AUTHOR(S):

TITLE:

YEAR:

Publisher citation:

OpenAIR citation:

Corporate global nomadism: the role of the transnational professional as consumer of popular management discourses

Gabriela Whitehead
(Department of Communication, Marketing and Media,) Robert Gordon University, UK

Robert Halsall
(Department of Communication, Marketing and Media,) Robert Gordon University, UK

Abstract
An increasing body of research has paid particular attention to the role of different organizational actors in the consumption of popular management ideas, including their local diffusion, adaptation and enactment. However, with a few exceptions, these studies mostly focus on the organizational setting, thus neglecting the consumption of this kind of discourses in other environments. Drawing on narrative analysis, this study follows this line of research by examining the ways in which a category of transnational professionals perceive and represent the discourse of corporate 'global nomadism' as part of their everyday life. This paper contributes to management education by providing a critical approach to the ambiguous experiences involved in the 'nomadic' lifestyle that generally conflict with the idealised and glamourous views of corporate global mobility. In this way, a more rounded, critical and ultimately ethical type of management education for transnational mobility can be produced than currently is the case.

Introduction

This paper examines the extent to which a particular class of transnational professionals has internalised the contemporary discourse of corporate 'global nomadism', understood in terms of the individual's continuous international mobility in the pursuit of work opportunities. Global nomadism is proposed here as an example of the kind of popular managerial discourses that are emerging as a way to support organizational interests and which embody prescriptions of identity, flexibility and mobility associated with the ideology of neoliberal capitalist globalization (Boltanski

and Chiapello, 2007; Fairclough, 2004, 2006; Harvey, 2005). This paper offers a critical analysis of the ambiguous experiences involved in the life of the highly mobile professional, in relation to the popular iconic image of the figure of the corporate expatriate as someone who leads a glamorous and problem-free lifestyle (Fechter, 2007). The interest here is to contribute to the existing literature on management knowledge as part of Business School education and organizational learning; by offering a critical approach to popular management discourses, this paper hopes to help the production of a more rounded, critical and ultimately ethical type of management education for transnational mobility than currently is the case.

Management discourses have been widely researched from different theoretical approaches during the past decades (see e.g. Sturdy 2004 for a critical review). Some studies have focused, for instance, on how and why certain management ideas and the authors—e.g. management gurus, consultants and academics—who produce and promote them gain widespread popularity (Engwall and Kipping, 2004; Furusten, 1999; Huczynski, 1993; Jackson, 2001; Ten Bos and Heusinkveld, 2007). Others have explored the life-cycle or evolution of management discourses or 'fashions' between their production and adoption/rejection across different organizational settings (Abrahamson 1996; Clark, 2004; Gibson and Tesone, 2001; Spell, 1999; Van Veen, Bezemer and Karsten, 2011).

An increasing body of research has paid particular attention to the role of organizational actors in the 'co-consumption' of popular management ideas in terms of their local diffusion, adaptation and enactment (Corbett-Etchevers and Mounoud, 2011; Heusinkveld, Sturdy and Werr, 2011; Lervik and Lunnan, 2004). Here, some

authors have explored how involvement in the diffusion process influences the individual's subjectivity. For example, Wright and Kitay (2004: 271) found that managers and consultants identify with the ideological aspects of the management concepts and models they promote, and use them as moral resources to justify their activities at work: 'in the process of seeking to convince others of the benefits of new ideas and practices, consultants also convince themselves'. Whittle (2008: 530) challenges this view by arguing that involvement in the diffusion process of popular management ideas is a sort of performance by consultants seeking to 'convert' others, but it does not necessarily result in their own 'conversion'.

These findings are consistent with the view that popular management discourses provide individuals with a rational and socially accepted source of reference for their identity work, hence serving to legitimise and justify some of their attitudes and actions in their role within the organizational setting (Clark and Salaman, 1998; Ten Bos, 2000; Wilhelm and Bort, 2013). However, the 'translation' of management theory to actual workplace practices (Gabriel, 2002) is not a direct top-down process of diffusion and implementation, as it may encounter ambiguities, transformations and resistance from the employees (McCabe, 2011; Knights and McCabe, 1998; Sturdy and Fleming, 2003; Sturdy, 2004). These studies mostly focus on the organizational context, thus neglecting the process of consumption in other kind of settings, such as for instance guru seminars (Groß, Heusinkveld and Clark, 2015) and Business Schools (Sturdy and Gabriel, 2000; Sturdy et al., 2006). In addition, 'talking about work' (Sturdy and Fleming, 2003) outside the workplace constitutes both a form of dissemination of management discourses and a form of resistance to the meaning of such discourses from the part of individuals: 'Words then, do not just facilitate nor wholly constitute the

diffusion of management knowledge, but are techniques as well' (Sturdy and Fleming, 2003: 770).

This paper follows this line of research by focusing in the consumption of the discourse of corporate global nomadism by transnational professionals outside the organizational setting, namely, as part of their narrative during the research interviews and discussions in online social networks. By focusing on narratives constructed outside the workplace, this paper offers a critical insight of how the discourse of global mobility is 'talked about' (Sturdy and Fleming, 2003) as part of the everyday life of the 'nomadic' professional. This is identified in the ways in which the narrator represents and justifies his/her own continuous mobility to him/herself and to others (i.e. to the interviewer during the interview; to other participants in the online forums).

This paper contributes to the existing body of literature in at least three ways. First, it critically analyses the extent to which the discourse of corporate global nomadism serves as a reference structure on which transnational professionals draw upon to construct their 'nomadic' identity (Clark and Salaman, 1998; Ten Bos, 2000; Wilhelm and Bort, 2013). Second, it contributes to the understanding of the potential of popular management discourses in disseminating hegemonic assumptions associated with the ideology of neoliberalism (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001; Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002). Third, considering the individual's continuous international mobility in the pursuit of work opportunities as a form of enactment of the discourse of corporate global nomadism, it provides further insights into the relationship between management theory and practice, between corporate discourses and individual action (Gabriel, 2002; Sturdy and Fleming, 2003).

4

The contemporary discourse of global nomadism

The term nomad has become 'fashionable' as it is often used to encapsulate all forms of contemporary mobility (Augé, 2012; Bauman, 2000). For instance, nomadism is popularly employed as a metaphor for ideas of flux, displacement and boundary crossing which generally refer to the individual's detachment from geographical, emotional or intellectual fixity (Cresswell, 1997; Stengers, 1997). Moreover, contemporary representations of nomadism are often used to oppose the discourse of sedentariness, understood in terms of spatial stability and/or subjective attachment to 'existential territories' (Stengers, 1997), whether geographical, professional or cultural, which is becoming the object of contempt under the nomadic values of modern society (Bauman, 2000; Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Harvey 2005). As a result, nomadic mobility is disassociated from the negative and marginal connotations historically attributed to traditional nomadic communities, and tied to positive and elitist views of mobility to describe the regular patterns of movement of professionals and middle classes (Cresswell, 1997; Noyes, 2004; Stengers, 1997).

For example, some studies (D'Andrea, 2006; Meerwarth, 2008; Meyer, Kaplan and Charum, 2001) refer to certain characteristics traditionally associated with ancient nomadic communities, such as repetitive geographical displacement and relationships with place, to describe the forms of mobility of the modern professional. Meyer, Kaplan and Charum (2001: 310), for instance, speak of the 'nomadic behaviours' of a certain group of skilled professionals on the basis that the notion exemplifies a kind of mobility

that includes 'acculturation, learning, iterative process and collective bonds'. Similarly, Meerwarth (2008: 113) uses the term 'nomadic worker' to refer to those individuals who in order to accomplish work are constantly 'traveling down similar paths and grounding themselves in familiar places for periods of time'. From a different perspective, D'Andrea (2006) draws upon ancient nomadic communities to put forward the theory of 'neo-nomadism' as the 'ideal-type of post-identitarian mobility'; a 'fluidic and metamorphic' subjectivity that emerges under conditions of globalization. According to D'Andrea (2006: 97), the emerging form of identity represents a convergence of economic strategies and lifestyles 'that structures the social life of people claiming to embrace the global as a new home and reference'.

Representations of the discourse of global nomadism in guru texts

The corporate discourses associated with global nomadism are often framed by idealised and oversimplified views of globalization in ways in which may result in stimulation or inspiration for individuals; for instance, by drawing upon dominant ideals, such as individual freedom, flexibility and entrepreneurial virtues, to encompass the transformations occurring in the economic markets (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001; Harvey, 2006). These kinds of discourses are identified in some of the ideas promoted in guru texts by popular writers who present or re-package (Gabriel, 2002: 136) existing theories and established assumptions to meet a given purpose or support a particular perspective, while seeking to legitimise their claims and potentially gain normative acceptance (Benders and Van Veen, 2001; Clark, 2004; McCabe, 2011; see also Fairclough, 2001).

Guru texts are of importance because their wide availability means that potentially a vast number of individuals have access to the ideas developed by a few writers (Furusten, 1999); although this phenomenon does not equate to a common interpretation or an influence on people's behaviour, it nevertheless contributes to the popularity of the writers and the ideas they advocate (Huczynski, 1993). For example, Roper, Ganesh and Inkson (2010) examine the ways in which the ideology of neoliberalism, which emphasises the assumption that individuals—rather than societal or organizational systems—are responsible for their own economic and career outcome, permeates academic knowledge through the 'boundaryless careers' discourse. This support, whether conscious or subconscious, is manifested by a general lack of critical recognition of the power relations and economic interests embedded in the discourse (Roper, Ganesh and Inkson, 2010).

The boundaryless metaphor is also found at the centre of some of the popular works by Kenichi Ohmae. The utopia of a borderless world as popularized by Ohmae (1990, 2005) supports the aura with which the mobile elite is imbued, by associating it with ideas of social promotion and professional advancement in comparison to the sedentary individual (Augé, 2012; Bauman, 2000; Harvey, 2006). In this environment, the personal ability to become 'lifestyle managers' (Ohmae, 2005: 239) in an attempt to pursue global mobility is seen as a prerequisite for success and progression; whereas 'to be local' means to be left in the margins of progress and economic growth (Augé, 2012). To some extent, the metaphor of the borderless world has become an assumption used by other management gurus, consultants and popular globalization writers to depict a view of the globalized world as the indisputable and inevitable reality

of modern society (Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002; Fairclough and Thomas, 2004). For instance, Bloch and Whiteley (2011) draw upon Ohmae's work to validate their prescriptions for individuals to become 'global workers' and to adopt 'borderless thinking'.

The study

The study followed a qualitative approach to collect a representative sample of personal narratives from 48 participants through in-depth interviews (16) and online discussion forums (32), between 2010 and 2011. These methods are presented in the subsections below. To find potential participants, the study was advertised in two online social networks: *LinkedIn*[1] and *InterNations*[2]. These websites were selected on the basis of their particular area of interest, namely, the professional context and global mobility. The criteria for the selection of participants were defined to encompass the dimension of continuous or 'nomadic' transnational mobility; on this basis, at the time of the data collection the individuals (a) had relocated internationally more than once, (b) had secured work in the host country before arrival, and (c) intended to continue to relocate internationally. Moreover, the transnational relocations were initiated by the individual rather than imposed by external circumstances.

The intention was to gather a diverse sample in terms of gender, age, country of origin and profession, but who have a similar lifestyle that results from the pursuit of work

---

[1] www.linkedin.com - promoted as 'the world's largest professional network' (2014)
[2] www.internations.org - promoted as 'connecting global minds in 390 cities around the world' (2014)

opportunities abroad. It falls beyond the scope of this paper to analyse the narratives considering each of these variables, which nonetheless can be of interest for future studies. This paper does not assume that the research participants have necessarily been informed by the contemporary discourse of corporate global nomadism, for instance, by reading popular management texts; rather, the paper argues that discourses shape and are shaped by the social practice in which they are produced, distributed and consumed (Fairclough, 2001), such as for instance, Business School education and organizational learning.

The sample comprises 48 participants (18 female; 30 male), aged between 23 and 61 years old, with the majority being between 35 and 45 years old. The countries of origin are: Argentina (1), Australia (1), Canada (1), Denmark (3), France (3), Germany (4), Hungary (1), Italy (2), Korea (1), Malaysia (1), Mexico (2), Nepal (1), Spain (4), Sweden (2), Taiwan (1), the Netherlands (1), the United Kingdom (8), the United States of America (7), Trinidad and Tobago (1) and Venezuela (3). The number of transnational relocations varies between two and nine, with an average of five moves, and the time the participants spent in each country varies between four months and eight years with an average of 2.5 years. The top six industries in which the participants worked at the time of the collection of the data were: Engineering (25%), Information Technology (25%), Marketing and Sales (25%), Banking and Finance (15%), Education (5%) and Research and Development (5%).

The collection and analysis of personal narratives contributes to the aims of this paper because it provides the context to gather the individual's life story, in the sense that it is a text produced by the individual who inhabited or lived the story rather than being

narrated by someone else (Boje, 2001; Czarniawska, 2004). The narratives collected for this paper are produced within two distinctive settings outside the workplace: the personal interview and the online discussion forums. In these settings the narrator is not necessarily constructing his/her narrative from the perspective of his/her role within the organization, thus allowing a wider scope of linguistic and cultural resources from which to draw upon to self-represent as a transnational professional. In the case of the online discussion forums, the narratives are collectively produced within the shared environment of the online social network; meaning that they are the narrator's work of emplotment on pieces of texts that are produced, incorporated and contested by different narrators (i.e. the other participants in the forum).

The narrative interviews

The 16 participants (8 female; 8 male) of the sample who took part in the interview process were interviewed on two different occasions with a twelve-month period in between each interview; the basis for this longitudinal approach was to consider potential changes in attitudes towards continuous global mobility. The interviews were semi-structured, resembling a conversation rather than a set pattern of question and answer, in order to allow the interviewee's spontaneous self-expression of subjectivity, beliefs and values (Fielding, 2003; O'Connor et al., 2008).

The interviews were carried out using Skype[3], traditional telephone or e-mail. All the interviews were initiated with an open question intended to prompt the interviewee's construction of a personal narrative or life story as a working professional (i.e. 'tell me about how you came about to work in [current country]'). The follow up questions acted as feedback during the conversation and were situated within the scope of the study by using as a frame of reference core themes of interest concerning global mobility (e.g. attitudes towards their homeland, social relations with the local community in which they live and work and expectations for the future); however, due to the open and informal approach of the semi-structured interview the interviewees spontaneously raised these aspects as part of their narrative.

Interviews that do not involve face-to-face interactions between the interviewer and the interviewee, such as the interviews carried out for the purposes of this study, are considered as appropriate to gather qualitative data that requires the interviewee's expression of meanings and opinions concerning personal experiences (Fielding, 2003). This is because rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee may be more easily achieved due to the lack of personal and visual contact, which can potentially have an impact on the participant's responses (Fielding, 2003).

In the first set of interviews, 11 took place via *Skype*, one via traditional telephone and one via e-mail. The spoken interviews lasted an average of 1.5 hours; they were recorded digitally and transcribed within a week following the interview to ensure reliability. The interview via e-mail lasted three weeks during which a sort of

---

[3]*Skype* is a free online application for verbal communication between users of the technology independently of their geographical location (www.skype.com)

'conversation' was achieved despite the temporal interruptions characteristic of this medium (Fielding, 2003; O'Connor et al., 2008). In the second set of interviews, eight took place via Skype, seven via e-mail and one via telephone; the spoken interviews lasted an average of 30 minutes and the e-mail interviews lasted between two and three days.

The online discussion forums

A sample of 32 online narratives (from 10 female and 22 male participants) was collected from nine discussion forums created for the purposes of this study in *LinkedIn* and *InterNations*, which proved to be effective regarding the level of participation from the target audience who met the criteria set out for the selection of the sample. These forums were used over a period of 12 months; the topics of discussion were associated with the life of the transnational professional, using notions such as 'mobile professionals' and 'serial expatriation'. Online forums are considered as a social and communal phenomenon that can aid to the understanding of a particular aspect of social life (Kozinets, 2010; O'Connor et al., 2008); as for example the sense of belonging to a particular group or community of highly mobile individuals, constructed on the basis of certain characteristics associated with the nomadic lifestyle (Fechter, 2007; Polson, 2011, see also Gabriel, 2002: 138).

The narratives constructed in the forums can be understood following the notion of 'antenarratives' as advocated by Boje (2001). This type of narratives are nonlinear and fragmented stories that unfold through intertextual and interdiscursive connections

with other fragmented, and sometimes opposing, stories; interlacing past events and experiences as well as future expectations and aspirations, while seeking accordance with the discursive developments during the discussion (Cunliffe, Luhmann and Boje, 2004; Humle and Pedersen, 2014). According to Boje (2001), antenarratives are 'local' or small narratives that are partially embedded in established or dominant grand narratives, which are considered as predicted interpretations that aid to give events and experiences a sense of order and unit, such as for instance the grand narrative of 'the global' as a neoliberal idealism that claims the individual's liberation from 'the local' (Fairclough, 2004; Fairclough and Thomas, 2004; Harvey, 2005), but which may be resisted and contested through tensions and contradictions expressed as the story unfolds. It may be the case that the ways in which the discourse of global mobility is 'talked about' (Sturdy and Fleming, 2003; see also Benders and Van Veen, 2001) in the online forums, is influenced or encouraged by particular collective representations (Heusinkveld, Sturdy and Werr, 2011; Clark, 2004). However, it falls beyond the scope of this paper to analyse to what extent representations of such discourses are shaped by the particular contextual interest of the social networks as sites for self-presentation and identity negotiation (Papacharissi, 2013; Van Dijck, 2013).

Narrative analysis

This paper rests on the view of narrative as a system that interlaces texts that are situated within different temporal and situational contexts (Boje, 2001; Czarniawska, 2004; Fairclough, 2006). The analysis of the narratives combines the approaches of deconstruction and intertextuality, meaning that the texts are examined for 'what' they

say through associations with other texts and 'how' these associations are incorporated (Gabriel, 2004). In general terms, deconstruction primarily seeks to identify discrepancies in the text rather than assuming that core structural principles, such as ideologies or hegemonic assumptions, are imposed upon it, even if imposing such structural principles is the intention of the author of the narrative (Boje, 2001). This approach is supported by intertextual analysis to identify how other, prior texts are consciously or subconsciously drawn upon by the narrator as frames of reference to render meaningful past events, actions and characters situated within the context of his/her own life history, but which may create dissonance among different parts of the narrative, potentially transforming its overall sense (Boje, 2001; Czarniawska, 2004; Fairclough, 2006).

Popular management discourses, as part of the linguistic and cultural resources of the wider social context in which individuals live and work (Fairclough, 2004, 2006), have the potential to serve as a frame of reference for the construction of the individual's identity (Clark and Salaman, 1998; Ten Bos, 2000; Wilhelm and Bort, 2013). Following this, this paper critically analyses the extent to which the discourse of corporate global nomadism is used as a sort of structural principle by the narrator to impose order on the flow of past events and experiences, and to self-represent as a nomadic individual. In addition, attention is given to how the discourse of corporate global nomadism, enacted by the narrator through the adoption of continuous global mobility as a lifestyle, is manifested as a presumption or 'ready-made' (Fairclough, 2001) textual interpretation in ways in which may support or undermine the ideology of neoliberal globalization. In order to do so, the analysis identifies the metaphors, discourses and narrative elements that are represented in similar or contradictory ways in the texts,

and to what extent these are consistent with particular perspectives or shared beliefs associated with individual global mobility.

The analysis

This section presents the analysis of the 48 narratives of the sample. It is divided into three subsections which correspond to three main discursive themes identified in the narratives; extracts from the latter are included as way of examples. The first subsection explores the ways in which the discourse of global mobility is represented in the texts as form of value for the modern professional, and how it serves to discursively differentiate the figure of the mobile from the figure of the sedentary. The second subsection focuses on how the duality 'global-local' as incorporated in the narratives draw upon the wider discourse of neoliberal globalization. The final subsection identifies the discrepancies in the narratives as the discourse of corporate global nomadism is represented and justified from the perspective of the corporate domain and from the perspective of the individual's private sphere.

Fictional names are used in the example of extracts offered here to protect the identity of the participants, and the word 'forum' is used to differentiate between the extracts taken from the narratives collected via the online discussion forums and those collected from the interviews.

Representations of global mobility as a form of value

A common feature among the narratives is to depict transnational professionals as a distinctive class, by discursively disassociating them from their sedentary counterparts using continuous global mobility as a frame of reference. The discourse of global mobility is thus used to establish a form of value against which the narrator ('the mobile') evaluates him/herself as well as others ('the sedentary'). In the extract below, for example, the pursuit of repetitive international relocations is presented as a sort of personal ability that positions the narrator within a particular category of people:

> '[Continuous global mobility] is not for everyone and I don't expect it to be -if anyone could do it, I would not feel so special! In truth, that is probably one of my motivations. I don't want to be like everyone else. Living in a new country, or changing countries regularly, makes sure that I always feel different in a positive way.' (*Elizabeth*)

The sense of superiority or 'specialness' is reflected in the expression of feeling different from what the narrator considers is the ordinary and normal. This condition is rendered positive by the portrayal of continuous global mobility as a desirable and unique form of life that challenges traditional sedentary values ('I don't want to be like everyone else'). Particular attributes are used in the narratives to depict the transnational professional as a distinctive group; for example: 'expats are indeed far more self-sufficient, self-motivated, decision makers and abhor bureaucratic nonsense […] this has come about from the nature of the expat adventurousness' (*Marc, forum*). Here, the virtues of entrepreneurship, flexibility and adventure attributed to the figure of the transnational professional are represented from the perspective of the ideology of neoliberalism, in that they are positively assumed by the individual who rejects the paternalistic role of organizations characteristic of previous stages of capitalism (Bauman, 2000; Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Harvey, 2006).

The associations of the motifs of adventure and exploration with global mobility are common across all the narratives, for example: 'I became an expat for the adventure and money mainly, and yes, for the kick of getting things done under extreme circumstances' (*John, forum*). This text refers to the traditional elitist view of the life of luxury of the expatriate who travels to exotic locations driven by personal economic gains (Fechter, 2007). Moreover, the figure of the expatriate is used by the narrator to self-represent with a sort of 'heroic status' in his accounts of becoming a transnational professional, that is, leaving the ordinary life of the sedentary to embark on risky ventures, during which he acquires knowledge and experience that help pave the way for others in the future (Kostera, 2012). This is further elaborated in a different extract from the same narrative:

> 'You know what a real professional expat is? Someone like me, who opens the Saturday edition of his local newspaper in the foreseeable future, and reads an ad like "we've created a breathable atmosphere on planet Mars, and are now looking for a bunch of pioneers to live there and set up a society from ground level onwards", and then steps on a space shuttle on Monday morning.' (*John, forum*)

The 'grandiosity' (Alvesson and Gabriel, 2016) that surrounds the figure of the transnational professional in the narratives is sustained by the tendency to represent their sedentary counterparts as being less privileged: 'the sad thing that draws a line between us and most other professionals who have not expatriated before, is that they do not understand our drive and will to share experiences, we find then narrow minded' (*Richard, forum*). In other narratives, the unequal relation between the mobile and the sedentary is represented from the perspective of the family domain:

> 'I mean, take my brother, he still lives in the same town as my parents […] I don't think he understands what I'm doing […] and I don't need him to, it's something that I choose, and something that I like, but it's

17

> something that is very different to what they value and appreciate'
> (*Agnes*)

In the extract, the feeling of not being understood expresses a kind of 'heroic indifference' ('I don't need him to') that liberates the narrator from the set conventions that shape sedentary life. This is a representation of the participant's conscious intention to construct a narrative consonant with her feelings of self-management over her nomadic lifestyle ('that I choose', 'that I like').

The portrayal of the duality 'global-local'

The positive portrayal of global mobility manifested in the narratives is mostly based on idealised representations of the world as a source of opportunities and experiences. For example, the extract below depicts international travel as a sort of journey of exploration away from the security of a familiar environment in order to explore the 'unknown' (Kostera, 2012):

> 'It is like learning to swim as a child. Once you swim, new waterways and horizons open, and where horizons open, there are so many more opportunities that you would not have discovered without taking that first plunge.' (*Elizabeth, forum*)

The metaphorical portrayal of the world as 'a sea of opportunities' is a Romantic archetype that refers to the individual's transcendence of the traditional boundaries of the bourgeois environment in which they live (i.e. the local). The transition from being sedentary to leading a globally mobile lifestyle is portrayed as a positive 'learning experience' for the narrator through which she has 'discovered' something new, somewhat positioning her in advantage in relation to the spatially settled who are

discursively associated with the loss of opportunities. This kind of positive representation of the discourse of the global emphasises the negative and marginal connotations associated with the discourse of the local: 'I felt I was geographically kind of stuck [...] not seeing with my eyes new things and not meeting new people that think differently, I was missing out on that' (*Logan*). Here the global represents 'the new', hence to be 'stuck' in a place is an undesirable condition for the narrator; at the same time, the global draws upon the utopia of a 'borderless' society in which individuals are free from socio-political constraints to move at will. More specifically, the ability to be globally mobile in modern society is represented in the narratives as an uncontested assumption, as exemplified in the extract below:

> 'I don't believe that there are real boundaries anymore; the boundaries between countries are just for political reasons [...] from a professional perspective I do believe that people can work wherever they want to, if they want to; if they want to make it happen.' (*Carlos*)

This text can be related, for instance, to the view of the 'boundaryless world' promoted by Kenichi Ohmae (1990), which primarily refers to today's state of the global economy in the sense that the flows and expansion of capital, corporations and consumer goods are not delimited by traditional geopolitical borders. This vision of a world 'without borders' is part of the ideology of the system of globalization that denies the traditional spatial-temporal markers that are at the centre of such a system (Augé, 2012; Harvey, 2006). A similar representation of the duality global-local is found in the next extract from a different narrative, in which the narrator makes direct reference to the 'flat world' metaphor as popularized by Thomas Friedman (2006) to justify his own mobility:

> 'I think [to be mobile] is part of the reality of this world today, you know, it is flat; I mean, you have to be global if you are going to have a career

> in the global environment of the 21st century, you have to be that kind
> of person who is not tied to [a given locality/country].' (*Tim*)

The narrator self-represents as a 'global person' in terms of his detachment from place, which is consonant with the flatness metaphor presented by Friedman (2006), based on the claim that developments in communication and travel technologies provide 'equalizing opportunities' for all individuals as privileges and disparities associated with local culture and history are eliminated. However, as argued by Halsall (2009: 140, see also Halsall, 2012), this rhetorical portrayal of contemporary globalization draws upon the universal ideal of a world citizenship advocated by Enlightenment cosmopolitanism, intended to validate the corporate demands for a 'flexible' identity of the global manager who remains disengaged from national origins as well as from the culture of the country in which he/she works. The global discourse in the extract above, however, results in a contradiction because it expresses a necessity for the participant to change in order to sustain his employability ('you have to be that kind of person'). In other words, the narrator feels that he has no choice but to become a 'global employee' if he is to compete in the modern labour market (Bauman, 2000). As happens with the notion of 'being mobile', the idea of 'being global' is incorporated in the narratives as a personal asset that enhances the individual's status in the context of work:

> 'At the moment I start to speak to the client, one of the first things that I
> do is try to show that: I have three years of experience, that I have lived
> in or visited different parts of the world; and all that sells, all that is
> important to the client, it is also important to my potential boss.' (*Miguel*)

In this extract, international experience is presented as a sort of commodity that can be traded in the workplace, meaning that being global is consonant with the dictates of

what is 'fashionable' or 'tasteful' (Ten Bos and Heusinkveld, 2007) in the context of modern organizations; a view that is sustained by the role of guru texts such as those mentioned above. In other words, the discourse of corporate global nomadism seems to be consumed by the transnational professional in terms of 'means and ends' (Wilhelm and Bort, 2013), that is, to impress others, to justify their own nomadic lifestyle and to support their sense of belonging to the community of the mobile.

The discourse of corporate global nomadism as part of work-life experiences

The pursuit of a nomadic lifestyle is described in the narratives as a desirable form of action in the context of work, in which it is thought to generate subjective and practical rewards. For example, in the next extract, being a transnational professional is presented as the means to seek personal growth and career advancement: 'if I stay in the same place I will no longer be so successful; it will end the drive that has taken me to carry on progressing, acquiring more prestige professionally, acquiring new perspectives' (*Ana*). However, in this text the nomadic lifestyle constitutes a contradictory element because it is represented as generating the 'need' for more mobility, that is, the feeling of not being able to 'stay in the same place', which would mean giving up professional progress and status. As a result, sedentariness becomes an undesirable condition for the narrator: 'when one has been living this type of life, the worst fear that one confronts is to stay stuck, stay stuck in a job that you don't like, stay stuck in a place' (*Ana*). This tension recurs in a different part of the same narrative as the participant rationalises her own mobility in terms of her personal aspirations in the private sphere:

'I don't want to sacrifice that side of my life [having a family of her own]. To be able to say that I am a successful person who has lived in 50 different countries, but to be alone as a result [...] for me that would be a failure.' (*Ana*)

These texts show how the discourse of corporate global nomadism serves as a resource to justify and validate the adoption of a highly mobile lifestyle inasmuch it is considered from the perspective of the organizational setting. Considered from the perspective of traditional sedentary values, the same discourse seems to result in negative feelings: '[as a mobile professional] you can't do your life, you can't have kids, you can't have a family' (*Miguel*). This supports the argument that people's consumption of popular management discourses are not only shaped and directed by the particularities of their position or role within the organizational setting, as managers or employees, for example, but also by their interactions with other actors as meaning is constructed in different situational and temporal contexts (Groß, Heusinkveld and Clark, 2015; Heusinkveld, Sturdy and Werr, 2011). Another example from a different narrative is offered below, in which the narrator recounts her experience when she did not succeed in 'settling back' in her native country:

'I really tried to [settle back home]; I even bought a lot of furniture and I got a nice flat [...] but I remember one day I was with my mum and my sister, and they were talking about something, and I just burst into tears and said "I have no idea what you or anyone else is talking about". I just had no idea [...] it's hard to relate to people at home because I felt I've been, you know, travelling the world and doing all this stuff, and my friends at home got married and had kids, always lived in the same place, and we didn't have much to talk about anymore, and it was really quite strange.' (*Monica*)

The notion of being global as presented in the extract is intended to positively differentiate the narrator (who has travelled the world and lived many experiences)

from her sedentary counterparts (who have remained in the same locality and followed a traditional sedentary life). However, being global also generates negative emotions for the narrator ('I burst into tears'; 'it's hard'; 'quite strange'). Here it seems that having adopted a nomadic identity results in feelings of estrangement from traditional sedentary values; as further exemplified in this quote from the same narrative: 'I think what you are supposed to do is to settle down; you are not supposed to keep moving on like this, because it means that there is something weird about you' (*Monica*).

These examples show that the fashionable element attributed to the discourse of corporate global nomadism on which the transnational professional constructs his/her sense of uniqueness and specialness in the workplace, is contradicted in other areas of social life as it meets with ambiguities and contradictions. As well as a sense of estrangement and feelings of failing to meet certain expectations in the private domain, continuous global mobility is described in the narratives as a 'tiring' and 'repetitive' lifestyle; a view that opposes the notion of adventure and excitement associated with international relocations: 'it is not so enjoyable when you have moved so much [...] to adapt to the new country and to the people, it gets to a point when you get tired' (*Miguel*). This finding is consistent with other studies (McCabe, 2011; Knights and McCabe, 1998; Sturdy and Fleming, 2003; Sturdy, 2004), supporting the argument that despite the persuasive elements of certain popular management discourses (Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002) they are not passively internalised by the individual.

Discussion and conclusions

This paper focuses on the consumption of the popular discourse of corporate global nomadism by a representative sample of transnational professionals, who, to some extent, enact the discourse by continuously relocating internationally in the pursuit of work. Popular management ideas, such as the discourse of corporate global nomadism examined here, are part of the social world in which people live, work and interact, meaning that they influence and are influenced by the actors who produce, distribute and consume them as well as by the temporal and situational contexts in which such processes occur (Clark, 2004; Gabriel, 2002; Heusinkveld, Sturdy and Werr, 2011; Sturdy, 2004; Wright and Kitay, 2004). In other words, the discourse of corporate global nomadism is continuously constructed and deconstructed, interpreted and diffused, through dialectical relationships with other social elements (e.g. workplace colleagues or cultural values) which contribute to the reproduction and transformation of social structures (e.g. the privileged mobile elite), while also being determined by them (Fairclough, 2001).

This is identified in the narratives as the discourse of corporate global nomadism is somewhat adapted 'to fit' (Ansari, Fiss and Zajac, 2010) the role of the transnational professional from the perspective of the organizational setting, in which is equated with notions of success, progress and prestige. However, the discourse meets with ambiguities and contradictions when it is evaluated from the perspective of the individual's private sphere, in which it generates negative feelings of estrangement from traditional sedentary values and a sense of 'being stuck' in the mobile lifestyle, in that mobility seems to generate the need for more mobility. A similar finding is presented by Costas (2013) in a study that addresses the 'ambiguities and frictions' involved in the way mobility is experienced by the mobile elite. Costas (2013) refers to

24

the tensions continuous mobility generates for individuals, as the sense of exclusiveness and glamour associated with international travel is confronted by feelings of 'entrapment' or 'being stuck' in the never-ending mobility cycle from one location to another. These feelings, Costas (2013: 1478) argues, oppose the idealised and elitist view of mobility as a form of liberation from what is perceived as 'tedious' and 'boring'.

Considered from a wider perspective, the production, distribution and translation of popular management discourses are shaped by dominant ideologies and power relations embedded in different domains and scales of social life, such as economic markets and the corporate world of multinational organizations. This is of particular importance because in order to appeal to organizational actors and praxis, that is, to potentially become 'fashionable', management ideas draw upon other discourses and concepts that are particularly salient at a certain point in time, which serve as resources to justify and legitimise such 'new' ideas and the practices they address (Benders and Van Veen, 2001; Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002; Gabriel, 2002; Sturdy, 2004). In the case of the discourse of corporate global nomadism, meaning is partially constructed by drawing upon idealised representations of international travel and subjective detachment from national and local origins to describe the mobility of modern professionals (D'Andrea, 2006; Meyer, Kaplan and Charum, 2001; Meerwarth, 2008), while being consistent with the interests of modern organizations (e.g. to seek geographical expansion and compete in global markets), and which generally contradict the principles of rootedness and fixity that characterized previous stages of capitalism (Bauman, 2000; Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Harvey 2005).

The discourse of corporate global nomadism as a narrative element

It can be argued that to some extent the popular discourse of corporate global nomadism is used as a structural principle in the narratives, in that it helps to impose order and render meaningful the past events, characters and experiences involved in the narrator's nomadic lifestyle (see 'grand narrative' in table 1). This is identified in the ways in which the discourse is manifested in a similar manner in all the narratives of the sample despite differences in the individual's professional and socio-cultural background. The positive representations of the discourse of corporate global nomadism in the narratives may be motivated by the utopian messages involved in the globalization discourse on which it rests, such as for instance the universal values of individual freedom and equality (Harvey, 2005; see also Halsall, 2009, 2012). From the perspective of the individual, it may be the case that the discourse of corporate global nomadism appeals to those who have an orientation towards Western capitalist culture and its ideologies (Sturdy, 2004), and thus identify with the hegemonic assumptions associated with the notion of 'being global' (Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002).

For instance, as happens with the heroic image of the manager popularly depicted in guru texts, and which may shape the latter's sense of identity in his role within the organization (Clark and Salaman, 1998: 154; see also Alvesson and Gabriel, 2016), the heroic status attributed to the mobile and flexible individual in the workplace, may be a source of inspiration for the transnational professional and serve as resource for the construction of his/her nomadic identity. On one hand, the discourse of corporate

global nomadism somewhat gains normative acceptance in the narratives because it is manifested as an uncontested reality in modern corporations; but on the other hand, the notion of continuous international mobility creates contradictions in the texts because what is described as 'normal' in the workplace is challenged by feelings of self-alienation in other settings (see table 1).

Table 1 - Linkage between dominant discourses (grand narratives) and the consumption of such discourses by the transnational professional (local narrative)

Discursive construct	As part of the ideology of neoliberalism (grand narrative)	Individual's consumption of the discourse (small narrative)	Examples of narrative extracts
Duality mobile-sedentary	The discourse of the mobile draws upon idealised views of international travel and subjective detachment from place, associated with the managerial discourses of individual flexibility, cosmopolitanism and entrepreneurial virtues. The discourse of the sedentary is related to the idea of 'being stuck' in a locality, which is represented in the narratives as a negative condition that hinders personal progress and economic growth.	The narrative character of the mobile is presented in opposition to the figure of the sedentary on the basis of personal abilities and attitudes that are perceived as somewhat unique to the transnational professional, such as a sense of adventure and positive feelings of being different to their sedentary counterparts. Contradictions are identified in the negative expressions concerning continuous mobility.	'I don't see myself spinning around the world all my life, I like this life of adventure, but I guess that at some point one will want to settle down somewhere […] not to be so gypsy' (*Santiago*). 'I knew I wanted to see the world, but I didn't think I would keep doing it for ten years' (*Monica*).
Duality global-local	The discourse of the global draws upon the universal principles of individual freedom and equality to present the world as a source of prosperity and success. The discourse of the local is related to negative	The discourse of the global is used to validate the adoption of a nomadic lifestyle, which in the organizational context is perceived to result in career advancement and personal growth. In the private sphere the notion of 'being nomadic'	'I think international experience is quite important, otherwise you stay attached to your local market' (*Jason*) 'My mum considers this as one of the phases that I have to

| representations of fixity and rootedness, characteristic of previous stages of capitalism. | causes contradictory feelings of estrangement from traditional sedentary values. | go through, and soon it will be over and I will come back and be normal' (*Agnes*) |

The tendency in the narratives to invest the figure of the transnational professional with a sense of elitism and exclusiveness, particularly in relation to the figure of the sedentary individual, may be seen as the desire to show that the narrator has a 'distinct taste for smart and innovative thinking [i.e. being nomadic] and a similar distaste for what has become obsolete [i.e. being rooted to place]' (Ten Bos and Heusinkveld, 2007: 320). However, as discussed above, while the popular discourse of corporate global nomadism may dictate what is fashionable or tasteful in the workplace, it encounters transformations and ambiguities as it is consumed or interpreted from the perspective of the individual's private sphere (see small narratives in table 1). In addition, a kind of 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006: 6) is discursively constructed in the narratives through the portrayal of the mobile professional as a class of individuals, which seems to provide the participants with a sense of belonging to a group on the basis of shared beliefs, attitudes and behaviours associated with the highly mobile lifestyle, despite their personal socio-cultural background or the locality in which they temporarily live and work. On this view, and following Gabriel's (2002: 138) argument, the transnational professional as a consumer of the discourse of corporate global nomadism may be seen to form part of a sort of 'community of practice' of the transnational professional inasmuch he/she shares the tastes and aesthetics perceived to be involved with continuous international mobility.

The relationship between the discourse of corporate global nomadism and the ideology of neoliberal capitalism is identified in the narratives in the assumption that in the context of modern corporations the values of flexibility, adaptability and mobility represent personal assets of competitive advantage for professionals; however, as the findings of this paper show, the nomadic lifestyle fundamentally opposes the needs and aspirations in other aspects in the everyday life of the transnational professional. Sedentariness, as the oppositional narrative element incorporated in the narratives, is thus represented as a negative condition for the individual; a view that generally draws upon the duality 'global-local' from the perspective of contemporary globalization.

Implications for management learning

Management education in the era of globalization has increasingly been oriented towards producing transnational professionals able to lead and undertake job assignments across the globe; in effect, 'nomadic' mobility has become a prescription as the 'norm' to which professionals should aspire (Fisher, Doughty and Mussayeva, 2008; Griffiths, Winstanley and Gabriel, 2005). Popular management and globalization texts used in many Business Schools, such as those here discussed, often contain oversimplified and uncritical descriptions regarding the mobile lifestyle which managers will or should adopt; however, as this paper shows, the life of the transnational professional involves ambiguous experiences that generally conflict with such idealised views of corporate global mobility.

Therefore, Business School education and organizational learning in general should place less reliance on romanticised, heroic accounts of global mobility in guru texts, and more reliance on engaging critically with actual accounts of transnational nomadic life by professionals, such as the narratives presented in this paper. In this way, a more rounded, critical and ultimately ethical type of management education for transnational mobility can be produced than currently is the case, thus helping to better prepare future global professionals and managers to cope with the hardships of the nomadic life, as well as the exciting and 'adventurous' side of it.

References

Abrahamson E (1996) Management fashion. *Academy of Management Review* 21(1): 254–285.

Alvesson M and Gabriel Y (2016) Grandiosity in contemporary management and education. *Management Learning* 47(4): 464–473.

Anderson B (2006) *Imagined communities*. London: Verso.

Ansari S, Fiss P and Zajac E (2010) Made to fit: How practices vary as they diffuse. *Academy of Management Review* 35(1): 67–92.

Augé M (2012) *Pour une anthropologie de la mobilité.* Paris: Éditions Payot & Rivages.

Bauman Z (2000) *Globalization: The human consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Benders J and Van Veen K (2001) What's in a fashion? Interpretative viability and management fashion. *Organization* 8(1): 33–53.

Bloch S and Whiteley P (2011) *The global you: the strategies to operate as an international business player*. London: Marshall Cavendish International.

Boje D (2001) *Narrative methods for organizational and communication research*. London: SAGE Publications, Ltd.

Boltanski L and Chiapello È (2007) *The new spirit of capitalism*, trans. G. Elliott. London: Verso.

Bourdieu P and Wacquant L (2001) NewLiberalSpeak: notes on the new planetary vulgate. *Radical Philosophy* 105: 2-5.

Chiapello È and Fairclough N (2002) Understanding the new management ideology: A transdisciplinary contribution from critical discourse analysis and new sociology of capitalism. *Discourse & Society* 13(2): 185-208.

Clark T (2004) The fashion of management fashion: A surge too far? *Organization* 11(2): 297–306.

Clark T and Salaman G (1998) Telling tales: Management gurus' narratives and the construction of managerial identity. *Journal of Management Studies* 35(2): 138–61

Corbett-Etchevers I and Mounoud E (2011) A narrative framework for management ideas: Disclosing the plots of knowledge management in a multinational company. *Management Learning* 42(2): 165–181.

Costas J (2013) Problematizing mobility: A metaphor of stickiness, non-places and the kinetic elite. *Organization Studies* 34(10): 1467-1485.

Cresswell T (1997) Imaging the nomad: mobility and the postmodern primitive. In: Benko G and Strohmayer U (eds) *Space and social theory: interpreting modernity and postmodernity.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 360-382

Cunliffe AL, Luhmann JT and Boje D (2004) Narrative temporality: Implications for organizational research. *Organization Studies* 25(2): 261–286.

Czarniawska B (2004) *Narratives in Social Science Research: Introducing qualitative methods.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

D'Andrea A (2006) Neo-Nomadism: a theory of post-identitarian mobility in the global age. *Mobilities* 1(1): 95-119.

Engwall L and Kipping M (2004) Introduction: The Dissemination of Management Knowledge. *Management Learning* 35(3): 243–253.

Fairclough N (2001) *Language and power.* 2nd ed. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Fairclough N (2004) Critical discourse analysis in researching language in the new capitalism: Overdetermination, transdisciplinary, and textual analysis. In: Young L and Harrison C (eds) *Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis: Studies in Social Change.* New York: Continuum, pp.103-122.

Fairclough N (2006) *Discourse and social change.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fairclough N and Thomas P (2004) The discourse of globalization and the globalization of discourse. In: Grant D, Hardy C, Oswick C and Putnam L (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse.* London: SAGE Publications, pp. 379-396.

Fechter A (2007) *Transnational lives: Expatriates in Indonesia.* Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing.

Fielding N (2003) *Interviewing: Volume II.* London: Sage Publications.

Fisher C, Doughty D and Mussayeva S (2008) Learning and Tensions in Managerial Intercultural Encounters: A Dialectical Interpretation. *Management Learning* 39(3): 311–327.

Friedman T (2006) *The world is flat: The globalized world in the twenty-first century.* London: Penguin Books.

Furusten S (1999) *Popular management books: how they are made and what they mean for organizations.* London: Routledge.

Gabriel Y (2002) On paragrammatic uses of organization theory: A provocation. *Organization Studies* 23(1): 133–151.

Gabriel Y (2004) Narratives, stories and texts. In: Grant D, Hardy C, Oswick C and Putnam L (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse.* London: SAGE Publications, pp. 61-77.

Gibson J and Tesone D (2001) Management Fads—Emergence, Evolution and Implications for Managers. *Academy of Management Executive* 15(4): 122–34.

Griffiths DS, Winstanley D and Gabriel Y (2005) Learning Shock The Trauma of Return to Formal Learning. *Management Learning* 36(3): 275–297.

Groß C, Heusinkveld S and Clark T (2015) The Active Audience? Gurus, Management Ideas and Consumer Variability. *British Journal of Management* 26(2): 273–291.

Halsall R (2009) The discourse of corporate cosmopolitanism. *British Journal of Management* 20(1): 136-148.

Halsall R (2012) The end of 'cosmopolitan' capitalism? Reflections on nations, models and brands in the global economic crisis. *Philosophy of management* 11(1): 63-77.

Harvey D (2005) *A brief history of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harvey D (2006) The production of spatial configurations: the geographical mobilities of capital and labour. In: Harvey D (ed) *Limits to capital*. London: Verso, pp. 373-412.

Heusinkveld S, Sturdy A and Werr A (2011) The co-consumption of management ideas and practices. *Management Learning* 42(2): 139–147.

Huczynski A (1993) *Management gurus: what makes them and how to become one*. London: Routledge.

Humle DM and Pedersen AR (2015) Fragmented work stories: Developing an antenarrative approach by discontinuity, tensions and editing. *Management Learning* 46(5): 582–597.

Jackson B (2001) *Management Gurus and Management Fashions*. London: Routledge.

Knights D and McCabe D (1998) What happens when the phone goes wild? Staff, stress and spaces for escape in a BPR telephone banking work regime. *Journal of Management Studies* 35(2): 163–194.

Kostera M (2012) *Organizations and archetypes*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

Kozinets R (2010) *Netnography: Doing ethnographic research online*. London: SAGE Publications.

Lervik JE and Lunnan R (2004) Contrasting perspectives on the diffusion of management knowledge: Performance management in a Norwegian multinational. *Management Learning* 35(3): 287-302.

McCabe D (2011) Opening Pandora's box: The unintended consequences of Stephen Covey's effectiveness movement. *Management Learning* 42(2): 183-197.

Meerwarth T (2008) Disentangling patterns of nomadic life. In: Meerwarth T, Gluesing J and Jordan B (eds) *Mobile work, mobile lives: cultural accounts of lived experiences*. NAPA Bulletin 30. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp.102-117.

Meyer J, Kaplan D and Charum J (2001) Scientific nomadism and the new geopolitics of knowledge. *International Social Science Journal* 53(168): 309-321.

Noyes J (2004) Nomadism, nomadology, postcolonialism: By way of introduction. *Interventions* 6(2): 159-168.

O'Connor H, Madge C, Shaw R and Wellens J (2008) Internet-based interviewing. In: NG Fielding, RM Lee and G Blank (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of online research methods*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp.271-289.

Ohmae K (1990) *The borderless world: Power and strategy in the interlinked economy*. New York: Harper Collins.

Ohmae K (2005) *The next global stage: challenges and opportunities in our borderless world*. New Jersey: Wharton School Publishing.

Papacharissi Z. (2013) A networked self: Identity performance and sociability on social network sites. In: Lee F, Leung L, Qiu J and Chu D (eds) *Frontiers in New Media*. London: Routledge, pp.207-221.

Polson E (2011) Belonging to the network society: social media and the production of new global middle class. *Communication, Culture & Critique* 4(2): 144-163.

Roper J, Ganesh S and Inkson K (2010) Neoliberalism and knowledge interests in boundaryless careers discourse. *Work, employment and society* 24(4): 661-679.

Spell C (1999) Where do management fashions come from, and how long do they stay for?. J*ournal of Management History* 5(6): 334-348.

Stengers I (1997) *Cosmopolitiques, tome 7: pour en finir avec la tolérance.* Paris: La découverte.

Sturdy A (2004) The adoption of management ideas and practices: Theoretical perspectives and possibilities. *Management Learning* 35(2): 155-179.

Sturdy A and Fleming P (2003) Talk as technique: A critique of the words and deeds distinction in the diffusion of customer service cultures in call centres. *Journal of Management Studies* 40(4): 753-773.

Sturdy A and Gabriel (2000) Missionaries, mercenaries or car salesmen? MBA teaching in malaysia. *Journal of Management Studies* 37(7): 979-1002.

Sturdy A, Brocklehurst M, Winstanley D and Littlejohns M (2006) Management as a (self)confidence trick: management ideas, education and identity work. *Organization* 13(6): 841-860.

Ten Bos R (2000) *Fashion and Utopia in Management Thinking*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Ten Bos R and Heusinkveld S (2007) The guru's gusto: management fashion, performance and taste. *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 20(3): 304-325.

Van Dijck J (2013) You have one identity': performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn. *Media, Culture & Society* 35(2): 199–215.

Van Veen K, Bezemer J and Karsten L (2011) Diffusion, translation and the neglected role of managers in the fashion setting process: The case of MANS. *Management Learning* 42(2): 149-164.

Whittle A (2008) From flexibility to work-life balance: exploring the changing discourses of management consultants. *Organization* 15(4): 513–534.

Wilhelm H and S Bort (2013) How managers talk about their consumption of popular management concepts: identity, rules and situations. *British Journal of Management* 24(3): 428-444.

Wright C and Kitay J (2004) Spreading the Word. *Management Learning* 35(3): 271-286.