'non-local' hometown) who are now expecting to stay and work in the vicinity around LYIT or HUC.
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# Findings (2): Some Observations...

Work and Life Preferences after completing school: LYIT students

		All
		Under 30
<b>Importance of:</b>	<b>Among:</b>	
<b>A. Being in a big city</b>		
	Hometown not in Ireland:	1.17
	Hometown within Cty Donegal	0.75
	Hometown in adjacent county	0.91
	Hometown elsewhere in Ireland	1.10
<b>B. Chances for advancement</b>		
	Hometown not in Ireland:	2.46
	Hometown within Cty Donegal	2.36
	Hometown in adjacent county	2.40
	Hometown elsewhere in Ireland	2.41
<b>C. Salary</b>		
	Hometown not in Ireland:	2.08
	Hometown within Cty Donegal	2.38
	Hometown in adjacent county	2.30
	Hometown elsewhere in Ireland	2.38
<b>D. Being close to friends &amp; family</b>		
	Hometown not in Ireland:	1.63
	Hometown within Cty Donegal	2.15
	Hometown in adjacent county	2.09
	Hometown elsewhere in Ireland	1.69

Note: All scores are means based on: Unimportant=0, somewhat important=1, Important=2, Very important=3.



# Findings (3): Some Observations...

Work and Life Preferences after completing school: HUC students

		All
		Under 30
<b>Importance of:</b>	<b>Among:</b>	
<b>A. Being in a big city</b>		
	Hometown not in Norway:	1.00
	Hometown within Troms	0.79
	Hometown adjacent (i.e. in Nordland)	0.64
	Hometown elsewhere in Norway	0.67
<b>B. Chances for advancement</b>		
	Hometown not in Norway:	2.50
	Hometown within Troms	2.05
	Hometown adjacent (i.e. in Nordland)	2.40
	Hometown elsewhere in Norway	2.33
<b>C. Salary</b>		
	Hometown not in Norway:	2.07
	Hometown within Troms	1.95
	Hometown adjacent (i.e. in Nordland)	2.00
	Hometown elsewhere in Norway	1.67
<b>D. Being close to friends &amp; family</b>		
	Hometown not in Norway:	2.00
	Hometown within Troms	2.13
	Hometown adjacent (i.e. in Nordland)	2.29
	Hometown elsewhere in Norway	2.13

Note: All scores are means based on: Unimportant=0, somewhat important=1, Important=2, Very important=3.

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## Findings (4): Some Observations...

- A summary of the Irish/LYIT table:
  - Being in a big city is relatively unimportant to those not from Ireland, but still higher than among those with an Irish hometown. This is in line with expectations, since LYIT is not located in a big city, and presumably survey respondents are attending by their own choice.
  - In contrast, chances for advancement is very important to most LYIT students, and is even slightly more important for international students.
  - Strangely, salary is considered to be important to international students at LYIT, but noticeably less so than among those Irish-born. Since wages and salaries in Northwest Ireland are considered to be relatively low, perhaps local students are concerned about being offered a low compensation package (in the area) even after completing third level education. If the international students have a higher level of mobility, then they might simply subconsciously expect to search for jobs that meet their financial expectations.
  - Finally, being close to friends and family, after completing school, is somewhat unimportant to international students at LYIT, as well as among Irish students not from Donegal or an adjacent county. That makes sense given that these two groups travelled furthest to attend LYIT. Conversely, those from County Donegal place higher importance on being close to friends and family.
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## Findings (5): Some Observations...

- A summary of the Norwegian/HUC table:
  - Being in a big city was, again, unimportant to HUC students, regardless of hometown location.
  - HUC students place relatively high importance on having chances for advancement, but that importance is much lower, on average, among those with a hometown within Troms than all other subgroups. That potentially signals a higher desire to work locally after completing school, regardless of job quality.
  - International students at HUC place an equivalent importance on salary as did the international students at LYIT, on average. The Norwegian students at HUC, however, placed less importance on salary than the international students, and much less importance than the Irish students had at LYIT. Presumably, this is due to the lower income inequality within Norway.
  - Finally, as was the case among LYIT students, international students at HUC place less importance on being close to friends and family than Norwegian students at HUC. However, the HUC students placed higher importance on being close to friends and family than the LYIT students had. One possible explanation is that since income inequality is relatively low in Norway, as is unemployment generally, then Norwegian students face less economic uncertainty, and can, instead, place higher emphasis on other aspects of life when considering work after completing school.
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## Wrap-up

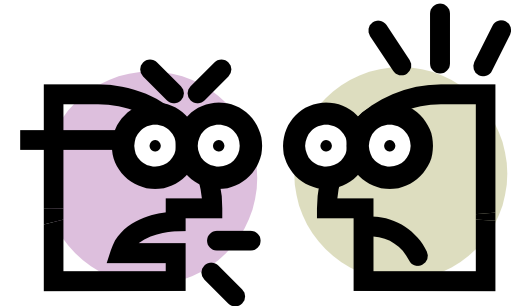
- Working conditions are increasingly polarized, with a small number of privileged workers receiving high rewards and security, while the bulk of others have, or perceiving that they have, lower access to good quality employment.
- Acquiring education is among the most important factors to acquire more power, and hence privilege, in the labour market, and so it is interesting to look at the opinions of post-secondary education students.
- This study suggests that, for a rural region with a PSE institution, international students are a potential source of labour market talent.
- If a PSE institution can entice local young people to stay and learn, they are fairly likely to try to stay and live and work in the region afterwards. Other domestic students might just be studying in the region as a short-term adventure.
- Money isn't everything! These rural PSE students prioritize advancement opportunities more than salary or a big city lifestyle, on average.



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Questions?  
Comments?  
Complaints!?!  
Suggestions?

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