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The Psychology of Careers in Industrial - Organizational Settings:

A Critical but Appreciative Analysis

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March 2007

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Introduction

We have been struck by the reflective mood of many of the contributions since the previous review of the careers in this series (Arnold, 1997a). It appears that this has been a time to take stock. The words 'critical but appreciative' in our title have been borrowed from Alan Bryman's (2004) review of qualitative research on leadership. They reflect our opinion that there has been much creative and constructive work in the careers field over the last decade or so, but also some significant weaknesses and limitations. This applies to both theoretical and empirical work.

To start with we will explain how we have approached the writing of this chapter. First, given the nature of this publication, we focus mainly on careers in organizational workplaces. This means we have placed in the background the extensive work on vocational choice and career counseling outside organizational contexts, thus reflecting a divergence that is perhaps regrettable (Erdheim, Zickar, & Yankelevich, 2007), but real nevertheless. Second, we have tried to be open to careers research that is highly relevant to I/O psychology, but originates from other disciplinary perspectives and/or is published in outlets not at the top of most I/O psychologists' priority lists. Third, we have been selective. We felt that a review that attempted to encompass all significant aspects of careers in organizations would be very bland, with just the briefest of comments as we rushed from one study or topic to another. That would be a catalogue, not a review. Therefore we tend to discuss a moderate number of studies in some detail rather than a very large number in one sentence each. Fourth, we have not, on the whole, included the HRM-oriented literature on career management interventions run by organizations, except where they focus heavily on individuals' careers. Coverage of that can be found in Arnold (1997b) and Baruch (2004). Finally, we have chosen topics that we believe reflect a combination of the most vibrant research areas and the most vital to the future of careers research in I/O psychology.

After this introduction we briefly analyze the contexts in which careers are being enacted. We suggest that whilst there is a lot of change about, there has probably never been a time in living memory when people thought otherwise. We also argue that disciplines other than I-O psychology can contribute to our understanding of careers in the new millennium. Then we offer an analysis of two currently dominant concepts in psychologically-oriented careers research: namely boundaryless and protean careers. We conclude that, whilst these helpfully highlight some career phenomena, they tend to be used too carelessly and (worse) treated as an objective and welcome reality. Competing conceptions of career, as well as turbulent times, call into question the nature of a successful career and how individuals can ensure they have one. We therefore examine the voluminous literature on career success and the role of individual career management in it. We believe that more imaginative outcome variables, more sophisticated methods, tighter conceptual structures and more attention to context are required in order to make major progress, although there is some very good work available. Because the formal structures supporting careers have weakened, we then pay close attention to the role of social relationships in careers. Here we combine research on mentoring with several other strands. We draw some similar conclusions to those about career success, but we also argue that some innovative concepts and theories are emerging that bode well for the future. Finally, we draw some overall conclusions for the future of careers research in I-O psychology.

We take as our working definition of career 'the unfolding sequence of a person's work experience over time' (Arthur & Rousseau,1996, p. 6). This definition avoids making assumptions about the setting or form of a career. It also allows for exploration of individuals and social contexts, and of their interplay. This definition likewise acknowledges temporal, and potentially spatial dimensions of experience. Given the 'elasticity' (Collin & Young, 2000) of the career concept, we feel that sharpening the focus in this way enhances its analytical value. Savickas (2002) highlights subjective sense-making as central to the career concept: 'the essential point is that career denotes a reflection on the course of one's vocational behavior; it is not vocational behavior.' In this chapter, therefore, we will emphasize the meaning that the person attaches to his or her career path, rather than restricting ourselves to objectively observable patterns of movement through organizational or occupational

hierarchies. Second, echoing our point above, Savickas argues that the notion of development, of movement through time, is fundamental to the career concept. In his view the concern of careers is not 'how to fit people into occupations', but rather 'how individuals produce their own development' (p. 384).

The socio-economic context of careers

Despite our emphasis on the subjective, the external conditions in which careers are enacted cannot be ignored. There is a growing consensus that we are experiencing an irreversible change in the organization of our working lives and the structures and cultures of our working environments. In his critique of what he describes as 'flexible capitalism', Sennett (1998) comments:

> Today the phrase 'flexible capitalism' describes a system which is more than a permutation on an old theme. The emphasis is on flexibility. Rigid forms of bureaucracy are under attack, as are the evils of blind routine. Workers are asked to behave nimbly, to be open to change at short notice, to take risks continually, to become ever less dependent on regulations and formal procedures. The emphasis on flexibility is changing the very meaning of work (p. 9).

Given the extent to which the notion of bureaucracy is embedded within the concept of career, the changes described by Sennett could have significant repercussions for the ways in which careers are understood, enacted and managed. Indeed, in recent years the issue of context has become increasingly important to careers researchers, with implications for the kinds of empirical settings researchers are choosing to focus on (Cohen & Mallon, 1999; Baruch & Budwhar, 2006; Leong & Hartung, 2000; Pieperl et al., 2000), career policy (Watts, 2000), the development of conceptual understanding (Iellatchitch, Mayrhofer & Myer, 2003; Collin, 2006) and even for the concept of career itself (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999; Hall, 2002).

Storey (2000) has highlighted the process of globalization as having important consequences for the structure of career opportunities and career enactment.

Deregulation and the liberalisation of trade, most notably in financial markets, telecommunications and transport, have had a significant impact on the structure of organizations and the experience of work across the world. Noon & Blyton (2002) suggested that such policies have been implemented most visibly in what they describe as 'supranational alliances' in North America, South East Asia and Europe. Whilst in North America and Asia these alliances have remained largely economic entities, in Europe their aspirations are much more extensive, including political, legal and social objectives which are having far-reaching consequences for work, employment and career. For example, they cite recent European legislation regarding the employment rights of part-time workers, which could have significant implications for women's career development (Tomlinson, 2006).

The rapid process of globalization has drawn researchers' attention to the hitherto narrow focus on Western career contexts and actors. The importance of moving beyond these narrow parameters has been highlighted (El-Sawad, Ackers & Cohen, 2006; Leong & Hartung, 2000) and so has the need to take culture seriously, an issue which Stead (2004) argues has been sidelined in much career theorising. Importantly, notwithstanding pressures of institutional isomorphism, Storey (2000) argues that globalization will not inevitably lead towards greater homogeneity, but could result in diverse arrangements depending on national cultural contexts, local labor markets and sectoral considerations – again, highlighting the importance of extending the range of our empirical and conceptual gaze.

Technological developments and intense competition have encouraged companies to move quickly between geographical areas in search of labor cost efficiencies, higher levels of productivity and greater market share. This could have significant implications for the kinds of careers available within organizations and for individual career sense-making and enactment. In particular, commentators point to increasing insecurity and uncertainty (Arnold, 2001; Cohen & El-Sawad, 2006; Sennett, 1998), and a growing bifurcation in the labor market between those in a position to reap the benefits of the new, flexible career environment increasingly distant and those less able to gain a foothold (Noon & Blyton, 2002; Richardson, 2000). This division is partly related to changing employment patterns: an increase in temporary contracts and part-time work, and growing numbers of self-employed and portfolio workers

(Savickas, 2000; Tomlinson, 2006; Platman, 2004; Cohen & Mallon, 1999), with implications in particular for women, people from some minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities, given their disproportionate representation in these more precarious sectors (Hopfl & Hornby Atkinson, 2000; Woodhams & Danieli, 2000; Lamba, 2003).

On an organizational level, inextricably linked to the more macro features already noted, are wide-ranging and almost continual processes of re-structuring, such as de-layering and down-sizing which aim to reduce workforce size and the number of hierarchical levels in an effort to increase flexibility and adaptability (Cascio & Wynn, 2004; Noon & Blyton, 2002). Although the extent and permanence of change in the organizational context of careers is contested (Baruch, 2006; Cappelli, 1999; Jacoby, 1999), it is change at the organizational level of analysis which has above all captured the attention of careers researchers. Job insecurity, 'contingent' (i.e. not full-time or permanent) employment (Feldman, 2006), and unemployment of executives and professionals have all received attention. Although there is quite strong evidence that perceived job insecurity reduces psychological well-being (Hellgren & Sverke, 2003), it has become apparent that contingent employment is not necessarily associated with negative attitudes, performance or well-being (Guest, 2004a,b). Whether the person is on their preferred type of contract, and whether it is in line with their expectations at the outset are key factors. The evidence that involuntary unemployment generally has negative effects on people is well-established (Winefield, 2002). Recent work has extended this finding to the underemployment (Feldman, Leana, & Bolino, 2002) and mature-age unemployment (Ranzijn, Carson, Winefield & Price, 2006) that can occur as a result of downsizing and delayering.

However, discussion about organizational changes and careers extends far beyond the behavioral and attitudinal consequences of insecure or interrupted employment. There have been wide-ranging debates into the implications for career forms and structures (including how careers are enacted in time and space), ideological underpinnings and permeating values, notions of career success, and the roles of social networks and individual agency (as opposed to organizational processes) in shaping careers. We will examine these debates in this chapter.

The academic context of careers research

Although thus far our discussion has concentrated on change in the contexts in which contemporary careers are located, we certainly do not wish to obscure or ignore continuity and coherence. This continuity ironically extends to statements about the pace of change. Here is an extract from Wright Mill's *The Sociological Imagination*:

> In what period have so many men [sic] been so totally exposed at so fast a pace to such earthquakes of change? … The history that now affects every man is world history… The very shaping of history now outpaces the ability of men to orient themselves in accordance with cherished values. And which values? Even when they do not panic, men often sense that their older ways of feeling and thinking have collapsed and that newer beginnings are ambiguous to the point of moral stasis (1959: 4,5).

The familiarity of this sentiment is uncanny. Although Wright Mills was writing in 1959, it could have been today. Cullinane and Dundon (2006), in a review of the psychological contract literature, describe our tendency to portray the past as stable, secure and understandable, in contrast to the turbulent and complex present. Like Cullinane and Dundon, we would take issue with the implicit suggestion that this new career world is all change, in contrast to the 'traditional', stable and coherent, one of old. On the contrary, we would argue that many of the same issues which preoccupied careers scholars throughout the last century continue to engage us today. Writing back in 1961, Goffman described career as both an objective phenomenon and a subjective process:

> Traditionally the term career has been reserved for those who expect to enjoy rises laid out within a respectable profession. The term is coming to be used, however, in a broadened sense to refer to any social strand of a person's course through life…The concept of career, then, allows one to move back and forth between the personal and the public, between the self and its significant society (1961: 127).

Embedded within this quote are complex questions which have always stimulated careers researchers' imaginations regarding how we understand individuals' development through time and space. However, at any given time certain features come to the fore, and then fade as others surface. To avoid reification and the reliance on taken-for-granted assumptions, it is important that researchers continue to examine not only these features themselves, but also the reasons for their visibility or obfuscation (Evetts, 1992). Quite apart from how significant a particular change might turn out to be, a focus on change can help us to avoid complacency and the taking for granted of unexplored assumptions in career theorising.

It is apparent that career theory, like organization theory, has become more multidisciplinary in recent years. In addition to the psychological perspectives which have largely dominated the field, theorists have attempted to apply macro social and cultural theory to career settings. Since the work of the Chicago school of sociologists in the 1930s, there has been a minority of careers researchers interested in career as a conceptual vehicle which recursively links the individual to the organization and, significantly, to the wider, changing social world. In the past ten years scholars have, for example, drawn on Giddens' structuration theory (Duberley, Cohen & Mallon, 2006) and Bourdieu (Iellatchitch, Mayrhofer & Myer, 2003) to further develop our understandings of the relationships between these spheres, and the role of career in this interplay.

The organizational theorists Grey (1994), Fournier (1998) and Savage (1998) have used Foucauldian notions of discipline, surveillance, and the concept of the career as a project of the self to explore the relationship between organizational control and career development. Savage's paper, in which he examines the development of 'career ladders' on the Great Western Railway (1833-1914), is particularly notable for its historical perspective. This is rare within the careers literature with its almost myopic focus on the 'here and now' - a focus which is somewhat ironic given the temporal dimension of the career concept. The intersection of career, discipline and control is further explored by El-Sawad (2005) in her examination of metaphors-in-use by respondents working in a blue chip company. El-Sawad argues that the pursuit of career must be seen as a politicized process, a view which she suggests is

at odds with ideas of individual choice, freedom and empowerment implicit in much contemporary career discourse.

The last few years have seen a growing interest in non-positivist perspectives and methodologies designed to provide insights into the lived experience of career, including for example, culture, power and powerlessness, ideology, emotion and the role of others in career sense-making and enactment. In particular, constructionist and social constructionist approaches have received considerable attention, not only in facilitating a 'critical stance towards taken for granted knowledge' (Burr, 1995), but also drawing attention to issues of reflexivity, highlighting that 'as epistemic subjects we are all complicit in the processes through which we socially construct versions of reality' (Cohen, Duberley & Mallon, 2004: 420). This turn away from correspondence theories of truth has encouraged the development of methodologies such as story and narrative approaches (Bosley, Arnold & Cohen, 2007; Bujold, 2004; Platman, 2004), discourse analysis (Coupland, 2004; Cohen, Arnold, Wilkinson & Finn, 2005), metaphors (El-Sawad, 2005; Inkson, 2006; Mignot, 2004) and family and life histories (Schulteiss, Kress, Manzi & Glasscock, 2001). This interest is further evidenced by the increasing numbers of articles using such approaches in careers journals, and journal special issues (e.g. Young & Collin, 2004).

Protean and boundaryless careers

Linked to the contextual changes discussed earlier, within the last decade there has been a growing consensus about the demise of the 'traditional', bureaucratic career (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999; Hall, 2002; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006) with its implicit sense of advancement from humble beginnings to more senior positions. Although the extent to which most careers ever did conform to this model is debatable, such patterns are increasingly being discredited as stultifying individuals' initiative and promoting an unhealthy dependence on organizations (Herriot & Pemberton, 1995; Briscoe & Hall, 2006). In their place more embracing notions of career, based on the accumulation of skills and knowledge and the integration of professional and personal life are being promoted. Metaphors of boundaryless and protean careers

have been developed to capture this changing landscape (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006; Hall & Mirvis, 1996; Briscoe & Hall, 2006).

These metaphors have rapidly become incorporated into ways of thinking and talking about career. A search of 'boundaryless career' in Google Scholar produced nearly 2,000 hits, while for 'protean career' it was over 6,000. Indeed, such is their growing legitimacy that it is now commonplace to hear references, both in academic and popular contexts, to this as the 'era of the boundaryless career', or these as 'protean career times'. Clearly these metaphors have resounded powerfully in the current career context. However, in our view these emerging ideas are all too often taken as given rather than subjected to critical scrutiny. In Evetts' (1992) terms, we are concerned that they are fast becoming reified, and being used as mirrors which reflect the social world, rather than as lenses which offer a particular perspective on it. In this section we will expand on these concerns.

Although the notions of protean and boundaryless careers have at times been used synonymously, as a shorthand to connote careers that do not conform to bureaucratic norms (Briscoe & Hall, 2006), in a recent issue of *Journal of Vocational Behavior* leading proponents of the concepts have argued that collapsing them in this way dilutes their analytic potential (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). In what follows we briefly summarize the distinctive features of boundaryless and protean metaphors as represented by these writers, and subject them to critical scrutiny.

Conceptualizing the boundaryless career

Arthur and Rousseau (1996) edited a collection of papers on the boundaryless career which was to have significant impact on the ways in which academics and potentially also practitioners and career actors themselves, make sense of career. In their introduction, the editors outlined their use of the metaphor, identifying six different, but related meanings:

1. Careers that transcend the boundaries of different employers;

2. That draw validity and marketability from outside the present employing organization
3. That are sustained and supported by external networks;
4. That challenge traditional assumptions about career advancement and movement up through an organizational hierarchy;
5. In which individuals reject opportunities for advancement in favour of personal or family reasons; and
6. Careers that are based on the actor's interpretation, who may see their career as boundaryless regardless of contextual constraints.

Permeating all six meanings is a focus on the weakening of people's ties with organizations in the construction and enactment of career. As DeFillipi and Arthur stated in their contribution to that collection, 'Put simply, boundaryless careers are the opposite of 'organizational careers' – careers conceived to unfold in a single employment setting' (1996: 5). For us this statement raises some important questions about the use of the boundaryless metaphor.

Boundaryless vs organizational careers?

First, we challenge the claims that organizational careers happen within single organizational contexts, and that simply not remaining, or not intending to remain, with one firm can be seen as a version of boundarylessness. In our work with business and management students over the years, as well as in our research into professional work (Cohen, Arnold, Wilkinson & Finn, 2005), scientific careers (Duberley, Cohen & Mallon, 2006), careers in the UK National Health Service (Arnold, Loan-Clarke, Coombs, Wilkinson, Park & Preston, 2006) and graduate careers (Arnold, Schalk, Bosley, & Van Overbeek, 2002), we have talked to countless people who continue to describe their careers in organizational terms, with implied notions of hierarchical movement, and who see experience in diverse organizations as essential to developing the credibility, knowledge and social capital required to progress. Indeed, many of these people described such change as a widely recognized requirement for upward movement in their chosen fields. Applying the

boundaryless concept to expatriate careers, Stahl, Miller and Tung (2002) argued that their finding that expatriates saw their international assignments as an opportunity for career advancement, though possibly not within their current firm, provides evidence for the boundaryless career concept. Far from illustrating a boundaryless orientation, we suggest that in their respondents' occupational sectors, movement between organizations could be wholly compatible with established career trajectories and notions of career progress.

Second, we take issue with the idea that boundaryless and organizational careers are opposites. In particular, we cannot conceive of what this dichotomization might look like in practice. Surely both are simply metaphors which serve to direct our attention towards certain aspects of career thinking and action, and away from others (Tietze, Cohen & Musson, 2003). Careers in certain sectors, particularly California's Silicon Valley (Saxenian, 1996) and the arts (Jones, 1996) are frequently held up as the quintessential examples of boundarylessness. However in both cases there are important elements of organization which impact on individuals' careers in diverse ways. Indeed, how individuals negotiate with these elements in constructing their careers is a fascinating process. We would argue that the dichotomization of organizational and boundaryless careers leads to simplistic analyses which fail to account for the complex interplay between organizations and individuals, and between enablement and constraint.

Gunz, Evans and Jalland (2000) argued that while organizations have become increasingly permeable in a range of ways, this has not resulted in an ontological condition of boundarylessness. Rather, it has led to 'different kinds of boundaries becoming salient' (2000, p. 25), highlighting in particular timescales, life cycle stages, geographical and inter-firm relationships, secrecy, regulation and intellectual differentiation. Gunz, Evans and Jalland criticize much of the emerging literature, such that boundaryless is seen not as an illuminating theoretical lens, but rather as a normative prescription. In their words:

> At present, the boundaryless career argument is eerily reminiscent of the
> quest for the 'one best way' that dominated management and organization
> writing for the first half of the 20th century. Boundaryless careers, so the

argument goes, are the way of the future, and the only question is learning how to live in a world of boundarylessness (2000: 50).

We have considerable sympathy with this view and likewise are wary of the strongly judgemental overtones of some of contributions to this literature. In our view, the boundaryless career concept must be seen as inextricably linked to the political and cultural circumstances in which it emerged: a highly conservative context dominated by notions of individualism, short-termism and career marketability (Sennett, 1998). As Lips-Wiersma and McMorland (2006) have argued:

> Several parameters of career success suggested by boundaryless career theory, such as portable skills and adaptability, seem to be primarily directed by market forces external to the individual. The driver for change is thus predominantly economic necessity … the self becomes 'career brand', the marketable, employable unit (150).

Lips-Wiersma and McMorland advocate the introduction of the notion of vocation to the boundaryless concept as a way of overcoming the instrumental orientation implicit in much writing on boundarylessness. We likewise have reservations about this apparently instrumental perspective and agree that the concept of vocation has much to offer. However, in our view a renewed interest in vocation (see also Hall & Chandler, 2005) will not address the deeper problem that Lips-Wiersma and McMorland highlight. Although conceived as an antidote to stifling organizational careers, one might suggest that the boundaryless career concept is a response to an increasingly insecure organizational career world in which individuals have become casualties of a focus on short-term advantage at the expense of longer term commitment and responsibility. Sennett (1998) has argued that without clear paths, individuals are left vulnerable to 'the sense of aimlessness which constitutes the deepest sense of anxiety' (p.120) - a sharp contrast to the joys of boundarylessness evoked in much of the literature. Whilst certainly a minority view, other writers have echoed Sennett's concerns (Richardson, 2000; Hirsch & Shanley, 1996). In particular, these authors argue that, because of structures of opportunity and access to career capital, some people are more able than others to reap its benefits:

Particularly neglected have been the costs of transition for major segments of the workforce – older employees who lose out in the stepped-up tournaments of the new organizational era, and their younger peripheralized counterparts (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996, p. 219).

However, these more critical voices are largely drowned in a chorus of approval and celebration of the boundaryless career as a self-evident and pervasive context for 21st century careers.

The boundaryless metaphor

Responding to calls for greater conceptual clarity (Inkson, 2002; Pringle & Mallon, 2003), Sullivan and Arthur (2006) have recently elaborated on the nature of the boundaries in question. Whilst originally referring to organizational boundaries most specifically, here they widen their scope to include occupational and cultural ones as well. Interestingly though, they do not emphasize firm location which, particularly in the light of developments in business process outsourcing and offshoring, could have significant implications for perceptions of career boundaries and boundary transgression. The measures of 'boundaryless mindset' and 'mobility preference' reported by Briscoe et al. (2006 p. 35) focus almost exclusively on organizational boundaries, which seems strange given the multi-faceted nature of boundarylessness described by Arthur and Rousseau (1996).

Sullivan and Arthur (2006) have distinguished between what they describe as physical and psychological boundaries implicit in the six meanings. They argue that whilst much research attention has focused on the former, the crossing of psychological boundaries has been relatively neglected. Briscoe and Hall (2006) likewise have distinguished between physical and psychological aspects in their comparison of protean and boundaryless career concepts. Fundamental to this distinction is a view of what is physical which we find slightly perplexing. Sullivan and Arthur cite 'occupations, firms, levels' (2006, p. 21) as examples of physical boundaries. However, it seems to us that people often cross boundaries between work roles or organizational levels without making any physical moves at all.

Conversely, we would argue that people who move between organizational sites, but with no change in job or level, might well be seen as transcending physical boundaries – though Sullivan and Arthur do not appear to include them as such. Whilst we do not wish to wallow in petty detail here, we believe that given its centrality to the boundaryless career concept, this rather fuzzy notion of the physical boundary is problematic given its centrality to the boundaryless career concept.

Sullivan and Arthur (2006) explained that because much of the literature on boundaryless careers to date has focused on physical movement, the concept could appear to be rather inflexible. They argued that it is in taking account of the psychological dimension that its versatility becomes apparent. However, in our view this 'versatility' could be the concept's downfall. If all career movement, whether psychological or physical (and also including movement that actually isn't even necessarily physical, but rather has to do with task and activity) is included, then does this mean that any career that isn't absolutely still, fixed and unchanging can be considered boundaryless? And if this is the case, doesn't the metaphor lose its analytic purchase? The power of metaphor lies in its potential to trigger new understandings and reveal hitherto unrealised or obscured meanings. In the career field, this has been vividly illustrated in Inkson's (2006) analysis of working life from a metaphorical perspective, and El-Sawad's (2005) examination of the metaphors used by employees to describe and explain their career development within a blue chip corporation.

However, within metaphor theory, there is a view that some metaphors become so diffuse that they cease to be valuable as heuristic devices (Derrida, 1978). Referred to as 'dead' metaphors, 'the lustre of the original metaphor has worn off, become literalised… the familiarity of the terms has erased their rhetorical value, like a coin whose faced is rubbed out from wear and tear, transforming it from currency to simple metal' (Johnson, 1997, p. 87). While such dead metaphors may cease to illuminate new meanings, they are nevertheless interesting to us precisely because they draw our attention to what is taken for granted. This happened in the case of the ladder and pathway metaphors that until recently dominated much career thinking and theorizing. Taking a critical look at this rhetoric (in the way that Gowler and Legge did in their important 1989 paper) gives us fresh insight into the underpinning

ideologies and how the ideas are played out in practice. Similarly, we would argue that as the boundaryless career metaphor becomes more diffuse, as it is seen as increasingly 'versatile', in the words of Sullivan and Arthur, it could also lose its potential to challenge, provoke and illuminate, becoming instead a sort of rhetorical vehicle for the reproduction of embedded ideologies and practices.

National boundaries

The management of expatriate careers within organizations has been a topic of intense research interest for some years (e.g. Black, Mendenhall, & Ouddou, 1991). Although these expatriates cross national boundaries, their status as boundaryless careerists is somewhat unclear, since they do not necessarily meet any of the six criteria set out by Arthur and Rousseau (1996). In fact, those who decline overseas assignments in the face of corporate pressure are arguably operating more in line with boundaryless career principles, especially if they do so for family reasons (Baldridge, Eddleston, & Veiga, 2006). Interestingly though, most of the research is centered on how successfully the boundaries (including repatriation) are crossed in terms of personal performance and adjustment (e.g. Hechanova, Beehr, & Christiansen, 2003; Shaffer et al., 2006). There must be lessons to be learned from this research about how other kinds of boundaries can be successfully negotiated.

An emerging theme within the boundaryless career literature is the 'global career'. Tams and Arthur (2007) have recently identified three different perspectives on the study of careers across cultures: international careers, typified by expatriate workers; cross-cultural comparisons which focus on careers as culturally situated and embedded; and globalized careers in which individuals' career sense-making and enactment can be seen as illustrating their adjustment to global contextual changes. In the case of this third perspective, Tams and Arthur suggest that the 'career lens' is used to 'generate insights into globalization as a cultural phenomenon, in particular with regards the international flow of ideas and knowledge, the sharing of working

cultures, global civil society, and humanity's response to environmental issues' (p. 92). This builds on Carr, Inkson and Thorn (2005) in which the authors introduce their idea of 'talent flows' to describe the ways in which highly skilled career actors migrate between nations to ply their trades (see also Thomas, Lazarova & Inkson, 2005). Central to their analysis is a 'globalized' form of boundarylessness, in which key terms in Arthur and Rousseau's 1996 definition are replaced by references to national-cultural boundaries and movement around the world. The focus here, as in the boundaryless career itself, is on career self-management, proactivity and the smart deployment of career capital.

We see these studies as representing a fruitful new direction in career theory. However, we have significant concerns about the emphasis within this emerging literature on individual agency, choice and self-determination, with 'highly skilled professionals and influential leaders' (Tams & Arthur, 2007, p. 95) appearing at centre stage. In particular, the lived experience of less privileged career actors might provide a useful antidote to the existing, largely elitist discourse. Here understandings from outside the career literature could be illuminating. Recent studies into, for example, the working lives of Indian women migrants in New Zealand (Pio, 2005), UK refugees' experiences of employment training programmes (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002) and relationships between Anglos and Latino immigrants working in an Iowa meat-packing plant (Grey, 1999), provide insights into people with arguably less to offer in the global career marketplace. In addition, the emerging literature on the under-utilisation of migrants' skills, knowledge and capabilities, sometimes referred to as 'brain waste' (Lee, 2005; Lianos, 2007) noted but not developed by Carr et al. (2005), offers an important, though often neglected perspective.

Conceptualizing the protean career

Whereas the boundaryless career metaphor is used to describe both physical and psychological dimensions of career, the protean career focuses on the latter, and specifically on the achievement of 'subjective career success through self-directed vocational behavior' (Briscoe & Hall, 2006, p. 31). Reflecting on the 'quarter century

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journey' of the protean career concept, Hall (2004), the 'founder' of the idea, has described its origins and development. Coined in the final chapter of his 1976 book *Careers in Organizations*, the protean metaphor is used to describe careers in which 'the individual, not the organization, is in charge, the core values are freedom and growth, and the main success criteria are subjective (psychological) vs. objective (position, salary)' (2004, p. 4). The metaphor has been further developed in the US by Hall and his colleagues (see for example Hall, 2002; Hall & Mirvis, 1996; Hall & Moss, 1998; Briscoe & Hall, 2002; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth, 2006) and also to a more limited extent by scholars in Europe and Australasia (Cadin, Bender, De Saint Giniez & Pringle, 2001; Arthur et al., 1999).

We take Richardson's point that the protean career concept is a 'seemingly more psychologically sensitive version of the new career' (2000, p. 202). Emphasizing values, and the notion of career as a 'path with a heart' (Shephard, 1986), the protean career could be seen as less instrumental and market-oriented than the boundaryless concept. In this sense, it has an implicit sense of vocation, of career as 'the fulfilment of self through the expression and experience of living authentically and sharing in the (re)creation of organizations and society' (Lips-Wiersma & McMorland, 2006, p. 148).

Problems with the protean metaphor

There is much that we find appealing in the concept of the protean career and we recognize its resonance to both academics and practitioners. Nevertheless, we do have concerns about the concept itself, its strongly normative overtones and its apparent reification, from useful heuristic to social fact. Regarding the first point, we question the aptness of the protean metaphor itself. According to *Bulfinch's Mythology* (1978), Proteus was a sea monster, a prophet who possessed special powers which, when he was under siege, enabled him to change his shape in order to escape: 'He will become a wild boar or a fierce tiger, a scaly dragon or lion with a yellow mane. Or he will make a noise like the crackling of flames or the rush of water, so as to tempt you to let go the chain'. However, if the captor is able to persevere and keep him bound, 'at last when he finds all his arts unavailing, he will return to his own figure and obey your commands' (1978, p. 154-55).

There is a striking contrast between this image and Hall and his colleagues' notion of the protean career. While Proteus did have the power to change shape, he only did so under moments of extreme duress – to escape capture. A far cry from freedom, growth and self-direction, this is about mere survival. In addition, the kinds of shapes Proteus chose were scary, even at times almost bewitching. Indeed, their purpose was to frighten or deceive. Again, this is very different from the notion of career as the 'path with the heart'. In fact, according to Bulfinch the only values which appeared to drive Proteus were a malicious sense of autonomy and over-riding concern to be left alone. Eventually, if his pursuer was able to withstand Proteus' transformations and hold on, the sea monster would eventually give up, go back to his original shape, and submit to the will of his captor. In career terms, there is no personal development in the myth of Proteus, as at best he returns to just where he started. And the captor (the organization?) wins the day.

We also have a concern, noted above with respect to boundarylessness, about the reification of the protean career concept. In their 2006 papers Briscoe and Hall seek to further refine and clarify the protean concept through the development of a typology of career profiles representing various combinations of boundaryless and protean orientations (2006) and the construction of four scales for measuring self-directed and value-driven dispositions (Briscoe, Hall & Frautschy DeMuth, 2006). These are useful papers in that they illuminate facets of the metaphors with greater specificity and highlight which of these resonate in different settings and why. However, our concern is that such endeavors serve to reify concepts which will never be 'real' in an ontological sense. What interests us about boundaryless and protean metaphors is what they elucidate about current career thinking, what they disguise, whose voices they promote, and whose they obscure. In short, they can help us to understand careers in these times. It is in addressing issues such as this (rather than through the constructing of rigorous scales and measurement systems) that we see their conceptual power.

The over-emphasis on individualism in protean careers

As with the boundaryless career, we also take issue with the normative orientation of much of the emerging literature on protean careers such as recent attempts to develop a model of how people become protean (Hall, 2004, p. 7), and to understand how organizations can enable a more protean orientation amongst their staff (Hall, 2004, p.9; Briscoe & Hall, 2006). These imply that being protean is necessarily 'good', and arguably threaten to take possession (via measurement and control) of phenomena that are personal and unquantifiable (c.f. Fineman's 2004 critique of emotional intelligence). . In particular, we would take issue with Briscoe and Hall's suggestion that 'a strong sense of identity and values as well as adaptability and boundarylessness are needed to successfully navigate the course of one's life' (2006, p. 5). Is this to suggest that people without a sense of boundaryless will invariably be unsuccessful in this journey?. It seems to be assumed that being a 'values driven' person necessarily means valuing self-expression and autonomy, and that these are defined in terms of conflict with what the person's employer wants. This impression is confirmed by the measure described in Briscoe et al. (2006, p. 34). Yet Schein's (1996) analysis of career anchors (see also Feldman & Bolino, 2000) shows that it is perfectly possible for a person to be 'values driven', but to value service, security or lifestyle in preference to more agentic values. A person might also value loyalty or conformity, so that being 'values-driven' would mean behaving in line with the employer's wishes.

Echoing our analysis of the boundaryless career, we would argue that underpinning the protean career concept is an ideology based on unfettered individualism and free choice. Here we would agree with Richardson (2000) who has taken issue with what she sees as its over-emphasis on individual agency, collapsing of personal and professional spheres of life, promotion of self-sufficiency as opposed to more collective notions of affiliation and community and lack of regard for people with limited personal resources:

> It is my contention that these features of the new career ideology, in fact, serve the needs of a new capitalist order that requires workers who do not believe that they should depend on an employer to provide the safety and security long associated with stable employment, and that enables managers more easily to dispense with workers as needed. The protean career fits all to

well with what has been called a ruthless economy (Head, 1996), while, at the same time, the role of this economy in dictating the shape of the new career is either obscured or glorified (2000, p. 203).

Not only are we concerned about this emphatic individualism from an ideological point of view, but we would also take issue with it theoretically. In focusing so exclusively on the career actor, we would argue that both protean and boundaryless concepts neglect the role of social institutions in people's understanding and enactment of career, resulting in a view of career which is at once undersocialized and depoliticized. We do not believe that career presents infinite possibilities for individuals. Rather, economic, political, cultural, social, occupational factors serve to structure available opportunity. Even in 'boundaryless' labor markets where temporary project assignments are common, mediating organizations such as employment agencies often limit the extent to which a person can use his or her human capital and other attributes to obtain work (King, Burke, & Pemberton, 2005).

The voluntaristic perspective embedded within boundaryless and protean career thinking has led to a lack of theorisation of the concept of constraint within the 'new careers' literature. Although the complex relationship between enablement and constraint is a widely debated theme within social theory (Giddens, 1984; Bourdieu, 1998), with some notable exceptions (Ielliatchitch, Mayrhofer & Meyer, 2003; Duberley, Cohen & Mallon, 2006), it has received far less attention within the careers field. Here we support Gunz et al's view that 'there is no necessary shame in recognizing that there are boundaries [constraints] that shape one's career, and there may be a great deal to be gained from understanding the forces that create these boundaries' (2000, p. 51).

Career Success

Research interest in career success has been high for many years now, and if anything seems still to be on the increase. It was possibly triggered by early work noting that success in the form of advancement through structured organizations, and/or high earnings growth, did not necessarily lead to personal happiness (Howard

& Bray, 1988; Evans & Bartolome, 1980). It has no doubt also been fueled by an understandable desire of many people to know what they can do to make themselves more successful. One plausible argument for psychologists' interest in career success is that because individuals' careers are typically less predictable and ordered than they once were, there are nowadays many different competing measures of success, and perhaps a wider range of individual behaviors and characteristics that might influence success, however it is measured (e.g. Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999; Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003). The measurement and cause-effect issues thrown up by this are home territory for many I/O psychologists.

Two broad strands of research have become apparent. One concerns the different ways of construing career success, and how they are (or are not) related to each other (e.g. Heslin, 2003, 2005; Sturges, 1999). The second strand concerns what predicts success. Most studies use more than one indicator of career success (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005), and many use a plethora of predictors that are sometimes grouped rather arbitrarily in order to bring a touch of order to the chaos – not always very successfully. The number of statistical associations between variables is very high in some studies. This makes it difficult to be confident about which significant ones are 'real'.

Conceptualizing and measuring career success

A conceptual distinction between so-called objective (or extrinsic) and subjective (intrinsic) measures of career success is very frequently made. Criteria of objective success include salary, rate of salary growth, hierarchical level attained in an organization, proximity to CEO, and number/rate of promotions. Criteria of subjective success include career satisfaction, life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and beliefs/perceptions about one's employability (see Arthur et al., 2005, for a helpful listing of the labels given to objective and subjective measures). Instinctively, one might agree with Arthur et al. (2005) that job satisfaction is an inadequate measure of subjective career success, because it refers to the current job rather than the cumulative sequence so far. However, Heslin (2005) suggests that people tend to think of their experiences at work in one of three ways: as a job, a career or a calling.

For those in the first category, job satisfaction may be an appropriate construct for assessing subjective career success.

Like most broad distinctions, the one between objective and subjective career success is less clear-cut than it might at first seem. For example, Arthur et al. (2005, p191) refer to '….employee turnover as a subjective career response to the objective career reality of the length of time employed on the same job'. Whilst it is true that, at the present moment, job tenure is an objective reality, presumably staying in the job for a long time was just as much a subjective career response as it would be now to leave it. In any case, leaving a job is objectively verifiable.

Objective success criteria are frequently described as readily observable, but of course things that are real are not necessarily readily observable, nor indeed measurable, except by asking people for their perceptions of them. For example, in a paper that has received less attention than it deserves, Sturges (1999) found that managers in a large telecommunications company quite frequently used criteria like being seen by others as an expert and having informal influence as criteria of success. This leads on to the rather obvious point that the promotions, salary increases etc a person receives are also at least partly a product of subjectivity – in this case the opinions held about him or her by decision-makers. The distinction between objective and subjective is perhaps better described as one's own subjectivity vs somebody else's. The distinction is also blurred in some measures of subjective success. For example, Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley's (1990) measure includes items about satisfaction with salary and status. To the extent that the weighting of items like this exceeds the extent to which the respondent cares about them, this could artificially inflate the correlation between the objective and subjective.

Some authors (e.g. Hall & Chandler, 2005) tend to emphasize subjective conceptions of success over objective ones because indicators of objective career success are both less readily achievable and less relevant in an era of protean or boundaryless careers. However, Nicholson and De Waal Andrews (2005) caution that many organizational and societal processes still sort people and determine allocation of scarce resources. This means that less has changed than is sometimes claimed, and

that it would be inappropriate to privilege subjective over objective measures when (for example) counseling people. From this perspective, we might conclude that the tendency for women to prefer subjective measures and men objective measures (Heslin, 2005) is a consequence of women's disadvantaged position in the labor market – in effect, they turn to subjective success because objective criteria are not easily attainable. Conversely, highly skilled and marketable individuals (to whom the notion of the boundaryless career is often considered best suited, see Hirsch & Shanley, 1996) can afford to value subjective success only because their objective success is virtually assured. This is reminiscent of Maslow's prediction that met needs cease to be motivators, and also more recent assertions that pay matters more to people than they are usually willing or able to say (Rynes, Gerhart, & Minette, 2004).

Recent work has also included discussions of how subjective and objective success relate to each other. Hall's notion of the psychological success cycle (Hall & Nougaim, 1968; Hall, 2002) has been used to consider how objective achievements lead to subjective feelings of success, which in turn feed back into willingness to take on challenging tasks which, if accomplished, lead to objective success and so on. This model portrays objective success as a precursor to subjective success more than vice versa. Arthur et al. (2005) found that published studies on objective and subjective success tended to be based on that premise too, though some caution is needed here because Arthur et al. seem to have used a very liberal interpretation of what counts as a measure of subjective career success (e.g. having been mentored and having received social support). Hall and Chandler (2005) offer an interesting discussion of when the psychological success cycle might break down (for example, when the cost of succeeding at work tasks is failure or neglect of personal life), and how there may be reciprocal relationships between the two forms of success.

A rarely used criterion for career success, but surely highly relevant to some people, is the extent to which the person has avoided involuntary unemployment. This might be considered an indicator of employability or (as Eby, Butts & Lockwood (2003) call it) marketability. Given that many people are allegedly in less secure employment than they once were, the ability to 'keep the job you have, or get the one you want' (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007) seems like a valid measure of success. Research on

employability is beginning to accumulate, but conceptions of its nature and scope vary quite a lot. For example, Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden (2006) take a perspective oriented towards HRM and work competencies, whereas Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth (2004) favor a dispositional approach, and consequently view employability more as a predictor than an outcome. Berntson, Sverke and Marklund (2006) have reported findings from large Swedish datasets in 1993 and 1999. They found that the prevailing economic conditions affected the mean level of perceived employability. This is inconsistent with a dispositional view of employability.

Curiously, criteria for measuring career success seem to have little connection with analyses of life-span development, whether career-related or not. These might have particular relevance for people in mid-late career and could include the extent to which one is holding onto one's position in the face of younger competition (from Super's analysis, e.g. Super, 1990), the ways in which one thinks and behaves wisely (e.g. Smith & Baltes, 1990; Arnold, 1997c); the extent to which one has accomplished a mid-life reappraisal (Levinson, 1986); and the extent and range of expressed individuation and/or generativity at work (Erikson, 1959). More recently, Robson, Hansson, Abalos, and Booth (2006) have suggested five criteria based on analyses of aging: adaptability and health; positive relationships; occupational growth; personal security; and a continued focus on and achievement of personal goals. Of course, some of these diverse alternative criteria may be in people's minds when they subjectively evaluate their career success. However, the fact that they do not feature more explicitly in career success measures perhaps signals that careers research neglects a 'whole person' perspective. Consistent with this observation, Heslin (2005) notes that few measures of subjective career success contain items on work-life balance. This is despite the fact that a defining feature of the boundaryless career is people's openness to making work decisions on the basis of non-work concerns (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996).

Predictors of career success

A key resource here is the recent meta-analysis reported by Ng, Eby, Sorenson, and Feldman (2005). Along with much of the research they review, Ng et al. refer to

'predictors' of career success, even though the so-called predictors were rarely assessed at some point in time before the career success measures. Some 'predictors' (e.g. political knowledge and skills, social capital, work centrality, hours worked, and career sponsorship) are arguably outcomes or by-products of some forms of success. Understandably given the scope of their task, Ng et al.'s analysis of moderator variables (which is one way of addressing context) was limited to gender and the interaction between gender and recency of study. Attention to whether a study is longitudinal or cross-sectional, the kind(s) of occupation involved, and the country/culture in which any particular study took place might shed a lot more light on what predicts career success, and why. The interaction between gender and age might also merit further examination to see whether Lincoln and Allen's (2004) results with Hollywood stars can be generalized.

In common with many specific studies of predictors of career success, Ng et al. (2005) offer a conceptual structure for the organization of predictor variables. They distinguish between a contest mobility career system and a sponsored mobility system in an organization. In the former, upward mobility is primarily determined by job performance. In the latter, upward mobility is more influenced by powerful individuals identifying the people they think have potential and then giving them preferential opportunities. This is an appealing distinction, but it might well break down in practice. A contest mobility system would presumably feature someone powerful evaluating performance and allocating rewards and opportunities accordingly (i.e. sponsored mobility), whilst a sponsored mobility system gives opportunities only to those already deemed to be doing well (in a contest), rather than to randomly chosen individuals. This is not to criticise Ng et al. in particular – just to point out how difficult it is to apply a satisfactory structure to research on career success. The issue that lies behind the contest vs sponsorship distinction is an important one practically and ethically: does career success depend most on how well a person performs, or on his or her social position? In a longitudinal study of I/O psychologists, Judge et al. (2004) found more evidence for the former than the latter.

Ng et al. classified variables into four types: Human capital (e.g. work centrality, hours worked, education level, international experience, political knowledge and skills); Organizational sponsorship (e.g. supervisor support, organizational resources

as a surrogate for organizational size); socio-demographics (gender, race, marital status, age); and stable individual differences (personality characteristics). They argued that human capital variables reflect contest mobility systems, whereas sponsorship and socio-demographic variables reflect sponsored mobility systems. These too seem rather forced linkages because any of the human capital variables might take the eye of a potential sponsor, whilst supervisor support might help a person perform better.

Ng et al. found that a number of predictors were correlated with one or more of the dependent variables of salary, promotions, and career satisfaction. Interestingly, though, there were some discernible patterns. Human capital and socio-demographic variables tended to correlate with salary. The strongest were education level, political knowledge and skills, work experience, age, and hours worked. Organizational sponsorship and individual difference variables were the better predictors of career satisfaction, especially locus of control, supervisor support, career sponsorship, proactivity, training and skill development opportunities, and emotional stability. Promotion had few substantial correlates.

Ng et al's meta-analysis produced evidence of small but statistically significant disadvantages for women relative to men, and non-whites relative to whites. Even though some other variables were more strongly related to success, these effects probably signal lingering social injustice. This was most pronounced for salary. Further evidence for this, in the USA at least, is provided by Huffman (2004), who concludes (p498) that 'there is a substantial net pay penalty associated with Black-dominated jobs, and there is some evidence that this penalty is stronger for Black workers than Whites'. Some other research in recent years suggests that, first, it is crucial to distinguish between ethnic groups at a more sophisticated level than black vs white, and second, that within ethnic minority groups, there are notably different labor market experiences and outcomes (Bevelenader & Veenman, 2004; Kenny & Briner, in press). There is certainly much less careers research on the success of different ethnic groups than there is on the success of men and women (Kenny & Briner, in press).

The salary disadvantage for women relative to men confirms a lot of research over the years (e.g. Stroh, Brett, & Reilly, 1992; Chenevert & Tremblay, 2002). Slightly encouragingly, Ng et al. found that the gender difference was significantly smaller in more recent studies than in older ones. But other research indicates that using opportunities for breaks from work provided by 'family friendly' employer policies (women do this more frequently than men) is still associated with negative consequences for career success (Bagilhole, 2006; Judiesch & Lyness, 1999; Reitman & Schneer, 2005). Hakim (2000, 2006) has argued on the basis of her 'preference theory' that family friendly policies are predicated on the assumption that women's disadvantaged position is due to sex discrimination. Hakim however asserts that the main reason is consistent sex differences in personal styles, values and life goals, which mean that many (though not all) women place less importance on conventional career success than most men do. Consequently they tend to choose different and fairly varied paths through life (see also Huang et al., in press), and social and organizational policies have only a limited impact on this. Hakim's analysis is controversial and has the strength of offering a radically different perspective from the prevailing one.

There is some evidence that being married and having children is much more conducive to career success for men than for women (see for example Kirchmeyer, 2006). But this effect does not always hold. Being single and childless was associated with least success for both men and women in a large scale study of managers in the Australian public and private sectors (Tharenou, 1999). Kirchmeyer spells out the different possible reasons why family structure might impact upon extrinsic success, but one can't help wondering whether Tharenou's findings reflect factors not so much to do with family structure, but with individual differences which produced those family structures. Perhaps single childless people tend to be those who seek independence from others, and an ordered predictable environment, or who have a passionate non-work interest that absorbs their time and commitment. These preferences are unlikely to lead to success in managerial work.

What all this seems to add up to is that objective career success, at least in the form of salary, may be most influenced by a collection of potentially relevant features of the person and his/her experience, plus some irrelevant and/or discriminatory ones.

Career satisfaction on the other hand may depend upon given opportunities and being supported. It is noteworthy that these 'sponsorship' variables are stronger correlates of subjective than objective success.

Personality, intelligence and competencies in career success

I/O psychologists have shown considerable recent interest in personality as a correlate/predictor of career success. Some of this is too recent for coverage in Ng et al. (2005). Mueller and Plug (2006) found in a sample from Wisconsin USA that amongst men earnings were linked with being emotionally stable, open to experience, and not being agreeable (in terms of the Big Five personality characteristics). For women, relevant personality traits were openness to experience and conscientiousness. One suspects that these findings reflect the lingering different expectations of men and women's behavior at work. Some rather different results were obtained by Gelissen and de Graaf (2006), who found in a Dutch sample of 4000 that agreeableness was not associated with career outcomes, and conscientiousness was negatively related to women's upward status mobility whilst emotional stability was positively related to remuneration for both sexes, and extraversion was for men only. However, personality was measured at the same time that retrospective life history data were collected. So despite the comparative stability of personality, it is possible that it was affected by success, rather than vice versa. A similar caution applies to the work of Bozionelos (2004), who found in a sample of UK university administrators that conscientiousness and extraversion were *negatively* associated with grade in the organization. Agreeableness was negatively associated with grade but positively with subjective career success (Ng et al. 2005 report similar findings, albeit weak ones). Neuroticism was negatively associated with both forms of success.

It seems likely that some associations between personality and intrinsic/subjective success are not strictly causal, but instead expressions of disposition via the success measure (Bowling, Beehr, & Lepisto, 2006). But there are also likely to be more substantive paths. This is demonstrably the case for 'Proactive personality', which is defined as a disposition towards taking action to influence one's environment

(Bateman & Crant, 1993). In recent short-term longitudinal studies, proactive personality has been found to predict job search activity and success (Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy, & Shalhoop, 2006), and engagement in development activity (Major, Turner & Fletcher, 2006). This latter study also found some evidence for openness to experience and extraversion as predictors of development activity. Seibert, Kraimer and Crant (2001) found that proactive personality predicted innovation, political knowledge, and career initiative two years later, and that these variables in turn were associated with objective and subjective success. In a cross-sectional but multi-source study, Thompson (2005) found evidence for proactive personality working through initiative taking and developing social networks.

Why do findings regarding personality and career success vary so markedly from study to study? It looks likely that different occupational (Holland, 1997) and national (Brodbeck et al., 2000) cultures encourage and reward different behaviors at work, at least to some extent. Evidence for this is the studies described above, as well as a comparison of managers in Europe and the US by Boudreau et al. (2001). Admittedly, the evidence is confused and contradictory, and we find it difficult to discern consistent patterns in the studies reviewed here. Structured comparisons between countries and occupations might well be enlightening. That is also the case for predictors other than personality.

Schmidt and Hunter (2004) have made a strong case for general mental ability (GMA) being the most powerful determinant both of the status of occupation attained and performance within it, based upon huge amounts of data from many studies over many years. There is no doubt that the correlations between GMA and various performance outcome measures do indeed tend to be strong (around .5), and relatively invariant between contexts. However, the reported correlations are usually corrected for (among other things) restriction of range in GMA. Whilst this enables conclusions about the relationship between GMA and success in a whole national population, the reality is that (for example) a restricted range of people will seek to enter, succeed in entering, and be able to remain in, high status occupations. So correction for restriction of range is likely to exaggerate the observable relationship between GMA and success (c.f. Jansen & Vinkenburg, 2006).

Schmidt and Hunter (2004) also reanalyzed excellent longitudinal data reported by Judge, Higgins, Thoreson, and Barrick (1999), which included measures of personality and GMA over a 30 year period. They showed that GMA performs better than personality as a predictor of objective success, but that the Big Five trait of conscientiousness does add to the variance explained over and above GMA. Results for Emotional Intelligence are mixed, with contradictory evidence both about whether it can be differentiated from personality and/or traditional views of intelligence, and if so, whether it adds any predictive capacity to them (Amelang & Steinmayr, 2006; Law, Wong & Song, 2004).

In an intriguing review, Judge and Cable (2004) showed that physical height is correlated with salary after controlling for sex, age and weight. This correlation is somewhat stronger in highly social occupations such as sales than in less social ones such as crafts, which supports our point that career success criteria may vary significantly across occupations. Judge and Cable suggest that height tends to increase the social esteem in which people are held.

The concept of career competencies has risen in popularity along with the boundaryless career. De Fillippi and Arthur (1994) offered a tripartite division of career competencies for boundaryless careers. Knowing Why concerns a person's insight into his or her career motivation, personal meaning, and identification. Knowing Whom concerns career-related networks and contacts, and Knowing How refers to specific skills related to job and career. This conceptual structure has become a widely used part of the discourse in the boundaryless careers literature. In one of the few studies to have operationalized it, Eby, Butts and Lockwood (2003) found that all three types of competence contributed to explaining the variance in career satisfaction and perceived marketability amongst 458 alumni of 'a large southeastern university', presumably in the USA. Knowing Whom competencies seemed to contribute least, which perhaps puts a dampener on the oft-heard claim that 'It's not what you know but who you know that matters.' However, inspection of their measures and the correlations between them raises considerable doubt about whether the measures truly reflect the competency to which they were assigned. This may partly be due to the broadness of the competencies in the first place. Some work on that taxonomy and development of measures would be very useful. Although not

based only upon the three Knowings, recent work by Kuijpers and Scheerens (2006) may be a helpful start. Using data from 1579 employees in 16 Dutch companies, they identified six career competencies, which they labeled career development ability, reflection on capacities, reflection on motives, work exploration, career control and networking.

Individual career management for career success

Many of the things that individuals can do to enhance their own careers are implied by the research on predictors of career success (above) and also by the roles of other people (below). However, relatively few studies focus explicitly on career self-management. This is something of a contrast to the long history of research in vocational and counseling psychology on how to make successful decisions through career exploration, the elimination of sources of indecision, and the use of effective decision-making techniques (e.g. Flum & Blustein, 2000; Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996). A bridge between vocational and I-O psychology was provided by Mitchell, Levin and Krumboltz (1999), who analyzed the ways in which successful people often manage to be in the right place at the right time to benefit from chance events, and are able to identify such events when they occur. Mitchell et al. referred to this as 'planned happenstance'. In arguing that some people can to a considerable extent make their own luck, they opened up the debate about what successful people do that makes them successful.

In theory, thinking skills should be linked to successful career management behaviors, (Arnold, 1997c; Schmidt & Hunter, 2004; Sternberg et al., 2000), though there is little direct evidence for or against that proposition. As Sternberg et al. argued, many of the rules governing how workplaces function are unspoken, and people vary in their ability to identify and use them. Researchers have variously construed career management behaviors in organizations as keeping an eye open for jobs outside the organization, making oneself visible to influential people, developing one's contacts (or networking, see below), seeking guidance from an experienced person, seeking feedback for development, being ready (and willing) to move between jobs, being adaptable/resilient, and political behavior (Hall, 2002; Ito &

Brotheridge, 2005; Kossek et al., 1998; London, 1993; Perrewe & Nelson, 2004; Sturges et al., 2002, 2005).

In a helpful attempt to introduce a conceptual structure to this diversity, King (2004) has argued that career self-management behaviors are of three kinds. Positioning behaviors help accumulate the necessary contacts, skills and experiences to achieve desired outcomes. Influence behaviors are designed to influence the decisions of gatekeepers. Boundary management is concerned with balancing the demands of work and non-work. This last category is a rare but appropriate inclusion, and reflects one element of the six features of boundaryless careers, and also the increasing sophistication of analyses of the work-family interface (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Although some further subcategories are no doubt necessary, we think that King's contribution could form the basis for a more systematic and concerted examination of the role of career self-management than has yet been achieved.

Some aspects of career self-management might be seen as manipulative or unethical. For example, in their discussion of how women can improve their career success, Perrewe and Nelson (2004, p. 367) wrote '….politically skilled individuals must appear to be sincere, authentic, honest and genuine'. There is however no discussion of whether successfully appearing sincere and authentic when in fact one is not is ethically defensible, or of whether it does damage to the actor or others. In a recent qualitative study of 58 employees of a restaurant chain and 54 employees of a financial services organization, Harris and Ogbonna (2006) examined 'surreptitious' career success strategies. These were defined (p. 49) as '…conscious and deliberate, cloaked, camouflaged, or clandestine behaviors……that are motivated or designed to enhance extrinsic or intrinsic career success'. The authors identified from their data five strategies, each with subcategories. For example, the strategy 'Information acquisition and control' included data acquisition by subterfuge (e.g. reading in advance the interview questions for an upcoming internal vacancy that had been left on a manager's desk) and information control and exploitation (e.g. covering up failures and publicising successes). 79% of respondents reported in an interview that they had at least once used a surreptitious career success strategy. The authors point out that there is no direct evidence that these strategies actually

led to success (though many of the interviewees thought they had) or that the interviewees had actually done what they said they had. Nevertheless, this study is (in strictly academic terms!) a refreshing new approach to researching career self-management, with a number of vivid examples that bring their categories to life.

A common concern in the organizational career management literature is whether providing career management interventions for employees leads them to be grateful and more committed to the organization, or whether in contrast it equips them to leave (Arnold, 2002; Ito & Brotheridge, 2005; Sturges et al., 2002, 2005). Sturges et al. have mounted an argument that if organizations can be responsive to individuals' effort to self-manage careers, the outcome tends to be more commitment and less turnover. However, the data on this issue are limited, and trends in any direction seem to be weak and inconsistent. The interplay between individual and organizational efforts to manage careers could benefit from more investigation using longitudinal and intensive research designs.

The roles of other people in individuals' careers

The prominence in careers research of social capital, sponsored mobility and Knowing Whom competencies (see above) suggests that researchers as well as laypeople believe social factors play a significant role. In this section we take a closer look at the role of other people in careers. Much of this is in the context of career success, so this section follows very naturally from the previous one. We start with the well-researched topic of mentoring. We then broaden our gaze to include a wider range of developmental social contacts and an examination of the nature and role of social capital. We end by taking a closer look at exactly how person-to-person career help might work.

Mentoring

Most definitions of mentoring include references to mentors necessarily being older, of higher professional or organizational status and/or more experienced than protégés, which seems a little restrictive if we are truly in an era of more flexible

employment arrangements. Great claims have been made for the role of mentoring in developing the careers of protégés and also sometimes mentors themselves (for example, Clutterbuck, 2004). These claims seemed to be accepted remarkably uncritically for a long time in much of the mentoring literature. It wasn't a case of whether mentoring was valuable, but in what ways it was valuable, and by what processes (see Arnold & Johnson, 1997). Fortunately, since the late 1990s a much more balanced view has developed, and one can only hope that this spills over into research on the recent successor to mentoring, namely coaching (Gray, 2006).

Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, and Lima (2004) have reported a very helpful meta-analysis of studies evaluating mentoring. They found that in the small number of studies where mentored and unmentored groups were compared, mentoring seemed to have a small positive relationship (.12) with earnings, and a larger one with career satisfaction and job satisfaction (both .23). Allen et al. also analyzed the extent to which the provision by a mentor of career support (e.g. exposure to senior people and challenging projects) and psychosocial support (e.g. counseling, friendship) relate to outcomes. They found that career support was weakly but significantly associated with earnings (.12) and promotions (.16), whereas psychosocial support was not. Both forms of support were associated with career and job satisfaction to about the same extent (.22 to .25), and both were highly associated with satisfaction with mentoring, especially psychosocial support (.63). Underhill (2006) has also reported a meta-analysis of the minority of mentoring studies where mentored and unmentored groups are compared. She included some studies not analyzed by Allen et al. (2004), and concentrates on corporate settings only. Underhill's results are similar to those of Allen et al. (2004), and she also observed that informal mentoring had greater effects than formal mentoring, albeit only on a comparison of two studies vs. three.

Both Allen et al. (2004) and Underhill (2006) noted that caution must be exercised in drawing inferences from their findings. Very few studies have been longitudinal, and even if such studies were conducted, the effects of mentoring could be quite time-sensitive. The comparison between mentored and unmentored groups, although valuable, may be limited because there could be systematic differences between those who receive mentoring and those who do not. Indeed, mentoring could be

something of a self-fulfilling prophecy, where people who are going to 'make it' anyway are the ones who find mentors (Allen, Poteet, & Russell, 2000). Also, whilst Allen, Lentz and Day (2006) found some career benefits for mentors relative to non-mentors, cause and effect are again unclear. Perhaps, or even probably, successful people are attractive as mentors.

Perhaps partly as a reaction to the previous enthusiasm for mentoring, some research at the very end of the last century and the start of this one has explicitly considered its potential 'downside' (e.g. Eby et al., 2000; Scandura, 1998). This work suggests that incidents of truly dysfunctional mentoring are probably few and far between, and that intent is rarely malicious on either side. Nevertheless, according to protégés, mentors can sometimes be positively obstructive, jealous or exploitative rather than just not effective. According to mentors, protégés can lack the motivation and skills to make the relationship work.

Multiple developmental relationships

One possible reason why the effects of mentoring are apparently limited (see above) is that attention to a single mentor misses any other developmental relationships an individual may have (Molloy, 2005). In another example of the 'changing workplace' theme in careers literature, De Janasz, Sullivan and Whiting (2003) wrote '…because organizational structures have changed and careers have become boundaryless, the aspiring manager today must make use of an intelligent network of multiple mentors in order to flourish in a changing workplace' (p.78). Higgins and Kram (2001) have developed this idea, and in a particularly innovative paper Higgins and Thomas (2001) have investigated it empirically. Working with lawyers in the New York area of the USA, they obtained data about individuals' 'constellations' of developmental relationships, where the people in this constellation were defined as specific individuals who took an active interest in and/or concerted action to advance the respondent's career. They compared the effects of the one 'primary developer' with the whole constellation. Using as dependent variables work satisfaction and intention to remain (both measured at the same time as developmental relationships), and actual retention and promotion to partner (both two years later),

Higgins and Thomas concluded that the quality of support provided by the whole constellation adds explanatory power over and above the primary developer for the longer-term outcomes. Close scrutiny of their data suggests that this conclusion goes a little beyond what the data can truly justify, but nevertheless, we believe that the ideas and methods in this paper are excellent.

In another innovative paper, Parker, Arthur, and Inkson (2004) investigated the notion of career communities (see also Parker & Arthur, 2000). A career community was defined as a self-organized member-defined social structure through which individuals draw career support and sensemaking (Weick, 1995). They found that two of the three groups of people they investigated showed clear signs of being career communities, and that they drew on multiple bases for a community (such as occupational homogeneity, ideological homogeneity, and psychosocial support) to achieve this. Although some of Parker et al.'s data were based on rather loose definitions and operationalizations of the Knowing why, Knowing how and Knowing whom competencies (see above), and their analysis of interview data is highly interpretive, their conclusion is compelling. The existence and dynamics of career communities are important factors in shaping how people make sense of their career, including how they construe success. Further work on how people find and together construct career communities should help to clarify the value of the construct, as well as providing a welcome more collective and contextualized perspective to psychological research on careers.

The complexity of developmental relationships in careers is further illustrated by Flum (2001), who has argued that, despite a frequent focus on individuation in development, relational elements also contribute a great deal. Identities are defined and redefined through many aspects of relationships such as identification, mutuality and care. Gibson (2004) has advocated greater and better use of the concept of role model in career development. Role model is defined as '…a cognitive construction based on the attributes of people in social roles an individual perceives to be similar to him or herself to some extent, and desires to increase perceived similarity by emulating those attributes' (p. 136). Gibson states that role modeling is founded upon identification and social comparison, in contrast to mentoring which is rooted in interaction and involvement. He makes a convincing case for the added value of the

role model construct, and points out that the benefits of role models may be high and the costs low, not least because sometimes there is little or no direct interaction between person and role model. He also points out that people can have multiple role models.

Social networks and social capital

Definitions of social capital vary somewhat but they all refer to the social resources that a person can access and utilise. Tymon and Stumpf (2003) have argued that social capital usually takes time to build up, it needs maintenance, and it cannot be directly transferred to another person. If these statements are correct (perhaps they could be treated as hypotheses rather than assumptions), they emphasise the non-trivial investments required to acquire and keep social capital, but with the consolation that it is difficult for others to steal it. We have already seen that variables reflecting some aspects of social capital feature in research on career success (for example, some of the constructs Ng et al. (2005) classify as organizational sponsorship, and mentoring). But these studies do not usually enter into a detailed consideration of the nature and significance of the social aspects of careers. In this section we focus mainly on studies that do offer such consideration.

Luthans, Hodgetts, and Rosenkrantz (1988) found that, amongst managers, time spent on social networking was associated with occupational success. In a well-designed study of 245 supervisor-subordinate dyads with some longitudinal data, Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, and Graf (1999) found that the quality of leader-member exchange (LMX) predicted salary progression, promotability, and career satisfaction. LMX is not a direct measure of either social network(ing) or social capital, but it is probably close, and it outperformed mentoring and a range of human capital variables. On the other hand, Metz and Tharenou (2001) found little or no statistical impact of social capital variables on the career success of women in Australian banks, even though the women tended to say that they thought it was important when asked about it.

Ibarra (1993) amongst others has argued that, in western economies at least, women and minorities tend to have more restricted social networks than white men, and that this limits their chances of achieving some forms of career success. Forret and Dougherty (2001, 2004) found, in a sample of alumni from a US university, that men reported engaging in more socializing than women did, but there were no gender differences in four other types of networking activities: maintaining contacts, engaging in professional activities, participation in church and community, and increasing internal (workplace) visibility. There were some signs that social networking behavior was more associated with objective career success for men than for women, but the sample of 100 women was small relative to the number of predictors, so results need to be interpreted with caution. We also have reservations about some of the behaviors treated as aspects of networking. For example, accepting a speaking engagement might lead to networking, but it is not in itself networking under Forret and Dougherty's definition: individuals' attempts to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to assist in their work or career (2001, p. 284).

Friedman, Kane, and Cornfield (1998) argued that women and minorities (especially the latter) frequently have to reach out beyond their immediate workplace to find similar others, and that their networks are therefore less integrated and less powerful than is the case for white men. Friedman et al. examined whether the existence of an intra-organizational network group (NG) for minority professionals ameliorated social network problems amongst a sample of 397 black MBA graduates in the US. They found that the presence of an NG was associated with more career optimism, social ties with other minority members, and experience of being mentored. There appeared to be no effect on perceived discrimination, which might be seen as disappointing, but on the other hand at least it suggested no 'white backlash'. There are the usual problems of specifying cause and effect here, but the findings do suggest that intra-organizational support networks for potentially disadvantaged groups have some significant career benefits.

In our opinion the most theoretically sophisticated and empirically informative analysis of social capital and careers is provided by Seibert, Kraimer, and Liden (2001). They identified and combined three approaches to social capital. First, weak

tie theory (Granovetter, 1973) postulates that social ties within a group are often strong in the sense that they are intense, frequent, and multi-faceted. Weak ties are more characteristic of relationships with people in other social groups to one's own, and often form a bridge between groups that otherwise would not interact very much if at all. Granovetter suggested that weak ties were more likely to provide information about job opportunities than strong ones, a suggestion borne out more recently by Villar, Juan, Corominas, and Capell (2000).

Burt (1992) argued that the notion of structural holes does a better job than weak ties of reflecting the value of social contacts that bridge gaps between groups. A person's social network exhibits structural holes if two individuals known to the person do not know each other. A network of this kind is more likely than one where everyone knows each other to provide unique information and opportunities. It also enhances a person's visibility in the whole social system. The third approach discussed by Seibert et al. (2001) focuses less on the characteristics of ties or networks, and more on the nature of resources obtainable from people in a network, whoever and wherever they happen to be (Lin, Ensel, & Vaughn, 1981).

Seibert et al. (2001) developed and tested a model of workplace social capital where weak ties and structural holes predict contacts at higher organizational levels and in other functions, which in turn predict the extent to which the focal person enjoys career sponsorship, and has access to information and resources. In turn, these variables are said to predict objective and subjective success. With cross-sectional self-report data from 448 alumni of a US university, they found quite good support for the model, although many of the relationships were weak, and a few were non-significant. Career satisfaction was more predictable than promotions and salary. Although weak ties were positively related to contacts, they also showed a direct and negative link with access to information and career sponsorship. This suggests that weak ties per se are a mixed blessing.

Of course, the Seibert et al. (2001) model is very much rooted in the context of structured organizations, and may have a limited range of convenience. Also, alternative causal orders, or at the very least feedback loops, are likely. For example, promotions and career sponsorship are likely to foster contacts at higher levels

and/or different functions. We also want to query whether weak ties and structural holes can be construed as *causes* of contacts at higher levels and other functions. It seems to us that the causal order could be reversed, so that (at least in structured organizations) having a lot of contacts at higher levels tends to necessarily mean weak ties. In spite of these ambiguities though, we think there are huge research opportunities to build on Seibert et al.'s work.

Career helpers

It can be argued that the literatures on mentoring, social networks and social capital literature say little about the dynamics of the collaborative career-related interpersonal interactions that are assumed to occur. Research on formal careers advice and counseling focuses a lot more on what goes on between counselor and counselee (e.g. Nathan & Hill, 2005), but our attention here is on informal careers help in the workplace. Kidd, Jackson and Hirsh (2003) and Kidd, Hirsh and Jackson (2004) reported on a study of 162 incidents of career help in the workplace that were considered effective by the recipient. They found that mentors and coaches accounted for only 14% of these incidents, whilst bosses or other managers were involved in 47%. Half of all incidents were informal, which was more than twice as many as in appraisals and personal development planning combined. The features of the help and/or helper that were valued by the recipient were credibility in the eyes of the helpee, plus a mix of directive and non-directive tactics, including giving advice, facilitative skills, and challenging the helpee's point of view.

Bosley, Arnold and Cohen (2007) have recently developed what they refer to as an 'anatomy of credibility' based on in-depth interviews with 28 non-managerial employees, where credibility refers to the helpee's opinion of the likely value of the helper's contribution. Credibility rests partly on the relationship between the helper and the social structure, and partly on the relationship between helper and helpee. In the first category are the helper's structural knowledge, power, and influence, whilst in the latter are the helper's knowledge of the helpee, and the extent to which the helper demonstrates care. Spanning both categories is the notion of partiality, which is subdivided into a lack of prejudice against the helpee, and (more importantly for

most of them) positive partiality in favor of the helpee. This last point creates an interesting tension with career counseling practice, where impartiality is often considered important. By and large helpees favored helpers who validated their self-view, and challenges to this appeared to be less welcome than in the Kidd et al. studies. This may reflect the non-managerial population of the Bosley et al. study.

All three studies discussed in this section were conducted in the UK. We believe there is a lot of scope to extend them in other national contexts, and to learn more about the processes by which social networks are put to use when required.

Wanted for careers – real relationships?

Underlying much of the literature on the roles of other people in careers (particularly career success), we discern a desire for what might be called real relationships. By this we mean relationships that are close and supportive. The signs of this we see are as follows. First, the existence and quality of mentoring relationships are associated more with subjective than objective outcomes. Second, weak ties seem to have some negative as well as positive effects on career success. Third, career helpers who know and care about the person they are helping seem to be especially valued. Fourth, communities and support groups can play a significant role in bolstering career satisfaction and sense-making. Fifth, where quality and quantity of relationships are directly compared, quality more than holds its own (Higgins & Thomas, 2001; Wayne et al., 1999). Perhaps many people view establishing and maintaining positive relationship as success in itself, not as a predictor of other forms of success.

Tymon and Stumpf (2003) have elaborated upon a similar point in their discussion of networking and social capital. They emphasize the need for giving and reciprocity in social networks: 'Selfless acts of helping behavior form the strongest bonds in a network of relationships….. Mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefit are essential, just as are having a shared vision and shared values'. (p18). We find Tymon and Stumpf's arguments persuasive, and we have noted some signs in the literature that they could be right. However, there is little direct evidence that

mutuality and sharing are essential features of effective career networks, nor that people are seeking closeness in their career-related relationships. Indeed, Bosley et al's (2007) findings hint that authenticity might be unwelcome if it challenges a person's view of self and world. This seems to us to be another fruitful area for future research.

Conclusions

The psychology of careers in industrial and organizational settings has in recent years been characterized by some interesting new ideas and informative well-designed research. The attempts to reflect changes in the context of organizational careers are welcome and show a valuable connection between researchers and the career worlds that people inhabit. Concepts such as protean and boundaryless careers, social capital, developmental networks, role models, career self-management and career competencies all have the potential to contribute to theoretical frameworks that guide future research. Some of the current debates in the field, such as that on the different ways of construing career success, could lead to better conceptualized empirical work in future. There is already some well-conceptualized and well-designed empirical work available, particularly regarding social capital, proactive personality and developmental networks. Recent meta-analyses of predictors of career success and mentoring have helped to summarize large bodies of research.

On the other hand, we see a danger that much of the potential of recent developments will remain unfulfilled. In some ways we think the careers field resembles the early stages of the universe according to 'big bang' theory – expanding rapidly, with some bright stars and solid objects and the beginnings of some solar systems, but also large clouds of particles and gas drifting about that may or may not eventually come together. We are especially concerned about the fate of boundaryless and protean career notions. We think they have often been conceptualized in imprecise ways, have internal tensions, hover uneasily between the descriptive and the normative, and carry a lot of ideological baggage. For example, is a boundary simply like a line at the edge of a sports pitch that one can

just step over, or is it more like a wall that has to be climbed over? Do boundaries no longer exist, or are they still present but more traversable? Does boundaryless mean individuals are free to travel anywhere to fulfil their dreams, or does it mean that powerful external forces can march in without impediment? Whilst 'boundaryless' might evoke notions of liberation, it could also have connotations of invasion and oppression.

We think that the boundaryless and protean career concepts can yet be useful 'ideal types' in a Weberian sense if these issues can be resolved. But, to return to our "universe" metaphor, we fear they may remain like un-coalesced clouds, present but without substance. Or perhaps they will be like comets, visiting many parts of the universe in a highly visible way but never making a lasting difference to the areas they pass through.

Regarding empirical research, we think it might be helpful in future to have less but better. At present we have the impression that many authors (ourselves included) sweat and strain to fit their work into career-relevant conceptual and theoretical structures, and that this rarely works well. As we have already argued, this is partly because many of the concepts and theories have limitations or weaknesses. But it is also because the data gathered are not particularly well-suited to any conceptual structure. More rigor is required here. Also, given the temporal nature of careers, we really do need more longitudinal studies. In the careers field perhaps more than most, it is often easy to see alternative causal sequences to those proposed by authors. For example, there are many reasons to think that people's human and social capital are affected by their career success as well as (or even instead of) affecting it. Related to this, research is needed that takes a closer look at processes as well as predictors and outcomes. Some of the work on proactive personality has made a start in that respect.

Finally, we believe that psychological research on careers in organizations would benefit from a broader vision. We have argued that work in sociological and discursive traditions can enhance our understanding of alternative conceptions of career theory and data. Also, as some writers have acknowledged, the applicability of career theory in different contexts (Johns, 2006) and cultures requires much more

thorough examination. We began by acknowledging that the title of this chapter borrows from Alan Bryman's review of leadership literature, and we end with another reference to leadership. Perhaps the careers field could learn from the extensive cross-cultural work on leadership, particularly the GLOBE project (see for example Scandura & Dorfman, 2004). This was a massive international collaborative effort which investigated the extent to which theories and conceptions of leadership can be applied across the world. Once some of the grey areas identified in this chapter have been addressed, a careers project similar to GLOBE would be a major step forward.

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