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**CAREER PATHS IN THE THIRD SECTOR:
IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**WORKING PAPER NO. 30
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My interest in career paths in the third sector came from three early observations. First, the majority of workers appear to be women, in fact 77% of community sector community services in NSW (O'Donnell, 1985). Second, when asked about their career, most workers express the opinion that they have none. Third, when I examined the individual career paths of community sector workers I was struck by the stop and start nature of their paid work. Even, or perhaps especially, well qualified workers would move out of a position after about two years often to a more difficult position in a new area, with little or no salary increase and little prospect of future promotion. Indeed, there appears to be little career path available.

These observations raise a number of important questions, some of which will be explored in this paper. What is the structure of the third sector labour market? What is the staff structure of third sector organisations? Is it true that career paths are unavailable, either within organisations or within the sector? If none exists, why do workers stay in the field? What motivates them? If there is a high turnover of staff, is this the reason? What are the implications of all this? If some sort of career path does exist, why do workers deny having a career? What do we mean by 'career' anyway?

Well these are rather fascinating questions, questions that have been little researched, yet that potentially have huge implications for the sector and its management.

STRUCTURE OF THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

The formal evidence is sparse. Best available guesstimates suggest that there are 100,000 third sector organisations in Australia employing some 400,000 workers (Lyons, 1993). Of these, 46% employ less than 5 workers. At the other extreme, a few large organisations employ between them several thousand workers.

What are the implications of this? The sector is characterised by a great many small organisations with few workers operating in isolation as sole workers or in a small team with a flat structure. On the other hand, the top 20 organisations are huge with elaborated bureaucracies. It would seem that the only career paths to promotion are those located in the big organisations. But even here, most are highly decentralised with a very large flat base and a very small executive structure. It would seem that there is not much room for promotion even here.

To anticipate one of the findings of our research, we found that of those who had changed positions, the majority had either remained within the same organisation (20%) or moved to a smaller one (43%). There appears to be a strong preference for working in small, local organisations (Onyx & Maclean, 1993)

THE PRIMARY/SECONDARY LABOUR MARKET DISTINCTION

Recent moves to establish awards at state, and now at Commonwealth level, have highlighted the poor existing conditions of employment for many community sector workers. Much of the sector has remained award free till very recently. The issues arising from unregulated and exploitative employment practices have been well documented in NSW Council of Social Services publications (Garde and Wheeler, 1985; Wheeler, 1986). Salary levels have been kept artificially low. Because the funding for most positions is dependent on donations and/or annual government grants, there is very little security of tenure, with positions frequently disappearing, or reverting to part-time or casualised positions. Training has, again until recently, been largely unavailable. Opportunities for career progression have been minimal.

The literature, in discussing these characteristics, has drawn on the concepts of dual labour market theory, which posits a segmented, binary labour market. As defined by Barron and Norris, (1976):

1. There is a more or less pronounced division into higher paying and lower paying sectors;
2. Mobility across the boundary of these sectors is restricted;
3. Higher paying jobs are tied into promotional or career ladders, while lower paid jobs offer few opportunities for vertical movement;
4. Higher paying jobs are relatively stable, while lower paid jobs are unstable. While secondary employment may appear relatively permanent and secure in good economic times, it reduces to temporary, insecure or part-time status as economic circumstance deteriorate.

One of the more obvious marks of the primary labour market is the relatively high levels of entry qualifications, combined with access to inservice training and other resources that ensure and enhance high levels of recognised skill. Those in secondary employment may be valued for specific abilities such as manual dexterity or a "caring attitude" but they are nonetheless regarded as basically unskilled, and readily replaceable (Horrell, Rubery and Burchell, 1990; Bennett, 1984; Cox and Leonard, 1991).

Several analyses have further identified that the labour market is highly segmented by gender, such that something like 80% of all employed women are located in the secondary labour market (Barron and Norris, 1976; Dex, 1987). This position is greatly aggravated for women returning to work after child-birth; there is considerable evidence that, even for professionally trained women, the return to work is usually at a reduced status level, with long term negative implications for career advancement (Bird and West, 1987; Dex, 1987; Silverstone and Ward, 1980; Burchell and Rubery, 1990). There is a typical drop to part-time or casualised positions, with lower pay and reduced levels of required skill and responsibility. These losses are seldom regained.

While the analyses referred to above concern the labour market in general (mainly British studies), they have a direct bearing on the Australian community sector labour market. ABS figures indicate that 65% of people in the community services division are women (Jamrozik and Boland, 1993); women represent an estimated 77% of NSW workers employed in private sector community services (O'Donnell, 1985) and their conditions of employment fit well the characteristics of a secondary labour market. Several studies have pursued this approach. Wheeler conducted a detailed employment survey of five organisations in each category of Homecare, Home Nursing, Meals-on-Wheels, Senior Citizens Centres, and Community Centres (Wheeler, 1989). She concludes in broad "The evidence summarised above illustrates that the restructuring of home support services under HACC (Home and Community Care program) is recreating a labour market characterised by divisions of workers into primary and secondary labour markets...labour markets themselves divided by gender, ethnicity, race, and age. It shows the barriers to women's rights to regular secure employment. Those barriers examined here included the nature of employment, pay and conditions, the lack of appropriate education, training and retraining, the lack of career structures and child-care facilities, and use of volunteers. These represent inequities in employment for women" (p226). She goes on to argue that these inequities represent the exploitation of women's traditional nurturing role.

A very similar conclusion is reached by Walker (1989), largely on the basis of census data, and other available secondary sources. She notes in part, "the nature of most paid jobs in the community services are characteristic of the secondary labour market: insecure, low paid, part-time, dead-end, industrially unorganised, and with high labour turnover. There is rigid segmentation between "professional and non-professional jobs, and workers in secondary jobs have little possibility of progressing into professional jobs" (p108). She discusses the labour

market in terms of core and periphery. Beyond the secondary labour market of paid positions, there lies a second peripheral group of volunteers, and a third peripheral group of domestic labour; the presence of these other peripheral groups (mostly women) impacts on the paid labour market, keeping conditions at an artificially low level. The argument presented by Walker, and supported by the work of Baldock (1983), is that, while the skills required may be of a very high level, and indeed valued, they are not recognised as marketable skills, but viewed rather as a natural extension of women's unpaid domestic work and their nurturing role within the family.

The implication of these existing studies is that the community sector labour market within Australia is largely characterised by secondary labour market characteristics, that it is predominantly female, and that there are virtually no opportunities for career path progression. Indeed the prevailing wisdom by community sector workers themselves, is that there is no career structure within the sector.

THE CONCEPT OF CAREER

The very concept of career is problematic, especially for women. Career has been typically defined as "an ordered sequence of development extending over a period of years and involving progressively more responsible roles within an occupation" (Slocum, 1966, in Dex, 1987). Underlying this definition is an assumption of linear upward progression, i.e. a continuous movement from a position of relatively low status, responsibility and remuneration to a higher position. The image is usually one of "climbing a career ladder". Also assumed is the centrality of paid work. It is clear that few women expect, or attain the kind of extended full-time paid employment during their adult working life that offers opportunities for progressively more responsible roles within a single occupation.

However, career theory is much richer and more diverse than this simplistic approach would imply. Indeed career theory, and the empirical test of various approaches has received considerable attention in the mainstream literature.

Sonnenfeld and Kotter (1982) provide a historical overview of the development of career theory. They identify four major approaches to career. The first is identified as the social structural approach, which rests on the sociological tradition of such theorists as Durkheim, Marx, Weber, and which locates career within the structure of society, especially in terms of class. The second tradition, beginning somewhat later, is identified as the individual trait approach. This is based on the psychological tradition of trait theory, has been most influenced by the work of Holland (1972) and locates career within the personality of the individual. The third approach is the career stage approach, developed more recently, and is represented most strongly by the work of Super (1986). Finally, the fourth, or Life cycle approach, is represented most clearly by the work of Levinson (1984). Both Super and Levinson stress the dynamic changing nature of career over time. Each of these theoretical developments, according to Sonnenfeld and Kotter, provides an

increasingly dynamic view of the individual and the environmental context in which he or she operates.

Driver (1980, 1988) has developed a career concept model which identifies four basic but different cognitive maps of career held by people. According to Driver, there are two basic issues concerning the definition of career, and they are the extent to which career choices change over time or stay constant, and the direction of career moves, ie whether sideways or up. Driver's four career concepts are:

"Steady state-career choice is made once for a life-time commitment to an occupation.

Linear-career activity continues throughout life as one moves up an occupational ladder.

Spiral-career choice evolves through a series of occupations (7-10 year duration) where each new choice builds on the past and develops new skills.

Transitory-career choice is almost continuous-fields, organisations, jobs change over 1-4 year intervals with variety the dominant force."

Of the four concepts, the linear model reflects most closely the earlier definition by Slocum, and appears to match current U.S. cultural values. However a number of recent American authors have noted the decreasing appropriateness of the prevailing preoccupation with linear upward mobility, as changing demographic and economic conditions, and shifting organisational practices, make fewer and fewer positions at the top available (Brousseau, 1990; Leach and Chakiris, 1988).

Brousseau (1990) has extended the analysis further, demonstrating that in fact many people, given the choice, prefer to use other than the linear career concept. Each concept is associated with a different pattern of work values. So, while Linear career is desired by those who value prestige, Management skills, high income, power and achievement, those who prefer a steady state concept of career value expertise and security. A spiral concept career is desired by those who value personal growth, creativity, and developing others, while a transitory career is desired by those who value variety and independence. Each career concept carries with it a different pattern of rewards, or work motivation.

The other main approach to career involves some sort of developmental approach. This work either focuses on the developmental processes of making a career choice in early adulthood (eg Gottfredson, 1981), or the stages that can be identified in any career, regardless of the time of life at which it occurs (eg Super, 1986), or the lifecycle developmental processes encompassing the adult lifespan (eg Levinson, 1984). These approaches have in common a recognition of change within the person over time, as well as a recognition of the embeddedness of career within the larger lifespan.

As Sonnenfeld and Kotter (1982) point out, early approaches to career theory were static, and either focused on the social class structure at the exclusion of personal choice, or focused on individual traits, at the exclusion of structural constraints. Both approaches assumed a constant and unchanging person living out an unchanging lifetime in an unchanging world. More recent approaches have acknowledged the real complexity of career in a changing world, but have difficulty, within a positivist paradigm of controlling and measuring the many relevant variables. Thus, the developmental work of both Levinson and Super specifically address the changing needs and interests as people mature and gain experience, but while they acknowledge the importance of various other life experiences, they do not deal with them in any depth, and entirely ignore the larger social structure in which all career choices are embedded. Sonnenfeld and Kotter (1982) developed a model of career development which specifically includes three levels of the life space over time: the work/occupational space, the individual/personal space, and the nonwork/family space. Each of these interact and change over time to create the actual career.

However, such a model still expresses an objective reality, that has little to do with the individual's lived experience. Collin and Young (1986) make a plea for the importance of the subjective. Subjective and intersubjective meanings are constructed by the individual. They develop organically and arise out of the rich context of lived experience. No theory of career is meaningful without reference to the persons own experience.

The question arises as to how these various concepts of career may apply to third sector or nonprofit organisations. Given the variable patterns of motivation identified, one might expect that people who hold different cognitive maps and/or a different motivational base, will be drawn not only to different occupational environments (Holland, 1972; Gottfredson, 1981) but also to different organisational environments. Arguably, the nonprofit sector provides, in general, a very different organisational environment from the corporate sector.

There is very little direct evidence bearing on this. What evidence there is, is entirely American. It is suggested, with some supporting empirical evidence, that people working in the nonprofit sector are at least to some extent driven by ideals of service, and the creation of a better world (Jeavons, 1992; Mirvis, 1992). It is suggested that people who are attracted to value-expressive organisations and have a commitment to the mission are, to a certain extent prepared to forego financial rewards in order to achieve the social goals (Preston, 1990). While this argument is essentially gender neutral, it is often noted both that women predominate in the nonprofit labour market, and that the social values expressed in nonprofit organisations mission are more "naturally" conducive to womens interests and concerns.

PRELIMINARY AUSTRALIAN FINDINGS

I here report research recently conducted by Onyx and MacLean.

The empirical study proceeded through several stages. Given the paucity of documented knowledge on the topic, it was necessary to begin in an exploratory way, through 40 indepth interviews. From this experience, a questionnaire was constructed, piloted and revised. The questionnaire was then administered to community sector (nonprofit) workers throughout NSW. The sample was obtained through the assistance of Local Government Community Services workers in some 10 Local Government Areas, and supplemented with a sample of students attending courses at UTS and their colleagues. Every attempt was made to sample the full range of organisational types, service types, and target client sectors. The sample was largely restricted to those workers with approximately 10 years experience in the community sector in order to be able to track a work history. A final useable sample of 162 questionnaires was obtained.

Sample characteristics reflect the diversity of the community sector labour force. Of the sample, 79% was female. The average age was 42, with 37% over 45, and 34% under 34. Approximately 24% worked in rural areas (mainly Lismore and Orange), 22% worked in regional centres (mainly Wollongong and Maitland), and the remainder in metropolitan Sydney. The sample was a fairly educated one, with 45% having degree or postgraduate qualifications. On the other hand 17% had HSC or less, with the remainder having TAFE certificate or Associate Diploma qualifications (35%). 27% had children under 12. They worked in a variety of organisational types; 46% worked in small local organisations, 12% in peaks, 21% in local branches of large state/national organisations, and 16% in central offices, or large, semi-autonomous organisations.

A third, and supplementary phase of the study involved a comparative analysis of nonprofit and for-profit employees, on key items. For this purpose a small sample of 44 private sector post graduate students at UTS was used. The third phase should be regarded as a pilot for the next major research to be undertaken; preliminary findings of this pilot are presented here. However it should be noted that the private sample differed in several respects, being largely male, urban, well educated and young.

EVIDENCE OF CAREER PROGRESSION

The workers in the nonprofit sample stayed an average of 3 or 4 years within the one position, with older, more senior and rural workers staying longer.

The majority showed some evidence of career progression, ie of upward movement. Workers were asked for each of their last three positions, the level of employment, using a five level scale based broadly on the NSW SACS award. A summary of these results is presented in table 1. The majority of respondents are currently located at levels 3 or 4, that is with moderately responsible positions, though this was not necessarily so for previous positions. Further analyses

identified, that of the 138 cases for which there is sufficient information, 20% maintained a constant level over the past three positions, 58% improved their position, 12% lost ground, but subsequently improved, and 10% lost ground. It should be remembered that the sample was limited to those who had extensive experience in the community sector. Nonetheless, for these people at least, there appeared to be considerable upward movement. At least 33% claimed to have received a promotion within a community organisation. Position level did not appear to be related to any demographic variable. It was **not** the case that males have consistently higher status, nor that senior positions were more likely to be filled by more formally qualified people.

TABLE 1
Position Level (percent response)

	<i>Current position</i>	<i>Past position</i>	<i>Previous position</i>
Level one (assistant)	4	12	18
Level two (direct service)	7	25	30
Level three (substantial responsibility)	37	36	36
Level four (co-ordination)	45	19	12
Level five (higher management)	6	7	4
Number responding	(159)	(154)	(141)

TABLE 2
Moving from last to present Position (percent response)

	<i>Increase</i>	<i>(Private sector sample)</i>	<i>Same</i>	<i>Decrease</i>	<i>Number responding</i>
Salary	58	(75)	20	22	152
Budget responsibility	61	(65)	20	19	139
Staff responsibility	59	(66)	24	17	143
Access to decision making	72	(78)	19	9	148
Prestige	51	(75)	34	15	130

Workers in both the nonprofit sample and the for-profit sample, were asked about shifts in levels of responsibility and prestige, over recent job moves. Table 2 summarises some of these results. Note that the biggest increase was in access to decision making; this may reflect the dominant benefit sought, with other increases accruing as a result. Further analyses suggest that overall, the vast majority of respondents in fact experienced an increase in salary, status, and responsibility, over the past three positions. However, at least 34% of nonprofit sample accepted at least one **drop** in salary. The private for-profit sample experienced higher

levels of increase overall, with significantly higher increased levels of prestige ($X^2 = 7.3$, $p < .03$).

There was also evidence of movement between part-time and full-time status for the nonprofit sample. With regard to current position, 69% of the sample were full-time employed, 29% were part-time, and only 2% casual. However, when examining the work history over the past three positions, a great deal of movement in status is evident, with 48% moving either from part-time to full-time or from full-time to part-time. There is a strong association between job status on the one hand, and gender and the presence of children on the other. As might be expected, women are more likely than males to be part-time ($X^2 = 6.91$, $p < .01$) and those with children under 12 are more likely to be part-time ($X^2 = 14.97$, $p < .02$). There is here evidence of a bimodal career, and this is supported by the interviews. Many women moved into part time work when they had young children, often following a short break from paid work, with a return to full-time employment once the children were older. For some the part-time work was their first experience of the community sector; for others it represented a continuity of field.

So far, the evidence points to at least some career progression within the third sector. While women may drop back to part-time during child rearing, they often return to full-time later, and indeed experience some increase in status and responsibility.

REASONS AND INFLUENCES

The questionnaire explored several aspects of work orientation, or motivation. Two of the more interesting sets of questions concerned workers reasons for entering the community sector (table 3) and the relative importance of a number of influences when applying for their present job (table 4).

TABLE 3
Reasons for Entering the Community Sector (n=162)

<i>Reason</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Influence of family (parents)	6	4
Religious commitment	30	19
Philosophical/political commitment	91	56
Commitment to social change	101	62
Personal Life Experience (eg former service user)	36	22
Volunteer experience	38	24
Study placement	15	9
Hours/location convenient for family commitment/lifestyle	51	32
Only job available (or by chance)	27	17
Other	14	9

There appear to be three kinds of common reason for entering the community sector. The first, and strongest reason (held by 78%) concerns some form of personal commitment to the work itself, and particularly a commitment to social change. The second reason, one held by roughly a third of respondents, is the pragmatic reason of convenience. The third reason, held by at least a quarter of all respondents, is their earlier life experiences, either as a volunteer or as a service user. Very few moved into the community sector by chance or necessity or through family or study influences.

There are some differences in this pattern for different groups of workers. Gender is important for two reasons. Men are more likely than women to enter the community sector for "religious commitment" ($X^2 = 19.66$, $p < .001$). Women are more likely than men to enter because "the hours/location is convenient for family commitment" ($X^2 = 7.63$, $p < .006$). This effect is particularly strong for women with children under 12.

Age is also a relevant variable. Younger workers are more likely to have entered the community sector for reasons of "philosophical/political commitment" ($X^2 = 11.59$, $p < .003$), while the older group is more likely to have entered for pragmatic convenience to family commitments ($X^2 = 5.97$, $p < .05$). Those in more senior positions are more likely to give as reasons, "religious commitment" ($X^2 = 9.53$, $p < .05$), "philosophical/political commitment" ($X^2 = 13.26$, $p < .01$) and "commitment to social change" ($X^2 = 12.25$, $p < .02$). There was no observable difference by rural/urban location, or organisational type.

Respondents were also asked how important each of a number of reasons was in influencing their decision to apply for their current job. An overall summary of responses, is provided in table 4. The percent recording "strong attraction" is presented for both the community (nonprofit) sample and for the private (for profit) sample.

TABLE 4
Job Influences

	<i>Mean Importance Community</i>	<i>Percent 'Strong Attraction'</i>		<i>X'</i>	<i>P</i>
		<i>Community (N=162)</i>	<i>Private (N=44)</i>		
To extend personal skill	2.59	65	64	.18	non sig
More Interesting challenging work	2.57	66	66	1.06	"
A good group of people to work with	2.38	53	21	17.79	<.005
To contribute to social change	2.33	52	9	37.95	<.000
To work with a new client group	2.19	45	25	9.99	<.018
To network with other agencies	2.13	36	16	25.81	<.000
To influence policy development	2.03	35	25	2.12	non sig
To create a new service	1.99	37	25	3.27	"
Good organisational philosophy	2.29	46	23	13.18	<.004
The chance to work independently	2.27	44	39	4.91	non sig
More access to decision making	2.11	41	41	.72	"
Good management structure	1.97	30	30	3.68	"
Increased staff responsibility	1.81	24	25	.05	"
Increased budget responsibility	1.73	21	28	.95	"
Future career opportunities	1.75	24	64	28.21	<.000
Formal training opportunities	1.69	21	25	1.53	non sig
Convenient location	1.90	30	14	8.06	<.045
Increased salary rate	1.69	19	39	9.88	<.02
More flexible hours	1.58	17	7	5.90	non sig
Secure tenure	1.58	17	30	13.44	<.004
Greater prestige (* scored from not relevant/not offered = 1, somewhat relevant = 2, a strong attraction = 3)	1.48	14	32	20.33	<.000

The reasons given may be roughly clustered, in descending order of importance for the community sample as follows:

- Strongest attraction for most non-profit workers was the opportunity for interesting, challenging work and the opportunity to extend personal skills. These may be indicative of a strong personal development motivation. This was also the most important attraction for the private sample. There was no difference between samples.
- Almost as important was the social dimension; a good group of people to work with; this was much less important for the (largely male) private sector workers.

- A social action motivation was moderate to strong for many. Items include (in descending order of importance) the chance to contribute to social change, to work with a new client group, to network with other agencies. These reasons were significantly less salient for the private sector workers.
- Moderately strong were reasons associated with work mode; good organisational philosophy, the chance to work independently, access to decision making, and good management structure.
- Less important for most community sector workers, but important for about a quarter of all respondents were reasons associated with career development; increased staff and budget responsibilities, future career opportunities, formal training opportunities.
- Again less important for most community sector workers, but important for some were the pragmatics of working conditions: convenient location, salary, flexible hours and secure tenure.
- Least important to nonprofit workers, but moderately important to for-profit workers was greater prestige.

Those items relating to personal upward career movement were significantly more likely to be rated a strong attraction by private for-profit employees (future career opportunities, increased salary, secure tenure, greater prestige).

Further analyses examined the extent to which the pattern of responses for the nonprofit employees varied by age, gender, education, location, and position level. There were some differences, but the large number of cells made testing unreliable. However such differences as were found were marginal. The strongest outcome was the consistency of response across all categories of respondents, within the community sector.

Over a third of all community respondents had accepted a salary drop at some stage in the last three career positions. They were asked why they had done so. Very few had done so from necessity. Of those who had accepted a career drop, 70% were offered a "challenging/interesting job", 59% were offered "the opportunity for new skills". Other common reasons were "good experience" (46%), "religious/philosophical commitment" (41%), "More autonomy" (34%), "convenient for self" (44%), or "family" (26%), and "long term career advantages" (23%). These responses are consistent with those expressed in table 4, and suggest the predominance, for many, of non-financial considerations.

One other test of non-monetary commitment is the extent of volunteering among paid staff. Over 70% of all respondents claimed to work additional unpaid work for their own

organisation; the estimated average was over 20 hours per month. Many non-profit workers also contributed unpaid hours to other organisations (management committees, direct service delivery, and political action). Gender made no difference to these patterns, but age did; the younger workers were less likely to be involved in unpaid service delivery ($X^2=6.97, p<.03$). Those with young children were more likely to be involved in "club activities" ($X^2=7.54, p<.05$), while those in senior position were more likely to be on other management committees ($X^2=16.82, p<.002$). Private sector employees were just as likely to work unpaid overtime for their own organisations, and to be involved in club activities, but they were significantly less likely to be involved in management committees ($X^2=13.33, p<.0003$), direct service delivery ($X^2=10.29, p<.001$) or political action ($X^2=5.35, p<.02$).

DISCUSSION

The results presented here are exploratory rather than definitive. Nonetheless some fairly strong conclusions present themselves. It is important to emphasise that these results do not examine the objective conditions of employment. As many respondents made clear, there continues to be insecure, poorly paid, stressful conditions of work within the third sector. We have no doubt that exploitation is rampant. However this study examines why workers seek a career within the nonprofit or community sector.

First, it is clear that there is some sort of career progression. Not everyone has had this experience, and there is certainly evidence of poor work conditions and loss of salary and status. Nonetheless the majority of workers who responded to this questionnaire had experienced an improvement in position over the past 10 years. Many were promoted; others moved organisation. Most experienced an increase in salary, status, and responsibility. It is likely that the sample was biased in that these were the stayers. Nonetheless the results give the lie to the idea that career advancement in the community sector is impossible. Perhaps we are witnessing a coming of age of the industry, as award conditions are introduced, and as community sector workers take their work more seriously as "real work". Clearly, not only is it real work, but it also supports "real careers". This is so despite the frequent denial frequently expressed in terms of "the community sector doesn't really have a career structure".

Having said that, however, it is equally clear that the majority of workers are not oriented towards a linear career model. The classic notion of career as consistent progress upward towards greater prestige, power, and financial rewards, is simply inapplicable to the majority of respondents. The evidence for this is plentiful. Prestige, salary, secure tenure, were very low priority when it came to applying for a particular position. Over a third of the respondents had accepted a salary drop at some stage. There were examples of job changes that did not entail a career advancement, but were sideways moves made because the new job appeared interesting and challenging. A typical comment from an older woman in Sydney makes the point "I didn't see myself as having a "career"-more a series of interesting

worthwhile jobs".

The very strong, dominant motivation, both for entering the community sector, and for seeking particular jobs, related to strong social values. There is a very strong commitment to making the world a better place, either by helping other, disadvantaged people, or by working towards social change at the broad level. This broadly supports the findings of U.S. studies of non profits (Mirvis, 1992). To a certain extent workers seem to be prepared to forego higher salary for the sake of doing worthwhile work ("it feels good to work not only for the paypacket"). The desire to contribute to social change was the single biggest discriminator between community sector and private sector employees.

However, interestingly, both private sector and community sector employees placed a high premium on personal development. The desire to extend personal skills and to find interesting, challenging work was **the** paramount motivation for both samples. For the private sample, this personal development motivation was combined with a strong desire for status advance; for the community sample it was combined with strong social values. For the community sample the emphasis on personal development appears to be the other side of the social values coin. The two go together. That is, while there is strong evidence of a social commitment to the work itself, this is not put in terms of personal sacrifice, or duty to help others, but rather a commitment to work that is **both** socially worthwhile and personally rewarding.

In terms of Drivers four career concepts, the linear career model, with its emphasis on continuous upward mobility to positions of increased power and remuneration, appears more appropriate to the private sector sample. However other career concepts may be appropriate to both. Both samples appear to value challenge, variety, independence. These are marks of the transitory career concept, one marked by frequent sideways changes.

The spiral career concept may be particularly relevant to the community sector. Driver identifies the spiral career concept as emphasising an integrative decision style and personal growth and nurturance (Driver 1980). People who hold the spiral career concept seek creativity, interpersonal closeness, generativity. Brousseau (1990) notes that the spiral careerist prefers to work in an organisational structure marked by open systems, low structure, and semi-autonomous work units - all common features of nonprofit organisations. Or at least these features are common to those small, local, or decentralised work places that were the preferred organisational structures of this sample of community sector employees.

However both Driver and Brousseau ignore gender issues. The results of the present study clearly demonstrate the continuing importance of gender issues. It is **not** that men in nonprofits are advantaged in terms of career progression, at least for this sample, except that men are more likely to be full-time (and therefore on a full salary). Men come into the

community sector for much the same reasons as women do, and demonstrate much the same commitment. They hold much the same levels of responsibility overall (at least for this sample) and are as likely to experience career progression. It is likely, as Preston (1990) notes for her American sample, that men are similar to women in the nonprofit sector, but experience considerably greater (40%) salary loss in relation to the broader labour market. This may (partly) account for the small numbers of men in the sector. In the present comparative study, private sector males, were significantly more likely to have experienced a salary increase than community sector males but the overall difference (for females) was not significant. This also confirms Prestons finding of the relatively greater disadvantage for males in the nonprofit sector.

Women's career choices on the other hand are clearly shaped by family duties in general, and by child care constraints in particular. Women with young children are more likely to accept a job because it fits in to their family duties, than because they are committed to the work. They are more likely to accept or seek, part-time work. Fortunately, in the community sector, the two can often go together, which may explain the attractiveness of community sector work among this cohort of women. As one woman put it "My career in the community sector worked well for me with the family commitment being my main focus".

IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Both Driver (1980) and Brousseau (1990) are concerned primarily with Organisational Development - with the development of an organisational culture, structure and reward system that is most appropriate for the organisational mission, one that brings out the best potential of its employees. This means, partly, tailoring the organisation to the motivational concerns of the employees. There is no point in offering promotional ladders to people who aren't interested. Or in forcing creative autonomous people into rigid bureaucracies. It's a matter of horses for courses, sometimes tailoring the courses to suit the horses.

Brousseau contrasts the ideal human resource strategies for each career pattern. So:

- For transitory careerists, the ideal organisational structure is one of low formality, with ad hoc teams. The appropriate reward system involves job rotation and flexible working patterns.
- For the steady state careerist, the ideal organisational structure is flat with few levels, (or horizontal departments within a larger structure) with clearly defined speciality grades and rules. The appropriate reward system is based on security of tenure and benefits, and speciality assignments that offer acknowledgment of expertise.
- For linear careerists the ideal organisational structure is the pyramid, with lots of room

for upward movement. The appropriate reward system is promotions, perquisites, increased status.

- For spiral careerists the ideal organisational structure is open, with semi-autonomous work units with lots of opportunity for special assignments, new challenges and the development of new skills (and appropriate salary). The appropriate reward system is based on these ingredients; new assignments, training opportunities, perhaps an occasional cash bonus or travel opportunity.

To all of this must be added a gender dimension. Women are just as committed as men to a quality career. They are more likely than men to be attracted to the community sector. Many appear to hold a motivational pattern that fits most closely the spiral career concept. They are also strongly committed to the social values of the organisation.

But women, especially in the middle years, also tend to have family responsibilities that cannot be dropped. Many women in the community sector appear to be seeking a balance between paid work and family. That means they need part-time work with flexible hours that is close to home while the children are young. Later, as the children grow older, they may wish to revert to more demanding paid work schedules.

Nonprofit organisations are in the very fortunate position of being able to attract highly skilled, qualified, committed people for fairly modest financial returns. Few organisations are in a position to offer much in the way of linear career rewards. There is not a great deal of room for upward progression; salaries are well below those of comparable level in the private sector. Fortunately, these rewards are less important to most community sector workers. However that is not an excuse for exploitation. Workers do want a fair salary and status. But other incentives are more important, incentives that are well within the scope of good nonprofit organisational practice. Not money so much as flexibility and challenge. Not power so much as shared decision making. Not prestige so much as recognition of the value of the work. Not promotions so much as new learning opportunities.

It is incumbent on nonprofit organisations to respect the motivational base of its employees, and to provide an organisational climate that avoids exploitative and unfair practices, that maximises the productive capacity of its workers, and that does so by providing appropriate decision making structures and personal incentives. Such is the formula for excellence.

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