



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Rural Studies

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud

International migration by rural professionals: Professional subjectivity, disease ecology and veterinary migration from the United Kingdom to New Zealand

Gareth Enticott

School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University, Cardiff, CF10 3WA, UK



1. Introduction

Writing about the impact of British colonialism on the New Zealand (NZ) environment, [Brooking and Pawson \(2011\)](#) describe the circulations of experts and expertise that led to the creation of its now taken for granted pastoral agricultural landscape. Missing from these accounts, however, is the role of the British veterinary profession. This omission is surprising, not least because of its role in assisting colonial expansion in NZ ([Nightingale, 1992](#)) and subsequently helping to establish NZ as a leading exporter in the global milk market ([Gray and Le Heron, 2010](#)). Moreover, these patterns of circulating veterinary expertise continue today: NZ is a recognised world leader in animal disease control, exporting its techniques and veterinary practices, and continuing to attract British veterinarians despite fading colonial ties.

The aim of this paper is to examine the contemporary international migration of veterinary experts from the UK to New Zealand. There is, of course, a rich history of academic study of the causes of rural migration, reflecting economic and people-led motivations, and the differences between structural causes and migrants' own agency ([Halfacree, 2008](#); [Woods, 2016](#)). Despite calls for a greater focus on international migration as a means to 'disrupt conventional conceptualisations' of rural migration ([Smith, 2007](#)), much of this literature is focused on migration between European countries (but see [Preibisch, 2010](#)). Studies have therefore focused on low-skilled agricultural labour ([Hoggart and Mendoza, 1999](#); [Lever and Milbourne, 2015](#); [Sporton, 2013](#)), retirement migration ([Buller and Hoggart, 1994](#)) or return migration ([Ní Laoire, 2007](#)). Whilst a parallel literature on the geography and mobility of science ([Mahroum, 2000](#); [Powell, 2007](#)), experts and expertise ([Larner and Laurie, 2010](#)), and global professions ([Beaverstock, 1996](#); [Cranston, 2016](#); [Faulconbridge et al., 2009](#)) exists, this has not permeated discussions of rural migration or professions such as the veterinary profession.

Combining studies of professional subjectivity ([Thomson and Jones, 2016](#)) and rural migration ([Stockdale and Catney, 2014](#)), this paper identifies the reasons for international veterinary migration. The paper argues for a conceptualisation of international veterinary migration as a response to disruptions to narratives of professional identity that are set

within what veterinarian historian Diana [Davis \(2008\)](#) refers to as a 'disease ecology' – the inter-woven social, economic, biological, environmental and institutional relations that shape the processes and practices of animal disease management. The paper further develops the idea of disease ecology, to incorporate processes of veterinary subjectivity, situating veterinary migration as responses to disruptions to identity anxiety, alongside disease transmission and the professional lifecycle. In tracing the biographies of veterinary surgeons (hereafter vets) that have moved from the UK to NZ, the paper therefore shows how migration is shaped by the processes and practices of veterinary subjectification; notions of appropriate veterinary conduct; the circulation of disease; and personal and family circumstances.

To do this, the paper draws on in-depth biographical interviews with UK vets working in NZ. It begins by reviewing the literature on international migration and professional subjectivity, linking them to the concept of disease ecology. Secondly, the paper outlines the methodological approach adopted. Thirdly, the paper describes narratives of moving to and staying in New Zealand, showing how different elements of the disease ecology contribute to international migration.

2. International migration to rural areas

[Halfacree \(2008\)](#) argues that migration to European rural areas has 'largely been seen as an 'internal migration' phenomenon' dominated by studies of lifestyle-led voluntary movements of middle-class groups to rural areas and analyses of their socio-cultural and housing impacts ([Milbourne, 2007](#)). International studies of rural migration, however, have helped challenge the dualistic and stereotypical rendering of rural migration as a conflict between the fixed identities of locals and newcomers, tradition and modernity, and economic versus lifestyle motivations (see for example [Ní Laoire, 2007](#)). At the same time, accounts of international rural migration also challenge the significance of the rural idyll and middle-classes. Whilst some accounts stress the role of people-led explanations ([Buller and Hoggart, 1994](#)) others take a darker turn. Significant here are those migration studies that examine the changing demands of agricultural labour and food processing. Here, [Hoggart and Mendoza \(1999\)](#) describe how agricultural 'occupational niches' are

E-mail address: enticottg@cardiff.ac.uk.

created for immigrant labour, whilst Sporton (2013) and Lever and Milbourne (2015) argue that international migrant workers have become essential to the meat-processing industry, whose precarious lives are facilitated by employment regulations, employment agencies and zero hour contracts.

For Halfacree (2008), the story of European migrant labour reflects at least one way in which the binaries of rural migration research remain unchallenged: that of the difference between economic and people-led explanations, suggesting that these migration patterns reflect ‘economic’ explanations of migration in which cultural notions of rurality or the rural idyll are absent. However, more recent analyses also stress the extent to which these forms of labour-based international migration reflect the ‘messiness’ of migration categorisation (Stockdale, 2016). Thus, synthesising recent studies of migrant labour, Woods (2016) argues that ‘patterns and processes of contemporary migration are more fluid and dynamic than often imagined, providing ‘mixed messages’ about the agency of migrants. Whilst some accounts demonstrate their structural disempowerment, others highlight their own agency to construct their own identities and futures, and re-shape the places in which they live (Lever and Milbourne, 2014).

As Woods (2016) suggests, international migration might be better seen as patterned by heterogeneity: the origins and types of migrant workers varies in different places; that international migrants exhibit different motivations, experiences and aspirations; that trigger points and catalysts are social, economic and regulatory; and that migrants’ integration with local communities can vary between localities. In this messiness, international labour migration is shaped by economic factors and personal factors – such as marriage or family reunification (Hedberg and Haandrikman, 2014; Jirovsky et al., 2015; Sporton, 2013). Equally, the ease of stereotyping the kind of agency work performed by migrant workers as low-paid and unskilled in which migrants’ agency is captured by a globalised corporate food system is also misplaced. Rather, international rural migration can involve all social classes and employment types in which motivations combine the economic, social and personal (Eimermann et al., 2012). Indeed, many migrant workers working in poorly paid and unskilled jobs are educated and skilled but working in occupations that do not match their qualifications (Hoggart and Mendoza, 1999).

2.1. Subjectivity, professionalism and migration

Missing from these studies are accounts of the international migration of highly skilled professionals to rural areas. Instead, the migration of highly skilled professionals is associated with the rise of the ‘global city’ and ‘global work’ (Jones, 2008) in which the expansion of transnational corporations result in flows of professional labour between world cities (Faulconbridge et al., 2009; Smith, 2003). Whilst the global nature of rural space is increasingly recognised (Woods, 2007), these studies focus on lifestyle and amenity tourism. In some senses, professional migration may be no different to other international rural migration: professional migrants can rely on (and be let down by) employment agencies (Connell and Walton-Roberts, 2016) whilst motivations may include economic and cultural factors (Beaverstock, 1994). Indeed, drawing on Giddens (1984) structuration theory, Robinson and Carey (2000) distinguish between practical and discursive consciousness to describe the mixed reasons for international migration by doctors. Belying their discursive economic reasoning for migration, are a series of taken for granted historical cultural links that not only shape their destinations but also help them navigate bureaucratic barriers to migration (see also Kōu et al., 2015).

Studies of highly skilled professions have shown how the growth of globalised professions and flexible labour markets contribute to international migration to service seasonal demands (Beaverstock, 1996). Equally, others have shown how governments and institutions make possible the conditions for international migration by adapting employment laws (Raghuram and Kofman, 2002). In these forms of ‘global

work’ (Jones, 2008), managerial discourses contribute to the normalisation of professional mobility, creating professional subjectivities and different imaginings of distance and the global. In this mobilities perspective, migrants are produced relationally through their mobility, and the practices and process which inform their move (Cranston, 2016). For example, amongst scientific professions expectations of mobility have become part and parcel of how science works and how scientists behave (Ackers, 2005). Thus, Heffernan and Jöns (2013) describe how scientific subjectivities are created through institutional infrastructure – such as sabbatical programs – which contribute to the movement of highly skilled professionals as a means of doing ‘good science’ through the exchange and circulation of ideas (Jöns, 2015). In short, scientific mobility is essential not just to ‘doing good science’ but being a ‘good scientist’, strengthening the credibility of the scientist and the legitimacy of their institution as a ‘centre of gravity’ (Mahroum, 2000).

Elsewhere, management studies emphasise how professionalism is thought of and constructed as a mode of conduct rather than simply a matter of technical expertise (Grey, 1998). Discursive regimes (Gill, 2015) and ‘master narratives’ (Nelson, 2001) prescribe the limits of professional identity, regulate professional behaviour and determine professional status. These master narratives serve to reinforce dominant professional identities: those on the margins are not recognised as legitimate or valuable, are less able to intervene or voice concerns, and may ultimately come to accept the dominant view of their roles through what Nelson (2001) calls ‘infiltrated consciousness’. Master narratives may be created within professions themselves, or through the practices of international recruitment agencies that define ideal types of migrant worker (Cranston, 2017; Findlay et al., 2013). Whilst these dominant elite identities may confer status and provide a form of professional ontological security (Giddens, 1991), the pressure to continually conform and worries over losing identity can lead to ‘status anxiety’ (Burke, 1991). As a result, Gill (2015) argues that alternative counter-identities are developed in ‘spaces of action’ as sources of personal meaning. Other responses may include ‘survival practices’ (Collinson, 2003) in which alternative subjectivities are constructed to challenge dominant professional narratives. Another response is to leave the organisation or profession altogether. For example, studies in healthcare connect the promotion of new managerial subjectivities that are divorced from notions of appropriate care to professional exit and escape by international migration (Gauld and Horsburgh, 2015; Humphries et al., 2015; Sharma et al., 2012).

Master narratives of professionalism also reveal the geographical dimensions of professional conduct. Whilst the skills and characteristics of the prototypical professional may vary between countries, colonialism and the globalisation of professions can spread particular master narratives that seek to establish universal versions of professional conduct (Spence et al., 2015). In a neocolonial context, these master narratives also serve as a protection against competing forms of professionalism from marginal, non-elite countries. Thus, as Thomson and Jones (2016) show, professional migration from the margins to colonial centres may precipitate identity anxieties: career success, autonomy and security is dependent on the extent to which migrants are able to conform to prototypical colonial ideals.

2.2. Veterinary migration in global disease ecologies

How might professional subjectivity and status anxieties relate to the international migration of vets? The concept of ‘disease ecology’, originally used in studies of veterinary history can help explain further. These studies suggest that the veterinary profession was integral to colonial expansion (Mishra, 2011), establishing universal professional standards, practices and identities across the world. This historical depositing of veterinary ideals creates topologies of veterinary professionalism, making and drawing similar places together, and facilitating movement between them. The development and style of the NZ veterinary profession, for instance, was dependent on the arrival of

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6545303>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6545303>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)