

**THE DISSOLUTION OF CAREER
IN THE LIVES OF MIDDLE CLASS, MIDDLE AGED MEN**

by

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ABSTRACT

This grounded theory study investigated the experiences of 18 middle class, middle aged men who lost long term employment because of organizational restructuring. Limited research had previously been conducted in this area and this study extends our understanding about the impact of job loss on people who have lost long term employment. The purpose of the study was to explicate the lived experiences of these men and generate an explanation and model of how they reconstructed their understanding of career following job loss from long term employment. The men's experience of job loss and how they constructed career after the loss of long term employment were explained through a dynamic and interacting four stage process model of the dissolution of career.

Stage 1, establishing career, explained how the men came to understand career as a relationship. For these men, career, as a relationship, was based on trust and was comprised of reciprocal terms believed to exist between the "good employee" and the "good employer." Over time, by fulfilling the terms of reciprocity, a psychological contract was established between the men and their employers. This contract contained mutual obligations, such as, employment security in exchange for employee commitment, loyalty, hard work, and sacrifice.

Stage 2, the termination of employment, revealed how the experience of job loss signified a violation of the psychological contract. The men believed they had complied with the psychological contract; however, the employer's failure to provide employment security represented a violation of the psychological contract. This violation was a highly emotional experience, tantamount to a betrayal. Although compensation could represent the employer's effort to honour the employer/employee relationship, compensation in the form of severance pay was not adequate.

Stage 3, disengaging from career, signified the period of time during which the men attempted to come to terms with the loss of career. The men attempted to secure new employment in a world of work different from the world in which they had begun their

careers. Although the men sought employment that promoted the employer/employee relationship of career, seeking work revealed career as they had known it was unlikely in the new world of work. Past experience and educational upgrading had little effect on their ability to secure employment. Employers favoured inexpensive labour, immediate skills, and short term working relationships with employees. Generally, the men found themselves working in unstable jobs for less money. The men who secured stable work, gained job security through union membership or self employment instead of relying on the employer/employee relationship. The men's experiences during this stage underscored the experiences of the second stage.

Stage 4, the dearth of career, represented the outcome of the men's experiences of the preceding stages. Although the men maintained previous definitions of career, they stated they had lost career and that career is no longer possible in the context of the new world of work. They were less trusting of employers. They favoured a transactional orientation towards work and stressed self interest in work relationships. Whereas, career provided a major source of purpose and meaning in the past, they constructed new purpose and meaning in life by reprioritizing other relationships in their lives, that is, with self, family, and friends. One wonders, however, whether life seemed less meaningful for the men who participated in this study because they maintained their definitions of career.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Securing new work and re-establishing career following job loss are challenges that have confronted many middle aged Canadian men (40 to 55 years). Annual monthly unemployment statistics in the early 1990's indicated that 9.5 % of working age adults were unemployed (Statistics Canada, 1991). By 1998 the unemployment rate had dropped to 8.3 % (Statistics Canada, 1999). An in depth analysis of these unemployment rates reveals that over any two year period almost 33 % of middle aged men experienced a career transition that included unemployment. The average length of unemployment was approximately 13 weeks, although many men remained unemployed much longer and some men never regained work. However, statistics provide only a numerical representation of unemployment; they do not describe the personal hardships encountered by middle aged men following job loss.

These hardships include the emotional pain of job loss (Allan, 1990; Borgen & Amundson, 1987); personal losses such as financial insecurity, altered friendship patterns, and possible negative changes in social status (Newman, 1988); and confronting changes in the organization of work in society (Hage & Powers, 1992). The emotional and personal experiences of job loss have been well documented and suggest that job loss during mid-life may be one of the most traumatic experiences in a person's life (Allan, 1990; Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 1980). Changes in the organization of work, that is, corporate restructuring and downsizing, job security, and new skill demand, and how these changes influence middle aged men's conceptions of self and their efforts to secure new employment are not well documented.

Middle aged men, particularly middle class men, may discover that the beliefs they held about work and career when they entered the work force are incongruent with the organization of work in contemporary society. Instead of provincial economies, economies are global (Beck, 1992; Byrne, 1993). Technological upheaval, changes in the

means of production, and the proliferation of communication technologies have resulted in both an elimination of jobs because of skill obsolescence and the creation of new and different employment opportunities (Beck, 1992; Byrne, 1993). Instead of a plethora of long term, secure, and stable employment opportunities with organizational employers there is a scarcity of such work (Mirvis & Hall, 1994).

The recently unemployed, middle class, middle aged male, particularly if he has lost long term stable employment, may feel disoriented. His sense of self and vocational identity that was constructed in conjunction with career development (Neimeyer & Metzler, 1987) may no longer seem credible (Newman, 1988). Whereas organizations of the past favoured long term employer/employee relationships and were hierarchically organized, contemporary organizations may be delayed, downsized, and operate through a network of market-sensitive business units (Snow, Miles, & Coleman, 1992). These organizations may favour a variety of employer/employee relationships, for example, part-time employees, core employees, and short term employees (Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995).

The middle class, middle aged man's understanding of career, that may reflect the context of the traditional world of work, may lack currency in this new world of work. Instead of providing continuity between the past and the future, career seems separated from the present and offers little connection to the future. After many years of work, he may find himself struggling not only with unemployment, but also with the loss meaning that was provided by career.

Problem

One of the challenges for middle class, middle aged men who have lost long term employment is to assimilate the changes brought about by job loss into their understanding of career as a means of organizing purposeful behavior. However, little is known about the lived experiences of this group of men and how they integrate these experiences into their understanding of career. The purpose of this study is to broaden

our understanding of the lived experiences of these men and generate an explanation and model of how they could reconstruct their understanding of career following job loss from long term employment. Such an investigation presents an opportunity to strengthen our explanations of career because it is grounded in the economic and social realities of contemporary society, a world where the means of production and the opportunities for employment are constantly changing. The research questions are:

1. What are the lived experiences of middle class, middle aged men following job loss from long term employment?
2. What is the process by which middle class, middle aged men construct purposeful behavior in their lives following job loss from long term employment?
3. What model would represent the social construction of career among middle class; middle aged males, who have lost long term employment?

As this study will utilize a grounded theory research methodology, the first question in this study is the broad sensitizing question that will guide this study. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) such initial sensitizing questions may change as the data from the research are analyzed and new directions for the research are identified.

Definitions

Career. The definition of career advocated in this study is grounded in a constructionist epistemology. As distinct from logical positivism, which advocates that a single apprehendable objective reality exists, constructionism postulates that our understanding of reality is an outcome of subjective interpretation of personal experience and that a multitude of realities are possible (Hoshmand, 1994). One generates construct systems from phenomenological experience and social interaction; the meaning or sense one makes from such experiences “reflects and is reflected in one’s construct system” (Young & Valach, 1996, p. 365). Humans bring to any new experience a construct

system that is reflective of their experiences and history. This construct system is used to organize and explain one's own and other people's behavior (Young & Valach, 1996).

One's personal construct system is comprised of a variety of constructs of which career is one. Career is a superordinate construct because it acts as a higher level construct that subsumes other constructs and connects human action over time, for example, roles, goals, work, relationships, feelings, life themes and directions (Young & Valach, 1996). Therefore, career may be defined as a personal construct that people use to organize purposeful behavior over time and give meaning to their lives. This definition of career has been adopted by the researcher conducting this study.

Contrary to traditional definitions of career which seem to limit themselves to occupational fit and vocational development (Richardson, 1993), the definition of career used in this study does not limit itself to these two constructs. Other kinds of work (domestic work, care giving, and volunteering) and activities (play and recreation) may also enable people to organize purposeful behavior over time. This broader perspective of career incorporates the notion of subjective career and may enable us to better investigate the intersect between the individual's activities and his activities in social context following job loss. For example, the middle class, middle aged male who has lost long term employment may become a volunteer soccer coach for children. Coaching soccer represents an alternative type of purposeful behavior and contributes to his organization of it over time and defines his social relations and contributions within the context of his community.

Construct versus concept. The term "construct," rather than "concept," is used in this study to reflect its constructionist epistemology. Whereas the term concept is derived from the language of logical positivism to represent an objective entity that is discovered in the external world, the term "construct" reflects constructivism by highlighting the role language plays in shaping, constraining, and giving meaning to human reality. Language is a human creation and the words within language "do not mirror reality, they inscribe

meaning” by re-presenting reality through “the filters of self-chosen vocabulary” (Savickas, 1995, p. 22). The term construct denotes “the personal and cultural component of meaning making” (Savickas, 1995, p. 22).

For example, deconstructing a concept such as work reveals that at a deeper level the assumptive structure of work, as part of the traditional concept of career, is androcentric (Richardson, 1993). Work may be seen as a relational construct that maintains social privilege, power, and status for middle class males. Work that is performed by the poor, ethnic and racial minorities, women, and the unemployed is undervalued because it is not seen as part of the organizational realm of career. Richardson proposes that when work is defined as relational construct, encompassing community contribution, different kinds of work such as care giving, which may not achieve the goals of individuals, help maintain the very fabric of society.

Rationale

Generating an explanation of how middle class, middle aged men construct career following job loss from long term employment is of critical importance for a variety of reasons. These are: 1) traditional theory and research fail to adequately inform counselling practice, program planning, policy formation, and further research; 2) since ongoing restructuring in the organization of work suggests that people’s constructs of career and work will continue to change, this study provides an opportunity to explore how such changes in understanding are constructed; 3) not only do middle aged, middle class men who have lost work confront unique problems that are not applicable to younger men, studying these men may reveal how they assimilate a loss in social and economic privilege; and 4) investigating how middle class, middle aged men reconstruct career may reveal things about the broader phenomenon of human change, that is, how people respond to significant changes in the context of their lives in general.

Delimitations

This investigation has some important delimitations. First, constructionist perspectives, at least radical ones, are subject to the criticism of relativism which suggests that people's constructions may have little correspondence with reality because their constructions are merely fabrications of their minds. Nonetheless, this criticism would not nullify the importance of people's constructions because their fabrications may serve an adaptive function. For example, Taylor (1983) observed that some cancer patients believed they could control their cancer with imagery, diet, or changes in life style. Although such beliefs had no influence on their cancer, these beliefs did help patients adapt to cancer by giving them a feeling of control over cancer.

In addition, this first delimitation may be less of a concern because a critical constructionist perspective is adopted in this investigation. From a critical perspective the efficacy and adaptive value of the person's constructions are dependent on how viable the person's constructions are in helping him or her attain personal goals and solutions to problems. Constructions which more closely correspond with the environment are more likely to be viable because they enable behavior that allows the individual to more effectively interact with reality (Mahoney, 1991). For example, holding a belief that one can fly may prove insupportable if one jumps off a high building.

A second delimitation is that the study pertains only to men. Women are not included in the study because important differences in women's coping styles and strategies for adaptation have been well documented (Leana & Feldman, 1988; Melinckrodt & Fretz, 1989). Although this doesn't necessarily mean that such differences imply different theories for men and women, it may be that the differences between men and women could lead to some ambiguities while constructing theory. It is my position that a similar, but independent study, that aims to generate an explanation for women be conducted as a means of explicating how women reconstruct career following job loss from long term employment. This would permit a fuller understanding of men's

and women's unique experiences. A subsequent comparison could be performed as a means of identifying important differences between men and women.

A third delimitation is suggested because the investigation utilizes a grounded theory methodology. Because grounded theory aims to provide a causal explanation of a phenomenon, explanations may adhere to the linear causal models of natural science. However, Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued for the generation of fresh theory or explanation that was unencumbered by a fascination with quantitative validation. Indeed, the theory should be generated from the data that reflect the phenomenon of interest, not from personal assumptions or existing theories. Although revisions and refinements of grounded theory were provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990), which seem to adhere more closely to positivistic methodologies, the approach taken in this study is that any explanation that is generated should be primarily derived from the data, facilitate understanding, and therefore not be limited to linear causal models.

The final delimitation of this study is its validity. Whether grounded theory methodology can withstand the rigors of the verification procedures of natural science is doubtful. However, the purpose of grounded theory is to generate theory not to test theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Consequently, establishing the validity of any explanation that is developed from this investigation would be a task for subsequent research efforts.

Summary

The central problem that will be investigated in this study is how do unemployed, middle class, middle aged men who have lost long term, stable, employment reconstruct career. A constructionist epistemology is used in this study. Career is defined as a personal construct system that people use to organize purposeful behavior over time and to give meaning to their lives. Career may include, but is not limited to work. It is believed that a constructionist epistemology enables the researcher to investigate career from a broader perspective that allows for the inclusion of various kinds of work, for

example, domestic work, caring, and volunteering, instead of being limited to vocations and occupations as implied by traditional perspectives of career. Additionally, other kinds of activities such as play or volunteering may provide meaning and enable the individual to organize purposeful behavior over time. A constructionist epistemology enables the researcher to investigate the subjective relationship between the individual and his social world.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews relevant literature about work and career as a means of establishing a foundation for investigating how middle class, middle aged men reconstruct career following job loss from long term employment. The chapter is divided into five sections. First, a brief discussion about the changing world of work is provided as a way of accenting how such changes may be influencing, not only the way people work, but their constructions of career. Second, a brief review of three traditional career theories is provided. These theories have had a significant influence in the field of career. Third, constructionism is described and research supporting a constructionist perspective on career is reviewed. This provides a synopsis of how people construct career over time. Fourth, an overview of the research pertaining to job loss is presented as a means of explicating how middle class, middle aged, men cope and adapt to the event of job loss. This literature highlights important factors that may play a role in the process of reconstructing career. The final section is a discussion that summarizes the preceding sections, asks some important questions, and provides a conclusion to the literature review.

The Changing World of Work

The emergence of global economies, changes in the means of production, and the proliferation of communication technologies have dramatically changed the world of work and Canadian society (Beck, 1992; Byrne, 1993). Our society has transformed from an industrial to a post modern, post-industrial society (Giddens, 1991). This has brought both opportunity and hardship to Canadian society. On the one hand, 54% of the new jobs, for example, software development, communications, and education, have been generated in the new economy; on the other hand, during the economic recession (1989 to 1993) traditional industries such as steel manufacturing and forestry reduced their work force by approximately 21% (Beck, 1995). Some industries such as cement

manufacturing reduced their work force by as much as 95% (Beck, 1995). Many people who lost work in the transformation to the post-industrial society have discovered that their job skills are either obsolete or nontransferable. Without the availability of employment that requires their skills, these people may experience considerable hardship in their struggle for re-employment.

In addition to the aforementioned hardships, changes in the organization of work have reduced the possibility of finding secure, stable, and long term career employment. Rousseau and Wade-Benzoni (1995) observed that these changes are demonstrated in altered employment relations between individuals (workers) and the organizations that employ them. According to these authors, Western society has moved through three distinct phases in the organization of work in society: the emergent phase, the bureaucratic phase, and the "adhocratic" phase. The emergent phase began in the late 18th Century and marks the beginning of modern industrial organizations. The means of production shifted from home cottage industries to centralized workplaces (e.g., factories). Owners (managers) of factories gained control over the means of production and supervisor-subordinate relations emerged. Employment was governed by transactional contracts.

The bureaucratic phase, similar to Mirvis and Hall's (1994) notion of the boundaried career, followed the emergent phase. The organization of work during the bureaucratic phase promoted administrative control over employees, long-term employment relationships, and physical proximity between the organization and the employee (Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995). Workers were a core part of the organization. They learned skills and technologies that helped them promote the interests of their employers. Employment relationships were governed by relational contracts and the construct of cradle-to-grave careers was an apt metaphor. Organizational structures were hierarchic and career development was viewed as upward mobility through the internal hierarchies of the organization.

Unlike the bureaucratic phase, that emphasized the long term employer/employee relationship, the “adhocratic” phase favours a variety of different employment relations (Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995). Organizations of the adhocratic phase are comprised of core employees and peripheral employees. Core employees provide organizational memory and continuity and have long term relationships with their organizations. Peripheral employees are hired to fill the fluctuating demands of organization. Their positions are more flexible and their relationships with the organization more limited. Careers are less upwardly mobile although lateral movement may be common. Employment relations may be boundaryless (Mirvis & Hall, 1994) and workers may work at several different organizations. These organizations may be delayed, downsized, and operate through a network of market-sensitive business units (Snow, Miles, & Coleman, 1992).

The structures of the bureaucratic and adhocratic phases by definition appear to be incompatible. Although the bureaucratic world of work seems to be rapidly disappearing, the organizational structure of the new world of work is unclear. Hall and Mirvis (1995) hypothesize that the emerging boundaryless career highlights new opportunities and challenges for work and career. Individuals will define career in relationship to self instead of in relationship to an organization (Arthur, 1994). Life long learning is advocated as a means of meeting these challenges and seizing the opportunities of the new world of work (Bird, 1994). Mirvis and Hall (1994) contend that employment opportunities are readily available for people who can adapt to the challenges created by the reorganization of work in society; however, as Snow et al. (1992) observed, people may experience a great deal of pain as they confront the transition from the bureaucratic to adhocratic phase.

The recently unemployed, middle class, middle aged men may find the problem of securing new work in this environment particularly challenging. His concept of career, which may reflect the context of the traditional work environment, has limited currency

in the post-industrial society (Hage & Powers, 1992). He may no longer be able to evaluate self and personal identity in reference to the roles, institutions, and moral guidelines inherent in traditional society. Expectations of securing long term employment in the new world of work may be unfulfilled in a society where work is organized around a multitude of possible employee/employer relationships. Peavy (1993) contends that the rapid changes in society and the organization of work would require people to create new meaning by constructing a concept of self and identity that is internally referenced and resilient to "conditions of uncertainty, conflict, and lack of external moral criteria" (p. 128). Regardless of the accuracy of Peavy's assessment, it is highly likely that any changes in personal beliefs pertaining to self, identity, and career will occur as a result of the person's experiences in context of this rapidly changing world.

Career Development Theories

Several theories of career development have emerged during the past half century, for example, trait-factor, person-environment correspondence, life-span, life-space, typology approach, learning theory of career counseling, and sociological perspectives of work and career (Zunker, 1998). Three theories are of particular relevance in the field of career development: life-span, life space approach to career, Holland's typology, and sociological perspectives. These theories are conceptually well developed, have been well researched, and have had a strong influence on the field of career (Zunker, 1998). A brief review of each of these theories outlines the major characteristics of these theories.

Life-Span, Life-Space

Super's (1990) life-span, life space theory is a multifaceted approach to career development. Super's theory incorporates differential psychology, self concept theory, and depicts vocational development as following a sequence of five stages comprising the life course. Differential psychology, or trait-factor theory, provides a medium for testing

and furnishing information on occupational differences related to personality, aptitude, and interests. Vocational self concept, derived from self concept theory, is viewed as developing out of a person's physical and mental growth, observations of work, identifications with working adults, general environment, and general experiences. As people mature they develop more specific occupational interests and this enables them to make better occupational choices.

Super (1990) contends that vocational development occurs in five stages: growth, exploratory, establishment, maintenance, and decline. The stages provide a framework for understanding the development of vocational behaviour and attitudes over the life course. Vocational developmental tasks (crystallization, specification, implementation, stabilization, and consolidation) occur in conjunction with the five stages. Super proposes career maturity occurs when developmental tasks are completed within the continuous series of life stages. In addition, Super contends people are involved in a variety of life activities that occur in conjunction with the tasks and stages of career development, for example, being a child, a student, a parent, citizen, and pensioner. These other activities influence and are influenced by career development. Super depicts the relationship between the various factors of career development in a stage model that he calls a "life rainbow."

Holland's Typology

Holland (1992) proposes people develop a modal personal orientation to the environment as a consequence of heredity and personal life history. Different occupational environments have different individual role demands. Individuals are attracted to the particular role demands of an occupational environment that meets their personal needs and affords personal satisfaction. Holland proposed that people can be classified into six modal personal orientations and six matching occupational environments. Personal orientations and occupational environments can be organized according to six themes: R (realistic occupation), I (investigative), A (artistic), S (social),

E (enterprising), and C (conventional). By matching the themes of one's personal orientations with occupational environments that have similar themes, people are more likely to achieve personal satisfaction. Holland's typology represents a descriptive explanation of compatible factors that lead to job satisfaction, rather than a well developed theory of career development.

Sociological Perspectives on Career

Sociologists take a broader view of career and emphasize the individual's location within the societal structure in determining the individual's career development (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996). The sociological perspective explains the role of broader social forces in shaping and constraining the persons career opportunities, for example, family status, race and gender, education, power and authority in the work place, occupational structure, and labour market forces. Whereas career development theories from a psychological perspective assume individuals have a moderate amount of control in making career decisions, sociological theory contends that institutional and market forces limit the individual's decisions and obstruct satisfaction of career goals. Institutional factors determine and shape work place environments. The attainment of career aspirations within organizations has less to do with planning, but is a matter of obtaining a preferred position, that is, individuals are assigned to job slots depending on criteria established by the organization.

Constructionism

Constructionism is founded on the premise that humans are meaning makers and that being human entails active efforts to interpret experiences and seek purpose and significance in the phenomena of the human environment (Neimeyer, 1992, 1993). The human is viewed as an organism that is neurologically wired to classify and transform the sensations and experiences encountered in life into a codified and dynamic representation of the world (Bateson, 1979; Mahoney, 1991; Neimeyer, 1993). Such cognitive structures are not static storage entities, but are self organizing systems of transformation

(Mahoney & Lyddon, 1988). By actively creating and construing personal realities over time, in the context of culture, history, environment, and through interdependent relations with others, people generate and maintain deep inner construct structures (Hoshmond, 1994; Mahoney & Lyddon, 1988)

These core structures, comprised of four actively interdependent processing themes, that is, valence or value, reality or meaning, personal identity, and power or control), provide a framework from which people order and assign meaning to new experience (Mahoney & Lyddon, 1988). Tacit theories of self and representational models of the world (core constructs) exist at the core structural level and form the individual's assumptive world and guide patterns of affect, thinking, and behavior (Mahoney, 1991). Contrary to the view that the mind is a cybernetic feedback mechanism, as emphasized in previous information processing models, "constructivist models add the complementary influence of feedforward mechanism that serves to prepare the organism for a selective subset of possible experiences" (Mahoney & Lyddon, 1988, p. 201). That is, perceptions of events, activities, and objects in the world are not only filtered through the senses, people's existing perceptions lead to anticipations of what these events, activities, and objects will mean.

Human emotion plays a central role in people's ongoing constructions of self and personal reality by sensitizing the individual to the meaning of phenomena in the environment (Hillman & Ventura, 1991). Mahoney (1991) postulates that the implication of the convergence among evolutionary, cognitive, and developmental sciences is that there is an extensive interdependence between the processes of human emotionality and personal development throughout the life span. Knowing, feeling, and action are inseparable expressions of the same mind/body system (Bateson, 1979; Pert, 1992; Pert, Hill, & Zipser, 1989) reflected in the dynamics of self organization that occur in core ordering processes of the person (Mahoney, 1991). Emotions generate important information about the meaning and significance of phenomena in the world and motivate

the individual toward action in an adaptive way (Greenberg, 1993; Greenberg, Rice, & Elliot, 1993; Hillman & Ventura, 1991).

Human development represents a gradual shift from simple to more complex constructions of self and reality over time. Core structures pertaining to the individual's sense of reality, identity, power/control and values are generated. These are highly resistant to change. This promotes construct stability and protects the individual from rapid or sweeping reconstructive assault (Mahoney, 1991). Life progresses comfortably while there is correspondence between the environment and the person's tacit theories of self and reality. However, when tacit theories of self and representational models of the world fail to provide viable personal prescriptions (do's) and proscriptions (don'ts) for behavior, the individual may experience anxiety and emotional discomfort (Mahoney, 1991). Under extreme threat the individual may change his or her core structures by deconstructing previous representations and construct new ones as a means of promoting more viable interactions with the environment. A situation that may occur, for example, when career, as it was known, no longer provides a means for organizing purposeful behavior over time.

Constructionism and Career

The credibility of adopting a constructionist approach for understanding human development and career may be traced to the works of object relations theorists such as Fairbairn (1946), Winnicott (1963), and Kernberg (1976) (Mahoney, 1988). These authors postulated that early relationships with caregivers are internalized as representations of the self and others. Such representations influence future development and interpersonal relations. Kernberg (1976) added that these representations are affectively charged. Knobloch and Knobloch (1979) have elaborated on the work of the object relation theorists (and psychodynamic theory in general) by demonstrating that childhood familial relationships become internalized as unconscious schemas that influence the way the individual relates to others during adulthood. For example, how

one related to one's father is replicated in one's relationships with authorities, for example, police and employers, during adulthood.

The significance of such relationships in work and career was more fully explicated by McGregor and Cochran (1988) and Chusid and Cochran (1989). McGregor and Cochran (1988) investigated the correspondence between people's family of origin roles and their relationships with co-workers. They found that the roles played in work were dramatic reenactments of the dynamics of family. The constancy of the reenactment of family roles in work relationships highlighted the importance of meaning in people's lives. People continually impart meaning on their stream of experience and continually seek to structure situations in ways that enhance meaning. One potent source for imparting meaning and structuring situations is "the learned repertoire of family roles and their integration into dramatic units" (McGregor & Cochran, 1988, p. 146). The various roles and dramas of family may become a metaphorical orientation towards life.

Chusid and Cochran (1989) tested the hypothesis that vocational role enactments were reenactments of family dramas experienced in youth and examined the role of family drama in career change. They discovered that occupational roles often corresponded to a family drama or family themes; however, correspondence between family dramas and work role enactments was not always parallel. Career change, viewed as an extension of these family dramas, in some instances could result in reenactment of family dramas in the new work locations; in other instances career change might lead to a shift to another family drama or a synthesis of various dramatic family themes, ultimately resulting in crystallization of family themes (Chusid & Cochran, 1989). Hence, career pursuits, suggest two important processes. On the one hand, individuals imbue work roles with the meanings garnered from the family dramas of their youth; on the other hand, changing careers may be an effort by individuals to restructure their sense of self and identity in relation to implicit metaphors of their lives for comprehending work situations and work roles.

The relationship between family dramas and work roles and career change may reflect the extensive interactions and structuring activities that occur at the level of the person's core structures as he or she navigates the world of work. Meaning and identity, as represented in work and career, are closely linked to one's family history. Osherson's (1980) study of middle-class, middle-aged, professional men who gave up highly successful careers to become artists, for example, epitomizes how psychodynamic struggles pertaining to identity and personal meaning are an integral part of one's inner life regardless of one's external trappings of success.

Human life and development, however, is comprised of more than family experiences. People live in a social context that is comprised of culture, social institutions, interpersonal relationships, and other phenomena, for example, communication technologies and media (Peavy, 1991). Context is integral to human action and development because its meaning is garnered from people's interpretations that manifest in the dynamics of human interaction. Context is not an objectifiable, static setting, it is dependent on actors' interpretations and perspectives as they live their purposeful and goal directed lives. It is within the tapestry of human context that people construct career and personal identity.

Neimeyer, Nevill, Probert and Fukuyama (1985) postulated that people's constructions of vocation and career reflect a progression of development that can be represented in a three stage model, that is, from early stages to intermediate stages to the most functional stages. Early stages represent simple (global) conceptions of career; whereas, the later and most functional stages represent more complex conceptions of career. The feasibility of this model was explored by Nevill, Neimeyer, Probert, and Fukuyama (1986). The results of Nevill et al. (1986) supported Neimeyer et al.'s (1985) three stage model and revealed that effective information processing is more likely to occur in "well-integrated systems that process information along fewer channels or dimensions" (p. 118). Nevill et al. concluded that superior vocational decisions occur in

the latter stages of Neimeyer et al.'s model because people have better organized vocational schemas.

Neimeyer and Metzler (1987) extended Nevill et al.'s (1986) exploratory work by focusing on the relationship between the structural characteristics of vocational schemas and the particular stages of vocational identity development. In particular, they hypothesized that more advanced vocational schemas should relate to higher levels of identity achievement. Based on Erikson's (1968) theory that identity formation proceeds along a continuum from diffusion to achievement and that people can be classified according to their location on this continuum, that is, diffuse, foreclosed, moratorium, or achieved, Neimeyer and Metzler (1987) investigated this progression and found that individuals with highly integrated and highly differentiated vocational schemas have "relatively advanced identity development" (p. 28). The authors deduced their findings supported Neimeyer et al.'s (1985) structural model which indicates that as people form occupational commitments they move from simple to complex vocational schemas, a process characteristic of cognitive development in general.

The findings of Neimeyer and Metzler (1987) and Nevill et al. (1986) support a constructivist perspective about work and career. Career development is seen as a process of cognitive construction, consistent with identity development, moving from relatively simple vocational schemas to more complex and highly integrated and differentiated structures. Neimeyer and Metzler (1987) and Nevill et al.'s studies add to our understanding of how people construct career in social context. As people increase their knowledge of vocations and occupations over time they are better able to make decisions about work and career.

Neimeyer and Metzler (1987) and Nevill et al.'s (1986) studies, however, suffer from some important limitations. The studies are cross sectional and represent a select population (university students) whose members would seem to lack a working history in their chosen field. Because the studies are cross sectional we are unable to say with

certainty that the progression from simple to complex vocational construct systems occurs. Findings may simply represent an artifact of the testing situation. Sampling university students (primarily undergraduate psychology students) may contain an inherent bias that represents a unique and assumed developmental progression relative to undergraduate psychology students. More importantly, how would the participants of these studies have responded later in life, when they may have committed themselves to a vocation? Would the decisions and directions taken during university be impervious to the vicissitudes of life after university? As Williams and Savickas (1990) observed, vocational interest and decideness may fail to translate into vocational practice due to the particular circumstances of the individual.

Williams and Savickas (1990) examined the career concerns of employed adults. They wanted to determine whether the vocational development postulated in Super's maintenance stage, was related to age and whether a renewal stage might be included to reflect mid-life tasks pertaining to reassessment of career choice and commitment. This renewal stage, posited by Murphy and Burck (1976), might reflect a person's reevaluation of self concept resulting in changes or confirmations in the person's career. From a constructionist perspective changes or reifications occurring represent the ongoing structuring and restructuring of the person's construct system.

Williams and Savickas (1990) tested their hypotheses by determining where the study participants were located on Super's stage model (exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline) and by having participants identify their major career concerns and how they would deal with these concerns. Concerns were categorized and analyzed with a scree test. The results indicated age was not related to career stage and career concerns pointed to both a career maintenance stage and a renewal stage. Persons involved in career maintenance engaged in activities that enabled them to hold on to current positions. This might include the pursuit of continuing education as a means of keeping up to the knowledge requirements of one's employment. Renewal was

characterized by a reordering of priorities, for example, devoting more time to family or leisure, or redirecting one's efforts towards a new occupational field.

Williams and Savickas (1990) demonstrated that because the tasks relevant to each of Super's stages related neither to age nor stage, the postulation of maturation following a set sequence or continuum was not evident. Instead, adaptation, not maturation, was a better reflection of people's responses to their major career concerns regardless if the concerns were about maintenance or renewal. Adaptation may be core task for career maintenance because one uses activities such as continuing education to accommodate the knowledge requirements of work; whereas, adaptation during a renewal stage may reflect an effort to cope with internal changes pertaining to the meaning one attaches to the one's current occupation or other events in life.

Importantly, the study of Williams and Savickas (1990) underscores the significance of context in career. Proponents of constructionism contend that human behaviour cannot be separated from race, gender, class, and ethnicity (Savickas, 1995), politics and economics (Muhlhausler & Harré, 1990; Shotter, 1984), and culture and history (Cushman, 1991). Society is a matrix of obligations and responsibilities, a moral order rather than the natural order postulated in the traditional sciences (Muhlhausler & Harré, 1990; Shotter, 1984). This moral order is constructed and maintained by people in their ongoing interactions with each other in their world. Constructs such as career are part of people's common sense understanding of the world (Savickas, 1995). The common sense world consists of taken-for-granted social action (Garfinkel, 1967). For example, people may assume the meaning of constructs such as career; however, because the meaning of career is taken-for-granted, people may be unaware of how this construct shapes and constrains behaviour (Chartrand, Strong, & Weitzman, 1995).

The aforementioned literature in this section on constructionism described some aspects of the process where-by people generate constructs of vocation and career. Career may be understood as dramatic re-enactments of family themes (Chusid &

Cochran, 1989; McGregor & Cochran, 1988). Vocation and career may be understood as a developmental progression in people's lives, that is, the movement from simple to complex constructions of career (Nevill et al., 1986; Neimeyer et al., 1985). More importantly, career as a social construction is inseparable from its social context (Savickas, 1995). This social context has undergone considerable changes in the last two decades that have affected career and the organization of work (Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995). In light of these changes, it seems critical to include the influence of events such as job loss into an understanding of how people construct career in a world where "cradle-to-grave" career paths are disappearing.

In the next section of the literature review, research relating to job loss is examined with an aim toward broadening the foundation for an examination of how middle class, middle aged men reconstruct career following job loss from long term employment. This body of literature should be viewed as representing only one aspect of the context within which individuals may reconstruct career. Its focus is on adaptation to job loss and the factors that influence this adaptation; not how people construct or reconstruct career. Although the event of job loss may not result in altered conceptions of career for everyone, for example, some individuals return to previous occupations and life styles, the perspective taken in this study is that job loss in post-industrial society may mark the end of career as it was known by the individual and stimulate the process of reconstructing career. A review of the job loss literature therefore presents an opportunity to explore not only the factors that influence adaptation and coping to job loss but also to identify important directions and questions that may be pursued in the present investigation.

Job Loss

Research on job loss has identified a variety of factors that influence people's efforts to cope and adapt to job loss. Research is frequently guided by the exigencies of the moment rather than established career theories (Hackett, Lent, & Greenhaus, 1991).

This has resulted in myriad of studies whose findings are poorly integrated. As a means of providing a sense of initial order and structure to this extensive body of research, the schema utilized in Schlossberg's (1980) transition model is adopted in this section of the literature review. According to Schlossberg's model events such as job loss after 40 years of age can be characterized under three broad categories: characteristics of the event, characteristics of the individual, and characteristics of the environment. By understanding the interactions between these categories it is possible to understand how people adapt and cope with an event such as job loss.

Characteristics of the Event

The characteristics of the event refer to the changes that are imposed upon the individual as a result of the event, for example, job loss. The phenomena that are classified under this category are: role change, emotional impact, personal control, duration of unemployment, and stress.

Role change. The major role change of unemployment is that one loses the status of worker and acquires the status of unemployed. The loss of the role of worker is often traumatic and highly stressful (Allan, 1990, Latack & Dozier, 1986; Newman, 1988; and Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 1980). Relationships with family, friends, and even prospective employers may change (Newman, 1988). The displaced worker may lose the role of family provider and become dependent on the family for emotional and financial support (Mallinckrodt & Fretz, 1988; Newman, 1988). Prospective employers may perceive the unemployed person as a less desirable employee than someone who is already employed because of assumptions about unemployed persons being less competent employees (Allan, 1990). Regrettably, with the exception of Newman's study, the aforementioned studies are a result of mailed questionnaires and provide little insight into people's perceptions of themselves and how these perceptions may have influenced their conceptions of career.

Emotional impact. Research on the emotional impact of job loss, particularly among the 40 years old and older adult, is limited. Observations are generally anecdotal and suggest that job loss is experienced as an undesirable and emotionally devastating experience (Hyman, 1975; Isaacson, 1981; Leana & Feldman, 1991). Displaced workers may express resentment and bitterness towards their previous employer (Latack & Dozier, 1986). These anecdotal observations are supported by Borgen and Amundson's (1987) qualitative study about the emotional impact of unemployment.

Borgen and Amundson (1987) found that unemployment was an emotional roller coaster. This emotional experience revealed similarities to the stages of grieving described by Kübler-Ross (1969). Moods could swing from despair and depression to hope and elation. For example, individuals might feel elated prior to a job interview and filled with despair afterwards if the interview was unsuccessful. Continued failures to secure employment could eventually result in a state of emotional burnout. Borgen and Amundson (1987) postulated that unemployment leads to shifts in emotions and cognitions and therefore it would be important to "assess these reactions ... to determine intervention options that may range from enhancing job search techniques to renewing self-confidence" (p. 183).

Borgen and Amundson's (1987) study, however, has some important limitations. The study did not focus on the 40 years old and older adult. Participants were categorized as under 25 years of age (n=21) and over 25 years of age (n=35). It is unclear how many of the participants were over 40 years of age and whether their emotional responses were similar to those under 40 years of age. Additionally, their study provides only a description of the emotional experience. The role of emotions in career, however, is not adequately addressed. For example, emotions may inform individuals about the meaning of an event and such information may motivate people to action (Greenberg, 1993). Investigating men's experiences and how they reconstruct

career following job loss from long term employment may reveal additional information about the role of emotions in career.

Personal control. Schlossberg (1981) hypothesized that self directed changes are less stressful than externally imposed changes. The central issue is that of "perceived control over one's own life" (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 9). Research that examines the issue of personal control over job loss after 40 years of age is limited and occasionally confusing.

On the basis of clinical observations, Isaacson (1981) discussed voluntary versus involuntary mid-life career changers. He noted that the concerns for voluntary career changers center around consistency and congruency of interests, emotional factors which impact on work, and fear of failure. The concerns of involuntary career changers center around the grief of job loss, coming to terms with personal characteristics that lead job loss, and future concerns in regard employment. On the basis of these differing concerns Isaacson (1981) made two observations: 1) that counsellors should use different counselling strategies for voluntarily and involuntarily career changers; and 2) traditional career theories require reevaluation because career changers do not follow traditional career stages or trajectories. This latter observation underscores the importance of generating alternate career theories as a means of more fully explicating career change according to differing circumstances of people.

The variable of personal control, however, seems more intricate than merely self directed versus externally directed career change. Personal control encompasses many dimensions. For example, forewarning of pending job loss may enable one to secure new work prior to the actual separation from the current employer (Allan, 1990). This might reduce personal stress and financial worries. Although one may not have had direct control over job loss, one can take personal control over one's life by acting in ways that promote adaptation to the anticipated change. By taking control over some aspects of the

pending event the individual maintains self esteem and a sense of self worth (Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 1980).

Duration of unemployment. Responses to increasing length of unemployment are not well researched. Parnes and King (1977) reported that the longer people were unemployed the greater the likelihood of poor health and a sense of powerlessness. Support for this conclusion, however, was based on limited evidence. Their study used the National Longitudinal Surveys from 1966 to 1971 and it is unclear whether the Surveys were discrete enough to identify health and feelings of powerlessness as the cause or the effect of long term unemployment.

Mallinckrodt and Fretz (1988), as part of a larger study, examined the relationship between job loss after 40 years of age and one's reaction over time. They found that although stress was initially quite high and people worried about financial concerns, stress and financial concerns decreased over time. People adapted to the status of being unemployed. The indications from Mallinckrodt and Fretz (1988) and Parnes and King (1977) are that the relationship between job loss and duration of unemployment is unclear.

Stress. The literature about job loss generally includes stress as one facet of the job loss experience; however, stress is seldom made the central focus of research. Mallinckrodt and Fretz (1988) examined the influence of supports on stress and found that group supports which replicate the work environment, are better stress reducers than other kinds of support.

Characteristics of the Individual

This category refers to the specific characteristics of the individual that may influence his or her ability to adapt to the experience of job loss and unemployment. The phenomena which are classified under the category of the individual are age and timing, psychosocial competence, gender, health, socioeconomic status, and value orientation.

Age and timing. According to Estes (1979) and Moody (1986) there are socially prescribed times, designated by age, when people engage in certain activities. For example, old age is a time for retirement while the preceding period of adulthood is a time for work (Moody, 1986). Theories such as those of Erikson (1950), Levinson (1978), and Super (1957) reflect this normative social view. Phenomena such as job loss after 40 years of age are off time because they disrupt the sequence of career development. According to Super (1957) 40 years of age is a time for career maturity not a time when one makes decisions about one's future occupation, something that should have been done in late adolescence or early adulthood.

Research examining the relationship between age and timing and job loss after 40 years is limited. Latack and Dozier (1986) reviewed literature about the relationship between age and job loss and concluded that further research was required to clear up ambiguities. For example, professional workers in the 30 to 50 year age range were less adversely affected by job loss than professional workers under 30 or over 50. However, middle aged blue collar workers (30 - 49 years old) were more adversely affected by job loss than either younger or older blue collar workers. Non-professional workers were more adversely affected by job loss than older workers. Schlossberg and Leibowitz (1980) reported similar findings in relation to non-professional workers and suggested the most negative reactions were amongst those who perceived themselves as old enough to have difficulty finding another job because of real or perceived age prejudice, but too young to retire. These findings suggest that timing and age may influence one's conception of career and therefore it is likely that the factor of age may play a role in how people construct future career.

Psychosocial competence. The concept of psychosocial competence is adopted from Tyler's (1978) study of survivors of traumatic events. Tyler (1978) proposed that psychosocial competence describes a three faceted personality configuration of the competent self which involves: a) self-attitudes, b) world attitudes, and c) behavioral

attitudes. Self attitudes refer to a “moderately favorable self evaluation,” the belief that one’s actions can influence the course of one’s life, and a “sense of responsibility” (Tyler, 1978, p. 313). World attitudes refers to a sense of optimism (hope) and moderate trust as the underpinnings for a pattern of “constructive interactions with the world” (Tyler, 1978, p. 313). That is, the belief that what is possible is possible. People who possess the behavioral attributes of the competent self display “an active coping orientation; high initiative; realistic goal setting; substantial planning, forbearance and effort in the service of attaining goals; and a capacity for enjoying success, suffering failure, and building from both” (Tyler, 1978, p. 313). Psychosocial competence enables an individual to more effectively cope with the events of daily life.

The influence of job loss after age 40 on people’s self attitudes is not well researched. Nonetheless, inferences may be drawn from some of the research. For example, individuals may feel they are unemployable because they believe their skills are obsolete or that they are too old (Bytheway, 1992; Isaacson, 1981; Mallinckrodt & Fretz, 1988; Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 1980). Managers and professionals may experience doubt and anxiety because they believe they are overqualified (Allan, 1990). Unfortunately, these studies did not investigate how the participants’ self attitudes influenced career behavior or persons’ constructions of career. Instead, they revealed, as suggested by Schlossberg and Leibowitz (1980), job loss might be temporarily detrimental to positive self-attitudes. In some instances re-employment could improve self attitudes because people realized that skills were transferable (Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 1980).

Research that investigated the influence of world attitudes following job loss is also difficult to find. Newman (1988) and Zawada (1980) reported that people who lost work might feel life was hopeless; however, their comments are limited to anecdotal derivatives and did not form the underpinnings of their research. Newman’s (1988) subjects felt defeated because of their inability to maintain economic parity with peers.

Consequently, they felt abandoned by their previous work world and gradually disengaged from their peers, as their peers disengaged from them.

Zawada (1980) examined the problems of displaced homemakers who were trying to find alternate employment after their children left home and their occupation as parent had ended. Zawada (1980) reported that displaced homemakers faced a multitude of problems that might be associated with a lack of work experience outside the home. These people reported that their education, skills, and job experience were of little value in finding employment; like Newman's (1988) respondents, Zawada's participants reported that life felt hopeless. Zawada's (1980) study is intriguing because she broadens the definition of work as suggested by Richardson (1993). Homemaking is defined as important work that can be lost. Displaced homemakers are viewed as people experiencing unemployment, not merely individuals who are entering the work force for the first time.

Finally, a search for studies about behavioral attitudes produced only one study. Gray (1983) examined the job seeking behavior of 46 employment service clients of various ages. Participants were randomly assigned to an experimental group which undertook a behavioral self-help job finding program and a control group which received normally available services. Participating in a self help group provided many of the positive attributes suggested by Tyler (1978), for example, planning, goal setting. Gray (1983) found that after twelve weeks, 74% of the experimental group versus 22% of the controls were re-employed. Gray's (1983) findings reveal the possible dynamic interactions that may occur during unemployment. In one instance, positive behavioral attitudes could lead to worthwhile behaviors; in another instance worthwhile behaviors might lead to positive behavioral attitudes. Such interactions could be mutually reinforcing.

The significance of these examples, presented under the heading of psychosocial competence, is that they suggest how people's constructs of career are influenced by

beliefs and feelings. It is possible that constructs such as career (defined as one's personal construct system that is used to guide purposeful behavior over time) may change because job loss may threaten personal beliefs about self, the world, and the efficacy of personal behavior. One's construct of career may no longer guide purposeful behavior over time because the context in which career was constructed has changed. Consequently, identity derived from a career that is no longer tenable is jeopardized. This may have a variety of influences on one's behaviors. Hopefully, this study will shed more light on these phenomena.

Gender. The influence of gender on the experience of job loss and unemployment is not well researched and some discrepancies exist. Leana and Feldman (1988, 1991) reported that men are more likely than women to utilize problem focused activities (behaviors such as work search, retraining, and relocating as a means of eliminating the source of stress, i.e., job loss). Harris, Heller, and Braddock (1988) and Leana and Feldman (1991) found that women may rely on social support (symptom-focused) from friends or family to help cope with job loss. Mallinckrodt and Fretz (1988), however, found no gender differences with regard to job seeking strategies and stress symptoms, although women reported that they perceived more available social support systems than men.

The discrepancy in the findings may be attributed to the different range of variables included in Mallinckrodt and Fretz's (1988) investigation. These researchers investigated people from similar educational and occupational levels (professionals and managers who had at least a Bachelor's degree). Mallinckrodt and Fretz's (1988) study was subsequently supported by Allan (1991) who found no significant differences in the coping behavior of men and women from the same occupational level. The significance of the discrepant findings pertaining to gender is that they highlight the importance of context rather focusing on relationships between variables.

Health. The influence of job loss on health among 40 year old and older adults was discussed under the variable of the duration of unemployment.

Socioeconomic Status (SES). The majority of studies about job loss at 40 years of age and older examine middle class professionals and managers, for example, Allan, (1990), Mallinckrodt and Fretz (1988), and Newman (1988). Few studies include blue collar, lower class, workers over forty, for example Parnes and King (1977). Authors such as Parnes and King (1977) refer to socioeconomic status; however, their definition of socioeconomic status is restricted to the monetary resources of working class people and does not include variables such as education. Nonetheless, a relationship between socioeconomic status and job loss is suggested in Latack and Dozier's (1986) summary of the seemingly contradictory findings about age and responses to job loss mentioned earlier in this paper.

For example, blue collar workers (30-49 years.) may have found job loss more stressful because they have fewer transferable skills, fewer opportunities for new work, and meeting financial responsibilities may have been more closely linked to predictable pay cheques. Professional workers (30-49 years.) might have had more transferable skills and greater opportunities for finding new work. Blue collar workers over 50 years of age might have found job loss less stressful because of the possibilities early retirement and reduced financial concerns because children are no longer at home. Latack and Dozier (1986) suggested that these were possible reasons; however, these reasons are limited to speculation. Comparative analyses of socioeconomic status and job loss after 40 years of age is notable by their absence.

Personal meaning. Studies focusing on the personal meaning of job loss and unemployment after 40 years are few. Newman (1988) reported that losing one's job may mean different things to different people. Newman (1988) suggested that middle class professionals have individual and social identity attached to work and this increases the trauma of job loss; whereas, a laborer might merely see a job as a means of paying the

bills, loss of identity and social status are not involved. Osgood (1982) and Pahl (1988) provide some support for Newman's (1988) contentions. However, Form (1987) noted that working class people gained identity and status from their work by deriving satisfaction from a job well done. The significance of the meaning of one's work and subsequently losing work requires further investigation and elaboration.

Characteristics of the Environment

The last set of factors presented under the schema of Schlossberg's (1981) transition model are those pertaining to the environment. Schlossberg (1981) stresses that environment should be viewed in the broadest sense. Unfortunately, she fails to define environment any further than this; however, she seems to ascribe to a traditional social science perspective that interprets environment according to its structural components. Nonetheless, her inclusion of these factors in the model promotes a fuller examination of the literature on job loss. The factors that are included under the category of environment are interpersonal and institutional support systems and the physical setting.

Support. Research examining the relationship between support and job loss and unemployment after 40 years of age combines interpersonal and social support systems (Mallinckrodt & Fretz, 1988; Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 1980) or investigates support as a secondary feature of the central thesis (Allan, 1990; Leana & Feldman, 1991; Newman, 1988). There are few studies focusing on the 40 years of age and older adult.

Newman (1988), utilized a focused life histories technique and conducted an anthropological study about downward mobility of middle class American executives and professionals (n=150). Newman (1988) found that when job loss resulted in significant decreases of income for lengthy periods of time, family relations and interpersonal networks suffered. People reported having more conflicts with their spouses because they were unable to maintain their previous standard of living; difficulties with children occurred because the children could no longer participate in the activities of their more

affluent friends. Friendships and interpersonal networks suffered because respondents could not participate in costly social activities or maintain previous residences. According to Newman (1988), middle class Americans who became unemployed lost social support.

Newman's (1988) study has some limitations. Her methodology does not follow the rules of empiricism, for example, her sample is not random; however, she generalizes her findings to middle class Americans. Findings about phenomena such as marital discord or difficulties with children require deeper exploration. It is unclear whether these problems existed prior to unemployment. Schlossberg and Leibowitz (1980) and Allan (1990), for example, noted that when marital difficulty existed it had preceded job loss. Job loss may intensify marital difficulties; however, this is somewhat different than being the primary cause of marital disharmony.

Mallinckrodt and Fretz (1988) examined social support in relation to stress symptoms and the value of social support as a buffer to the negative interactions of other stressors (length of unemployment and financial concerns) among professionals 40 years old and older. Social support was significantly related to self esteem, internal locus of control, and lower levels of psychological symptoms. Women perceived a greater availability of social support than men. The total level of social support was significantly correlated to the level of job seeking behavior for men. Men who received more social support spent more time looking for work. Interestingly, multiple regression analysis did not support the original hypothesis of the stress-buffering effects of social support and its interactions with the stressors of financial concerns and length of unemployment "beyond that of the direct effects, of any of the stress symptoms" (Mallinckrodt and Fretz, 1988, p. 283).

Of particular importance in the study of Mallinckrodt and Fretz (1988) was their discovery that institutional support which emphasized the self worth of the individual and group supports from others facing similar hardships seemed more beneficial than support

from family and friends. This discovery is similar to the findings of Schlossberg and Leibowitz (1980) and Allan (1990). Schlossberg and Leibowitz (1980) reported that dismissed workers got over distress and feelings of anger towards the employer sooner when the company aided the employee in finding new work by providing job finding services or retraining. Under these circumstances, employees felt that they were still valued by the company regardless of having their employment terminated.

The value of group support or institutional support was also reported by Allan (1990) who examined the job seeking activities of managerial and professional adults (n=348) that were members of the Forty Plus club. Allan (1990) reported that the job finding club provided a substitute for the interpersonal supports which were normally available from coworkers. Allan (1990) noted that not all kinds of organizational support were viewed favorably. Government or private employment agencies were generally viewed unfavorably. Approximately 10% of the sample were particularly dissatisfied with executive search firms, "expressing the feeling that such firms look for candidates from among the people who are employed, not the unemployed" (Allan, 1990, p. 118).

Summarizing the studies on support systems it would seem that social support received from others facing similar hardships has more beneficial and positive effects than support from other sources. This raises the question of how does support influence people's understanding of work and career over time in the contemporary work world.

Physical setting. Research that investigated the physical setting of the unemployment environment was limited. Allan (1990) suggested that a job search environment that was similar to the work environment enhanced a person's re-employment efforts. In view of the rapidly changing world of work, creating such an environment may prove challenging, particularly when that environment no longer exists. In the post-industrial society the work environments of the traditional organizations may no longer be tenable (Giddens, 1991).

The influence of the environment in its broadest sense (including social and organizational support systems and physical setting) requires further elaboration. Environment, after all, is not a static entity. People are active co-producers of their world (Hoshmond, 1994). They have perspective and their behavior is purposeful and goal directed (Mahoney, 1991). As a means of better understanding how middle class, middle aged men reconstruct career following job loss, it may prove more comprehensive to account for dynamic context in which they live.

Discussion

The literature review has encompassed four broad areas, the changing world of work, traditional career theories, constructionism and research supporting a constructionist orientation to career, and how people cope and adapt to job loss. The world of work has changed from an industrial society to a post-industrial society. The "cradle-to-grave" careers which were promoted by traditional work organizations are being supplanted by careers that emphasize change, flexibility, temporariness, and knowledge. Traditional career theories identify important determinants of career development. Constructionism provides an epistemology for investigating how people, such as, middle class, middle aged men, whose construct of career is jeopardized by the changes in post-industrial society, may reconstruct career. The review of research that assumes a constructionist orientation revealed that career may be linked to people's family of origin experiences, is a process of transformation wherein the individual moves from global to complex cognitive structures of career, and that adaptation better explains career development than maturation. However, abrupt changes in the direction of career construction brought on by events such as job loss are not adequately addressed by research that assumes a constructionist orientation.

The absence of such research lead to a review of the research literature on job loss after 40 years of age. It was proposed that job loss signifies an important event that may inform individuals that career as it was known is no longer viable. Research on job loss

reveals factors that play a role in the process of reconstructing of career. As a means of bringing an initial sense of order to the plethora of research on job loss the organizing schema of Schlossberg's (1980) transition model was adopted. According to this schema, factors that influence adaptation to job loss were classified under three broad categories: 1) characteristics of the event, that is, role change, emotional impact, personal control, duration of unemployment, and stress; 2) the characteristics of the individual, that is, age and timing, psychosocial competence, gender, health, socioeconomic status, and personal meaning; and 3) characteristics of the environment, that is, support (personal and organizational) and the physical setting.

The limitations of the two bodies of research are numerous. Research assuming a constructionist orientation explains how career construction moves from global to complex structures; however, there seems to be limited research that accounts for abrupt directional changes in career construction brought about by disruptions such job loss. Studies are primarily cross sectional and therefore longitudinal explanations of career are relegated to inference. Some studies are dated and most studies fail to reflect the vicissitudes of the post-industrial society. Research methods seldom adhere to established career theory and as a body of knowledge it is poorly organized and synthesized (Hackett et al., 1991). Overall the research pertaining to adults 40 years of age and older, particularly in relation to middle class, middle aged men is limited. The limitations of the research therefore reinforce the significance of conducting a study on how middle class, middle aged men construct career following job loss from long term employment.

Various questions and issues, including the primary research questions, are raised by this review of the literature. For instance, what role do factors such as emotions, role change, stress, age or perceptions of age, socioeconomic status, personal meaning, and support systems play in the process of reconstructing career following job loss from long term employment? These factors that comprise parts of individuals' contexts have a

demonstrated influence in adaptation to job loss and it seems likely they will continue to play a role beyond adaptation to the event of job loss. Additionally, we may want to reconsider the use of constructs such as adaptation because they may be limiting. Adaptation, according to Schlossberg (1981), refers to a process in which one moves from total preoccupation with an event or non-event (failing to receive an anticipated promotion) to the integration of the event or non-event into one's life (Schlossberg, 1981). This results in a qualitative change (transition) in one's assumptions and behavior. Such change is described as an outcome between "the ratio of resources to deficits, allowing for changes in the ratio as one's situation changes" (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 8). However, does this capture the complexity and intricacy of people's responses to major life events such as job loss from long term employment during middle age?

Job loss may signify more than the end of work and the benefits derived from work, job loss in the new world of work may signify the end of one's career, a career that one may have cherished and built upon for many years in the rich and varied context of human life. Cochran (1992) proposes that people's careers may be understood as thematically rich constructions (personal themes) that are unique to individuals and unify and provide direction in their lives. These personal themes may be indefinite and pervade persons' life histories, for example, social worker. Collin and Young (1992) observe that career enables one to interpret the meaning of events over time and give life a sense of cohesion. A career as a social worker could allow someone to organize purposeful behavior over time and give meaning to life. The permanent loss of work as a social worker could disrupt one's career as a social worker and rupture the sense of cohesion provided by career.

Mahoney (1993) postulated that disruption of a person's construct system, for example, career, interferes with feedback/feedforward mechanism of the person's construct system. The anticipatory flow of life is broken and the person's world loses predictability. Nevill et al. (1986) provided some support for this proposition in their

finding that effective vocational information processing is more likely to occur in “well-integrated systems that process information along fewer channels or dimensions” (p. 118). The disruption of career, stemming from job loss, may jeopardize the integrity the person’s construct of career. Without a viable construct of career, effective information processing becomes problematic and the individual may experience difficulty organizing purposeful behavior over time and finding meaning in life. The person may reconstruct career in light of events such as job loss as a means of regaining system integrity and cohesion, resulting in a transformation of the person’s construct of career. Adaptation might therefore be more clearly defined as a process of reconstruction and transformation; a process that incorporates people’s active efforts to create purpose and meaning in the lived context of their lives.

In addition to the aforementioned questions and issues, a review of the literature failed to unearth a model of how people construct career in the first place? Although this indicates that a model of normative career construction is unavailable for building the intended model, construction of the present model may reveal how career is generally constructed by various populations in post-industrial society. For example, many of the challenges faced in a social context where work is temporary, knowledge intensive, and uncertain may be similar to the challenges faced by younger adults. Ultimately a model of career construction following job loss may differ by only a matter of degree from a general model of career construction within the context of post-industrial society.

Conclusion

A review of the literature has demonstrated that generating a theory of how middle class, middle aged, men reconstruct career following job loss is a worthwhile endeavor. Job loss during mid-life is a common phenomenon and there is an absence of literature that explains how these men reconstruct career in post-industrial society. Research assuming a constructivist perspective reveals that people construct career over time. A

linear model seems inherent in the research and problems pertaining to the disruption or redirection of this path are not represented. Research from more traditional scientific orientations identified many variables that influence adaptation to job loss. However, this body of research lacks synthesis, is limited to relationships between variables, and fails to account for the role of people's purposeful behavior in the context of their lived experience. Although our knowledge of career demonstrates that job loss can be a traumatic event and that traumatic events can lead to shifts in people's understanding of self worth and representational models of the world, established career theories fail to account for such processes of change.

This failure of explanation in traditional career theories provides counsellors and other professionals working with middle class, middle aged men, limited guidance in assisting these clients. Instead, these professionals must rely on their personal experience and innovation. Although experience and innovation are invaluable, providing a fuller explanation that includes a model of the how people reconstruct of career would provide a stronger foundation for practice. Such an explanation could help synthesize the various bodies of research, buttress professionals' personal experiences and practices, and encourage further innovations and future research. The following chapter presents a qualitative methodology, grounded theory, for investigating how middle class, middle aged men reconstruct career.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This construct-oriented study proposed to investigate the experiences of middle class, middle aged men, who had lost long term employment. The goal of the study was to generate an explanation and model of how these men might reconstruct career as a result of their experiences. Grounded theory methodology was selected for the study because its purpose is to assist the researcher in developing explanations or generating theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A theory in this study is regarded as a set of interrelated constructs that emerge from attempts to explain a given body of data. These interrelated constructs provide an explanation of the subject at hand.

In contradistinction to traditional natural science methodologies that emphasize theory verification, grounded theory is an interactive approach for investigating the interaction between the conditions in people's lives (social context), their responses to these conditions and to the consequences of their actions, and for the generation of new explanations about the phenomena under investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). As a discovery method, grounded theory adheres to two significant principles that are drawn from symbolic interactionism and pragmatism. These principles demonstrate the viability of grounded theory methodology for this research endeavour.

First, phenomena are not viewed as static but are perceived as being in a constant state of change in response to their environment (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Methods of investigating phenomena therefore should be able to incorporate change as a means of reflecting the non-static nature of phenomena in the life world. According to the definition of career that was used in this study, work plays a central role in people's understanding of career. Because of the multitudinous changes in the organization of work over the past two decades it was believed a methodology that allows for the investigation of significant changes in people's lives would better access how middle class, middle aged men's constructs of career change over time.

Second, grounded theory rejects the causal explanations of strict determinism; however, nondeterminism is not sanctified (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). People are viewed as capable of influencing their destinies by making decisions about the events and occurrences that they perceive in their environment. This second principle is aligned with the construct-oriented approach (constructionism) advocated in this study. Proponents of constructionism postulate that people actively create and construe personal meaning and reality in the context of culture, history, environment, and through their interdependent relations with others (Hoshmond, 1994). People generate tacit theories of self and representational models of the world that are used to guide patterns of affect, thinking, and behaviour during their daily lives (Mahoney, 1991).

The suitability of using a grounded theory methodology for construct-oriented approaches to the study of human activity has been demonstrated in the work of Morrow and Smith (1995). By collecting data that were grounded in the experience of women who had been victims of childhood sexual abuse, Morrow and Smith developed a model that provided a comprehensive explanation of how women adjust to and cope with childhood sexual abuse in the lived context of their everyday adult lives. Importantly, the model presented a conceptual framework that helped synthesize the diverse findings of previous research that focused on the symptomatology of sexual abuse. Accordingly, it was believed that grounded theory methodology could enable this researcher to achieve similar goals, that is, to construct a model and explanation that offers a conceptual framework of how middle class, middle aged men, who have lost long term employment, reconstruct career.

Research activity in grounded theory methodology is a reciprocal process that is guided by theoretical sampling; theory evolves from research through the "continuous interplay between analysis and data collection" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). Data may be collected from a variety of sources: interviews, observations, literature, government documents, video, books and anything that can illuminate the question under

investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Data are collected that further theoretical understanding and these data are interpreted as a means of generating concepts that are related through statements of relationship. Sandelowski, Davis, and Harris (1989) characterize the grounded theory approach to knowledge development as:

The simultaneous and ongoing collection, categorization, and interpretation of data, the deliberate sampling of comparative groups of subjects all of whom can illuminate the evolving phenomenon being studied, and the ongoing use of measures to ensure validity of the study. Grounded theory is a recursive process in which tentative theoretical explanations are continually generated on the basis of incoming data, and in which sampling and data collection techniques are continually modified to confirm or refute these explanations. (p. 79)

Grounded theory, therefore, is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data that are systematically collected and analyzed (Corbin & Strauss, 1994). Research follows three general processes that may occur simultaneously: data collection, data analysis and theory development, and the preparation of the written report. In the remainder of this chapter the processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory development are presented in relation to the present study. A brief discussion about validity and reliability addresses some of the limitations of this grounded theory study.

Data Collection

Collection of the data for this study was governed by the general research question, "What are the lived experiences of middle class, middle aged men following job loss from long term employment?" According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the general research question sensitizes the researcher to the problem and provides direction for collecting and analyzing the data. Unlike traditional research questions, this sensitizing question is more flexible and subject to change as data are collected and concepts and theory are generated (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As the research progresses, the researcher may propose new questions that shape the study. For example, later on in the study this researcher asked, "What happened to the men's understanding of career as a result of their experiences?" This eventually led to the realization that the men in the study did not

reconstruct career. They felt they had lost career and believed it would be unlikely they would reestablish a career in the future. The sensitizing question therefore provides the underpinnings for gathering data from various sources without limiting the potential discoveries which are available from the research process.

The sources of data for this study included a review of the literature, two interviews (initial and follow-up) of each of the 18 middle class, middle aged men who participated in the study, and the researcher's own assumptions about the subject. Data collection was governed by the principle of theoretical sampling, that is, data are collected that help to facilitate the generation of theory not verification of existing theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The process of theoretical sampling requires the simultaneous and reciprocal process of data collection and analysis; consequently, alternate sources of data may be suggested during the research process as a means of deepening and verifying emerging explanations, for example, follow-up interviews were used in the study.

Interview Protocol

The interview format used in this study was the formal unstructured interview. Unlike the formal structured interview which follows a rigid and inflexible interview schedule (Swanson, 1986) or the informal interview which relies, for example, on the use of everyday impromptu conversations (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986), the formal unstructured interview is an in-depth interview that utilizes a set of general questions or themes to acquire relevant data about the problem from the study participants (Swanson, 1986). Although interview questions provide focus and structure to the interview, the format of the questions is open and flexible thus allowing the interviewer to pursue participants' replies with probes or additional questions that promote greater clarification and deeper exploration of the research topic.

Interview Questions: Initial Interview and Follow-up Interview

The initial interview schedule was developed from the literature review and the researcher's field notes from an employment counselling program (Appendix A). This interview schedule was tentative to reflect the principle of theoretical sampling inherent in grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The interview schedule provided a guideline for the initial interview. However, as noted by Swanson (1986) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), modifications in the interview schedule occur because incoming data can suggest new avenues to pursue during initial and subsequent interviews. These questions can help to further theory development. This occurred in the current study. New questions were generated during the initial interviews and this enabled the researcher to better explore the men's stories. Indeed, had the researcher rigorously adhered to the original interview schedule, theory development may have been hampered because of the limitations of the interview schedule.

The follow-up interview schedule was generated from the analysis of the first 15 participants' responses to the initial interview. The follow-up questions were specific and were designed to corroborate the researcher's emerging theory development, that is, the reciprocity inherent in career (see Appendix B). The follow-up interview also provided an opportunity to collect additional data to fill in some of the categories that were not sufficiently saturated, for example, foundations, childhood experiences, and recruitment.

Participants

Eighteen participants were recruited for the study. As a means of promoting rich and thick descriptions of the phenomenon of interest, participants were interviewed who were middle class, middle aged men who had lost long term employment due to organizational restructuring. Participants' self definition of middle class was used to determine their middle class status. The guideline of 40 to 55 years of age from Statistics Canada was used to determine middle age at the time the participants lost long term

employment. They had been away from their long term employer for at least 2 years. The two-year time limit was imposed for two reasons. First, the literature revealed there was a paucity of research about the long term effects of job loss on middle class, middle aged men. Second, it was hoped that the two-year limit would allow sufficient time for the participants to adapt to their experience. This, it was believed, would allow the participants to reflect on their experience rather than being overwhelmed by the immediate experiences of employment termination, for example, shock.

Participants came from diverse lines of work and a variety of different employers. Eight men were managers or executives and 10 men were highly skilled technical workers. Participants were informed about the nature of the study, confidentiality, and were required to sign a consent form acknowledging their willingness to participate in the study (see Appendix D). They were provided with a copy of the consent form for their personal records. Participants and their employers are given pseudonyms in this document to protect their identity.

Recruitment of Participants

Recruitment of participants for this study occurred in four steps. The first step was to assess the feasibility of conducting this study. This was done by contacting a local employment counselling agency, Kovacs and Associates, and inquiring about the possibility of securing participants suitable for the study. Although no participant was directly recruited from this agency, informal conversations with the agency's proprietor, Sharron Kovacs, indicated that recruitment of participants would not pose a significant problem. Kovacs and Associates kept a database of people who had participated in their program. A preliminary review of this data base indicated that there were several men listed in the database who fit the participant criteria for the study. This information suggested that it might be possible to recruit a sufficient number of participants by simply contacting people listed in the database. However, because the proper use of grounded

theory methodology encourages variability in the study sample, participants were recruited through local community newspapers.

The second step was to place an advertisement (April 27, 1997) in a local community newspaper, The Courier (Appendix E). This paper is primarily distributed in Vancouver, British Columbia. There was considerable response to the advertisement (n=35); however, only 12 men met the participant criteria. Ten of the volunteers from this group were interviewed during May and June. The 2 remaining volunteers failed to attend the interview. Follow-up telephone conversations with these men revealed that for personal reasons they had changed their minds about participating in the study, for example, "I thought a lot about it since we first talked and I decided I didn't want to relive it again. I just want to put it all behind me." In spite of the loss of these participants, two additional volunteers were recruited by word of mouth as a result of the first set of interviews.

The third step was to place another advertisement (February 15, 1998) in a second local community newspaper, the North Shore News, that services North and West Vancouver, British Columbia. The same advertisement that had been placed in the Courier was placed in the North Shore News. The response to this advertisement was much lower (n=8). Three additional participants who met the participant criteria were recruited from the North Shore thus bringing the sample size to 15. These interviews were completed by the middle of March 1998.

The final step was to place an additional advertisement in the North Shore News (May 17, 1998). The same advertisement that was used previously was used for this advertisement. Three additional participants were recruited from this advertisement. They were interviewed during the remainder of May, 1998.

Interviews: In-person and Follow-up Telephone

Two kinds of interviews were conducted, one in-person interview and one follow-up telephone interview per participant. The in-person interviews lasted from 1 1/2 hours

to 5 1/2 hours with an average duration of approximately 2 hours. These in-person interviews were conducted in one of three locations: in a private office at Kovacs and Associates, in the participant's home, and in restaurants. Participants were informed that they might receive additional follow-up contacts for clarification or elaboration of material that was presented during their interview.

Seventeen of the first interviews were tape recorded and transcribed; however, one interview was not tape recorded because of a malfunction in the recording equipment. The researcher wrote a summary of this interview and asked the participant to review the summary. The participant agreed with the content of the summary. The 17 participants, whose interviews were successfully recorded, were offered a copy of the transcript that they could review to verify its accuracy. The participants who wanted to have copies of the transcripts (n=6) did not report any inaccuracies in their interview transcripts.

The follow-up telephone interviews occurred between the months of April 1998 and July 1998 (see Appendix B). Fifteen participants received follow-up telephone interviews. The 3 participants who were interviewed last did not receive a follow-up telephone interview. Instead, they were asked the follow-up questions at the end of the initial interview because the follow-up questions had been developed by this time. At the beginning of each telephone interview participants were asked if they would allow the interviewer to tape record the telephone conversation. None of the participants objected to the taping of these telephone interviews. Segments of these interviews were transcribed, for example, participants' comments that helped to saturate categories.

Personal Assumptions

By identifying his or her own assumptions the researcher accomplishes two important research functions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). First, the researcher identifies personal values that may influence the researcher's analysis of the data. This enables the researcher to take measures that reduce the influence of personal bias. Second, by

identifying personal assumptions in the research report, reviewers and members of the academic community may better assess the credibility of the study.

Reflecting upon this study I identified several personal assumptions that I believed might influence my research activities. They are:

- Middle class, middle aged men can communicate their thoughts and feelings about how they organize purposeful behaviour in their lives.
- People are capable of change and can both influence and be influenced by their environment.
- Variable models of the human condition are a better representation of people than are invariant models of the human condition.
- I feel that human change is better represented by transition models such as those of Schlossberg (1981) than linear models development, for example, Levinson (1978).
- I support a contextualist view of the world and I feel that scientific orientations, which aim to objectify human behaviour, fail to consider how social reality is characterized by intersubjective and common meanings that change over time.
- People are emotional beings and human emotion is inextricably linked to human experience, cognition, and action.
- For research to be worthwhile it should have some practical application.
- People will re-construct career after losing what they believed was their career.
- My own experiences of marginalization as an immigrant and my status as a middle class, middle aged man could predispose me towards interpretations of the participants' experiences that may not be an accurate reflection of their experiences.

Analysis of Data

Analysis of data followed the procedures of grounded theory methodology.

Analysis of data was a systematic and reciprocal process that occurred in conjunction with data collection. Analysis, as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1990), was guided by the ongoing discoveries which were generated during the research process. In grounded theory methodology one works with conceptualizations of the data, not the actual data, in formulating theoretical explanations (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Conceptualization begins with the generation of concepts and proceeds to the construction of categories. The construction of concepts and categories is facilitated through coding and memo writing.

Concepts and Categories

Concepts are the basic units of analysis in grounded theory research. Concepts are derived from interpretations of the meaning of the events and occurrences that is grounded in the data. As research progresses a multitude of concepts may emerge. Similar concepts may be grouped together to form categories. These categories are developed in terms of their properties which may be dimensionalized (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For example, the category of compensation was constructed in this study and had the properties of cash payments and pension benefits. These properties had their corresponding dimensions, for example, cash payments could be interpreted along the dimension of not enough to enough.

Properties and dimensions provide a basis for constructing relationships among categories as part of a continuum of increasingly higher levels of abstraction that can represent the evolving theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This continuum of increasingly elaborate and more abstract categories may eventually result in a core category that represents the explanation or theory about the phenomenon of interest. This structural conceptualization may be represented pictorially, for example, the four stage model generated in this study. Although, the explanation of how grounded

theory is performed may be abstract, its procedures become clearer in its practical application.

Coding

The generation of concepts and categories in grounded theory is aided through the process of coding. Coding facilitates the breaking down and conceptualizing of the data. Two analytic procedures are germane to the coding process, although their nature changes with each kind of coding: the use of questions and the process of constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Concepts and categories are initially provisional. The use of questions promotes fuller exploration of the meaning of the data, concepts, and categories. Constant comparative analysis ensures the viability of concepts and categories because alternative concepts and categories are eliminated through ongoing data collection and analysis. Three types of coding, consistent with grounded theory methodology, were used in this study: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Open coding. Open coding is an interpretive process that enables the researcher to break down data analytically and provide conceptual labels to the data (observations, sentences, ideas, and events, etc.) that stand for the phenomena they represent (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). According to Corbin and Strauss (1990) the process of open coding reduces researcher bias in a study by forcing the researcher to compare preconceived ideas against the data itself. Biases which are not supported by the data are more likely to be eliminated.

Open coding was conducted in this study in three steps. First, I read the transcripts of the interviews to familiarize myself with each participant's story. Second, the first 6 interviews were read again during which I underlined any words, phrases, sentences, or segments of text that I interpreted to be meaningful in relation to job loss. I deemed text meaningful by asking questions about the content of the text I was reading. I wrote a code which I felt summarized the meaning of the identified data.

Third, I used questions and the constant comparative method to assess whether I was applying the similar codes to the similar units of meaning. By working back and forth between the documents and comparing the codes and their respective text units to each other, I reduced numerous open codes to 85 open codes. This was possible because some codes were isolated and did not reflect a common experience. These were tentatively discarded. Additionally, different codes sometimes referred to the same idea. I prescribed a single code name for consistency and to eliminate confusion. The final list of codes and their text units were subsequently examined and compared by placing them into a table that was created with a word processor.

Finally, I began to move the concepts (open codes) to higher levels of abstraction by categorizing them. A category is a construct that represents either a theme or process in the data. Some examples of categories which emerged in the study are: "being loyal," "working hard," and "making sacrifices." During the process of constructing categories I discovered that some categories were expected because of my familiarity with the field. Other categories, however, were surprising because they were unanticipated. Such discoveries helped me discard some of my assumptions because it was apparent that the data did not support my assumptions.

For example, the category "career pessimism" emerged early in the analysis of the data. I had assumed that the men would eventually re-establish themselves in a new career. However, none of the men felt they had re-established themselves in a career and they expressed little faith in this possibility. As the analysis progressed I was forced to look more closely at the men's construction of career in order to assess what they were pessimistic about. From this process the idea of career as a relationship emerged. Career pessimism was eventually subsumed under a larger heading of "loss of career" to reflect the participants' belief that they were unlikely to re-establish an employer/employee relationship in the future which they would interpret as career.

Axial coding. This type of coding is more sophisticated than open coding and strives to relate the concepts and categories to each other and test these relationships against each other. Strauss and Corbin (1990) state the focus in axial coding is on specifying a category (phenomenon) in terms of:

the conditions that give rise to it; the context (its specific set of properties) in which it is embedded; the action/interactional strategies by which it is handled, managed, carried out; and the consequences of those strategies. These specifying features of a category give it precision, thus we refer to them as subcategories. In essence they too are categories but because we relate them to a category in some form of relationship, we add the prefix "sub." (p. 97)

Hypothetical relationships that are proposed during axial coding are provisional until they are verified repeatedly by incoming data. Axial coding aids theory building because it emphasizes the process of building connections between categories in terms of their properties and conditions, for example, context, causes, conditions, and consequences. The researcher does this informally throughout the research process; however, by concentrating on identifying the relationships between well established categories, the researcher puts the data back together in new ways. As a result of this procedure the researcher may discover that some categories (subcategories) are related to larger and more encompassing categories.

The process of axial coding was facilitated in two ways. First, I imported the computer text files of the first 6 participants' transcripts into a computer program known as Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing (NUD•IST) (Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty Ltd. [QSR], 1997). This qualitative research analysis program facilitates the management of large amounts of textual data (NUD•IST was subsequently used throughout the analysis process). Referring to categories I had identified during open coding, I read through the initial 6 transcripts once again and used NUD•IST to place the text units associated with each category into a separate container within the software program. This container, which is like a directory, was given the name of the category. During the process of re-reading the transcripts in NUD•IST, I

discovered new categories and renamed some of my previous categories. This meant that I had to return to the transcripts of the other participants to check my new discoveries.

The remaining transcripts were entered into NUD•IST as they became available. I coded the remaining transcripts directly in NUD•IST; however, I also utilized the paper copies of the transcripts to further my analysis. The paper copies allowed me to read the text more fully and this seemed to sensitize me to the richness of the men's stories. The process of refining categories occurred through the coding of the remaining transcripts. In addition, categories which had limited representation from the participants were gradually discarded.

The text for each category was then printed out. This facilitated a finer grained analysis of the categories because I was able to compare the text units comprising the category and make comparisons amongst different participants. This helped me verify whether I had consistently coded the category and whether the category was sufficiently saturated, that is, there is sufficient data in the category that searching for additional data will not strengthen or define its parameters. Categories were analyzed for their properties or whether they related to other categories. By actively searching for relationships between categories, higher level abstractions were discovered. Just as concepts seemed to fall into categories, categories fell together or seemed to be connected because of their properties or conditions.

For example, the categories of "control" and "integrity" represented properties and conditions of a higher-order category, "the manner of employment termination." Control was related to integrity. Participants who had the greater control over "the manner of employment termination" generally felt their employers had displayed higher levels of integrity, for example, they did not feel deceived. Conversely, men who exercised little control over employment termination were less likely to experience the employer as displaying integrity, for example, they felt the employer had been deceitful.

By subsuming these categories to higher-order categories, theory may be simplified without losing the explanatory power. Indeed, these lower-order categories (subcategories) may help strengthen the explanatory power of the emerging theory. Some subcategories may be dropped in this process as it becomes apparent that they do not add to the higher order category or explanatory power of the theory. This reduces the number of categories and assists the researcher in delimiting the emerging theory.

Selective coding. The final form of coding is selective coding and this occurred in the later stages of the analysis of data as I became increasingly committed to a theory that seemed to explain the data. Selective coding is used to unify all of the identified categories around a core category (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The central phenomenon of the study shall be represented in a core category. The other categories stand in relationship to the “core category as conditions, action/interactional strategies, or consequences” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 14) and can be represented in diagrammatic form that represents the theory.

The process of selective coding began when the researcher became committed to a theory that seemed to explain the data. The body of data was reexamined and old data in categories were selectively coded into the blossoming theory. Incomplete categories were identified and additional research was conducted to saturate these categories. For example, during follow-up interviews participants were asked questions pertaining to the category labeled “foundations.” Eventually, the work on developing new categories ended and energy was directed to increasing the density and power of the theory.

The process of isolating the core category occurred gradually as categories were compared and reduced. The core category is one process or construct among the many discovered in the data that explains the activity in its context in a new and useful way. The core category is compared to the larger body of data to ascertain its match. For example, earlier in the study I felt convinced that the category named “marginalization” (living as an outsider in middle class society) was a core construct. However, when I

reexamined the larger body of data I discovered that some men did not experience marginalization. Indeed, they had sufficient personal resources to maintain their social status. I struggled with the poor fit and was eventually compelled to discard this core process (hypothesis) in favour of what became the core process in the theory, that is, “the dearth of career.”

Memo Writing

Identifying relationships between categories was aided by the process of memo writing in this study. A memo is simply the recording of one's thoughts on paper regarding the data, a given category, connections between categories, or the theory as a whole. Systematic memo writing (immediate recording of one's thoughts) keeps an ongoing record of the analysis process, the researcher's self reflections, any questions that arise during research, and provides written elaboration about the data and coded categories (Charmaz, 1983; Morrow & Smith, 1995). This promotes more effective data management and aids in placing questions that arise during coding into analytic context. As an intermediate activity between coding and writing the analysis, memos connect the basic analytic framework that is provided by coding to the refined ideas of the completed draft of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Memos in this study were recorded in two locations: in NUD•IST and in a hard cover journal. NUD•IST enabled me to record memo's adjacent to the categories. This aided the analytical process because text associated with the memo was immediately available. In addition, NUD•IST allowed me to make annotations within the text which could be extracted from the text through a simple program command. This provided an ongoing record of my thoughts during the analysis of the transcripts. The hard cover journal was used for recording thoughts when I was not working in the software package. This was particularly helpful when I was writing the document and when I was away from my work area (e.g, middle of the night ideas).

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two central canons of natural science methodologies that are used to demonstrate the soundness and usefulness of a study. A criticism of grounded theory methodology is that, like other qualitative methodologies, validity and reliability are problematic (Corbin & Strauss, 1994). According to the traditional theory verifying methodologies of natural science, the findings from qualitative research are neither generalizable nor replicable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Strauss and Corbin (1990), however, maintain that this does not mitigate the value of a grounded theory study. Instead, they stress that the canons of good science can be retained by redefining these canons to fit the realities of qualitative research and reflect the complexities of ever changing social phenomenon.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) assert grounded theory studies can be accurately evaluated according to the canons of qualitative research if: 1) judgments can be made about the credibility (i.e., validity and reliability) of the data; 2) the study's procedures are sufficiently explicit in the written document; and, 3) the research standards are empirically grounded. Readers of the study should be able to assess whether or not procedures and standards have been met from the written document.

Credibility. The credibility of the findings is achieved by maintaining an explicit and complete account that allows other researchers or experts in the field to judge the sufficiency of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). In grounded theory credibility is demonstrated by establishing that enough data was collected, the data represented the phenomenon of interest, data collection was governed by the principle of theoretical sampling, and that the data collected allowed for maximum variation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Credibility of the data collected in this study was demonstrated by the thorough documentation of all data collection procedures (e.g, memos, journal, transcripts, audio tapes, and software database). This documentation is available for inspection by other researchers or experts in the field.

In addition, the credibility of the study was demonstrated by the researcher's efforts to demonstrate that the results were an accurate reflection of the participants' experiences and that consistent coding (reliability) was applied during the analysis. The accuracy of the results was supported by the follow-up interviews (see Appendix B). The participants agreed with the concept of reciprocity between the employer and the employee. They agreed to the terms of reciprocity that had been identified by the researcher. That is, employees provide the employer with commitment, loyalty, hard work, and sacrifice; in turn, the employer provides employees with his/her commitment, loyalty, opportunities for promotions and development, and employment security.

The reliability of the coding of categories was established by demonstrating that the researcher's coding was consistent. This was done with the assistance of four members from a grounded theory seminar group (comprised of one faculty member and three doctoral students) which was held approximately once every four to six weeks during the last year the researcher worked on the study. The procedure incorporated the following steps. First, four categories were selected from the study: expectations, sacrifices, deception, and reciprocity. Three samples of text from each category (without the category label) were selected (see Appendix F). These were printed on paper. The samples of text (three for each category) were clipped from the paper. This resulted in a set of 12 clippings. These clippings were then shuffled as a means of mixing up the anonymous samples of text. This procedure was repeated four times so that there were four complete sets of text clippings, one for each member of the seminar group.

Second, each of the members of the seminar group were given a complete set of text clippings. They were asked to sort the text clippings into four thematic piles. Three of the members arranged the clippings into the four thematic piles and they had three clippings in each pile. The remaining member had some difficulty deciding where to place one of the text clippings. A brief discussion revealed that her confusion was a

result of the last line in the text clipping. By instructing her to disregard that line she was able to place the clipping into one of the thematic piles.

Third, I gave each of the four members of the seminar group four envelopes. Each envelope had the name of one of the four categories from which the text clippings were extracted. I asked them if they could place each thematic pile into an envelope which had a category label that corresponded to the theme of the pile. All four members of the group were able to do this; however, one member challenged my use of the category of "deceit." She felt that "betrayal" was a better reflection of the theme contained in the text samples. "Deceit" was maintained as the category label because deceit, it was believed, could be better dimensionalized. For example, "betrayal" represents the high level of deceit and a "little lie" represents a low level of deceit. The results of this exercise demonstrated that there was a high degree of consistency and reliability in the researcher's assignment of categories.

Sufficiency of procedures. The criteria that demonstrate the appropriateness of the research process are: 1) what was the basis for sample selection; 2) what major categories emerged; 3) what were the events, actions, etc., that pointed to these categories; 4) how did theoretical sampling inform data sampling; 5) what were the hypotheses and how were they formulated and assessed; 6) what was done with hypotheses that did not hold up against the data; and, 7) how was the core category selected (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The basis of sample selection was the recruitment of participants who were familiar with the phenomenon of interest. Four major categories emerged, that is, establishing career, termination of employment, disengaging from career, and dearth of career. Theoretical sampling provided focus by identifying and intensifying the relationship between process and events, for example, the termination of employment was the cause for the event (consequence) disengaging from career. Initial hypotheses were considered, for example, marginalization and betrayal. These hypotheses were generated through the process of questioning, constant comparison, axial coding, and selective coding;

however, they were discarded because they were not supported by the data. The core category (the dearth of career) was generated through the processes of axial and selective coding. The dearth of career remained core category because the other categories and the data supported this core category.

Empirical grounding. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), the empirical grounding of a grounded theory study is demonstrated if the study meets seven criteria. These criteria are: 1) are concepts generated; 2) are the concepts systematically related; 3) are there many conceptual linkages and are the categories well developed, that is, do they have conceptual density; 4) is much variation built into the theory; 5) are the broader conditions that affect the phenomenon under study built into its explanation; 6) has process been taken into account; and, 7) the theoretical findings seem significant and to what extent?

The empirical grounding of this study is demonstrated in several ways. First, concepts were generated through coding. Second, concepts were systematically related to each other through the processes of questioning, constant comparison, axial coding, and selective coding. Third, many conceptual linkages were developed through the use of axial and selective coding. Fourth, variation was built into the theory because the differing perspectives of participants were accounted for in the study. Fifth, the broader conditions, for example, changes in the world of work, that affected the phenomenon of interest were integral to the explanation. For example, changes in the world of work added depth and richness to context of employment termination and disengaging from career. Sixth, the theory and the model demonstrates the process of change as the men move through the various stages. Finally, the results of the study were significant because they suggest that career may be understood from an additional perspective, that is, the employer/employee relationship. This has implications for counselling interventions (see Chapter 6).

Preparation of the Written Report

The final step in grounded theory methodology is the preparation of the written report. This process begins once the core category has been isolated. Writing a comprehensive and well integrated theory from start to finish is a difficult task because of the complexity of the interrelated concepts and the richness of detail possible in grounded theory research. As a means of maintaining control over this process, the categories and their respective memos were sorted and organized around the core category in NUD•IST. This enabled the researcher to maintain linkages across the categories. Through experimentation, different ways of examining the relationships between the categories was possible, for example, different hierarchical structures were created in the software program. This process was augmented through the use of diagrams to represent conceptual relationships.

The final report presents a substantive theory that was generated primarily through the use of constant comparative analysis of interview material. The study was influenced by previous research in the area of career and employment termination in men's lives (see Chapter 2). Brief references to the literature pertaining to constructionism and the psychological contract are incorporated into the results chapters of the study. These references were made for two reasons. First, consistent with the construct-oriented approach of this study, references to constructionism provided a means of linking the findings of this study to the broader theory of constructionism. Second, reference to research about the psychological contract was made because it provided data and conceptual clarity for the construction of a theory about the dearth of career in the study participants lives.

Comments

There are two additional areas which I feel require discussion before moving to the results chapter, the language of grounded theory and important interview experiences. This chapter described how grounded theory method was used to conduct this study.

Some conflict exists in the language of grounded theory methodology and constructionism orientation of this study. Grounded theorists such as Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe the process of theory generation as a progression from the generation of concepts to core categories. Constructionism proposes that terms such as concepts, derived from the language of logical positivism, are problematic. According to the language of logical positivism a concept reflects an objective entity that exists in reality. The interpretative act of ascribing meaning to phenomena is not acknowledged. Although it was beyond the scope of this study to redesign grounded theory to fully integrate the language of constructionism into the methodology, it is stressed that concepts are constructions of events (interpretations) that are made by people, researchers and lay people alike.

There were three research experiences which I feel are worthy of mentioning: 1) my experience of personal bias while interviewing, 2) encountering a conflict between a participant's comments during the initial interview and the follow-up interview, and 3) the emotional experience of identifying with some of the participants. I believe that my responses to these events help speak to the credibility of this study.

The actual process of interviewing the participants sensitized me to my own values, purposes and biases and how these could interfere with my ability to listen carefully. During the in-person interviews I used the interview schedule to focus on the topic of the men's post job loss experiences. However, I noticed that the men seemed as interested in discussing their experiences of the termination of employment as they were in discussing their post job loss experiences. Initially, I found this disconcerting because I wanted to gather information about their post job loss experiences. Indeed, my emotional reaction was one of impatience with what I perceived as complaining. Reviewing the transcripts I noticed that I would attempt to redirect participants to the topic of post job loss experiences; however, the participants would return to their topical concern later in the interview. I suddenly realized that a central part of their experience related to the

termination of employment. I decided to let future participants ($n=8$) take the lead if they wanted to discuss the termination of their employment.

The subsequent in-person interviews were dramatically different. Although I did not abandon the interview schedule, I allowed the men to set the pace and the direction of the interviews. I asked additional questions to help clarify their stories. This more flexible approach allowed me to see that the men believed there was some kind of unwritten agreement with their employers and that they felt this agreement had been broken. I reread the transcripts from the previous interviews and discovered that the other participants had already told me what the recent participants had told me. This realization eventually led to the construct of the psychological contract and my postulation that career could be understood as a relationship between the employer and the employee.

The second important experience that I encountered was during the follow-up interviews. These interviews were a means of performing a member check in relation to my emerging explanation of the men's experience. The interaction with one of the participants demonstrated the delicacy and difficulty of acquiring accurate information about people's experiences. I had asked the participant if, in light of his experiences, he felt employers were trustworthy. He responded that employers could be trusted. This response seemed to contradict the statements he made during the in-person interview, that is, he had stated it was unlikely he would trust future employers. I asked him about this discrepancy and he reaffirmed his initial interview position. This incident seemed to confirm Nicholson and West's (1989) observation that interviews may provide different outcomes than questionnaires. In-person interviews seem to provide a fuller account of persons' experiences and this may facilitate better explanations of human behaviour.

The final important experience related to my own emotional reactions to some of the interviews. I observed that after listening to some of the men's stories I would feel tired and uninterested in the study on the following day. These feelings of malaise might

last for several days. Initially, I thought it might only relate to the demands of daily living, however, I realized that the experience was particularly strong after an interview with one of the participants.

This participant's story was particularly disheartening. He had plummeted from the role of an executive in the steel industry to the daily struggles of someone trying to survive on social assistance. In spite of his years of hard work, he was never able to become reemployed in work that was similar to the work he had performed during his career. I wondered about my reactions and after discussing these reactions with a fellow graduate student I realized I had identified with him. Although I had voluntarily left my former job, I was now a student in my late forties. I was afraid my fate might be similar to this participant's, that is, unemployed or underemployed once I graduated. Once I became aware of this process, I seldom suffered from this post interview malaise and I found myself looking at the study more objectively. The significance of this experience was that it highlighted the potential of bias emerging in the process of conducting interviews. Researchers may be affected by participants stories and this may affect the researchers ability to analyze and theorize. Without an awareness of such influences the problem of bias is compounded.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This grounded theory study sought to investigate the experiences of middle class, middle aged men who had lost long term employment due to organizational restructuring. Rather than focusing on the immediate effects of employment termination, this study focused on men who had lost long term employment at least two years prior to participating in the study. The study had two goals. The primary goal was to provide an explanation and model that would expand our understanding of the experiences of middle class, middle aged men who had lost long term employment. The secondary goal of the study was to explain how middle class, middle aged men reconstructed career as a result of their experiences. Three research questions were generated to achieve these goals:

1. What are the lived experiences of middle class, middle aged men following job loss from long term employment.
2. What is the process by which middle class, middle aged men construct purposeful behaviour in their lives following the loss of long term employment?
3. What model would represent the social construction of career among middle class, middle aged men who have lost term employment?

The first question, in keeping with grounded theory methodology, was a broad sensitizing question that guided the investigation. This sensitizing question was open for revision in the event that incoming data and ongoing data analysis suggested new research directions. As the study progressed new research questions were generated. These helped to narrow the scope of the study and better reflect the participants' experiences:

1. How do the middle class, middle aged men who participated in this study understand career?
2. What are the major components of career for the middle class, middle aged men who participated in this study?

3. What happened to the men's understanding of career as a result of their experiences?

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. First, a brief description of the study participants is provided. Second, the major discoveries of this research project are introduced, that is, career may be understood as a relationship between an employee and an employer and that the termination of employment for these men results in the dissolution of career. This brief overview of the major findings sets the stage for the presentation of the results. The third section provides an overview of how the results of the study are organized in the document. Finally, this chapter presents the four stages of the four stage model which is proposed in the study. The results of this study provide a substantive explanation of the experiences of the 18 middle class, middle aged men who participated in this study.

Participants

Eighteen middle class, middle aged men familiar with the phenomenon of interest were recruited for the study (see Table 1). The men reported they had lost their long term employment because of either organizational restructuring, down sizing, or work force adjustment. They had worked as managers ($n=8$) who had supervisory responsibilities and highly skilled technicians ($n=10$). The men had worked in a variety of industries: forestry, communications, computers, manufacturing, food, and health care. Their educational credentials ranged from high school completion to advanced graduate degrees. They had lost their long term employment at least two years prior to participating in the study ($\bar{X} = 5.20$ years, $SD = 3.63$ years). The men reported that at the time of employment termination they were: 1) members of the middle class; 2) an average of 49.10 years of age ($SD = 5.78$ years); and, 3) employed an average of 21.70 years ($SD = 7.58$ years) with their long term employer. These men were interviewed and the stories of their experiences were analyzed.

Table 1

Demographics of the Middle Class, Middle Aged Male Study Participants

PSEUDONYM	age	ended	years	occup.	tenure	income	educ.	child.	rel stat.
January	42	1995	2	T	15	40-60	B.E.	0	s
February	46	1993	4	T	12	40-60	B.A.	1	m
March	49	1994	3	M	11	60-80	B.E.	2	m
April	50	1995	2	M	18	60-80	B.Sc.	1	d
May	45	1995	2	M	11	80-100	Ph.D.	1	m
June	54	1992	5	M	25	80-100	M.A.	2	d
July	49	1985	13	T	14	40-60	M.A.	1	m
August	47	1990	7	M	30	40-60	Hsch	2	m
September	45	1991	7	T	25	80-100	Hsch	2	m
October	41	1995	3	T	17	40-60	Tech	0	s
November	47	1991	7	M	25	80-100	Hsch	1	m
December	54	1991	6	M	28	120+	Tech	2	d
Monday	49	1983	15	T	18	40-60	B.Sc.	1	m
Tuesday	54	1992	5	T	21	60-80	Tech	1	m
Wednesday	53	1996	2	T	35	60-80	Hsch	2	m
Thursday	52	1993	5	T	32	60-80	Hsch	2	m
Friday	51	1995	3	M	25	120+	B.A.	2	m
Saturday	44	1992	5	T	24	40-60	Hsch	2	m
MEAN	49.10		5.20		21.44	60-80			
ST. DEV.	5.78		3.63		7.34	20			
RANGE	20.00		13.00		24.00	80+			

Key:

NAME..... Pseudonyms are used to ensure the participants anonymity. The months of the year and days of the week were selected as convenient pseudonyms.

age The age of the participant at the time of job loss.

ended The year that the participant's long term employment was terminated.

years The number of years that have elapsed since the participant lost long term employment.

occup. The kind of work the participating at the time he lost long term employment (T=technical/skilled; M=managerial).

tenure The number of years the participant worked for the long term employer.

income..... Income in 000's of dollars, e.g., 40-60 is equal to \$40,000 to \$60,000.

educ. Level of educational attainment (Hsch = High School; Tech = Technical School; B.Ed. = Bachelor of Education; BA. = Bachelor of Arts; MA. = Master of Arts; Ph.D.= Doctor of Philosophy).

child..... Number of children.

rel stat Relationship status: S = single; M= married; D = divorced.

Career as a Relationship

The central discovery of this investigation, from the perspective of the middle class, middle aged men who participated in this study, is that career may be constructed as a relationship between the employee and the employer. Career, as a relationship, is based on a belief about the reciprocal rules that exist between the “good employee” and the “good employer.” By adhering to these rules, the middle class, middle aged men who participated in this study, entered into a psychological contract in relation to their employer. This contract is an unwritten agreement that, over time, established a powerful bond between the men and their employers. The subsequent termination of the men’s employment due to down sizing, organizational restructuring, and work force adjustment was understood by the men as a violation of the psychological contract by the employer. This is because the men perceived their employer’s actions as a failure to honour the rules of reciprocity; whereas, they believed they themselves had adhered to the rules of reciprocity. The violation of the psychological contract denotes the end of the reciprocal relationship that the men believed existed between themselves and their employer, that is, the dissolution of career.

The results of this study yield an explanation and process model that depict career as a relationship and the subsequent loss of career as a consequence of the dissolution of this relationship, that is, the termination of employment. The model is comprised of four sequential and dynamic stages. Each stage represents a period of interacting events, experiences, and changes encountered by the men in their journey through career. The first stage, establishing career, describes the formation and emergence of career in the men’s lives. The second stage, termination of employment, represents the pivotal event in the dissolution of the men’s careers. The third stage, disengaging from career, explains how the men endeavoured to come to terms with the loss of career and secure new employment. The final stage, dearth of career, depicts the aftermath of the

experiences the men encountered during the second and third stages of the dissolution of career.

Organization of the Chapter

As a means of elaborating the explanation and model, the results of this study are presented in the following manner. Following the introductory materials in this chapter, the four stages of the dissolution of career are presented. Each stage is examined in its own right. Data from the study participants' interviews are provided in each stage as a means of giving richness and depth to the emerging process model. The following chapter in the document, Chapter 5, presents the model and a synthesis of the the four stages. The reader may wish to first read Chapter 5 first as a means of having an overview of the four stage model.

Stage 1: Establishing Career

Establishing career is the first of the four stages in the dissolution of career. The formation and emergence of career as a relationship between the men who participated in this study and their employers becomes apparent in the first stage. This stage is comprised of three components, each with subcomponents, and elements. The components and their subcomponents are: 1) the world of work (tenure, work place family, paternalism), 2) the employer/employee relationship (reciprocity, employee terms, employer terms), and 3) foundations (childhood development, core constructs) (see Figure 1). The elements are presented in the discussion on subcomponents and provide further elaboration to the stage.

The first component addresses the nature of the world of work that the men entered at the beginning of their work life. This world was characterized as stable and slowly evolving (Toronow, 1988); a work world wherein people entered into a long term working relationship with their employer. The second component explicates the nature of employer/employee relationship. This relationship is based on implicit rules of reciprocity that exist between the "good employer" and the "good employee." Adherence

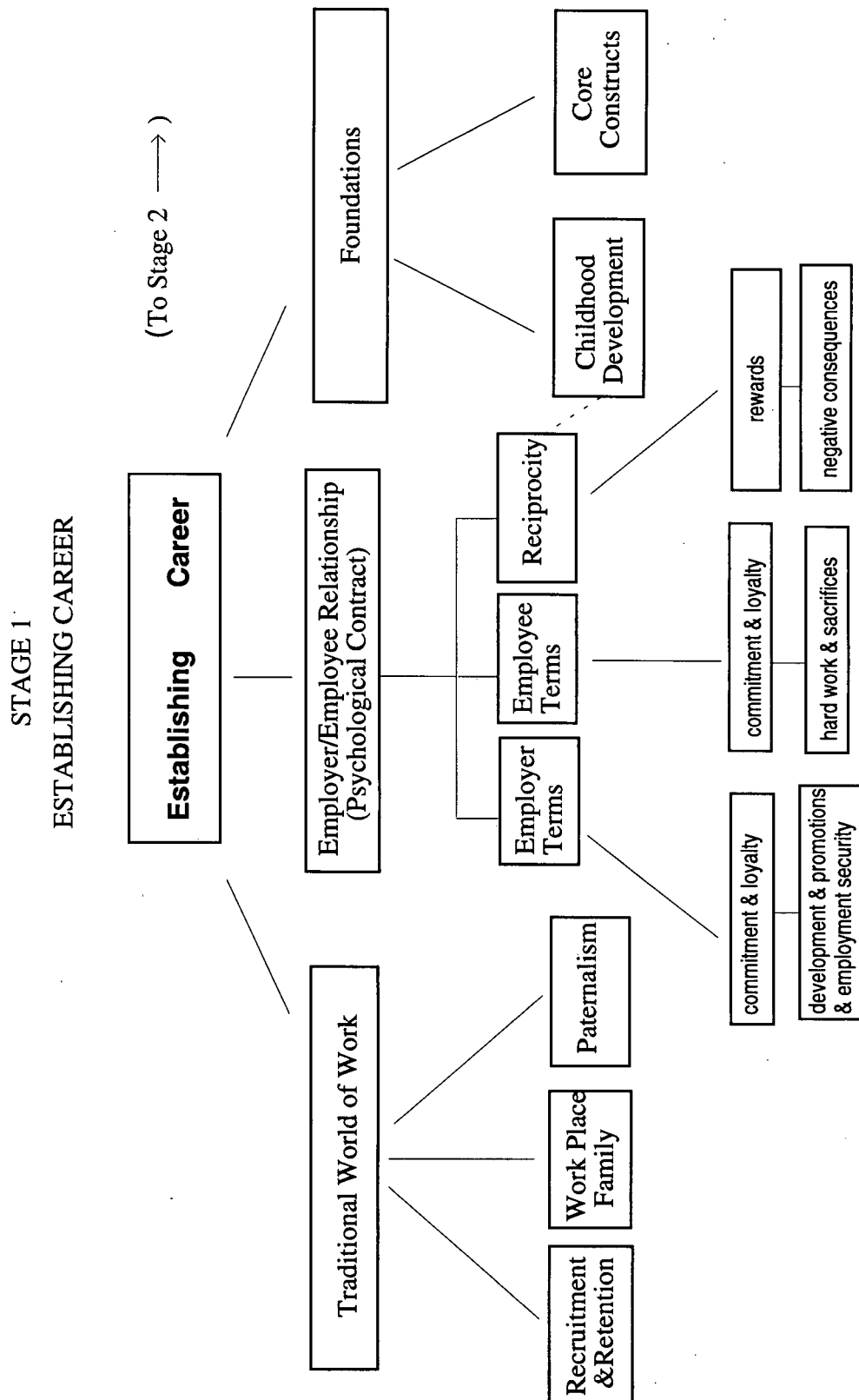


Figure 1. Stage 1, Establishing Career, of the 4 stages of career dissolution is comprised of 3 components (Traditional World of Work, Employer/Employee Relationship, and Foundations) and their subcomponents, some of which are broken into elements. The dotted line between Childhood Development and Reciprocity emphasizes reciprocity was originally learned during childhood.

to these rules forms a psychological contract that establishes an unwritten bond between the employer and the employee (Rousseau, 1990).

The final component of the first stage, foundations, examines how the men came to understand the implicit rules of reciprocity that existed between “good employers” and “good employees.” These rules, it is proposed, were learned during childhood and adolescence in the men’s families of origin. These reciprocal rules, from a constructivist perspective, may be understood as core constructs. These constructs were reinforced over time in the context of the men’s lives and provided them with guidelines for making sense (meaning) of their world. The development and reinforcement of these core constructs helps explicate how the men’s careers may be understood as relationship between the themselves and their employer that was nurtured over time.

The Traditional World of Work

Toronow (1988) proposes that the organizational structures of the traditional world of work are paternalistic, value loyalty, and promote employee tenure. In this traditional world of work people may assume that employment with one employer could be for life. Mirvis and Hall (1994) suggested the organizational structures of the traditional world of work resulted in careers that unfolded in the confines of organizations. According to Rousseau (1990), the nature of careers that evolve within organizational structures is relational rather than transactional. Relational careers unfold over time, are open ended, and may last indefinitely. Such careers are subjective and understood and transcend formal employment contracts. In contrast, transactional careers are closed, specific, and governed by written contracts. According to the stories of the participants in this study, they began their working lives with employers who seemed to adhere to customs and practices associated with the traditional world of work. The customs and practices identified by the study participants were: recruitment and retention, the family atmosphere of work, and paternalism.

Recruitment and Retention

The men began their careers in the traditional world of work. They believed that their employers were interested in securing employees who could be developed and retained for the long term benefits of the organization. They assumed that employment with their employer was long term, potentially for a life time. Friday, for example, described how he had recruited new employees for Easy to Use Computers (EUC). Potential employees, as was his experience, were persuaded to join EUC with promises for development and promotion regardless of their computer skills:

I later said to students when I was on campus recruiting we don't care what you have learned so far we are going to teach you what you need to know about the computer business and about dealing with customers, and all we want is some indication that you have succeeded. So you could have a pharmacy degree or an education degree or a Phys Ed degree and it doesn't matter, just show us you started something, you completed it, you were able to achieve. And if we believe that you have the right characteristics to learn and grow in our business then we will take you and teach you what you need to know about the computer business.... So the assumption was every single person we bring in the door is going to start right out of school and is going to -- and has the potential to work his or way up to be president of the company.

Once hired, the practices of traditional employers mirrored their recruitment inducements of developing and retaining employees. For example, Wednesday's experiences in the work place demonstrated how his employer was committed to retaining employees:

You know, you had that feeling that people were never let go unless they were totally dishonest or even if they were incompetent and you had a reasonable length of service behind you, they always fit you into some environment. Yeah, they put you in a very mundane environment and maybe rehabilitate you but you were never terminated.

The employer's practices helped confirm the employee's belief that the employer could be counted on for permanent employment. The promises of recruitment seemed consistent with the employer's treatment of employees.

Work Place Family

The men believed that the permanence of work was reinforced in the family atmosphere of the traditional work environment. Indeed, they felt that they were

members of a work place family. Membership in a family, one may generally assume, is intimate and for a life time. The veracity of the experience of the work place family was strongly described by November. He observed that his experience of the work place family was intergenerational. His father had worked for the employer until he retired and November believed he would follow in his father's footsteps:

So on it went and ah so sure by 1978 I ah 11 years in with the company, by 1988 I was now in my 21st year with the company. Ah we were still called Smith John and Company, it was still very much an integral ah family run type business. As I say my father had retired and the people who owned the business were in fact the Smith John descendants, in fact of the Smith John family.

INTERVIEWER:

So your family was with their company?

NOVEMBER:

Absolutely, including my involvement and my dad's 50 years and my involvement, 75 years in the family.

Paternalism

The work place family is closely related to the remaining custom and practice of employers which was explicated by the study participants, that is, the paternalism of employers. The employer as the paternalistic head of the family provided a variety of benefits for his employees; benefits that went beyond the pay cheque and were not included in the employment contract. Friday commented on his employer's paternalism and the special treatment employees received:

They always used to have a number of events for employees each year. They would have a picnic in the summer, they would have a Christmas party at Christmas and this was for employees' families. So it is a paternalistic way of running a company, that's what you do when it is a big family. They would also have a dinner for the retirees ...

Paternalism, it seems, played an important role in altering the men's work environment from a location where people met to work, to an environment where it was possible to enter into a relationship with their employer. The employer's paternalism personalized the employer/employee relationship by paying special tribute to employees for their service.

The Employer/Employee Relationship

The unfolding of employer/employee relationship over time may form what becomes known as career for middle class, middle aged men. Career emerges from the reciprocal relationship that exists between the "good employer" and the "good employee." According to Rousseau (1990), the "good employee" provides the "good employer" with commitment, loyalty, sacrifice, and hard work (see Figure 2). In return, the "good employer" provides the "good employee" with commitment, loyalty, opportunities for development and promotion, and employment security (see Figure 2). The terms of this reciprocal relationship are not part of the written employment contract, but constitute implicit understandings or agreements between the employer and the employee.

Rousseau (1989, 1990) postulates that adherence to such implied reciprocal agreements may lead to a psychological contract between the employee and employer. Over time this psychological contract becomes stronger and establishes a bond between the parties of the psychological contract. The terms of reciprocity define the expectations and the assumed mutual obligations that are to be fulfilled by each of the parties of the psychological contract (see Figure 2). The stories of the men who participated in this study demonstrate that they: 1) believed in reciprocity between the employer and the employee; 2) complied with the employee's rules of reciprocity; and 3) believed that employers complied with the employer's rules of reciprocity. Career, subsequently, may be understood as the relational reciprocity that unfolds over time and is governed by the psychological contract that employees believe exists between themselves and their employer.

Reciprocity

The significance of reciprocity among the men was apparent in their discussions about working for their long term employers. Their comments during the initial interview and the follow-up interview (see Appendix B) seem to reveal they believed that

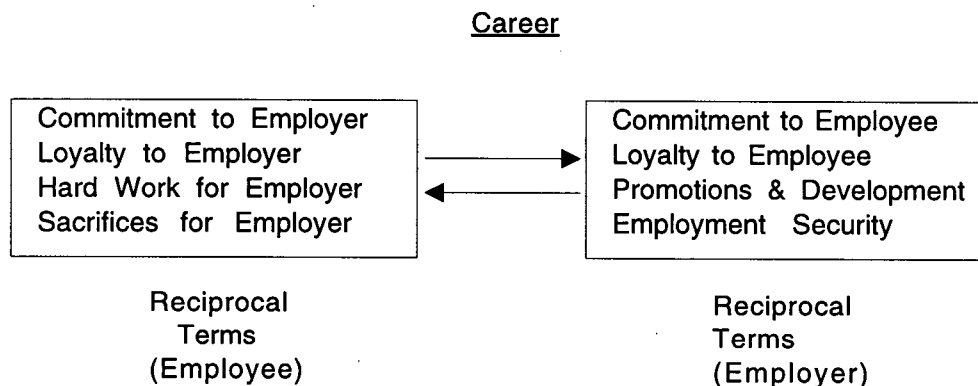


Figure 2. Fulfillment of psychological contract occurs when the employee believes that both the employer and the employee are complying with the reciprocal rules of the psychological contract.

their adherence to the terms of reciprocity would result in their employers' compliance with the terms of reciprocity, that is, the psychological contract. They believed that meeting the terms of reciprocity would result in rewards from their employers and that these rewards would be awarded fairly. In addition, the men believed that failure to adhere to the psychological contract by neglecting terms of reciprocity would warrant negative consequences.

Rewards. The belief that rewards may be forthcoming when the terms of the reciprocity are satisfied was evident in the men's perspective about receiving promotions. August, for example, explained how he felt promotions were an outcome of following certain rules, that is, those who work extra hard will be rewarded with a promotion:

You know if you put a lot into it and do well at it, it become obvious to more than one person and you are going to get promoted and all that sort of thing. You know there may be some considerations for you there that aren't there for the person who works 8 hours a day and forgets about it... You know appropriate consideration, you know if he does his time and does well... I think, although it never happened with me, I could see instances in the company where... you know they knew somebody or it was somebody's son or something like that. That upsets people a lot.

Implicit in August's comments about receiving "appropriate consideration" is the presumption of fairness. Indeed, when the interviewer, in response to the aforementioned

comments, asked him if he expected "a level of fairness," August responded, "Yah, exactly, yah. If you want people to be committed to you you got to make a commitment to them." Fairness, one may infer, demonstrates that the employer's commitment to employees is equitably reciprocated.

Negative consequences. The men believed that failure to fulfill the reciprocal obligations of the psychological contract warranted negative consequences. They felt that a failure to fulfill the obligations of the psychological contract by one party, voided the obligations of the other party. The men indicated this rule applied not only to employers, but it applied also to themselves. July provided a poignant example of this rule by recounting his failure to fulfill his employer's expectations of reciprocity:

I went to ah I had an undergraduate degree, which ah they paid for from ah Sir George Williams. What at that time was Sir George Williams, I think it is Concordia now. Then when we relocated to Toronto I got a post graduate degree from York, which they paid for, and then when they expected a return on that and ah asked me to transfer I said, no. So in a effect I may have authored my own (chuckles) demise.

July's comments may underscore how men's failure to honour reciprocity may be viewed as a violation of psychological contract by the employer. Consequently, as July suggested, employers are justified in imposing negative consequences on employees who fail to adhere to the psychological contract.

Employee Reciprocity

The men, as employees, fulfilled the obligations of the psychological contract by providing commitment and loyalty to their employers (see Appendix B). Indeed, it was common to hear them verbalize the depth of their commitment and loyalty to the employer by comparing career (the employer/employee relationship) to a marriage. November, for example, stated, "I was married to the company, I dedicated myself sort of career was everything, all consuming." Comparing career to marriage underscores the relational quality of the men's commitment to their employer. Commitment to their employers, however, was primarily demonstrated in the men's descriptions of their work

habits. For example, they demonstrated their commitment and loyalty through hard work and sacrifice.

Hard work may reflect commitment to the employer because of the demands it places on men's available time. Few of the managers in the study could remember how many additional hours of work they donated to their employer. July, for example, estimated he had performed "approximately 4200 hours in overtime or extra work" during the 9 years and 9 months he worked for the employer. Work he stated, "becomes an integral part of your life." Hard work, however, is more than extra hours of work it may also reflect the personal sacrifices the men made for the benefit of their employers.

Sacrifices may demonstrate the highest level of commitment and loyalty to the employer because the men may have relinquished something else of importance in their lives. The sacrifices which the men made for their employers include health, family, and personal ambitions. December, who described his career as an executive in the steel industry, indicated that his career consumed all of his time. This exacted a toll on his health:

Um, I used to have headaches. Um, you know, over the years I suffered from what was called cluster headaches, I have been seen at -- Clinic and Columbia University, New York, and it was associated with the pressures of just going all the time. I mean, I lived right on the edge, operations ran 24 hours a day so I worked 30 hours a day, eight days a week 400 days a year.

August observed that the sacrifices one made for the employer affected not only oneself, they included repercussions to the welfare of one's family:

I sacrificed a lot of weekends and nights at one point (laughs) on several points. Went to head office. God I worked 16 hours lots of times. And moved my family around a lot, that's kind of a given, yes, it does affect everyone in the family and everything that happens. I mean it affects everything from your transportation to your social requirements (hm hm). I mean everything is affected .. The curtains don't shut there is nothing unaffected by it so there are major upheavals. I think I said before if you ever heard somebody say that it really doesn't bother the kids to move them around, you have met the most insensitive guy you are ever going to meet.

Sacrificing one's ambitions may also demonstrate commitment and loyalty to the employer. For example, November sacrificed an alternate career as a police officer to remain with his employer:

I would have to say I made some sacrifices some rather major sacrifices for the employer. I bypassed a couple of opportunities for career change earlier that maybe in retrospect I would have been better off looking at, both with the OPP and the RCMP, that's true. But at the time I made those decisions, in all fairness I was quite happy doing what I was doing, before I saw the paradigm change within the organization (hm hm) so.

The paradigm shift occurred after a new employer purchased Smith John and Company. November indicated that the new employer did not provide the commitment and loyalty he had previously enjoyed with the long term employer.

Employer Reciprocity

The belief that employers adhered to the rules of reciprocity was common among the men (see Appendix B). They believed that their loyalty and commitment would be rewarded with loyalty and commitment from the employer. They believed that the employer would reward their hard work and personal sacrifices with opportunities for development and advancement and ongoing employment. Although one may question, as Arnold (1997) challenges, whether people's employers actually adhere to the rules of reciprocity, from a constructionist perspective this objection has limited relevance. It is the beliefs about reality, for example, the reciprocal relationship, that exist in people's minds that guide people's behaviour (Mahoney, 1991). Nonetheless, as a means of partially addressing Arnold's (1997) question, participants who had supervisory responsibility were asked if they adhered to the rules of reciprocity from an employer's perspective (see Appendix C).

Study participants who had supervisory responsibility agreed that adherence to the rules of reciprocity influenced their decision making about their employees, that is, they were loyal and committed to employees who were loyal and committed to the employer. Their expectations about the degree of commitment and loyalty varied. At a minimal

level, they wanted employees to do a good job and put in a reasonable performance. September humorously summarized this point by noting they didn't have to "sing the corporate song every morning." However, promotions and opportunities for advancement required greater commitment on the part of the employee. This included working overtime and a willingness to make some sacrifices. For example, Friday observed promotions were given to employees "who would put the company's interests before their own." This might mean moving to an undesirable geographic location at EUC's (the employer) request.

Foundations

The men explained they learned about the rules of reciprocity that exist between "the good employee" and the "good employer" in their families of origin. September described these as, "just the basic nitty gritty stuff, the stuff that mom and dad brought me up with." Monday reported that he learned that being a good employee was a matter of values:

You learn them as a kid. I don't know how else to explain it. When I look at some when I come across people who don't have the same values I tend to look.. well where have they come from (interviewer: hm hm) and what sort of early background did they have. Well sometimes I can answer the question and sometimes I can't. But often when I find there is quite differing values, in fact almost opposing values, I have found out that ah, I get the impression that their background or early years was far different than mine.

These values and beliefs, as noted by November, are core beliefs that follow one throughout one's life. In response to the interviewer's question about the origin of his values and beliefs he referred to a story he heard on the radio:

Curiously as I drove to work this morning they were, every now and then the Globe and mail advertises on the radio and they put should the young offenders be put into the adult court or whatever. These are the thought provoking things that you will find in the Globe and Mail. Well today was, Are Killers Born or Made? (interviewer: hm hm) And I said to myself, I am convinced they are made ahm I think that your your background and your values are set in childhood. And I rarely, yes you can change a person's behaviour and yes it can be the second coming and they can be a born again. Those are the exceptions rather than the rule, ahm, unfortunately you look at the kids who for years from the time they were

born were told that niggers were to be feared and reviled, so they believed it and you can't change that behaviour once it has been entrenched for 20 years. Or it is a very strong and very strong minded person that can do that. So that is a long winded answer. I think childhood is probably the number 1 factor.

The men's explanations about the origins of their values and beliefs pertaining to career illuminate how their understanding of career began during early childhood. According to a constructivist perspective, such early values and beliefs would help form the participants simple (global) conceptions of career (Neimeyer et al., 1985). These early conceptions, because they are embedded in early family relationships, may represent highly potent sources of meaning that influence both how the participants impart meaning to career experiences and structure career situations in ways that enhance meaning (McGregor & Cochran, 1988).

However, the meaning of career is more than a manifestation of family beliefs and values; the meaning of career is also influenced by social context (Peavy, 1991). It is through the ongoing interactions during the person's life that the person's understanding of career is refined and shaped. One's social experiences subsequent to family provide an ongoing feedback and feed forward loop that supports and reinforces the person's understanding of career. After the early stages of career development, persons enter the intermediate and the most functional stages of career development (Neimeyer et al., 1985). The men's stories revealed that during early adulthood they entered a world of work wherein their values and beliefs about career were supported. They secured employment with employers who seemed willing to commit themselves to employees who would commit themselves to the employer. For example, as noted previously, Friday was informed during his recruitment to EUC that the company would provide him with ongoing training and opportunities for promotion in return for his long term (life long) commitment and loyalty to the employer.

The men's subsequent experiences with their employers continued to support their beliefs and values pertaining to career. Few, if any, coworkers were fired, and then only

for serious violation of work rules. Employees who were loyal and committed and did not commit any serious violations of the rules of reciprocity maintained employment. Consistent with the men's beliefs and values about development and promotion, they observed that employees who demonstrated their loyalty and commitment most actively, for example, through additional work and making personal sacrifices, were the ones who received promotions and increased employee benefits (salary increases). Not only did other employees receive promotions and benefits, the participants received promotions and opportunities for personal development by following the prescriptions and proscriptions (do's and don'ts) of the employer/employee relationship which had become known as career.

Stage 2: Termination of Employment

Stage 2, the termination of employment, represents the pivotal event in the dissolution of career because it constitutes a violation of the psychological contract between the men and their employers (Figure 3). The men may feel that the inherent obligations of the psychological contract were violated by the employer's failure to honour reciprocity. They discover that their commitment, loyalty, sacrifice, and hard work are not reciprocated with the employer's commitment and loyalty, that is, their efforts were not reciprocated with employment security. The termination of employment is comprised of three dynamic and interacting components and subcomponents. The components are: 1) work place restructuring (in context of the new world of work) ; 2) striving to maintain employment; and, 3) the manner of employment termination. An examination of the components and subcomponents reveals experiences that affect the quality of the employer/employee relationship, that is, men's perception of career.

Work Place Restructuring

The traditional world of work wherein the men in this study began their careers was fairly stable and predictable. Over the years they developed their careers by complying with the reciprocal rules of the psychological contract that was generated between

STAGE 2

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

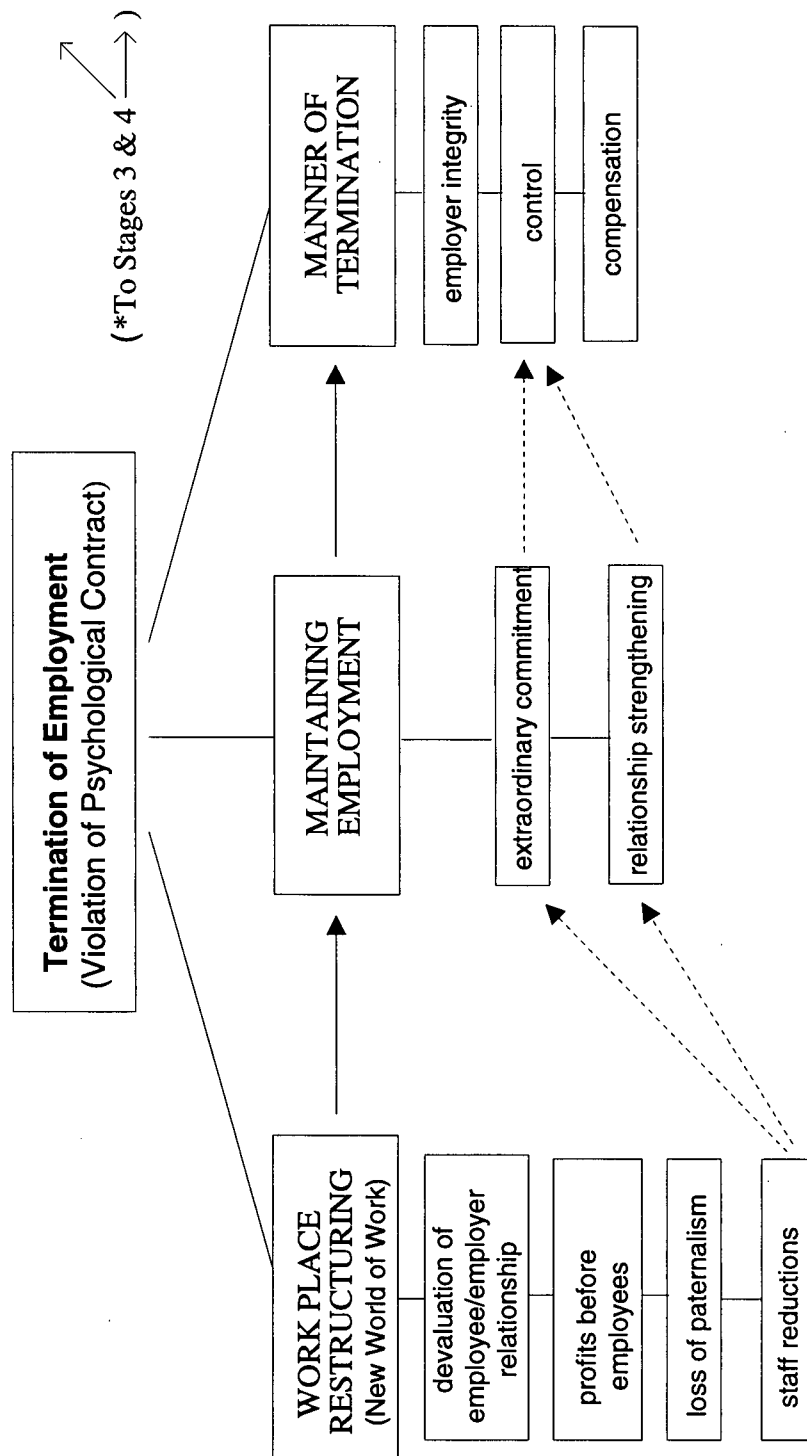


Figure 3. The termination of employment connotes the violation of the psychological contract. The solid arrows demonstrate the direction of the interaction amongst the three subcomponents of this stage. The dotted arrows demonstrate fine grained relationships in the stage. For example, staff reductions may result in extraordinary commitment by the men. Extraordinary commitment represents the men's efforts to strengthen their relationship with the employer. In this way the men may be endeavoring to control whether or not their employment is terminated. *This stage interacts dynamically with stages 3 and 4.

themselves and their employers. They had received promotions and salary increases for being good employees, that is, they were loyal, committed, hard working, and sacrificing. However, with the emergence of global economies and competition, the men's employers began to change their practices as a means of adapting to a changing market economy in the new world of work. The traditional world of work changed to the new world of work, a world wherein the employer/employee relationship, it seems, became secondary to the interests of profitability.

The men in this study gradually became aware of the changes in the world of work. Employers, in response to the changing economy, changed their organizational philosophy and employee policies. These changes affected the relationship between the employer and the employee. The paternalism of the past that personalized the relationship between the employer and the employee was gradually replaced (sometimes the changes took years) with an organizational philosophy that emphasized profitability over employee development and tenure. Initially, the changes were subtle. Friday, for example, reminisced how his employer demonstrated recognition of good employees by giving them certificates of achievement when they attained or exceeded performance expectations:

... and so every year they would send us a framed certificate, gold embossed, you know, suitable for framing, that a member of the 8th Hundred Percent Club, and it was signed by the chairman of the board and it was always considered a big deal. And I wasn't dumb enough to think that the chairman of the board had signed 10, 000 of these by himself but still I thought it was pretty neat.

Although the certificates were of little monetary value, the certificates were amongst the first of the many perks that were taken away when EUC began its restructuring process. Elimination of the certificates was perceived as symbolic of changes in the company's philosophy, particularly its relationship to its employees:

Yeah, it is just a piece of paper. But the piece of paper was done very well and the cost was probably ten bucks each by the time you get into printing and mailing and all that. But they multiplied the numbers out and they decided this was a frill that wasn't really necessary and had to go, but

that's symbolic of what was happening in the company. So I think all of us who had enjoyed work working there so much were grumbling and talking about, you know, they pay us well and the work is still interesting but it is not the same place anymore. And it is because of this whole philosophical shift was moving from family ...

The elimination of the certificates symbolized a shift towards a greater level of impersonality within the company. Paternalistic policies that emphasized the value of employee tenure were overshadowed with policies which emphasized profitability. For example, as Friday observed, the policy of keeping all employees was replaced with a policy of eliminating unprofitable employees because "the previous policy among many others became too expensive to maintain."

Changes in employer philosophy and policy were also reflected in recruitment practices. The men believed that, in the past, employers sought to develop and retain employees indefinitely. The personal qualities of the employee were stressed over his or her skill specialization. In this environment the work place family emerged. However, employers began to emphasize new employee skills and formal training in their recruitment practices (presumably because this would increase profitability). For example, Wednesday reminisced about changes in his employer's hiring policies, that is, the movement from a family oriented culture to a profit driven culture:

A new culture that came into the bank. You know, prior to that ... prior to I would say ... prior to the 70s most of our people came up through the ranks. Whatever level that they aspired to they came up through the ranks with very, very minimal education. Basically with Grade 12. And that was a requirement when I joined the bank you had to have at least a Grade 11 education and had to be 16 years of age. That changed dramatically in the 70s where they were now emphasizing university education as your entry level, a B Com, MBA, something related to that. And it started to change and then the new breed of management came in and during the 80s we had people in the executive ranks that never worked in a branch environment.

More than hiring policies, however, were affected. The effect of the change in culture was reflected in the way the bank began to terminate employees. These employees, according to Wednesday, were given little compassion or compensation:

Prior to 1988, when they terminated, they just walked into your office and

said you are gone. And then what happened, there was about seven or eight employees that got terminated, just terminated, your job, you know, we don't want you anymore, good-bye and here you go. No severance package, just get the hell out the door and here is a few bucks, here is whatever. I never really got really the knowledge of what their severance package was, but they all went to court and won. So the bank had to kind of regroup.

Wednesday felt that the legal actions of these other workers had paved the way for his satisfactory compensation package when his employment was terminated. Without the legal precedents against the bank, he doubted that he would have received any better treatment than his fellow workers.

Friday's and Wednesday's experiences in the period prior to their termination of employment are important because they represent events in the working environment that affected their beliefs about career, that is, the integrity of the employer/employee relationship. Beliefs and values pertaining to reciprocity between the employer and the employee eroded as the work environment became, as noted by Wednesday, "very impersonal" and employees became "just a cog in the wheel." They were no longer members of a family wherein employees were valued and had their contributions recognized. Under the new corporate culture the employer's interests took precedence over the employee's interests.

The aforementioned organizational changes affected the men's attitudes and allegiances towards their employers while they remained on the job. Wednesday, for example, felt the employer's behaviour gave the message that employees didn't matter, "They were kind of saying to you, if you don't like your job, get the hell out." Consequently, like the other men, Wednesday found himself withdrawing his allegiance from his employer. He became less committed and loyal towards the employer and began to "think about an optional career." Indeed, when he eventually received his termination notice (which included early retirement without loss of benefits) he felt relieved that it was over. Other men expressed similar attitudes. For example, August was so dismayed with the employer's failure to honour employee's record of commitment and loyalty, he became a

disagreeable and uncommitted employee. The employer's withdrawal from the psychological contract, it seems, was countered with the men's withdrawal from the psychological contract.

Striving to Maintain Employment

The men engaged in behaviour that they believed would help them maintain their employment in the face of work place restructuring. They performed activities that demonstrated extraordinary commitment and loyalty, for example, working extra hard or making additional sacrifices. Their intention, it seems, was to demonstrate to the employer that they were good employees who were worthy of maintaining their employment. This behaviour appears to be based on their faith in the psychological contract and its reciprocal terms, that is, high levels of commitment by the employee would result in high levels of commitment from the employer (ongoing employment). For example, February demonstrated his faith in the psychological contract by increasing his work performance beyond the norm:

In the process of this reorganization I actually spent quite a bit of time sort of, especially helping the company out .. (Interviewer: How?) We moved the computer to a different office and stuff and I was the one who went with the computer and trained new staff and ah and took care of a million rotten details and really ahm took care of business, you know and really sort of showed responsibility and helped them out over and above the norm and then to discover that ...

However, his additional efforts had little influence in maintaining his employment. His employer did not reciprocate with ongoing employment. February's psychological contract was violated.

Extraordinary commitment was occasionally accompanied by the men's efforts to nurture and strengthen the employer/employee relationship. For example, April's employer, The Big Phone Company (BPC), decided to reduce the company's work force by 600 employees. Departments that had become redundant were marked for elimination. April who was working in a department designated for elimination, was

transferred (on loan) to a department not fated for elimination. In his new position his specialized skills helped the employer simplify various technologies.

April stated he implemented a series of technological innovations that improved customer service and generated several million dollars of additional income for the employer. He worked hard to not only demonstrate his loyalty and commitment to the employer, he worked hard to foster his relationship with the supervisor of this department. April felt confident that his hard work and the strong relationship with the new supervisor would result in his receiving a permanent position in the new department. After all, he observed the supervisor, "wanted to hire" him. Once hired into the new department, he would not be subject to employment termination.

April's efforts were unsuccessful and when the earmarked department was eliminated, his employment was terminated. Adhering to his beliefs and values about the importance of the relationship between the employer and the employee had not resulted in ongoing employment. He felt dumbfounded and angry when he was called in for his termination interview, his understanding of career had not stood the test of reality. His loss of confidence in the reciprocal relationship between the employer/employee was evident in his statement, "afterwards, when I got cut, I knew they were a bunch of bastards. Pardon my language, but that is what they were." He felt they had mislead him.

The Manner of Employment Termination

The actual event of employment termination varied among the men. Their different experiences seem to be influenced by three important factors (subcomponents): control, integrity, and compensation. These factors seemed to affect the men's attitudes towards their employers' and their expectations of future employer/employee relationships. The manifestation of these factors may be interpreted as representing the employers' ongoing partnership in the psychological contract between the employee and the employer, regardless of the termination of the employee's employment. For example, providing the

employee with an opportunity to exercise some control over the process of employment termination may demonstrate that the employer's loyalty and commitment toward the employee is ongoing because the employee retains some influence over the dissolution of the psychological contract. An elaboration of each of the three factors will more fully explicate how the employer's conduct, from the men's perspective, in the process of employment termination represents a potential breach in the psychological contract between the employer and the employee.

Control. The influence that the participants were able to exert over the termination of their employment is defined as control in this study. Control is understood as occurring along a dimension that ranges from an absence of control to total control. Consequently, someone may have control over some of the circumstances of employment termination without actually being able to prevent the termination of employment, for example, having the choice of working for an extra six months so that one can receive better pension benefits.

The men who believed they could exercise control over the termination of their employment were more likely to have a favourable impression of their employer. Indeed, they believed they were treated fairly and stated that the termination of their employment was a result of events beyond the employer's control (the global economy and a competitive market). For example, Friday, June, and March were able to exercise control over the termination of their employment. They were given the option of accepting the termination of employment during organizational restructuring. Consequently they were able to exercise considerable control over their destiny, that is, working or not working.

Friday and June accepted termination of employment because the employer not only offered a satisfactory pay out, they were able to maintain their employment for an additional period of time. This enabled them to receive a better pension. March, who was too young to retire, was offered new work in eastern Canada by his employer. In light of his family circumstances, his belief that he would find new work in B.C., and

what he thought was adequate compensation at the time, March accepted the termination of his employment by remaining in B.C.

The men who felt they exerted minimal or no control over the termination of their employment were more likely to verbalize an unfavourable impression of the employer. They believed they had received little notice about the pending termination of their employment and once they became aware of the termination of their employment, they felt powerless to stop it. Like the other men, they believed they had been committed and loyal to their employer, worked hard, and had made personal sacrifices for their employer. In return, they anticipated the same kind of loyalty and commitment from the employer; however, as observed by November, "all the loyalty was, was one sided because it is only as good until somebody sells the company or changes."

November attempted to maintain his employment by channelling his work skills into computer systems. His employer, an employer who had offices across Canada, was endeavouring to consolidate data systems. November received the opportunity to participate in this activity. He felt his help in this area would be rewarded:

So in 88 I became a member of this task force and ah was part of, the vision was that we would have this new system and each company would have a director of MIS and a management director as well, not a techy, and that was the option that would be available to me. And I thought well that's pretty nice. That's kind of the way I channelled myself.

His hope was to carve a niche for himself that would promote his ongoing employment and career development. However, his efforts to influence his destiny proved ineffectual because the company was purchased by a new owner:

The task force lasted for approximately 18 months ... the sale to Big Paper happened pretty much about the time that ah the task force wound down. And no we are not going to do this because now it's an American ownership. And gee sorry November, but it doesn't look like there is anything for you now because we are not going to have this. And that was my 24th year ah, it was 1991 when we shook hands and said good bye.

His efforts had been in vane because circumstances beyond his control had disrupted his strategy. Once the employer was replaced, the relationship that he had built with the

previous owner no longer existed. Without this relationship, he was powerless to influence his ongoing employment with the new employer. The rewards of previous commitment did not transfer to his new employer. Stories of powerlessness were common among the men who felt they were unable to control the termination of employment.

Saturday, whose employer decided to close the manufacturing plant, engaged in variety of actions with his co-workers to maintain employment, for example, a strike, legal action, and physical resistance. The strike dragged on and eventually the company locked out the employees. Legal actions provided temporary hope, but were unsuccessful. Standing in front of vehicles to prevent them from removing equipment from the work site was ineffectual. Police supervision was acquired by the employer. Saturday learned the equipment had been sold to a foreign company. After eighteen months of struggle, the plant was closed. His efforts were unsuccessful, he received \$2,500 in severance pay. With tears in his eyes he stated, "they took my job." He had held the job for 24 years and no amount of effort had enabled him to retain his employment.

The experience of exercising little control over the termination of employment affected the men's perceptions of future employer/employee relationships, that is, the viability of career. For example, May observed that one exercised little control over one's career if one counted on the the good faith of an employer. In addition to feelings of outrage and bitterness towards his employer, he concluded that one could not rely on employers for employment security, one had to look after oneself:

It's it's being picked off, picked off like a fly on the window like that made me realize. I mean there are no guarantees really unless you have got a big severance clause in your contract where they are not going to try and touch you because it costs too much. They are just going to hope you die of natural causes or move on you know.. getting picked off that way taught me well there are no guarantees, I mean .. ahm .. you have to look out for yourself.

May's account also demonstrates the impact of the termination of employment experiences in both the third and fourth stages of the model. His experience not only

affected his disengagement from the employer, it affected his attitudes about potential future employer/employee relationships. Instead of relying on the employer/employee relationship for his security, he would rely on himself.

Employer integrity. The concept of employer integrity highlights the role of honesty versus deception in the manner of employment termination. Honesty demonstrates respect for the psychological contract by maintaining the integrity of the employer/employee relationship; whereas, deception violates the psychological contract by breaching the integrity of the employer/employee relationship. Employers who were seen as honest by the men, were more likely to be viewed favourably by the men. For example, Friday, March, and June, received advance notice of their employment termination and were included in the termination process.

The men who felt they were deceived by their employers expressed feelings of betrayal, lowered self worth, anger towards their employer, and dismay towards work friends. Deception was seen as intentional act by the employer to mislead the employee, an act which profited the employer but not the employee. Illustrative examples of deception were expressed by various men in the study, for example, February, April, and Monday. February, who had worked hard to assist the employer during the reorganization, compared his deception to the experience of discovering one has been betrayed by a live-in partner:

Obviously there was a plan in place that was hidden from me and ah, that's, I mean it was only after the fact that you realize .. it's like living with somebody and you discover after the that they were maybe having an affair all this time, and you're going, you mean that time we went to the Bahamas you were actually, you know .. it changes everything, right, and ah it ah, yah it definitely changes, changed my feelings of trust towards (chuckles) them.

February commented that the betrayal made it more difficult to handle the termination. It affected his feelings of his self esteem and he wondered about his self worth. April reported that his experience of deception affected his feelings about the employer. He felt angry and bitter and described his past employer as a bunch of "dirty rotten bastards."

Monday's experience of deception was possibly the most complex experience of deception.

Although Monday's position had been terminated, his supervisor failed to inform him about the termination of his employment. After not receiving his pay cheque, he asked his supervisor if there was a problem. He was informed that there wasn't any difficulty, the pay cheque had probably gone astray in the mail. This seemed like a plausible explanation to Monday because previous cheques had gone astray in the mail. He continued his work routines. After not receiving his pay cheque for a month he became more insistent with his supervisor. He received further reassurances and a written list of the week's duties. A few days later he encountered the Dean of the department in the elevator and decided to speak to the Dean about his circumstances:

Ah, he stepped into the elevator and I thought well should I say something to the department head, I don't like going over research fellow's head, the chain of command, but then again he has had his chance you know, and I thought well maybe I will say something. So we sort of looked at each other as we stepped into the elevator and before I could open my mouth the professor said, what are you doing here Dave? And I said, what do you mean what am I doing here. He said, well your term is up, it was up a month ago. I said, What term! He said, well you are a term employee. I said, I beg your pardon. I said, I have received no notice.

The situation was painful for Monday because he could not understand why his supervisor, a friend for many years, had betrayed him. A betrayal that "someone had profited from." In retrospect, Monday wondered if his immediate supervisor's failure to inform him occurred because the supervisor was unable to discard his loyalty for Monday. Paradoxically, by upholding the rules of reciprocity, the supervisor left Monday feeling betrayed.

The effect of the deception on the participants was both emotional and cognitive. Monday felt bewildered, exploited, and betrayed. He turned to the Labour Relations Board for assistance. Although his subsequent actions against the employer were successful, the pain of the experience was never forgotten. Fifteen years later, the after effects of the deception left him feeling mistrustful of employers. February observed that

the emotions surrounding the experience were both painful and long lasting. Additionally the experience of deception altered his beliefs about the trustworthiness of employers in general. In the past he may have believed that employers valued employees; however, he now adhered to a new belief, that is, employers view employees as dispensable:

I mean I really have never recovered from this, the duplicitousness ah..

INTERVIEWER:

When you say to me that you never really kind of recovered from this, how have you not recovered from this?

*FEBRUARY:

Well, I just ah in terms of trust, and ah, you know seeing how a company really operates, really operates behind the scenes and ah you know and also that a lot of effort doesn't necessarily mean that you are going to get rewarded. Yah, you know you are just dispensable. As long as you are needed you are needed and as long as .. you know the agenda changes then bingo out you go. That's, that's a very realistic lesson one that one needs to learn.

Compensation. The men's experience of the termination of employment seemed to be affected by the adequacy of the compensation they received from their employers. The adequacy of compensation, however, is more complex than a cash payment from the employer. In order for compensation to be adequate, compensation needs to represent a satisfaction of the psychological contract, regardless of the termination of employment. Adequate compensation, for example, may represent the employer's ongoing loyalty, commitment, and willingness to provide for the employee's long term welfare, that is, in lieu of providing ongoing work. An examination of men's experiences of adequate or inadequate compensation may help to demonstrate the importance of compensation.

The men who believed they were adequately compensated by their employer were more likely to express a favourable opinion of their past employers. For example, Wednesday and Friday reported they received cash payments and pension benefits which were commensurate with their years of employment. In addition, compensation included benefits that they would have earned if they had worked until retirement age, for example, increased pension benefits. Wednesday commented that his career with the

bank had allowed him to raise his family and build a comfortable life style. He was able to maintain his life style after the early termination of employment because he received a full pension and a very good financial package.

Friday stated his career with the EUC had provided him and his family a comfortable life style. He was satisfied with his financial pay out and the upwardly adjusted pension benefits he received. Although the income from his pension was less than his employment earnings, he used the skills and expertise he had gained during his tenure with EUC to establish himself as a consultant. The combination of his pension and working six months of the year provided a higher income than he earned with EUC. This enabled him to make adjustments in life style which were necessary to accommodate the health concerns of his wife.

The men who felt they were inadequately compensated by their employer were more likely to regard their employer negatively. For example, May, whose career was eliminated as part of the downsizing of medical services in Alberta, sued the employer because he believed the financial compensation was insufficient for his years of work for the employer. There were few positions in North America for his specialized skills as a consultant and manager of a heart transplant unit. Losing his job was tantamount to never finding similar work. His indignation was evident in his comments when he described how, "as part of the conservative agenda," the career he had established in the hospital was discarded:

Yah it kind of shows the level of thinking that goes in, well if you can privatize laundry I guess you can do it for labs too, what the heck do we know. Of course you can fly an airplane by computer. You can crash an airplane by computer and there is 300 people on board.

He believed his Ph.D., the years of loyalty and commitment, and the value of his work had been relegated to the level of unskilled work. However, he felt that the nature of his work could not be readily compared to unskilled work in a laundry room. Opportunities for ongoing development were highly unlikely in his area of specialization. The

termination of his employment represented a violation of the psychological contract because future opportunities for career development had been eliminated. Adequate compensation would require some kind of reimbursement for the loss of future development in the area of his specialization.

The non-monetary attributes of compensation were exemplified by August. He received what he described as a very satisfactory financial payment; however, there was another element to the loss of career that went beyond the money. August had dedicated 30 years of his working life to the employer. The employer was purchased by a global corporation; working for the new employer was a frustrating experience. He felt the new employer did not treat employees fairly because the employer mislead people with what "was all dam lies." In spite of his negative feelings toward the employer, the subsequent termination of his employment was a double edged sword. On the one hand he was glad to be away from the grief and frustration; on the other hand the career he had built was gone:

Well it felt good to end the you know the corporate bull shit that was going on. Just didn't have to listen to that anymore [hm hm]. And ah on the other hand there was a little resentment. Like I didn't mind taking the money, you know they had the 30 young years of my life and they could pay for it.

The 30 years he had invested in his career was not only lost; it was not possible to relive the 30 years he had spent building his career. Money may not suffice for such losses.

However, what would constitute adequate compensation? Adequate compensation, when career is based on the reciprocal relationship between the employee and the employer, would require that the employee perceived that his compensation was equitable because equitable compensation would reaffirm the reciprocity that existed in the employee/employer relationship. Adequate compensation would demonstrate that in spite of the termination of employment, loyalty and commitment were not simply in one direction (for the employer's benefit), loyalty and commitment were indeed two way. The termination of employment for May and August occurred at their expense and

primarily to the benefit of the employer. Whereas the termination of employment for Wednesday and Friday may have benefited the employer, Wednesday and Friday felt they received sufficient benefits because they were able to continue in a life style which was similar or better than their existing life style. Adequate compensation demonstrated that the employer honoured the psychological contract between the employee and the employer, even after the employee's work was terminated.

Stage 3: Disengaging from Career

Disengaging from career, the third stage in the dissolution of career, follows the termination of employment (see Figure 4). During this stage the men may endeavour to come to terms with the loss of employment and secure new employment. This stage includes three dynamic and interdependent factors, these are: separating from the employer, seeking work, and working again. These factors may occur simultaneously. For example, while struggling with separation from career, one may search for employment and expand one's knowledge about the world of work. However, some men do not experience all factors of this stage. For example, June and Wednesday chose not to search for employment following the termination of employment because their pensions enabled them to live a satisfactory life style. Nonetheless, they experienced separation from career.

Separating from the Employer

Separating from the employer refers to the process whereby the individual lets go of his career with the employer, that is, it is saying goodbye to the employer/employee relationship. Separation occurs over time and bridges the experience of employment termination and disengaging from career. Separation may begin before or after the termination of employment. For example, as noted in the termination of employment stage, some of the men discovered that their relationship with their employers had gradually changed prior to employment termination. Their employers had begun to

STAGE 3

Disengaging from Career

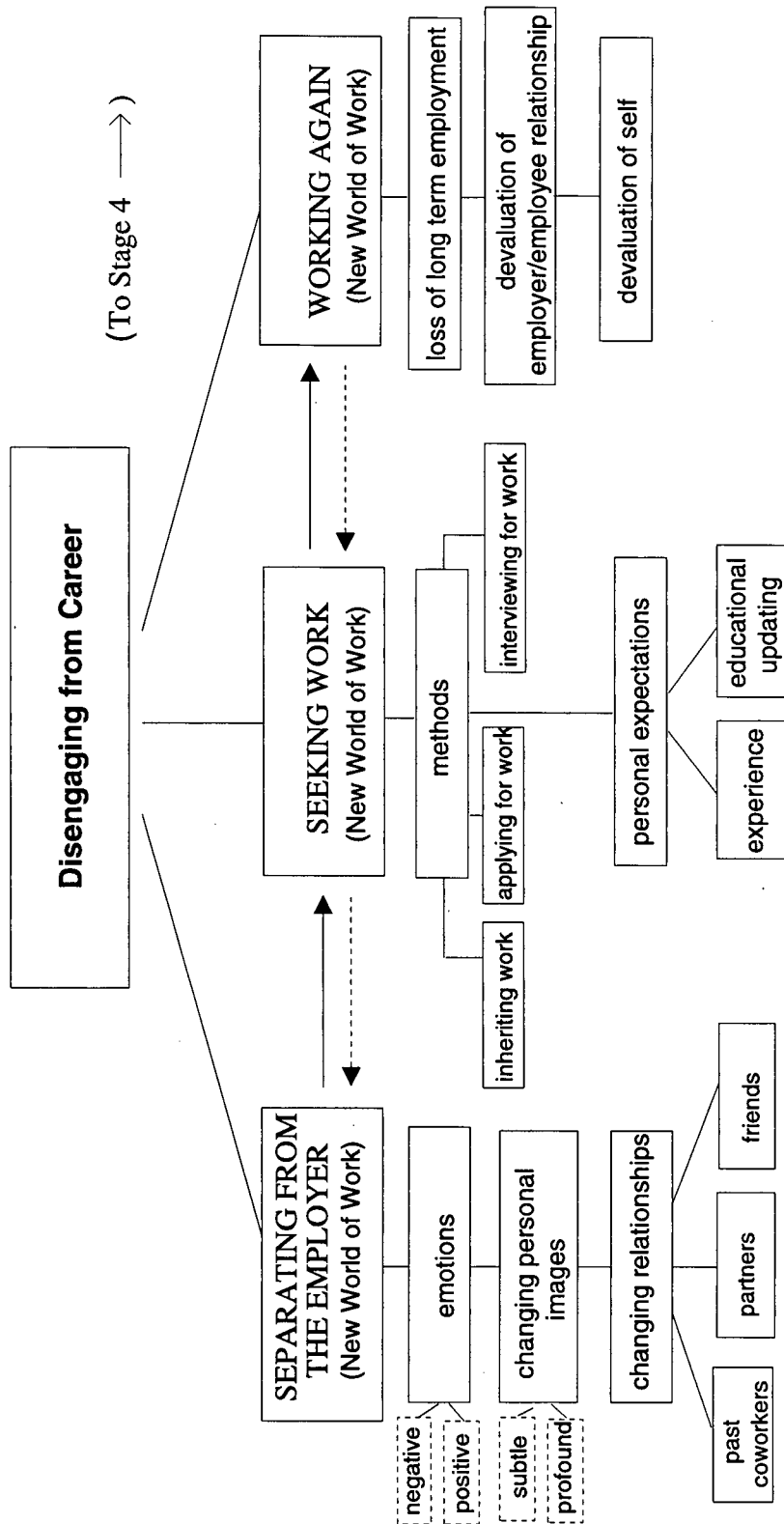


Figure 4. The process of disengaging from career highlights the men's attempts to adapt to the loss of long term employment and the loss of the employer/employee relationship. The dotted arrows demonstrate that the motion between the three subcomponents of this component are dynamic and interactive. For example, because work for the men was often temporary, they might seek work while they are working or start to seek work once again after a term of employment ends.

ignore the psychological contract and focus on profitability instead of people. Although these men had fond memories of career, they had gradually accepted the end of career.

The majority of the men, however, had little warning about their pending loss of employment. Employment termination was abrupt and separation from career began after the loss of work. Regardless of whether there was advance warning about employment termination, separating from the employer, that is, career, involves emotions, alterations in self image, and changes in other relationships.

Emotions

According to Hillman and Ventura (1991), emotions connect people to reality by informing them of the significance of the events in their environment. The men's emotional responses pertaining the loss of career may be interpreted as reflecting the rate at which career separation is experienced and the significance of career in the men's lives. Gradual separation from career may be accompanied by feelings of anger, sadness, disappointment, and relief. Because the process is gradual, feelings are less dramatic and dispersed over time. For example, Wednesday and Friday remembered the unpleasant feelings of watching the family like atmosphere of the work place disappear. When their employment was eventually terminated and they received early retirement, Wednesday felt relieved it was over and Friday no longer viewed career as his major life preoccupation.

The process of separation, however, began more abruptly for most of the men, that is, after the termination of employment. Emotions under such circumstances seemed more intense and complex and these emotions were both negative and positive. Negative emotions were more likely when the termination of employment was unwanted, for example, anger, rage, and disappointment. April, for example, was angry and bitter and referred to his employer as a "bunch of bastards." He sought revenge by endeavouring to establish his own business and commented, "I wanted to show them I didn't need them."

His comments would seem to highlight the significance of career as a relationship because they infer the emotional hurt of an unwanted separation.

The men might also experience positive emotions during separation. Positive emotions underscored the complexity of the emotional process of separation. Positive emotions may simply have demonstrated that employment termination was a desirable state for the individual. For example, June was happy to get away from his work because he no longer wanted to work. However, such positive emotions might also mask painful emotions that were beyond a man's immediate awareness. For example, September described the period of time prior to termination of employment as highly stressful. Organisational restructuring had left him with overwhelming responsibilities. Like a welcomed marital separation after a difficult marriage, employment termination provided relief from the stress of his work. He felt euphoric and compared the experience to a youth getting out of elementary school:

They did a first stage of layoffs. I think 32 of us were affected and I got nailed. Interestingly enough on October 14, 1991, the same anniversary date that I started with the company .. and at that point in time I sort of regarded it much as a kid would getting out of elementary school. In other words no more teachers, no more books.

However, six months later his feelings of relief and joy were gone and he sank into an unexplained state of depression:

But then I started slipping into a a depression. I had never experienced it before. The black dog of depression...

*Interviewer:

The black dog of depression?

*September:

To this day I am trying to determine what it is. But ahm, then ah, getting laid off and then whatever it was, six months or whatever from August, October 91 to August of 92 when I started to kick into the depression. I wasn't going out of the house, I refused to go out to the store to buy tobacco. Now that's a big thing for someone to be hooked on smokes ...

September sought professional help. His psychiatrist prescribed Prozac to relieve the symptoms of depression and psychotherapy to explore personal issues that might account for the depression. He stated that the main problem the psychiatrist diagnosed was the

absence of work in September's life. However, he added, it was more than simply the absence of work, it was the loss of his career with the aviation company. Subsequent work did not compensate for the loss of his career which spanned 25 years.

The painful emotions eventually end and this seems to mark the man's acceptance of separation from career. December described his emotional experiences after he lost his career as almost unbearable. He had resorted to welfare after his efforts to secure comparable employment as an executive in the steel industry were unsuccessful. He felt alone and life seemed hopeless. His emotions were so powerful that he occasionally felt himself overcome with the urge to commit suicide:

Yeah. So what happened was I would find myself waiting for Sky Train and this is (pause) this was something that was very frightening. When Sky Train was approaching I would have this feeling that there was this force working on me trying to throw me in front of the train. It wasn't (pause) I didn't want to do it, but I felt that I was having to actually brace myself not to be thrown in front of the train.

Fortunately, he realised that he required medical help and visited his doctor. He was admitted to Vancouver General Hospital and was diagnosed as suffering from depression. He had hit rock bottom. It was at this point that he accepted that his career in the steel industry was over and he decided life was worth living. Several months later he secured employment with a communications firm. Although, he was earning a quarter of his previous salary, he felt good about his new work even if it was not his career, that of "an executive in the steel industry."

Changing Personal Images

Richardson (1993) observed that career provides social status and power. Career, that is, the employee/employer relationship, based on Richardson's perspective, might act as a primary relationship which influences other relationships in men's lives. Their status in relation to other people and society may be contingent upon their career and may manifest in their personal images, for example, "I was an EUC'er" or, "I was an executive in the steel industry." Changes in personal image, that is, in relationship to

other people or society, may reflect the loss of career because the employee/employer relationship required to sustain the personal image is no longer available. For example, February observed that there was a decline in his status in his marital relationship following the termination of his employment:

(laughing) Well for a long time I was the main bread winner and she was the hobbyist, you know playing at part time jobs and what have you and now our fortunes have changed around. She's the main bread winner and ah that took some adjusting.

This, he reported, affected his feelings of personal adequacy:

I don't feel about as strong as I used to. Ahm, you know I just don't have anything, I mean esteem comes from doing things, from not from thinking but from being, from having, and having a job is a a and making money is a major major source of that so I, you know, now I still feel good about things that I accomplish but they are minor because they they don't usually make a lot of money and ahm there's always a feeling that I have to justify myself a little more.

The loss of his image as the main breadwinner affected both February's perception of his status in his marriage and his feelings of personal adequacy. Changes of self image may also reflect changes in the men's sense of status in society.

The self images the men presented about their change in social status were both subtle and pronounced. Subtle images may simply reflect their feelings of being unemployed; whereas, more profound images may represent a loss of the social prestige which was associated with one's career. For example, August was hesitant to go into the community without proper grooming and attire because he feared people would realise he was unemployed. However, May presented a powerful self image that mirrored feelings of loss of social worth. Whereas he had previously held an image of himself as a scientist and manager in a metropolitan hospital; following the termination of his employment, his career no longer provided a means of connecting to the world as someone who had prestige and status. Instead, he saw himself as someone who was invisible, disconnected, and powerless in the world.

Sometimes I feel a little bit invisible on the street. I feel like, oh I'm this older unemployed person, you know I I feel a bit cap in my hand if I have

to go out and try to market myself, like going out to this company I dealt with before ah I found that a bit demeaning .. ah .. so I have to talk to myself about it and say well, why is, why would it, why would I feel demeaned, what am I so worried about, what's at risk here and then I go home and think about it say well do I feel judged, or misconnected here that you know because I'm not part of the organisation it's easier to ignore what I say, you feel powerless.

Such changes in self image, however, may be best understood as an aspect of the separation from career. As old self images which were associated with career are no longer viable, the person may form new self images. Initially, self images are negative because they reflect personal losses encountered after the loss of employment; however, as the person begins to make gains in his life it is anticipated that new and more positive images will emerge. For example, they might like the image of being a freelance consultant.

Relationships

Separating from the employer was also reflected in the men's relationships with other people, for example, past co-workers, marriage partners, and friends. Relationships with past co-workers generally seemed to decline or disappear during this stage. Career may have provided a central relationship and common purpose (the business at hand) upon which to build relationships with co-workers, for example, the daily routines of work, which include work place socialisation, collaboration on work activities, and office politics. Indeed, work place relationships, as noted previously, were frequently elevated to the status of "family" by the men. However, without the common purposes of work, these relationships seemed to drift apart. In turn, these relationships no longer reinforced career.

Separating from the employer, that is, career, was also influenced by the men's relationships with good friends. During this stage the value of good friends may be revisited because good friends continue to provide support and assistance to the men regardless of their altered fortunes. For example, January's best friend helped him cope with depression by generating ludicrous employment scenarios, for example, work one

could do without ever getting out of bed. Support, according to Mallinckrodt and Fretz (1988) normalises experiences and provides validation of self worth. However, support, in the context of career loss, might also be understood as a strengthening of the men's other relationships as they separate from their career. Relationships with good friends have provided sustenance throughout life because they are based on a different set of rules; rules which are more enduring than temporal concerns such as company profitability.

Relationships with marital partners and family may also play an important role in separating from career. As with good friends, marital partners generally remained supportive in spite of the men's altered personal fortunes. Partners provided support by assuming new responsibilities (managing the family budget), giving emotional support and encouragement, or by contributing to family income through employment. Consequently, the men may discover (if they had not realised this previously) the greater importance of their relationship with their partner and family. Separating from career therefore underscores the process of re-prioritising relationships in life, one relationship (career) is supplanted by other relationships (friends, marital partners, and family).

Seeking Work

Seeking work encompasses the actions middle class, middle aged men perform and the experiences they encounter in their endeavour to secure employment. Seeking work is comprised of two dynamic and interacting subcomponents: methods (inheriting work, submitting job applications, and interviews) and personal expectations (the value of experience and employment history and further education). During the process of seeking work, the men encounter the realities of securing employment in the new world of work. They discover that employers seem more interested in the immediate benefits a new employee can provide to the employer's organisation, for example, skills and costs (wages). Their past beliefs about employer/employee relationships and experience seem of little importance. The experience at times seems bewildering for the men as they

gradually learn about the realities of work in the new world of work and let go of their past assumptions.

Methods

The men employed a variety of methods to find new work. These methods are inheritance, applying for work, and interviewing for work. Inheriting work occurs when one's employment is transferred from one employer to another employer without a period of unemployment. Applying for work refers to the process of actively seeking employment and includes the use of cold calls and warm calls. Cold calls are applications that are submitted to potential employers who are unknown to the applicant. Warm calls are applications that are submitted to potential employers with whom an applicant has a direct or indirect affiliation. Interviewing for work occurs after applying for work leads to a face-to-face meeting with the potential employer and the potential employer assesses the person's suitability for employment.

Inheriting work. The termination of employment with an employer may result in further employment when an employer is replaced with a new employer. This may occur when a company is purchased by another company and, as part of the change of ownership, the new employer agrees to keep existing employees. Under such circumstances the original employer may discharge some of his reciprocal obligations by ensuring that employees have ongoing employment. However, the process of securing employment through inheritance posed a threat to the men's careers. The loyalty and commitment that existed between the men's long term employers and themselves was unlikely to transfer in the change of ownership. The past reciprocal relationship had little influence in the new relationship and the new employer's interests, for example, profitability, tended to prevail over the interests of the men.

November, for example, gave an account of such an experience. After a lengthy career with his employer, the employer sold the company. Prior to the sale of the company, the employer assigned November to a special project. Initially the new

employer maintained November's position. November believed his work on the special project would result in ongoing employment and even a promotion; however, upon completion of the project he was informed by the new employer, "it doesn't look like there is anything for you now, because we are not going to have this." He was discharged because the new employer no longer required his skills and services.

Whereas, the previous employer might have placed November elsewhere in the company, the new employer had neither the relationship nor the sense of obligations stemming from a psychological contract with him. He felt disappointed because the dedication he had put into the new project was for naught. Although he could rationalise the employer's action as "that's business," he felt uncertain about providing future employer's with the kind of "dedication" he had in the past because he felt sceptical about the long term value of dedication.

Applying for work. Securing employment after the loss of employment seemed a challenging experience for the men because they entered the unfamiliar environment of unemployed job hunters. Whereas, they could rely on the employee/employer relationship for promotions and development in the past, without this relationship they discovered that they were simply one of many unemployed people searching for work. The men approached the task of applying for work by using two techniques, cold calls and warm calls.

The process of making cold calls involves a variety of activities which are intended to secure employment with an unknown employer. The men scanned the classified ads, scrutinised employment bulletin boards, and phoned potential employers directly. They developed routines which enabled them to tailor resumes and prepare for employment interviews. Numerous job applications were sent out by mail; however, the men received few replies to their applications. For example, February's comments represent the extreme experience of participants who did not receive responses to their applications. When he finally received a reply, even though it was a rejection, he said he felt joyous:

I remember distinctly getting my first rejection letter, you know, "Dear sir, sorry you didn't get the job." And I was jumping up and down with joy saying I got a rejection letter because I hadn't gotten one for 6 months!

Until that time he had felt:

(laughing) Like I'm living on Mars, I mean when I got the rejection letter at least I knew for the first time that you know my mail system, my little, my laser printer actually printing on paper and it was really going through the mail system and it was actually coming back to me, before that I thought I there was a black hole somewhere and all these letters would just sort of slipping in and I'd made some horrible mistake and the postal code said Mars, you know and they were all gone.

The men explained the lack of response to their applications as a consequence of a highly competitive world of work that has far fewer jobs available than people applying for these jobs. They commented that they were not alone in this experience and observed that their unemployed friends have similar experiences. Such social comparisons may have normalised their experience, but they remained unemployed and attempted other methods of finding work.

Warm calls represent the applications the men made to potential employers with whom they had a direct or indirect affiliation. Direct affiliations occur if a personal relationship exists between the applicant and the potential employer, for example, the potential employer is a friend. Indirect affiliations are less intimate connections to a potential employer, for example, one knows the potential employer through a professional association, previous work relationships, or through a friend. Warm call applications were more apt to lead to new employment for the men. The majority of the participants in this study secured employment through the use of warm calls.

However, warm calls may fail to result in employment regardless of the strength of the personal association. August's experience of accepting a past associate's invitation to apply for a sales manager position with the associate's employer exemplifies this situation:

I got a call from a guy from Maximum Mills and said that they were just shuffling people over at Mill Town and they needed a sales manager there. Well that's a very appropriate thing you know. Having gone (pauses)

Victoria did the same style of cutting and the same species. So I sent a resume over there and ah yah, yah, went over there and had a talk to uhm and they seemed all happy and ah I didn't get the job.

He felt bewildered because, "for 34 years they did the export sales" with his previous employer and he "knew the company pretty well." Because of his association with the potential employer he had anticipated getting the job and wondered,

Well I was ah .. you know .. ahm .. I guess you wonder, you know did I blow the interview, what did I say that that did something you know but hearing it from two sources, I don't think I did.

It was difficult for August to make sense of why he didn't receive the job. He believed he was the "properly qualified" applicant and validated his belief by highlighting the employer's mistake, "but I got the last laugh anyway they had to fire the guy they hired (laughs) so .." Regardless, of the reasons for not securing the job, it was apparent that August felt his past relationship should have stood for something, however, it did not seem to matter in the context of finding work.

Interviewing for work. Applying for work, as mentioned above, had variable results. Cold calls resulted in few responses from potential employers; warm calls had better results, although work was not always an outcome of warm calls. In either case the successful outcome of an initial application for work was an employment interview. The interview process was another facet of men's experience of finding work. Interviews provided new information that influenced their understanding of the world of work, for example, the kinds of work available and potential employers' expectations of employees. Employers, they believed, were interested in the employee's profit enhancing skills; employers were less interested in the employee's experience and employment history. Employers, it seemed, were unlikely to pay the men the salaries they enjoyed during career. Instead, the men felt that employers hired younger people because they were simply less expensive. During the interview process the men became more attuned to the reality that their personal expectations were inconsistent with the seeming interests of potential employers.

Personal Expectations

The men approached the problem of finding work with a sense of optimism; however, this might gradually change to uncertainty and a sense of hopelessness. They believed they would become re-employed at a similar level of pay and responsibility in the near future. March, for example, had experienced a previous downsizing in 1983 and although it had been emotionally more difficult, he noted, "it only took me about 4 months to get work and I was fortunate enough to have four offers at that time to choose from." Following his loss of work from the Big Coffee Company (BCC) in 1994, he started a business with a friend. Two years later the business was sold at a loss. He spent the next year looking for work; however, three years after leaving BCC, March was without work. March, like other men in this study, had personal expectations about his employability which were not substantiated with new work. These personal expectations were the value of one's experience and employment history and personal expectations about educational upgrading.

Experience and employment history. During their tenure with their long term employer the men's adherence to the rules of reciprocity provided avenues for development and promotion. These avenues enabled the men to acquire a wealth of work experience and demonstrate their commitment to employers. The men believed that their experience and employment history would be of value to potential employers. However, they discovered that contemporary employers seem to place little value on a potential employee's work experience or employment history. Instead, potential employers seemed interested in fulfilling their immediate needs (skills and cheap labour). Consequently, the men felt they were at a disadvantage when competing for work solely on the basis of their skills. Younger workers, whose skills were up-to-date, were hired and they believed, as April observed, middle aged men "always seem to come in second."

The men believed that not having their skills recognized was unfair because this overlooked their demonstrated track record of learning on the job. Indeed, as February

suggested, their successful work history offered proof that, although they are slightly older, they were potentially better employees than the younger people who were hired by employers. February summarised this sentiment:

I saw a nice article in the paper the other day about older people in the work force and they said, you know they do have this .. work record of already having adapted, and just because they are a little out of date in terms of the specific, you know information they have, with a little bit of work these people could in fact be better employees than the kids from school who had the qualifications in terms of the courses.

The perceived disparity between the value of one's skills and experience and credible work history; however, was more complex than the currency of skills. Some of the men had sufficient skills for sought after jobs and they received offers of employment. Nonetheless, these offers underscored the limited value which was accorded to experience and employment history. Employers, as October asserted, did not pay employees what they were worth:

They call you in for an interview and basically all they did is ask you how much money you want. And, if I would have offered to take the job for two thousand I would have received several jobs but I wasn't really worth two thousand dollars a month.

Educational updating. In response to their lack of success in finding new employment some men enrolled in educational upgrading. They believed that acquiring new skills would enable them to secure employment. After all, employers had informed the men that they required more current skills. Educational programs included information sessions, self awareness career counselling programs, and skill specific programs. Information programs helped the men gain a greater appreciation of the world of work. For example, they learned that the employment environments of the past were less likely in the new world of work.

Counselling programs accented employment exploration and self awareness. The men verbalised mixed responses to these programs. For example, January observed that employment agencies were more concerned with profits than a client's interests; whereas, Friday reported his employment counselling program was extremely helpful because he

gained greater self awareness as a consequence of taking a self assessment test (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). This helped him become a self employed systems consultant. Generally, however, the employment counselling programs were of limited value to the men. Enhanced personal awareness did not seem to translate into marketable skills.

Specific skills programs were viewed by the men as a means of overcoming their skill limitations and securing new work. Their intentions in taking such programs were to upgrade an existing area of expertise or acquire new skills for another kind of work. In either instance, the hoped for outcome of employment was seldom forthcoming. April, for example, upgraded his expertise in computer technology. He attained a first class standing in his courses; however, he failed to find the desired employment:

OK, I went in, I wanted to go back into work in the computer area. And I have done network designs and I've sold components and I've been sales support. I didn't have any formal PC training. So I decided to go back and get formal training on ahm PC repair, PC upgrading, and on PC networks. Two types of PC networking and that's Novell Netware and Microsoft Windows NT.

*Interviewer:

And so the hope being that by upgrading or getting some skills in those areas you would make yourself more marketable.

*April:

I figured I would get a job right away?

*Interviewer:

You figured you would get a job right away.

*April:

Yah. And I finished there in November, 1st of November and I have now been looking for 7 months, 6 months, 6 and 1/2 months.

Efforts, such as April's, may also reflect an indirect attempt to demonstrate one's willingness to be a good employee for a potential employers. Willingness to upgrade one's skills may imply commitment to a future employer because the potential employee is willing to make sacrifices (self financed education) that might benefit the employer. However, such potential demonstrations of commitment seemed of little value in the search for work.

Acquiring new skills for new kinds of work also resulted in similar disappointments for the men. February, for example, after no success in finding work in

his area of expertise (data systems management) decided to pursue a new direction, graphic arts. He enrolled in a computer graphics program provided by Employment Canada. After completing the 10 month program he believed he would find work in graphics arts; however, he discovered:

Well I thought that, you know with the new skills was definitely either going to be employed full time or start my own work full time ah I just didn't realise that it was going to be so hard.

Education, whether it is upgrading current skills or developing new skills, may not lead to new employment for middle class, middle aged men.

Discovering that experience and additional education may not facilitate new work contradicted the men's personal expectations of employability. This experience may have proved highly frustrating for the men. Whereas, the reciprocal relationship between the men and their employers had fostered opportunities for promotion and development; no reciprocal relationship existed between them and potential employers. Neither the rules of reciprocity nor a psychological contract provided any leverage in the process of seeking work. Although the men may have believed that their experience was of value and that their willingness to upgrade their skills demonstrated they would make good employees, potential employers seemed only interested in satisfying immediate skill needs of the company at an affordable price.

The men struggled to make sense of their unsuccessful efforts to secure employment. They normalised their experiences by making social comparisons. For example, they observed that although they were having a difficult time, they had associates who are having more difficult experiences. They speculated that their lack of success in finding employment might be a result of age discrimination. August, for example, noted that he didn't get the job on Vancouver Island because of this:

And ah I heard from the same guy that told me about the job, plus another guy that I know, both good friends that ah, the only reason I didn't get the job was my age.

Regardless of the reasons the men had for their lack of success in finding new work, the experience of never seeming to quite get the job felt demoralising and they often felt things were hopeless. March's comments, for example, captured the feelings of frustration and hopelessness that the men shared:

(sighing) There are times when you just feel hopeless. Like there is there is, what is the sense in pursuing any of these things, nothing it is going to come of it. You feel like you have talents and experience and knowledge and all of those things but nobody wants to make use of it and that's I find incredibly frustrating I don't know how to let people know that I'm a good employee, that I'm that I have gained all of this value and and would be a good asset for them to have.

The sense of hopelessness, however, did not result in the men abandoning their search for employment. They modified their expectations and accepted work with less status and less pay. Through the experiences of finding work they understood more fully that the careers of the past were not available in the new world of work. This increased understanding of new landscape of work was further underscored by the work that the men did secure.

Working Again

The final component of the disengaging from career stage, working again, illuminates how the men's perceptions of career were altered as a consequence of the work they secured following the termination of employment. New work reinforced the discoveries they made during separation and seeking work (in addition to the termination stage). New employers didn't seem to follow the rules of reciprocity that the men observed during career. This was conspicuous because: 1) employers favoured short term employment relationships; 2) contemporary employee/employer work relationships devalued the more traditional employee/employer relationship, that is, career based on reciprocity; and, 3) the kinds of work the men secured suggested a devaluation of the employee in the employee/employer relationship. These three discoveries occurred regardless of the nature of the work the men acquired, for example, working as a consultant, working for an employer, and self employed business.

Short Term Employment

Following the termination of employment stage the men were unlikely to find long term employment. Instead, work was temporary, unpredictable in duration or confined to a specific time period. January, for example, described his experience of having a job which ended after six months:

So then I went to Contact Starget Marketing and they happened to have researcher position open eh, it was basically getting on the phone and eh contacting businesses and updating their information and I got, it was basically working on a phone all day. I got commission basis, except it was a frenetic job, for every completed call, for every completed form I would get so many cents for it so. That worked OK, it paid the bills here again. So that went about half a year til the end of the year and they had to cut back about 30 40 percent, they lost funding from the Directory Firm so .. so here I am you know ah (chuckles) what do I do now?

In those instances where work was of a time limited period, the duration of employment was designated by formal contracts. December, for example, accepted six month long contracts with major organisations following his retirement from the EUC. In either instance, the employee/employer relationship was governed primarily by the employer's current business interests. Once the employer's interests were satisfied, the services of the employee became unnecessary.

In addition to the temporary nature of employment, the men reported that the potential for future work was also uncertain. January described his feelings about the uncertainty of future work:

Well I don't know what's coming beyond that now now it is a market research kinda company so he said, I said do you think there will be other work? He said yah there are always other things coming in we need help with. He doesn't know what or when exactly .. ah they may have a medical survey to interviews on, they got a biscuit tasting thing coming up so who knows, the point is in the economy, that's the way it goes.

This uncertainty occurred across different levels of skill and pay. December, for example, worked as a computer systems consultant. He secured six month long contracts, at highly satisfactory levels of pay, from various organisations during the first two years after his work with EUC. Recently, however, he has been without work for

several months. Although periods of unemployment were expected by the men who became consultants, such work had its pitfalls. The term "consultant," as August joked, "is the euphemism for unemployed on the North Shore."

Devaluation of Employer/Employee Relationship

The experience of working again underscores the altered employee/employer relationship. Whereas, the employee/employer relationship was governed by the rules of reciprocity, the men believed that their subsequent working experiences revealed the absence of these rules. Employer's might, for example, demonstrate an absence of loyalty to their employees by failing to give credit for good work. Monday recounted how his employer took credit for Monday's creations, for example, an electronic control box for robotics, instead of acknowledging Monday's good work. November reminisced how an employer capriciously changed the manner of pay, from wages and commission, to a commission only basis. Although this may have profited November's employer, it did little for November.

Indeed, even in those instances where the men offered considerable expertise to an employer, the employer may not have given much recognition to the men. March, for example, recounted his experience of devaluation in the employee/employer relationship. He and his partner operated a franchise and attempted to offer their expertise to the parent company. In spite of their good intentions, the parent company viewed their efforts negatively and deprecated he and his partner in front of the other franchise owners:

They had this incredible amount of talent in the people that were owners and they never ever saw fit to take advantage of that knowledge. They never, I mean they never tapped into to my partner's green coffee knowledge in terms of buying coffee. They were buying coffee from the same people that he had bought coffee from through The Good Tasting Coffee Company and yet they never saw fit to to take advantage of ... they never ever saw fit to take advantage of our experience."

*Interviewer:

So you really weren't appreciated for what you offered.

*March:

Oh not at all. In fact we tried many times to get them to do some of this so there was some kind of common, I we were paying an advertising percentage of our sales to them and there was virtually no advertising

that was being done at all, maybe once or twice a year.

In an attempt to more convincingly represent his concerns to the parent company March and his partner decided:

Maybe what we can do is ahm, get the owners together and present some kind of unified force and say look here's the things we as owners want to see you as the franchise owners do. Well that was deadly."

*Interviewer:

It was deadly?

*March:

They reacted like, like they were trying to be overthrown (laughs) and ah it was just vicious and they made some really horrible phone calls to some of the owners just trying to intimidate them and things and it was just ah really awful, awful,

*Interviewer:

Did they try to intimidate you?

*March:

And it worked. Yah, oh yah, they were trying to turn the owners against each other and what we found out of course was that they were telling each group of owners different different stories and so what they didn't want was us comparing stories.

This lack of consideration by the employer towards the employees (franchise owners) suggested the employee/employer relationship was no longer valued by the employer.

This shift in the value of the employee/employer relationship was in contradistinction to the men's experience of their long term employment. December, for example, remembered how they used to fight like cats and dogs; nonetheless, they all had the same goals in mind, the welfare of the organisation.

"I mean where I came from my whole -- whole life in the industry was we challenged each other internally as managers to push the system forward, right. I mean, management fought like cats and dogs. When I say fought, constructively so, right.

*Interviewer:

But you get very competitive, all kinds of other companies --

*December:

Yeah, but I mean we were internally putting incredible pressure on each other to move the system forward. In here they can't stand that."

By being committed to each other, regardless of interpersonal squabbles, the employer and employee were able to work for the mutual benefit of each other. In the new world of work the men believed they were less likely to experience such interpersonal respect.

Devaluation of Self

Working again seemed to affect the men's image of themselves. In an effort to meet their expenses they accepted work that paid considerably less than they earned during career. April, for example, worked as a carpenter in order to meet his basic expenses and secure enough money to build a business. The work was physically taxing, paid \$16.00 per hour (considerably less than the \$75,000 he earned at BPC), and uncertain. He described the impact on his self image:

Anways I was working last week in a place in Langley where they have just built a 16,000 square foot lab to do cancer research, the company moved lock stock and barrel from Pennsylvania. So I'm (pauses) a Joe boy."

In addition, his shift in self image demonstrated how he saw himself as having lost social status:

"Bum or bull work and that is what I'm doing. Carrying windows lumping lumber around, doing stuff that their normal guys would take too much time and they are higher paid than me so.

*Interviewer:

You are on the bottom?

*April:

I'm the bottom of the totem pole and I am doing all of the Joe jobs that ah, they don't want other people to do because it costs too much.

Such feelings may also represent a further manifestation of the devaluation of the employer/employee relationship.

Stage 4: Dearth of Career

The dearth of career is the final stage in the dissolution of career. This stage portrays the consequences of the men's experiences during the second and third stages of the loss of career (see Figure 5). The men reveal that although they may have some memories of career, career as they had known it is over. This awareness of the loss of career is revealed in five facets of their lives. First, the loss of long term employment represents the loss of career. Second, they are less trusting of employers because, regardless of employer integrity during the termination stage, they may feel they were betrayed by the employer. Third, instead of seeking a reciprocal relationship with

STAGE 4
DEARTH OF CAREER

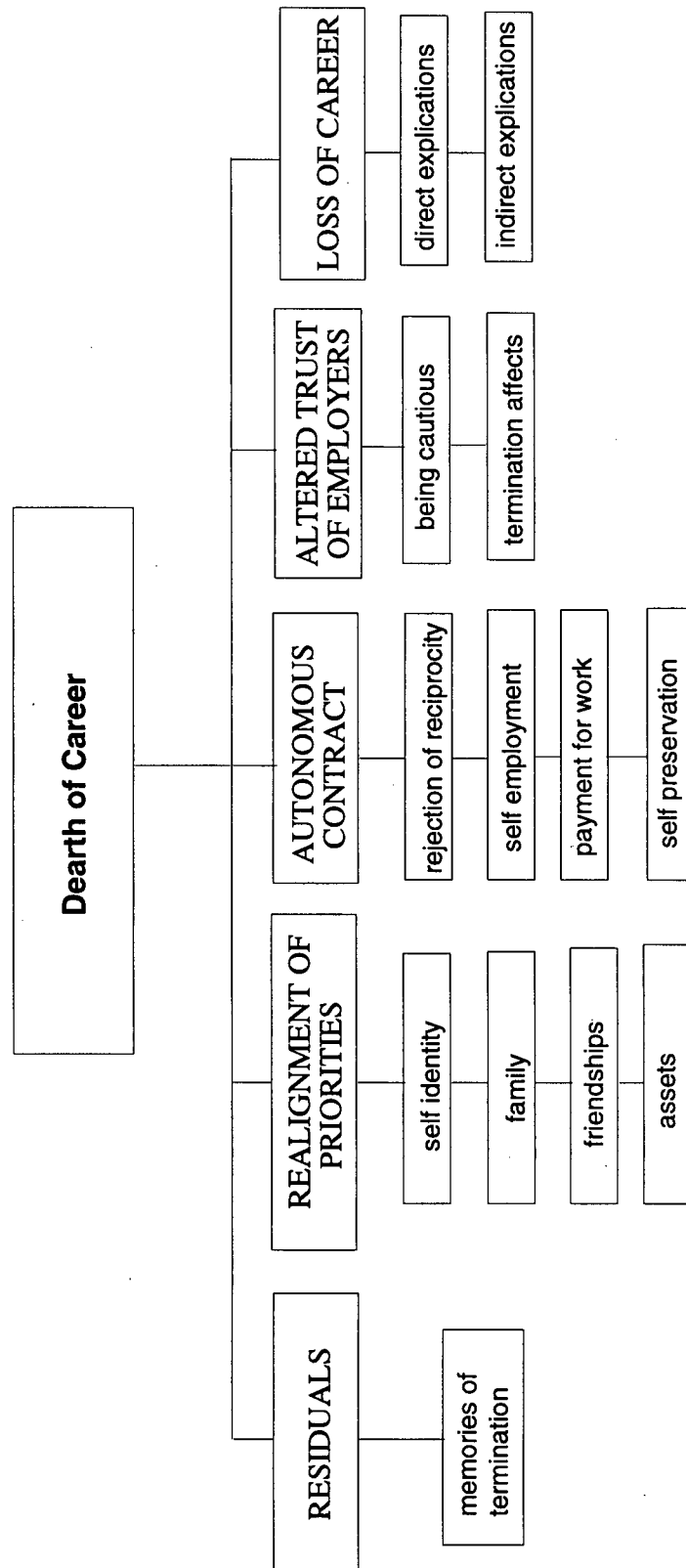


Figure 5. The dearth of career represents the outcome of having gone through the preceding stages. The men did not seem to alter their previous definition of career. Instead, they noted that career was missing in their lives (direct explication) or simply had difficulty defining career. The last stage is named the dearth of career to capture the concept that career the men's understanding of career may not have changed, however, career is no longer available.

employers, they guard their self interest by adopting a transactional contract. Fourth, without career as a primary source of meaning they realign the priorities in their lives. Finally, the experience of the loss of career is long lasting and may have a residual affect throughout the remainder of their working lives.

Loss of Career

The men's contemporary perspectives of career suggest they have not constructed a new definition of career. Instead, they believe that they no longer have a career or that a career is possible. This shift in perspective is demonstrated directly and indirectly. Direct explications of altered viewpoints are conveyed in the men's inability to identify career in their current lives. Although they can provide clear definitions of what career meant in the past, they believe that they no longer have a career. For example, December, defined his past career by stating, "Well, I was a steel industry manager, executive." This was in sharp contradistinction to his current definition, "I don' have a career really." His career in the steel industry was governed by his relationship with his employer, that is, the steel industry. Loyalty, commitment, sacrifices, and hard work had facilitated opportunities for development; however, in his current work his opportunities were governed by a union contract.

Direct explications of the absence of career in the men's lives may seem emotionally laden. Such emotions may underscore the significance of the perceived loss that absence of career represents to the men. For example, September's emotional response demonstrates the potential intensity of the feelings the men may have had about the loss of career. Although he had previously been gregarious in the interview, September became emotionally overwrought when he was asked to describe his current career:

*Interviewer:

And if I said to you now, what is your career now, how do you see career now?

*September:

(Long pause and participant begins to visibly and audibly cry) I don't have one.

*Interviewer:

It's gone.

*September:

Yah (starts to cry uncontrollably).

*Interviewer:

It was pretty important to you.

*September:

Yah (continues to cry, long pause as September slowly regains his composure).

*Interviewer:

Are you all right September?

*September:

Yah, it's OK. I have been here before. I am just kidding myself about the whole thing. This is more important to me than I thought, sorry.

Six years after employment termination, he continued to experience overwhelming emotions about the dissolution of his career.

Indirect expressions of the absence of career in the men's lives were demonstrated by vagueness of their current definitions of career or a belief that career was no longer worth pursuing with another employer. May, for example, demonstrated the uncertainty of his current definition of career. In response to the interviewer's request for a current definition of career, he editorialized that career in contemporary society was fragile:

I mean all I can say is right now ahm ... I'm not sure there is any notion of career because ah so many things are around us that we can't control, keep changing, the level of taxation or the government of the day. Ahm public service type jobs these days are a very threatened species and probably a very bad long term investment. Ahm, all it takes you know, Gordon Campbell wins the next election is suddenly teachers and ferry unions are not a good place to be anymore.

Although he had previously seen his career as the director of a cardiac unit in a metropolitan hospital, his career had been "snuffed out" because of new political priorities, that is, budget cuts. Loyalty and commitment, as the men discovered, may fail to protect career because career is subject to socio-economic forces that are greater than individual relationships between the employer and the employee.

Indirect expression of the absence of career was also evident men's statements that they have abandoned the pursuit of career. Although they maintained their previous

definitions of career, they were unwilling to pursue another career by re-establishing another reciprocal relationship with a new employer. November, for example, articulated the unwillingness to pursue another career. Establishing a new career would require too much time and effort:

Ahm, well I am not looking for a career and ah the definition wouldn't change, it is just that I am not willing to go work for somebody else and dedicate myself to that extent ever again. I am not sure if I were 35 if that would change and ah might still be able to do that and ah I can't answer if I had been answer if I had been married while working, if my definition would have been .. because as I said I was married to the company, I dedicated myself sort of career was everything, all consuming.

November, like other men in the study, was unwilling to commit himself to another employer/employee relationship.

Altered Trust of Employers

November's comments, in addition to articulating the absence of career, underscored the altered trust the men expressed in relation to employers. Whereas the trustworthiness of employers seemed to be taken-for-granted prior to employment termination, the experiences of employment termination and re-establishment seemed to affect their beliefs about the trustworthiness of employers, that is, trust was no longer taken-for-granted (see Appendix B). The degree of change in the men's willingness to trust employers, as previously observed, was influenced by the circumstances of employment termination. The men who reported considerable deceit during the termination of employment appeared somewhat more mistrusting of employers than those whose termination of employment was conducted with honesty. February, for example, who reported he had been misled for almost a year prior to his termination of employment, expressed profound mistrust of employers:

*Interviewer:

When you say you lost trust for that employer ah .. how do .. Where is your trust level now in terms of employers in general?

*February:

Well it's been shattered, I guess, ahm I mean I haven't been employed in a similar situation so, but I think I'd be pretty leery of ever being in a large company again.

Indeed, as February intoned, the experience of having one's trust violated may be so shattering that one may generalize mistrust to all future employers. Alternatively, the men who perceived their employers as honest during employment termination, were less likely to experience high levels of mistrust. Instead, they are more likely to be evaluative and take a more neutral stance towards prospective employers. June's comment, "some are, some aren't" trustworthy is indicative of this more neutral perspective.

This neutral perspective, however, reveals that regardless of employer's integrity during the termination of employment stage, the termination of employment affected the men's faith in employers. Employment termination was more than the loss of work, it was a violation of the psychological contract by the employer. The men believed they had honoured obligations of the psychological contract and trusted that the employer would also honour his/her obligations of the psychological contract. The employer's breach of that trust, regardless of the employer's integrity or the realities of a changing world of work, was tantamount to betrayal. As a consequence of such a betrayal the men became wiser and more cautious. They had learned that trustworthy employers may become untrustworthy or that trustworthy employers may be replaced by untrustworthy employers.

Transactional Orientation

The men's experience of employment termination and disengagement from career seemed to affect their perspectives about future employment relationships. Their perspective appeared to shift from career, that is grounded in the rules of reciprocity inherent in the traditional work world, to work that accentuates a transactional orientation of self interest. This change underscored the men's desire to gain greater control over their destinies. Employment termination had informed them that they cannot rely on their employer for their long term needs, for example, income, security, developmental opportunities. Instead, they decide to fulfill their own needs by becoming more self reliant.

The shift towards a transactional orientation is evident in four responses displayed by the men. First, there is a rejection of the reciprocal relationship between the employee and the employer. This is the primary shift towards the transactional orientation; whereas, the remaining responses represent manifestations of their loss of faith in the reciprocal relationship of career. Second, as a means of gaining control over their destiny they may pursue self employment. Third, they redirect their interest from the intangible rewards of career to an emphasis on tangible compensation for completed work. Finally, they aspire to self preservation, for example, employment security, through legal contracts instead of relying on relational contracts. These responses are behavioural manifestations of the loss of career in the men's lives.

Rejection of Reciprocity

The manifestation of a transactional orientation seems apparent in rejection of reciprocity in the men's working relationships with employers. Whereas loyalty and commitment were the hallmarks of the reciprocal relationship that existed between the men and their employers, self interest is the hallmark of the transactional orientation. November, for example, was unwilling to give the "kind of dedication" and "commitment" he had previously given to employers; instead, he dedicated his energies to building his business. February observed "the stress" of making personal sacrifices for the employer's benefit "isn't worth it." September contrasted his past attitudes towards employers with his present attitudes:

I think I have demonstrated, to me, I've that I've remained with in my adult working career, I have remained with employees, employers rather for a long time.

*Interviewer:

Now though, as a result of this whole kind of thing?

*September:

Now I am going to be a bee or a butterfly and I can flit to flit if I feel inclined too. I will work on my terms .. I don't really give a shit if I am making \$25 an hour, if I was making \$15 that's OK and if .. But if it was on my terms, that's the most important thing. It has to be on my terms and if you don't want to hire me on my terms, then fuck you I am not interested in working for you.

Clearly, the loyalty, commitment, and sacrifices he made previously for his employer were replaced with a greater devotion to his self interest.

Perhaps the strongest example of the shift from the reciprocal relationship to the transactional orientation was demonstrated by Friday. In response to the interviewer's question about employer loyalty, Friday expressed the advice he would give to his children or anyone entering the work world. This advice was in contradistinction to his experience in the traditional world of work:

*Interviewer:

Based on those kinds of experiences in looking at the world out there in terms of work, um, would you say now that -- that employers are less loyal to employees?

*Friday:

Yeah, absolutely. The advice I give my kids or would give anybody starting out or anybody in the position that I was in was make sure that you are taking as much out of this relationship as -- as you are putting in. And nobody is looking after you but you. Um, for the first 20 years of my career at EUC I was very comfortable thinking that there was somebody out there looking after me and all I had to do was work hard and that everything would be taken care of. And I think that the company encouraged that. I as a manager encouraged that among my people. But that's not the case anymore.

The significance of such a change in attitude is that it seems to represent a new set of values and beliefs about work; values and beliefs which might be taken into the work place by the next generation of workers. Values and beliefs which are likely to influence, and be influenced by, the tapestry of work in society.

Self Employment

The men who pursued self employment believed that self employment would enable them to exert greater influence over their destiny. Instead of depending on an employer, they believed that they were more self reliant. Their efforts were directly rewarded in the form of income and working conditions or indirectly in the form of self satisfaction. The direct benefits of self employment vary according to the success of the individual; that is, some of the men were more successful than are other men. Friday, for example, felt his business ventures were highly successful. He earned more money than

he had earned with his long term employer and he exerted greater control over the terms of his work as the co-author of his employment contracts. Self employment enabled him to work in Canada for six months each year and enjoy the sunshine of Arizona during the remaining months of the year.

Self employment, however, provided fewer direct benefits for other self employed men. Instead, these men earned less money and worked under less favourable conditions. April, as noted previously, described himself as earning too little money and performing the "bull work" that was too menial for others. However, even with less income and unfavourable working conditions, these men seemed to derive personal satisfaction from their work. February, for example, noted that his profits from the crafts he sold at Christmas were meager; however, self employment was self validating and provided a sense of belonging:

Last Christmas I did a craft fair and I sat in a chair for six hours and people just gave me money and bought these things. I came home with 300 bucks ah which for me was like a million dollars, I mean I thought this is marvellous, mind you that 300 bucks was like months and months of part time when I'm not doing anything else I would go to my workshop and I fiddle around, but it was wonderful to just sit there and have people say gee these are really cute I'll buy three. You know you go Wow, this is, talk about your ah feeling good.

*Interviewer:

You felt recognized for what you could do.

*February:

Exactly, yah and ah it was good and you get to meet the public and ah that's a very important part of that world, the world of crafters.

The value of the personal rewards of self employment was a common sentiment amongst self employed men regardless of their financial status.

Payment for Work

During the dearth of career stage the men emphasize the importance of receiving financial value for their labour. Instead of donating many free hours of work as a means of enhancing an intangible employer/employee relationship, they seem to favour the more tangible reward of money for their labour. This shift may represent a move towards

personal autonomy as the men reorient themselves from career. August, for example, expressed this viewpoint by stressing the importance of the adequacy of financial reward:

I would have to think who is involved in and what was involved and how much money was involved. You know, I am a whore of the wood industry. If you are gonna pay me enough I'll do anything (laughs). There is a price.

Later, after providing an example of receiving an offer to enter into a relationship with an employer, he re-affirmed this sentiment and noted his reservations about entering into another employer/employee relationship:

He talks about moving to a new offices and expanding the company and all this kind of stuff, well you know ah .. that's nice (emphasis on nice), I can't spend that (chuckling). You know reality is, is what I can get my hands on.

Like the other middle class, middle aged men in the study, he had learned one can't spend the unkept promises of employers.

Self Preservation

The shift towards a transactional orientation is also evident in the men's recognition of the importance of self preservation. Whereas in the past they had relied on their relationship with the employer to promote employment security and acquire retirement benefits; in the present, they seem to favour concrete assurances of employment security. December, for example, who had previously earned \$150,000.00 annually in the steel industry, was currently earning approximately \$40, 000.00 per annum with BPC. As a union employee, the security of his union contract protected him from unwarranted employment termination:

So in the sense of a union employee and all of that it sort of secures me. If I go in there and do my job nobody can say boo to me and I kind of like that freedom at the moment. I go in, I am December, I do my job, at the end of the day I shut off my computer and I leave. When my telephone rings I know it is not the phone company. I spent so many years, the steel company was 24 hours a day, right, I loved it but I am sort of happy to be free of that.

The importance of ensuring one's personal welfare was echoed by various participants in the study. Monday reported that he sacrificed the status of being a "team member" for

the security of belonging to a union. November and Saturday provided for their security by developing a small business. Additionally, the men stated that their long term security in the form of retirement was their responsibility. They could no longer rely on the paternal care of an employer and therefore they would have to provide for their own retirement, even if this meant working beyond 65 years of age.

Realignment of Priorities

The final alteration in the men's perceptions of career was expressed in a revision or reordering of their personal priorities. Whereas career was the major priority in their lives prior to the termination of employment, other aspects of life seemed to assume greater significance during the dearth of career stage. This realignment of priorities in life represents a restructuring of what the men understand to be meaningful in their world. The relationship between the employer and the employee, that is, career, is supplanted by revised or new relationships around which the men may define themselves and organize purposeful behaviour. These are: self, family, friends, and assets.

Self

Prior to employment termination the men may have defined themselves in relation to their career and the work they performed. Self definitions were a manifestation of their relationship with their employers. For example, December, described how people who worked for EUC defined themselves as "EUCer's." Career provided an important means of identity for the men. However, through the experiences of employment termination, they discover that identity that was based on a relationship with the employer is fragile. August, for example, observed:

There is something I learned. That you have to define yourself as who you are and what you are in terms other than your work [hm, hmm] and I find some good friends who, one guy who is an operating manager here and you know recall say that to him, that, don't let this be the only thing in your whole life because Japanese outfit could buy that company and you are gone, you know. Think about that in terms of who you are and what you are. You are not defined by your job. Your job can change. Are you gonna change with it? Maybe a little bit (laughs).

Family

The men seemed to express a heightened value for family during the dearth of career stage. Some the men regretted the lack of attention they gave their families during career. June, for example, observed he had had two marriages in his life, work and family, "but work came first." He wondered whether his marriage might have survived if marriage had been his first priority. Other men noted marriage and family had been of utmost importance throughout their lives; however, they gained an even greater appreciation of their family during the dearth of career stage. Thursday commented that the "a man should have is a good wife" to succeed in life. He felt his partner's support had enabled him to survive the experience of employment termination and the struggles of disengaging from career.

Friendships

The men emphasized a heightened appreciation of their relationships with friends during the dearth of career stage. Good friends, they observed, remain good friends in spite of the turmoil surrounding their loss of employment; whereas, they believed that other social relationships were less secure, that is, relationships with previous co-workers, club members, and community contacts. Friends provided an ongoing source of personal validation and support. Friends helped the men sustain themselves during the difficult times by providing humour, guidance, and leads to potential employment. For example, January frequently struggled with the uncertainty of finding his next job. At times this would lead to a sense of hopelessness and despair; however, his friend helped him gain a more positive attitude through the use of humour and exploring potential work options.

So he has been helpful I guess just ah in exploring career options or ideas I have for ah whatever I'm doing. He has just been kind of ah, his sense of humour and he is pretty creative, he's intelligent so he offers ideas half in jest and half serious at times and that opens up a lot of ideas. Ah specifically, I'll give you an example well for example, I was considering doing a writing an article or doing a workshop on ah and the subject was "some days it's better to stay in bed when you can't find a job." You know it was sort of a tongue and cheek look at the way of looking at it, what

kind of jobs could you create if you never had to get out of bed. So that was a bit of fun.

Assets

The importance of assets (income, steady employment, holidays) may assume a new value during the dearth of career stage. During the disengagement stage the men adjusted their life style because of their decreased incomes; however, during the dearth of career they might re-construct their economic and material losses into a perspective which emphasizes some of the benefits, instead of the deficits, of their circumstances. For example, May emphasized that one could lead a "decent life" without the comfortable salary of a hospital administrator. He and his partner decided that there was more to life than stable employment and paying the bills.

On the other hand we thought let's not beat ourselves over the head you know, let's try and have a decent life too. So you know we are very much ah I won't say proponents, but practitioners of the concept of voluntary simplicity.

Such a life style, he observed, enabled one to focus on what's important in life, for example, "getting to know this person" rather than "his job," instead of the more trivial things such as, "how they are going to spend their summer holiday, at what resort or flying to Mexico."

This reduced affiliation to one's assets, however, may represent more than simply an adaptation to a lowered standard of living. Career and its accompanying material benefits may have acted as a feedback loop that distracted the men from other aspects of their lives (self, friends, and family). December, may have touched on this realization by observing that his life was no longer wrapped up in the steel industry. Without his financial rewards of his career, he could no longer afford the assets he previously owned, however, these were no longer important because something-else had become more important:

Um, well, assets were at one time very important to me. Um, they are absolutely of no importance to me anymore. You know, what I have is what I want to use, right, but I am not tied to them. Money is something that enables me to live day to day, month to month. And, you know, I

have a little bit of vested pension from one of the steel companies. It is not a lot, but I will have a bit of pension, BPC, so I will have enough to, to live a very, very, very modest life. I mean, it might be poverty by the time I get to collect (laughing).

December concluded that gaining a greater connection with himself was what counted because, "I can live my own life now." During his career he felt his life belonged to his employer.

Residuals

The experience of the betrayal of the reciprocal relationship between the men and their long term employer, that is, a violation of the psychological contract, influenced them for a considerable period of time. As indicated by the responses in Appendix B, the men were generally less trusting of employers as a result of employment termination. Considering the participants of study had been away from their long term employment for an average of 5.2 years, with a range of 13 years, it is apparent that the impact of their experience may affect them for many years. The results indicated in Appendix B were consistent with the men's stories during the initial interview. Indeed, Monday's closing remarks during his initial interview captured the long term impact of employment termination. Fifteen years after the event, his anxiety and lack of trust of employers was evident in his recount of his pre-retirement interview:

There is something I haven't mentioned. As everybody know there's a lot of cut backs in the health field and I thought oh no not again. And ah I found out that, that I ah, in other words I saw a lot of people .. in my hospital come and go. In fact there is so many comings and goings that in one calendar year, without moving my desk, once again I worked for 3 different employers. One is the hospital, one is the local health board which was then dissolved and merged with a third, the second health board. So literally had three employers in one year. If that doesn't make you feel unsettled. The next thing is, along with that change, there was everybody from the ah the executive director right down to all the levels of the vice presidents, ah middle management, all the way down to one person above have all changed. None of them who were there when I first came, they have all left in the shuffle. When I came and suggested that I was now interested in retirement, they reminded me that ah there is a lot of change going on Dave but we are not really thinking of closing the position down. I said, I understand that. They said, you are not of the feeling you are going to be laid off are you. I said, no I am not. They said you are leaving voluntarily. I said, yes, I am leaving voluntarily. They

said then you really want retirement. I said I really think I am ready for retirement, yes you are not pushing me out (laughs). That's the way we left. So I felt well maybe I called the final shot after all.

In light of the longevity of the residual effects, one may wonder if the effects of terminating a long term employer/employee relationship may last for a lifetime.

CHAPTER V

SYNTHESIS AND MODEL

Career, according to the stories of the men who participated in this study, emerges as a relationship between the employee and the employer. This relationship develops over time and is governed by assumed reciprocal rules that exist between the "good employee" and the "good employer." Good employees not only fulfill the terms of the formal employment contract, they provide their employer with loyalty, commitment, hard work, and a willingness to make personal sacrifices (see Figure 6). In return, good employers reward good employees with loyalty, commitment, opportunities for development and promotion, and ongoing employment. This reciprocal relationship is a mutually beneficial partnership which is based on trust. Employees receive a stable and predictable employment future; employers receive reliable workers who keep the organization productive and profitable.

The study participants' beliefs about the implicit reciprocal rules which existed between themselves and their employers are reflective of what Rousseau (1989, 1990) defines as the psychological contract. According to Rousseau, people make assumptions about adhering to reciprocal rules that form a basis for a relationship, for example, my consideration for you will be reciprocated with your consideration for me. Although the reciprocal rules are unwritten, compliance with the reciprocal rules leads to a psychological contract between two parties, for example, the employee and the employer. The psychological contract differs from the more simple concept of expectations in that psychological contracts are "*promissory and reciprocal*. Promises of future behaviour (in this case on the part of the employer) typically are contingent on some reciprocal action by the employee" (Rousseau, 1990. p. 390). The psychological contract represents a powerful bond between the employee and the employer, a bond that is equally, if not more compelling, than a written contract.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

Career as a Relationship

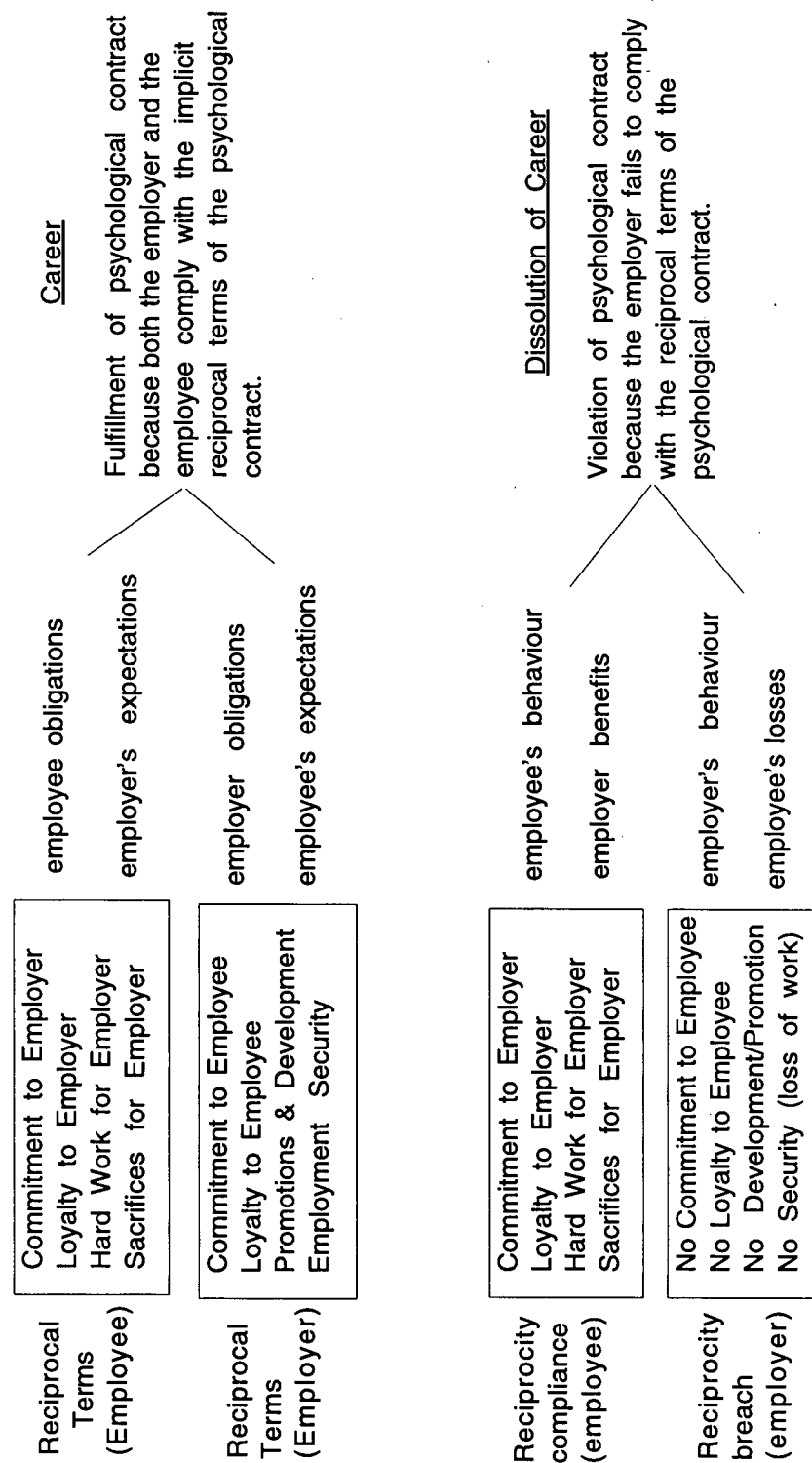


Figure 6. Career as a relationship unfolds when the reciprocal terms of the psychological contract are fulfilled. Career as a relationship is no longer possible when one party of the psychological contract fails to comply with the reciprocal terms of the psychological contract (i.e., the employer).

A breach of the reciprocal rules by one party of the psychological contract, is viewed as a violation of the psychological contract; particularly, if the other party believes it has complied with the reciprocal rules. The men's experience of employment termination, after many years of tenure with their employers, represents such a violation of a psychological contract (see Figure 6). The violation of the psychological contract represents the beginning of the dissolution of career in the lives of the men.

The process of entering into a psychological contract, establishing a career, and experiencing a violation of the psychological contract and subsequently losing career, may be understood in the context of a series of four dynamic and interacting stages. Each of the four stages represents an era of events and experiences that were encountered by the men who participated in this study. First, the men experienced an establishment stage. They learned about the rules of reciprocity and established a career during this stage. Second, they encountered a termination of employment stage. They discovered that compliance with the rules of reciprocity does not guarantee ongoing employment, that is, career is vulnerable. Third, the men experienced the disengagement from career stage. They learned that career as a relationship between the employee and the employer is highly unlikely in the new world of work. Finally, they entered into the dearth of career stage. They assimilated the discoveries of the previous two stages and although they may have maintained their beliefs about the meaning of career, they lived their lives without career.

The stages may be depicted as a process model that represents the dissolution of career in the lives of the men who participated in this study (see Figure 7). The stages are sequential, however, the men's experiences reveal that there are no clear boundaries between the stages. Movement occurs between and across the stages. For example, although a man who is in the dearth of career stage may have temporary work, he may migrate into the disengagement stage as he searches for new work. During the process of finding work, past emotions and cognitions that are similar to those experienced in the

THE DISSOLUTION OF CAREER IN THE LIVES OF MIDDLE CLASS, MIDDLE AGED MEN A FOUR STAGE MODEL

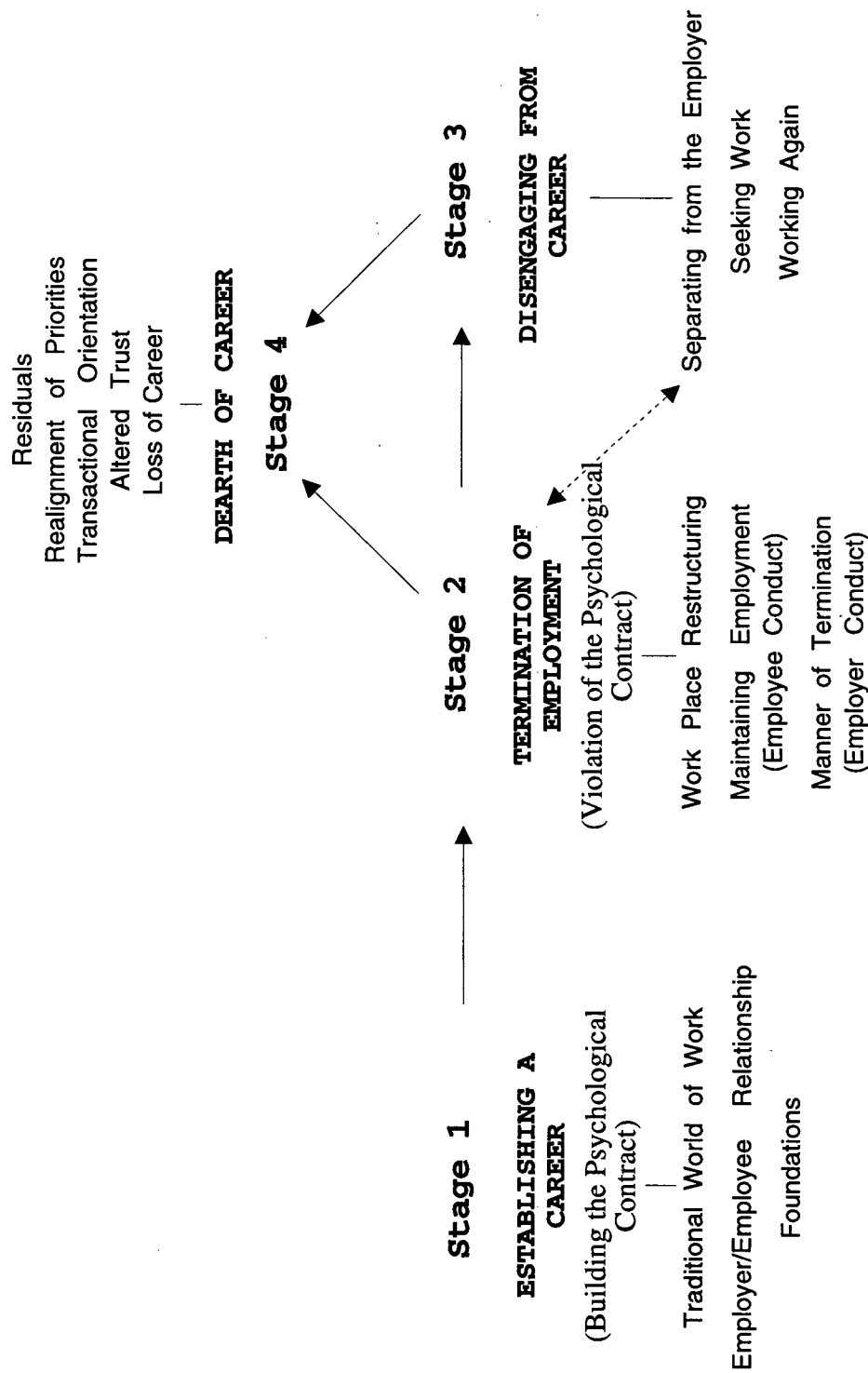


Figure 7. The four stage model which depicts the process of the dissolution of career. The flow of the movement through the stages is from stage 1 to stage 4. However, stage 2 impacts both stage 3 and 4. Note how the component of "separating from the employer" transcends both the second and third stages because this may occur in both stages.

termination of employment stage may emerge. In the remainder of this chapter a synthesis of each stage is presented as a means of explicating the men's journey through career and its dissolution.

Stage 1: Establishing Career

The men's understanding of the unwritten, reciprocal, relationships between the employer and the employee is reflective of the traditional world of work they entered during early adulthood. This world of work was characterized by stability, certainty, and growth. The men believed in the implicit reciprocal rules that governed their working relationship with their employer. They assumed that loyalty, commitment, sacrifice, and hard work for their employer would be reciprocated with their employers' loyalty and commitment. Employer reciprocity would be awarded as opportunities for development and promotion, and employment security. Compliance with these implicit reciprocal rules resulted in a psychological contract that bonded the men to their employers.

The men initially learned about the rules of reciprocity in their families of origin, that is, during childhood and adolescence. Their subsequent tenure with their long term employers reinforced their beliefs and values and strengthened their relationship with their employers. Over time this relationship came to represent career for the men who participated in this study. From a constructionist perspective the beliefs and values, inherent in the men's understanding of career, reflect potent core constructs which were developed over time, reinforced in social context, and provide effective structures for imposing meaning on current events and anticipating the meaning of future events.

Stage 2: Termination of Employment

The economic changes, which became apparent in the early 1980's, began to alter the world of work the men entered during early adulthood. Over the ensuing decade, under the auspices of downsizing, rightsizing, and work force adjustment, employers terminated their employment. Termination of employment violated the psychological contract and suggested that compliance with the rules of reciprocity had been one-sided.

The men discovered that their years of loyalty, commitment, sacrifice, and hard work exerted little influence on maintaining employment with their employers. The termination of employment undermined the men's faith in the reciprocal relationship between employees and employers in the new world of work.

The men's experience of employment termination may be understood in relation to three dynamic and interacting events: 1) work place restructuring, 2) men's efforts to maintain employment, and 3) the manner of employment termination. Work place restructuring encompasses the changes in employer philosophy, culture, or policy that the men encountered prior to the termination of employment. The men interpreted these changes as symbolic of a shift in attitude by their employers towards themselves, that is, profits before people.

In response to work place restructuring the men engaged in efforts to maintain their employment. They worked harder and made additional sacrifices to demonstrate their loyalty and commitment to their employers. Their behaviour demonstrated their faith in the psychological contract. Extraordinary compliance with the contract, they believed, would allow them to maintain employment. The men's efforts to maintain employment, however, were unsuccessful and they may have felt exploited and/or betrayed.

The manner of employment termination highlights the men's ability to influence the termination of their employment during work place restructuring. Three factors are apparent in this event: control, integrity, and compensation. Control refers to the men's ability to influence the termination of their employment. The men who were able to choose ongoing employment exerted control; whereas, those who had no choice exerted limited control. The integrity of employment termination highlights the employer's honesty or deception in terminating the men's employment. Honesty demonstrates ongoing respect towards the employee by honouring the trust in the employer/employee relationship; whereas, deception transgresses the trust in employer/employee relationship. Although the psychological contract was violated regardless of honesty or deception, the

men seemed to experience a greater sense betrayal when employers lacked integrity at the time of employment termination.

Compensation may be understood as a demonstration of an employer's willingness to honour the psychological contract in lieu of ongoing employment. Cash payments or early pension benefits may illustrate employers' recognition of the loyalty, commitment, sacrifice, and hard work the men gave the employer. However, compensation is a complex process. Although failure by employers to provide adequate compensation may underscore the breach of trust between employees and employers, adequate compensation is difficult to assess. Compensation may simply not mitigate the betrayal and subsequent losses stemming from the violation of the psychological contract.

Stage 3: Disengaging from Career

Disengaging from career encompasses those events and experiences the men encountered in their efforts to come to terms with the termination of employment, unemployment, and finding new employment. During this stage that the men more fully discovered that the world of work, in which they began their careers, no longer exists. The employer/employee relationship, which had comprised career, is highly unlikely in the new world of work. Instead, the men discovered that employers are more interested in fulfilling their immediate needs, such as, skills and cost effective labour, rather than developing a mutually beneficial relationship with employees. Disengaging from career is comprised of three dynamic and interdependent components: separating from the employer, seeking work, and working again.

Separating from the Employer

Separating from the employer refers to the process whereby the men let go of their relationship with their long term employer — it is saying good-bye to the employer/employee relationship. Separation occurs over time and bridges the termination of employment and disengaging from career stages. Separation from the employer includes emotions, changing personal images, and relationship effects. Emotions highlight the

significance of the loss of the employer/employee relationship. Emotions are complex and can be both negative and positive. Negative emotions may highlight the devastation of employment termination. Positive emotions may represent a valid expression of feelings, for example, relief that an unpleasant employment termination is over. However, positive emotions can mask the turmoil of job loss, for example, jubilation may hide depression.

Changing personal images reflect the altered perceptions the men experienced about themselves in the world during this stage, for example, a loss in social status and power. The employer/employee relationship may have acted as central relationship that situated the men within the social structure. Without career, the basis for these personal images was no longer available. Changes in personal images may represent ongoing alterations in the men's constructs of self as they disengaged from career.

Separating from the employer includes changes in men's relationships with past coworkers, friends, and spouses. Career provided a central relationship and common purpose for relationships with coworkers; without career the basis for these relationships is lost and these associations generally end. However, relationships with friends and spouses strengthened as men disengaged from career. Friends and spouses remained loyal and committed to men regardless of the men's changes in fortune. Indeed, these relationships eventually supplanted career (apparent in the fourth stage) as the primary relationship in the men's lives.

Seeking Work

Seeking work encompasses the actions the men performed and the experiences they encountered in their endeavour to secure new work, that is, the methods utilized, personal expectations about employability, and working again. Although, the men were confronted with the changing world of work throughout the last three stages, the process of finding work seemed to deepen their understanding of the new world of work.

Abstract knowledge of the new world of work becomes pragmatic comprehension of this world as they live the dramas of becoming reemployed.

Methods. The men employed a variety of methods to secure new employment, that is, inheriting work, applying for work, and interviewing for work. Inheriting work occurs when employment is transferred from one employer to another employer, for example, a company is sold to another company and existing employees are retained as part of the terms for the transfer of ownership. The original employer may honour some of the reciprocal obligations of the psychological contract, such as, ongoing employment; however, transfer of ownership does not include the transfer of the psychological contract. Inheriting employment, as the men discovered, may fail to provide job security if the new owner's business plans change.

Applying for work refers to the process of actively seeking employment and includes the use of cold calls and warm calls. Cold calls are applications to potential employers that were unknown to the men. Warm calls are applications to potential employers with whom the men had a direct or indirect affiliation. Cold calls often proved discouraging for the men because they were seldom successful. Warm calls had more favourable results, particularly when there were direct affiliations between the applicant and the employer, for example, work with friends. Such work, unlike the work of career, was generally of low skill and low pay. Indirect affiliations might lead to employment because the applicant's reputation was known by the potential employer. However, indirect affiliations were no guarantee of employment. Younger and cheaper people were hired if they satisfied the employer's goals.

Personal Expectations. The men discovered that their personal expectations about their employability were inconsistent with the outcome of their efforts to secure employment. They began the search for new employment under the assumption that their work history was of value in finding work, however, they discovered that potential employers seem minimally interested in their employment history. During career a

demonstrated history of commitment, loyalty, sacrifice, and hard work may have lead to promotions and opportunities for development; during the process of finding work, this history was of little value. New employers did not seem to cherish the employer/employee relationship. Instead, potential employers seemed reluctant to invest the time and energy to develop new employee's skills, especially if people with the requisite skills were immediately available at lower wages.

In an effort to overcome their skill limitations the men enrolled in educational courses, for example, information sessions, self awareness "career" programs, and skill development programs. Information programs increased their understanding of the world of work. Self awareness programs accented personal exploration as a means of selecting work that was consistent with one's personal qualities. Specific skills programs were completed as a means of acquiring the skills needed for employment in the world of work. These programs provided variable results for the men. Although some of the men gained from having more information, enhanced personal awareness, or new skills, completion of such programs did not translate into employment.

The failure to secure new work in spite of the men's personal expectations about the value of their employment history and educational upgrading seemed demoralizing for the men. They experienced a sense of hopelessness and uncertainty about finding work that would enable them to regain previous life styles. However, this did not discourage the men from seeking for work. Instead, it seemed to influence the men's willingness to accept lower skilled and lower paying work. For example, they may have accepted short term, low wage, employment as a means of meeting the expenses of daily living. During the process of seeking work the men's expectations of work began to transform as they discovered they would be unable to fulfill their initial expectations about future work.

Working Again. The final component of the disengaging from career stage, working again, illuminates how the men's perceptions of career were altered as a

consequence of the work they found following the termination of employment. New work seemed to reinforce the discoveries they made during separation and seeking work. New work generally failed to follow the familiar rules of reciprocity. This was conspicuous because: 1) employers seemed less interested in establishing a long term working relationship with employees; 2) contemporary employer/employee work relationships seemed to devalue the reciprocal rules which were integral to career; and, 3) work secured may have reinforced the devaluation of the employee in the employer/employee relationship. These three discoveries seem to occur regardless of the nature of the work men acquired, for example, working as a consultant, working for an employer, and self employed business.

The work that the men found was seldom long term employment. Work was typically temporary, unpredictable, or governed by the time limits of a project or contract. The work environment was unstable and employers seemed to devalue the long term long term employer/employee relationships of the past. The rules of reciprocity carried little weight in the new world of work. Instead, employers focused on their own interests. The men endured periods of unemployment and accepted low paying, low skilled jobs as a means of paying bills. This affected the men's self images. For example, one man referred to himself as performing "bum or bull work" at the "bottom of the totem pole." Such self deprecations suggested that their sense of personal worth had been aligned with career. Without career, there was some devaluation of self.

Stage 4: Dearth of Career

The final stage, dearth of career, represents the aftermath of the experiences the men encountered in the second and third stages of the loss of career. In this final stage, the experiences of employment termination and disengagement have become integral to the men's understanding of the world. They reveal that although their definition of career is the same; career as they had known it, is over. This awareness of the loss of career is revealed in five facets of their lives. First, they may believe they no longer have a career

or that career is possible. Second, they are less trusting of employers. Third, instead of seeking a reciprocal relationship with employers, they guard their self interest by adopting a transactional orientation. Fourth, without career as a primary source of meaning in life they may realign the priorities in their lives. Finally, the experience of the dissolution of career is long lasting and may have a residual affect in their lives.

Loss of Career

The men's definitions of career, that is, their constructs about the employer/employee relationship in forming career, did not seem to change as a result of their experiences. However, their perspectives on career revealed they no longer believed they had a career or that career is possible. This altered belief was expressed directly and indirectly. Direct expressions were revealed in the men's inability to identify career in their current lives. Indirect expressions were unveiled in the vagueness of their current definitions of career or a belief that career was no longer worth pursuing. Although the men's definitions of career remained constant, they had lost faith in the employer/employee relationship.

Altered Trust Towards Employers

Prior to the termination of employment the trustworthiness of employers was taken-for-granted; after the experiences of the termination of employment and disengaging from career the trustworthiness of employers was no longer taken-for-granted. This shift towards a less trusting attitude varied from total mistrust of all employers to a neutral perspective. However, it is difficult to identify casual links between specific events and the degree of mistrust individuals expressed towards employers. For example, although one might speculate that a relationship would exist between deception during the termination stage and mistrust, this was not always the case. Men who were not deceived were also less trusting of employers.

This peculiarity may make sense from the perspective of the psychological contract and social context. Potentially the termination of employment, regardless of manner of

termination, represents a deep violation of the men's psychological contract and this weakens trust. In addition, the termination of employment is only one of many events experienced in the social context of job loss. The cumulative and interactive effect of their experiences gradually weakened the men's previous levels of trust.

Transactional Orientation

The men's experience of employment termination and disengagement affected their perspective about future employment relationships. Their perspective shifts from career, which is grounded in the employer/employee relationship, to a transactional orientation of self interest. Instead of depending on the employer for their needs, they become more self reliant and abandon the employer/employee relationship as a means of fulfilling their needs. As an alternative, they turn to self employment, receiving pay for completed work, or gaining employment security through union contracts. These behavioural responses underscore an effort by the men to gain greater control over their destinies. Importantly, these responses may reflect a reconstruction of purpose and meaning in life, that is, one engages in independent rather than dependent actions to promote one's interests.

Realignment of Priorities

The final transformation in the men's perceptions of career is manifested in a revision or reordering of priorities. Whereas in the past the men's lives were organized around career, during the dearth of career stage, career is supplanted by other aspects of life, that is, self, family, friends, and assets. Instead of defining themselves in relationship to career, they may define themselves as an individual whose destiny is not governed by the employer. Family and friendships gain a heightened value during this stage, in part, because of the constancy of family and friends during the preceding stages. Finally, assets such as income, steady employment, and holidays, may assume a new value. The men have learned they can survive regardless of the losses of personal fortune. The realignment of priorities represents a restructuring of what is meaningful in the men's world.

Residuals

Residuals are the final component of the dearth of career stage. Residuals refer to the long term impact of the experience of employment termination. This long term impact is emotional and cognitive and underscores the depth of the violation of the psychological contract. In spite of the amount of time that had transpired since the termination of employment (2 to 15 years) the men were generally less trusting of employers as a result of their experiences. The impact of their experiences affected them for many years. Indeed, it seems that the experience was never forgotten and that the personal losses, in some instances, were never grieved.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

This grounded theory study investigated the experiences of 18 middle class, middle aged men who lost long term employment because of organizational restructuring. Limited research had previously been conducted in this area and this study extends our understanding about the impact of job loss on people who have lost long term employment. The purpose of the study was to explicate the lived experiences of these men and generate an explanation and model of how they reconstructed their understanding of career following job loss from long term employment. Three preliminary research questions guided the course of the study. However, as the investigation progressed three additional questions were raised that helped to generate the explanation of the dissolution of career in the lives of middle class, middle aged men. In the next two sections of this chapter, the three preliminary research questions and the three additional research questions are revisited and discussed. The remaining topics of the chapter are subsequently presented.

Preliminary Research Questions

The first question in the study was, what are the lived experiences of middle class, middle aged men following job loss from long term employment? The men's lived experiences following job loss from long term employment were explained in a four stage process model. This explanation and model provide an overview of the process whereby the men constructed career as the employer/employee relationship, confronted the loss of career, struggled to come to terms with the loss of career, and decided to go on living without career. The stages represent periods of dynamic and interacting events, experiences, and changes encountered by the men in the journey of lost career, that is, the dissolution of career. The relationships between the stages give the men's stories a sense of relevance and continuity. For example, the hardships of disengaging from career

become more meaningful when contrasted with the blessings of establishing career and the pain of employment termination.

Importantly, the men's stories of their experiences give additional insight into human change and transition. In the literature review Schlossberg's (1981) transition model of human change was introduced and used as an organizing schema for identifying variables that influence adaptation to job loss. Schlossberg (1981) defined adaptation as a process in which one moves from total preoccupation with an event to the integration of that event into one's life. This results in a qualitative change (transition) in one's assumptions and behaviour. Such change is described as an outcome between "the ratio of resources to deficits, allowing for changes in the ratio as one's situation changes" (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 8). Based on the men's experiences during the disengagement stage, it seems likely that transition is more complex than an outcome between the ratio of resources to deficits.

Job loss for the men meant more than the loss of work. It signified the end of career, that is, the end of the employer/employee relationship. Their careers had been constructed in the social context of the traditional world of work and had enabled the men to frame purposeful behaviour across time and to give meaning to their lives. Career gave access to social activities and relationships and afforded social and economic prestige. The loss of career meant the loss of purposeful behaviour and meaning, and the associated activities and benefits of career. Indeed, the loss of career signified a series of non-events. Adaptation required integrating not only an event, it included integrating all the other non-events (lost promotions, security, and financial stability) that followed from the loss of career.

The men who participated in this study understood they had lost their careers; however, they did not come to terms with this loss. They integrated life style changes and alterations in social prestige. They were not preoccupied with the loss of career and they had gained a new understanding of themselves and their world. According to

Schlossberg (1981) these changes suggest a qualitative change in the men's assumptions and integration of the loss of career into their lives. However, based on the men's stories, a qualitative change in their construction of career failed to materialize. In spite of recognizing the loss of career and making a series of life changes, their constructions of the meaning of career remained unchanged, as evidenced by their continued longing for lost career. Career was anesthetized but not forgotten and the men never fully grieved the loss of career. Transitions, it seems, do not always occur after some events. How do we account for this unanticipated result?

Schlossberg's (1981) discussion of the role of environment may, in part, account for this anomaly. The men's stories revealed that even though context (environment) may change, people may not change their beliefs and values. Schlossberg's model, consistent with traditional science, identifies factors and variables that determine and predict human behaviour. However, this model does not account for human choice. The men chose to retain their original constructs of career despite the changes in their environment, that is, the reorganization of work in society. Their behaviour was not solely determined by events in the environment.

This shortfall in Schlossberg's (1981) model highlights the limitations of traditional scientific approaches to understanding persons and underscores the importance of using alternative paradigms for the study of human behaviour. For example, the constructionist orientation of this study has facilitated an investigation of how people actively construct and maintain career in spite of the dramatic changes of the organization of work in society. By adopting a constructionist orientation it was possible to discover an apparent paradox in human behaviour, that is, people's failure to make psychological transitions in spite of adaptive behaviours. Humans may choose not to reconstruct their understanding of the world in spite of their responses to the environment.

A second explanation for the anomalous results of failure to change career construct might be proffered by an understanding of morality and social order. Social

constructionists, such as, Muhlhausler and Harre (1990) and Shotter 1984, conceive of society as a matrix of responsibilities, obligations, and expectations — a moral order that people, as members of society, maintain and evolve in their ongoing interactions and relationships with each other. People act in accord with this moral order that they construct and maintain. In the current study hints of this moral order were revealed in the construct of the “good employee” or the “good employer.” Potentially, being a good employee might be linked to good moral conduct. In the eyes of the men, changing one’s constructions of career could be tantamount to becoming a “bad employee” and demonstrating bad moral conduct. Hence they resisted changing their constructions of career as a means of preserving their personal sense of goodness.

The second question asked in this study was, what is the process by which middle class, middle aged men construct purposeful behaviour in their lives following job loss from their long term employer. The process of constructing purposeful behaviour was explained in the four stages of the dissolution of career and depicted in the four stage model. The men’s stories reveal they constructed purposeful behaviour in relation to their understanding of career, the loss of career, and social context. For example, work seeking activities were interpreted in relation to past experiences of career. The men sought employment that would enable them to establish long term employment based on the employer/employee relationship.

Work seeking behaviour, however, did not result in employment that might replicate career. The purposeful behaviour of securing long term employment was unsuccessful and hence not validated in the unknown terrain of seeking employment. In response the men constructed new ideas of purposeful behaviour, that is, they sought attainable work in the context of the new world of work. These forms of work became purposeful behaviour for two reasons. First, they allowed the men to pay expenses. Second, they were reinforced in the new world of work by being purposeful in the social context of working. Nonetheless, new forms of purposeful work did not represent a

reconstruction of career to the men. The men maintained their personal definitions of career regardless of the changes in the organization of work in society. This was a central discovery of this study.

The third question in this study is, what model would represent the social construction of career among middle class, middle aged men who have lost long term employment. Figure 7 is a depiction of this model. This model reveals that the social construction of career among middle class, middle aged men occurs over time and is embedded in social context. Once career is constructed it can be maintained over time regardless of changes in the world.

Additional Research Questions

The first of these questions was, how do the middle class, middle aged men who participated in this study understand career? The men's understanding of career related to their interpretation of the employer/employee relationship, that is, they described career as the relationship between the employer and the employee. This relationship was governed by the rules of reciprocity. The men interpreted the employer/employee relationship as indefinite or lasting until retirement.

The second of these questions was, what are the major components of middle class, middle aged men's careers? The central components of their careers were identified as the psychological contract between the men and their employers and the rules of reciprocity inherent in this contract. The psychological contract established a bond between the men and their employers. Adherence to the rules of reciprocity enabled the men to comply with the psychological contract.

The third of these questions was, what happened to the men's understanding of career as a result of their experiences? According to the men, their experiences arising from the loss of long term employment spelled the end of their careers. The termination of employment was understood as a violation of the psychological contract that existed between the men and their employers. The violation was tantamount to betrayal and the

men felt less trusting of future employers. Nonetheless, the men did not reconstruct their personal understandings of career. According to the definition of career that was used by the researcher, it was assumed that the men reconstructed career because they learned new forms of purposeful behaviour. This difference between the definitions of the men and the researcher highlights the variability of the definitions of career that may exist between academics, professionals working in the field of career, and laypersons.

Contributions to Career Development Theory

Three theories of career development were reviewed in Chapter 2. These theories were: Super's life-span, life-space, Holland's typology, and sociological theory of career development. These theories have had a significant influence on the field of career. In this section of the discussion, these three theories are revisited and reconsidered in light of the findings of the current study which was conducted from a constructionist orientation.

Life-Span, Life-Space

Super (1990) proposes that career development follows a sequence of five stages. During the progression of these stages people must also complete five vocational tasks. In addition, the process of career development is influenced by and influences other life activities. Occupational maturity occurs as a result of moving through the stages and fulfilling the tasks associated with each of the stages.

The results of this constructionist study raise some challenges to Super's life-span, life-space theory of career. Super's theory assumes a normative perspective on career development and does not account for a disruption of the sequence of stages in career development. The men in this study had arrived at the maintenance stage of career development. Regardless of having fulfilled the tasks associated with each of the stages, suggesting vocational maturity, they were unable to maintain employment. Instead, the men found themselves attempting to adapt to the changes in the world of work. Career, from their perspective, was over. The results of this constructionist study suggest

normative models of career development must be reconsidered in light of the changing world of work.

Holland's Typology

Holland (1992) postulates that career satisfaction is an outcome of the matching between an individual's modal personal orientation and occupational environments; however, Holland implies that career satisfaction is less likely when there is a mismatch between the individual and the environment. The results of this constructionist study add to Holland's work by expanding the parameters of occupational satisfaction.

The men's stories indicated their careers were not well planned and little consideration was given to modal personal orientations. Instead, they joined organizations because there was an opportunity for employment. During the course of employment they learned the skills and abilities essential for their work. Their careers became purposeful and gave meaning to lives. Until the termination of employment, the men considered their careers were satisfactory because the contributions they made to their employers received recognition from their employers through satisfaction of the rules of reciprocity. Career satisfaction, like career, may be constructed out of one's experiences rather being predetermined by matching modal personal orientations with compatible occupational environments.

Sociological Theory

Sociological theory of career development posits that career is a product of one's location in the social structure (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996). Sociologists believe individual planning has limited impact on an individual's ability to attain career goals. Instead, sociologists contend career is determined by impersonal market forces. The role of career planning is less important than an organization's prerogatives, that is, one is slotted into available work slots within the organizational structure of the employer. The results of the current study, which takes a constructionist orientation, provide mixed support for sociological theory.

Consistent with sociological theory the results of this study support the position that the men's ability to plan the course of their careers was subject to their employer's prerogatives and impersonal market forces. The men had received promotions from their employer when positions were available; however, the men indicated that people who were less deserving occasionally got the job. Impersonal market forces, that is, changes in the organization of work in society, strongly impacted the men's careers. Personal planning and abiding by the rules of reciprocity provided little protection from organizational restructuring. The men lost work regardless of personal effort.

Sociological theory, however, does not account for the men's steadfast constructions of career. In spite of the determinants of impersonal market forces, that is, the new world of work, the men continued to honour their established definitions of career. The men constructed and maintained career as a relationship between the employer and the employee. Rousseau (1998) notes that the majority of people entering the work force advocate a relational orientation to work regardless of changes in the organization of work. It is intriguing to speculate what impact people's constructions of career will have on the organization of work in society, particularly if people begin to leave organizations that promote transactional agreements and join organizations offering relational agreements (Bernstein, 1998). Constructionism, because it examines the interplay between the individual and society, would provide a means of investigating this possibility.

Literature Relevant to Study Findings

The last step in generating a grounded theory is to determine its relevance (Wilson, 1989). The importance of the explanation and four stage model generated in this study is clarified in part by discovering similarities and discrepancies with other work. Research literature that addresses the same key issues as this explanation has been considered and some of the literature previously presented is reinterpreted in light of this study's findings. The key issues that were discussed in this study are: career as a relationship, the

psychological contract, violation of the psychological contract, and the men's experience of transition from the traditional world of work to the new world of work.

Career as a Relationship

Career has been understood in a variety of ways, for example, trait-and-factor theory (Zunker, 1998), life-span, life space (Super, 1990), person-environment correspondence (Lofquist & Dawis, 1991), typology (Holland, 1973), and as a construct system (Young & Valach, 1996). Rousseau (1989, 1990) posited that one may have either a relational or transactional orientation towards career. The results of this study amplify and extend Rousseau's (1989, 1990) work by suggesting that for some people career is more than a relational orientation; career is constructed as the relationship between the employer and the employee. This relationship, like other interpersonal relationships, is nurtured and developed over time.

Career, as a relationship, is governed by the reciprocal terms of the psychological contract that the employee believes exists between the employer and the employee. Adherence over time to the terms of the psychological contract establishes a bond between the employee and the employer (Rousseau, 1989). The men's descriptions of career, verbalizations of loss of career, and identification of self in relation to their employer lend support to this perspective. The first stage of the four-stage model demonstrated how the men's understanding of career was an outcome of their developmental and working history. During their formative years they learned about employer/employee relations and the rules of reciprocity inherent in career. This knowledge was subsequently reinforced by their experiences during their tenure with their employers. The men's descriptions of career construction garner support from the literature.

In Chapter 2 it was proposed that the process of human development and career construction might be traced to the works of early object relations theorists such as Fairbairn (1946), Winnicott (1963), and Kernberg (1976). These theorists proposed that

early relationships with caregivers are internalized as representations of self and others. Knobloch and Knobloch (1979) elaborated on these theories by demonstrating that these early representations become unconscious schemas that influence how the individual relates to other people in the world. McGregor and Cochran (1988) discovered that one's relationships at work may be a re-enactment of family of origin dynamics. Daniell (1985) suggested that based on a person's family history, work may provide a principal source of identity and supplant relationships, such as, marriage, as a means of personal fulfillment.

The dynamics referred to by McGregor and Cochran (1988) and Daniell (1985) seemed apparent in the men's stories of career. They compared work place relations to family and described career as a form of marriage. Potentially, the men's stories and previous research suggest one form of career is an extension of relational patterns established during people's formative years. This proposition is supported by Rousseau and Robinson's (1994) finding that in early adulthood, the majority of new employees preferred a relational over a transactional orientation towards their employer in spite of the changing terrain of the work place. This relational orientation was found to become stronger during people's tenure with their employers (Millward & Hopkins, 1998).

In addition to constructing relational patterns, the men's stories revealed they also learned behaviours and rules during their formative years that were helpful for establishing and maintaining future relationships with long term employers, for example, good work habits and the rules of reciprocity. The men's accounts are consistent with the research on learned industriousness and social reinforcement (Eisenberger, Park, & Frank, 1976; Eisenberger, Leonard, Carlson, & Park, 1979) and indebtedness (Greenberg & Bar-Tel, 1976). Eisenberger et al. (1976) found that good work habits are learned in childhood. These habits are transferable to other settings such as adulthood (Eisenberger et al., 1979). Greenberg and Bar-Tel (1976) found that by young adulthood reciprocity was part of people's normative behaviour.

The studies listed in this section suggest the men held a basic construct of career as a relationship, based on reciprocal rules, by the time they reached young adulthood. Their early constructions of career may be viewed as simple constructions of career; however, contrary to Nevill et al.'s (1986) and Neimeyer and Metzler's (1987) observations that people move from simple (global) to complex conceptions of career, the men's construction of career may have deepened but it seems doubtful that their constructions of career became more complex. They maintained a simple and unidimensional construct of career that was unaffected by their mid-life experiences in a changing social and economic context.

A plausible explanation for the constancy of the men's construction of career was suggested from a social constructionist perspective, that is, people rely on a moral order to make decisions about events in the world. Riverin-Simard (1998) observed that people's vocational evolution is chaotic and filled with uncertainty and instability rather than following a predictable and tranquil course. Potentially, making decisions based on the moral order may provide a means of giving life a sense of stability and peace of mind during people's careers. For example, by being a "good employee" the men in this study believed they could influence the uncertainty of future vocational events, that is, "good employees" are rewarded with employment security. The men's simple construction of career, based on a moral order, might continue to provide a sense of control after the loss of long term employment by allowing them to make responsible decisions in terms of what it is to be a good employee in a work world that seems chaotic.

The Psychological Contract

Psychological contracts between employees and employers are relational contracts (Rousseau, 1989). Psychological contracts, according to Rousseau, are based on trust and have four main features. First, the psychological contract is highly subjective, that is, the nature of the perceived promises and considerations are subjective. Second, the psychological contract pertains to an individual's belief(s) in reciprocal obligations

between the individual and another party (Rousseau, 1989). The belief about another's obligation is strictly in the eye of the beholder. Third, the psychological contract includes a payment or offer of consideration to another party in exchange for a promise that the other party will reciprocate its promises. Finally, the psychological contract is part of the larger tapestry of a relationship. The longer the employment relationship, involving repeated cycles of contribution and reciprocity, the more extensive the list of contributions and inducements that may comprise the contract.

This study underscores previous work pertaining to the psychological contract in two important ways. First, this study extends our understanding of the psychological contract and its violation. Previous research investigated the relationship between the psychological contract and its violation in several areas, for example, expatriate managers (Guzzo, Noonan, & Elfron, 1994), interpersonal harassment (Thomas-Peter, 1997), absence culture (Nicholson & Johns, 1985), survivors of organizational restructuring (Brockner, 1988; Feller, 1995) and workplace violence (Johnson & Indvik, 1994). Whereas the aforementioned research was conducted with people who continued to work for their employers; this study looked at the psychological contract and a major violation of the contract (employment termination) after a person had left the employer. The results of this study indicated that the consequences of a violation of the psychological contract were transferable to other settings. The violation impacted an individual's attitudes towards both the current employer (the perceived violator) and employers in general (perceived as potential violators).

Second, the psychological contract as a construct emerged during the process of the research. Investigating the psychological contract was not the original purpose of the study. Indeed, the researcher was unfamiliar with the construct of the psychological contract when he undertook the study. However, as the study progressed the researcher frequently heard the study participants refer to the loyalty, commitment, hard work, and personal sacrifices they gave to their employers. They commented that loyalty, contrary

to their expectations, was only unidirectional. Although they believed their employers would reciprocate employee commitment and hard work with benefits such as employment security, the termination of employment shattered their beliefs about employer reciprocity. The breach of this assumed agreement seemed to play an important role in their experiences of job loss and life after the job.

The construct of the social contract was originally considered to represent the employee's assumed agreement between the men and their employers; however, a review of the literature clarified the meaning of the social contract as including the perspective of both the employer and the employee (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). The construct of the psychological contract was selected because it emphasized the employee's beliefs (Rousseau, 1989, 1990; Rousseau & Robinson, 1994). This was consistent with the research methodology of investigating employees' perspectives. Significantly, the "rediscovery" of the psychological contract reaffirmed it as a powerful construct that elaborates our understanding of relational reciprocity in the work place. In the remainder of this section on the psychological contract, literature that speaks to two important aspects of the psychological contract is examined in relation to the current study, that is, commitment and the implied contract.

Commitment

Commitment is a central component of the psychological contract (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1990, 1994). Although employee commitment to the organization (organizational commitment) has been defined in various ways; a common theme is apparent in the literature — organizational commitment is conceived as a bond or linking of the individual to the organization (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Two popular forms of organizational commitment have been studied — attitudinal organizational commitment and calculated organizational commitment. Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) define attitudinal organizational commitment as

the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement

in a particular organization. Conceptually, it can be characterized by at least three factors: a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. (p. 27)

Calculated organizational commitment, also known as continuous organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986), refers to the phenomenon whereby persons become bonded to the organization over time because of the investments they have made in the organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). They feel they cannot afford to lose these investments if they leave the organization, for example, pensions, pay scales, and seniority.

In the current study the men's stories and personal characteristics suggest their commitment to the organization was attitudinal. They reported that they were loyal to their employers and demonstrated a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values by incorporating their relationship with the organization into their identity. They exerted considerable effort for the benefit of their employers, for example, unpaid overtime work and personal sacrifices. They expressed a strong desire to maintain their membership in the organization, potentially until retirement.

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found several personal factors that were positively related to attitudinal commitment: age, perceived personal competence, job level, and positional tenure. The relationship between these factors and commitment was supported in the current study. The men were middle aged (mean age of 49.10 years), described themselves as competent employees, held managerial or highly skilled positions with their employers, and although it was not ascertained how long they were in their positions, they had an average tenure of 22.44 years with their long term employer.

The research on commitment adds to this study by supporting the participants' perceptions of employer commitment. The men felt their employers' behaviour supported their beliefs. For example, they received promotions, salary increases, and other symbols of appreciation from their employers. According to Eisenberger,

Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa (1986), organizational support of employees through rewards and other forms of endorsement, affects employees' global beliefs about the degree that the employer cares about employees' well being and values their contributions. Organizational support influences the employee's attendance and performance and affective attachment to the organization (Buchanan, 1974; Steers, 1977; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Cook and Wall (1980) found organizational support was positively related to loyalty, identification, and involvement with the employer.

Overall, the research literature on commitment supports the role of commitment in the psychological contract found in this study. The research underscores how the men's perception of mutual commitment strengthened the relational bonds between the men and their employers. Even though psychological contracts may be in "the eye of the beholder" (Rousseau, 1989), psychological contracts are constructed and reinforced in people's relations with others. Actions which demonstrate mutual commitment, according to the literature, would strengthen the men's psychological contracts. The role of mutual reinforcement is further elaborated in the research literature on implied contracts.

Implied Contracts

Implied contracts, like psychological contracts, arise from patterns of interaction and repeated cycles of exchange between parties (McLean Parks & Schmedemann, 1994; Rousseau, 1989). Implied contracts, unlike psychological contracts which are in the eye of the beholder, are observable by outsiders. The observability of implied contracts may be created by the presence of company handbooks which provide written evidence of organizational expectations of certain behavioural patterns (McLean Parks & Schmedemann, 1994). Implied contracts may also arise from an employer's oral promises, longevity of employment, written or unwritten employer policies, and industry wide practices (Heshizer, 1994). The presence of implied contracts, from a legal perspective, has diminished the employer's right to terminate an employee's employment

at-will. The importance of the existence of implied contracts between employees and employers, however, extends beyond legal implications of such contracts.

The existence of implied contracts between employees and their employers highlights how people construct psychological contracts in a social context. Although psychological contracts are held by individuals, the reciprocal terms of psychological contracts are not illusions emanating from people's minds. Psychological contracts are constructed in the context of employee's environment. The viability of their psychological contracts depends on the correspondence between their beliefs and their employer's beliefs. Congruence occurs when employee's and employers share the same beliefs that are contained in the psychological contract.

McLean Parks and Schmedemann (1994) found that congruence may exist between an individual's and an organization's respective psychological contracts. This congruence is variable and represents the magnitude of an implied contract. There may be considerable overlap between individual and organizational psychological contracts suggesting consistency between the employee's and the organization's psychological contracts. Alternatively, little overlap may exist and consequently there may be considerable inconsistency between the employee's and the employer's respective psychological contracts.

In the present study, even though only the employee's perspectives were investigated, there were examples of both congruence and incongruence of psychological contracts. Some participants felt their employers fulfilled employer obligations when employment was terminated because the employer provided adequate compensation. Other participants felt their employers failed to fulfill employer obligations because there was insufficient compensation or a lack of notice at the time of employment termination.

Violation of The Psychological Contract

A violation of the psychological contract occurs when the individual (the employee) perceives that the other party (the employer) has failed to fulfill one or more

of the obligations inherent in the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989). Employees are more likely to perceive a violation of the psychological contract if they believe that they have contributed to the psychological contract as promised and the employer has not adequately reciprocated the employee's contributions. Morrison and Robinson (1997) distinguish between a breach and a violation of the psychological contract by stressing that a violation connotes a strong emotional experience. This emotional experience involves powerful feelings of betrayal, anger, resentment, and a sense of injustice and maltreatment. These emotions signify the meaning of the violation of the psychological contract for the individual.

Violation of the psychological contract can result in a decrease of employees' trust towards employers, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to remain with employers (Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). The results of the current study reflect these earlier findings on the impact of a violation of the psychological contract. However, as previously stated, the effects of the men's experience of a violation of the psychological contract were more far reaching than simply towards their long term employers. The impact of their experiences generalized to future employers and beliefs about career. This generalization to other settings, the researcher believes, reflects the severity of the violation that the men experienced. The violation represented not only the loss of employment; it also represented the end of a relationship that had been nurtured over time, involving cycles of exchange and psychological contract reinforcement. The termination of the relationship was synonymous with the dissolution of career. As a means of clarifying the significance of the men's experience of violation, the remainder of this section will examine the role of emotions, fairness, and trust in psychological contract violation.

Emotions

Controversy exists over whether emotions are an outcome of our thoughts (cognitive process) or somatic responses (Feyereisen, 1989). Pert, Hill, and Zipser

(1989) and Pert (1992) offer some resolution to this controversy by concluding that emotions are both stimulated and transmitted from different regions of the body and that emotions can best be understood from a unified mind/body perspective. At a biological level emotions notify us of biological imbalances such as hunger. At a cognitive level emotions may be understood as an outcome of people's interpretations of events (Weiss & Cropanzo, 1996). For example, emotions may inform people about the meaning of career transitions or the outcomes of career decisions (Kidd, 1998). Emotions, therefore, are significant because they sensitize and connect people to their world (Hillman & Ventura, 1991; Stein, 1973).

The men's stories revealed the difficulty of ascertaining the meaning of emotions in relation to psychological contract violation. Their responses to the violation of the psychological contract were inconsistent. Emotions varied from joy and relief to feelings of intense anger and a sense of betrayal. In some instances the connection between men's emotions and the violation of the psychological contract seemed clear; in other instances the relationship was less clear. Some men may have verbalized feelings of relief in relation to contract violation, nonetheless, undertones of bitterness were apparent in their stories.

There are many possible explanations for the variation of emotional responses. Individual differences may account for dissimilar emotional reactions to similar events (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). The loss of work may have been less meaningful for some men, for example, they received adequate compensation and were eligible for retirement. Defense mechanisms such as repression, regression, and projection may provide a means of dealing with anxiety (Hall, 1979). Emotional burnout as a consequence of the emotional roller coaster of unemployment (Borgen & Amundson, 1987) may have flattened some of the men's responses. The support of family and friends may validate and buttress the individual's feelings of self worth and ease a person's painful emotions (Mallinckrodt & Fretz, 1988). Socioeconomic circumstances may contribute to the

person's reactions (Latack & Dozier, 1986). In addition, the circumstances prior to employment termination may influence emotional reactions. For example, a succession of smaller violations of the psychological contract may already have weakened some men's bonds to employers (i.e., career) prior to the termination of employment.

Frijda (1993) observes that people frequently describe an emotional experience not as a single emotion elicited from a single event. Instead, people report a series of emotional transactions in the environment. These are coherently organized around a single theme. Frijda defines this coherent and dynamic series of emotional events as an emotional episode. Each of the subevents may have its own distinct emotions which are occasionally contradictory, but the full episode has a core theme. During the episode the person remains in a state of continuous emotional engagement. For example, some of the men's description of the events leading up to the termination of employment revealed an emotional roller coaster. Although they might worry about job loss on one day, employer reassurances of employment security on the next day resulted in feelings of relief.

Fairness

Research on the role of fairness in the termination of employment has investigated people's perceptions of fairness and the effects on the level of organizational commitment of layoff survivors (Brockner, Tyler, & Cooper-Schneider, 1992), fairness of employment termination and a belief in an implied contract obligating the employer to retain the employee (Rousseau & Anton, 1988), and the role of seniority and formal commitments with regards to obligations to retain terminated employees (Rousseau & Aquino, 1993). The study reveals consistencies and inconsistencies with the aforementioned studies.

Brockner et al. (1992) examined the effect on layoff survivors' perceptions of fairness and organizational commitment as a result of employment terminations of co-workers. Brockner et al. found perceptions of fairness affected survivor's commitments to the organization. When employers were seen to be fair in their practices

(they offered clear and adequate reasons for job termination, severance pay, and out placement counselling) survivors who had high levels of prior commitment to the organization were more likely to look favourably upon the termination of employment procedure. However, when employers were deemed to be unfair in their termination practices, survivors with high prior commitment to the organization, showed significant reductions in their level of organizational commitment. Survivors whose commitment to the organizations was low, showed less significant reductions in their commitment to the organization.

Brockner et al's. (1992) results receive mixed support from the current study. The men who stated they were unfairly treated at the time of employment termination expressed negative attitudes and feelings towards their employer. The men who felt they were fairly treated expressed more charitable attitudes towards their employers. However, regardless of the perceived fairness of the employment termination process, the men reported a greater commitment to their own interest in the future. They indicated that one could not count on contemporary employers to promote employee welfare. Consequently, the men were less willing to commit themselves to employers in general. The discrepancies between the current study and Brockner et al's. study may be partially explained by the different circumstances of the participants in each study. Brockner et al.'s participants did not lose work, whereas, the participants in this study lost their work. It is conceivable that victims of employment termination may experience the world somewhat differently than survivors of employment termination.

Rousseau and Anton (1988) investigated the relationship between fairness of employment termination and an implied contract obligating employers to retain employees. The authors found employer obligations to retain employees were mitigated by the fairness of the termination procedure. Judgments pertaining to the fairness of employment termination were influenced by employee time on the job, compensation (severance pay), and formal commitment. Time on the job and formal commitment

appeared to be the most important subjective determinants of an obligation to retain an employee. Adequate compensation, however, could mitigate an employer's obligations to retain an employee.

The results of the current study offered mixed support for the findings of Rousseau and Anton (1988). Although some of the participants felt they had received a reasonable severance package and that the termination process was fair; others, who acknowledged that they had received reasonable severance packages, felt their employer was unfair. The termination of employment for these men was more than the loss of work. It was a betrayal of the relationship between the employer and the employee. This study demonstrates that the assumed obligations of such employer/employee relationships are not readily satisfied by employee severance packages.

Although it is not possible to ascertain whether the men in the current study changed their views about employer fairness over the course of long term employment, the current study at least suggests the experience of long term employment may affect employees perceptions of fairness. Rousseau and Anton's (1988) study participants (n=171) were students in human resource management programs at two Midwestern business schools. The students were in the early part of their working lives; however, the men in this study were in the latter part of their working lives. The students' perspectives may represent outsiders' perceptions of an abstract event; whereas, the men's perspectives represent insiders' understandings which were shaped and modified through lived experience.

In a study of university students (n=121), Rousseau and Aquino (1993) investigated the importance of time on the job and formal commitments in creating implied contracts or obligations to retain an employee. The authors identified two management practices that can modify or rescind an employer's obligation to retain employees: 1) advance notice and severance, and 2) out placement. These practices demonstrate how employers continue to honour an implied contract even when the specific terms of the implied

contract (job security) are not satisfied. This conclusion was consistent with the present study in relation to some of the men's experiences.

However, not all of the men felt this way. They felt that money alone could not compensate for the years of contribution they gave their employers. The discrepancy between the results of this study and the study of Rousseau and Aquino (1993), like the study of Rousseau and Anton (1988), can be explained by the different characteristics of the study samples. In addition, the results of this study extend the findings from these studies by highlighting the role of history and experience in shaping employee's beliefs about employer fairness.

Trust

Limited research was discovered that specifically addresses the relationship between trust and violation of the psychological contract. In a longitudinal study spanning 30 months, Robinson (1996) investigated the role of trust in mediating an employee's behavioural reactions to a breach of the psychological contract. Robinson found that low levels of initial trust were negatively related to trust following a psychological contract breach; initial high levels of trust were less affected by psychological contract breach. The level of trust influenced the likelihood that an individual would perceive a psychological contract violation. People with lower levels of trust were more likely to perceive a violation of psychological contract than people with high levels of trust. Psychological contract breach was negatively related to employee contributions. The effects of psychological contract breach were evident one year after the actual psychological contract breach.

The current study demonstrates some consistencies with Robinson's (1996) study. Even though it was not possible to assess the men's previous levels of trust in this study, the men reported that they were less trusting of employers in general as a result of their experience of job loss (see Appendix B). For example, they revealed decreased trust of employers by stressing the value of work environments wherein one did not rely on the

benevolence and trustworthiness of their employer for employment security. Self employment or union membership was seen as offering greater employment security than an employer/employee relationship.

The effects of the men's current levels of trust in relation to their contributions to current or potential employers was unclear. The men reported that they worked responsibly but they were unwilling to make the kinds of sacrifices to current employers that they had towards their long term employers. They stated they were less committed and loyal. Their willingness to work responsibly may suggest that they do make significant contributions to their employer; however, responsible work habits may be motivated by a desire to enhance their reputation as a good worker. This would aid them in securing new work in the future.

This study also speaks to the duration of the effects that psychological contract violation has on employees. Whereas the participants in Robinson's (1996) investigation had experienced a psychological contract violation one year earlier, the men in this study had lost long term employment on average 5.30 years earlier. They continued to express feelings of mistrust towards employers. Indeed, one man was so strongly affected by his experiences that 15 years after the event, he continued to mistrust employers. Potentially, one of the most significant aspects of this study is that it highlights the far reaching effects of a major psychological contract violation not only in relation to trust, but also in relation to the long term impact of such violations and the degree of generalization of outcomes to other settings.

Transitions in the World of Work

Chapter 2 discussed the changes occurring in the world of work during the latter part of this century. These changes in the organization of work in society were described in various ways: industrial to post-industrial society (Hage & Powers, 1992); bounded to boundaryless careers (Mirvis & Hall, 1994); and, bureaucratic to adhocratic employer/employee relations (Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995). A general theme emerges from

each of the perspectives. The world of work has moved from stability and predictability to instability and unpredictability. The organizations of the past are restructuring to meet the changes in the global economy. Instead of workers having long term relational attachments with organizations, workers are discovering a variety of working relationships with organizations (Snow et al., 1992). These can be short term, part-time, and unpredictable. Transactional employment contracts are becoming more common than relational contracts.

The results of this study support the explanations provided by the aforementioned authors and add two additional perspectives. First, the men's stories and the explanation conveyed in the four stages of the dissolution of career provide a window into some people's lived experiences of the transition from the traditional to the new world of work. According to the men, this transition is filled with hardship. In spite of the optimism of authors such as Mirvis and Hall (1994), who hail the opportunities for work and career in new world of work, the obstacles encountered by the men were immense. Additional education, contrary to Hall and Mirvis' (1995), is not always a means to securing employment. Financial hardship is an outcome of unemployment and, as Newman (1988) found, it can lead to downward social mobility. Age discrimination may also be an obstacle. Adapting to these changes may be overwhelming. People must gain both an understanding of the changes in the world of work in order to secure employment and they must make personal adaptations as a means of coping with an altered life style.

The second perspective is in relation to the changing social constructions of career. The aforementioned authors state that careers are different in the new world of work, for example, boundaried versus boundaryless careers (Mirvis & Hall, 1994). This study supports this notion. However, the findings of this study suggest a more critical perspective in relation to career. A logical question is, in relation to the changing constructions of career in contemporary society, what function does the construct of career have in society? Authors such as Freire (1985) and Aronowitz and Giroux (1985)

postulate a social conflict perspective of human behaviour and contend that people's belief systems shape and constrain their behaviour in the context of society. By deconstructing beliefs it is possible to see how certain beliefs may benefit one segment of society while exploiting another segment of society.

Career emerged as a relationship between the employer and the employee in this study. Deconstructing career reveals it is a multilayered phenomenon. At a surface level the employer/employee relationship seems mutually beneficial. However, at a deeper structural level, career as relationship contains a dimension of power. One party of the relationship (the employer) exercises power over the other party (the employee) in spite of the rules of reciprocity in the employer/employee relationship. This dimension of social control is hidden in the employer/employee relationship because rules for sharing power (reciprocity) give the impression of shared commitment. The eminence of social control becomes apparent in the termination of employment. Regardless of the men's compliance with the rules of reciprocity, when they were no longer considered beneficial to the employer's interests, the employer terminated their employment. A deconstruction of career therefore indicates an intrapersonal and interpersonal dimension to the construct of career.

Study Limitations

The study had limitations in relation to the sample and retrospective nature of the inquiry. The majority of the participants were recruited through advertisements in local community newspapers in Vancouver, B. C. and the influence of self selection is unclear. Although the participants met the general qualifications for participation in the study, it is possible that other factors influenced the men's decisions to respond to the advertisement. For example, only people who had a relational orientation towards the employer may have replied; whereas, people who had a relational orientation towards the job (Millward & Hopkins, 1998) may have failed to respond. People who were oriented towards their job may have had less intense emotional reactions to the loss of employment, hence they

felt less motivated to respond to the advertisement. This may have reduced the variability in the sample and lead to a narrower explanation of men's experiences of job loss following long term employment. It remains unclear what role deciding to volunteer for the study played.

The second limitation relates to the retrospective nature of the men's stories about their experiences. Time may have altered the memories of their experiences and it was not possible to directly assess the accuracy of individual's stories. Nonetheless, the consistency of the patterns in the men's stories and the saturation of the categories generated in the study indicates the men's stories were sufficiently reflective of the phenomenon of interest. In addition, a review of the literature supported critical components of the men's explanations of their experiences.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study yield an explanation of the effects of the violation of the psychological contract and the subsequent dissolution of career among the men who participated in this study. These results are significant because they may inform the practices of human relations professionals (psychologists, counsellors, and educators), employers, and expand our understanding of meaning of career in relation to a segment of the working population. The findings suggest many avenues for future research.

A next logical step would be to evaluate the study findings in relation to more diverse groups of people who have lost long-term employment. For example, how do the experiences of people from different social classes, age groups (e.g., older workers) or the experiences of women compare to the experiences of middle class, middle aged men? This kind of comparison might extend the boundaries of the current study and strengthen its specificity and relevance for counselling and policy initiatives.

Research from an organizational perspective is needed to address the problem of decreasing employee commitment and loyalty towards employers. The results of this study and previous studies (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994) revealed that violation of the

psychological contract decreased organizational commitment. These effects appear to be long term in spite of an employee's future experiences of fair treatment by an employer (Brockner et al., 1992). From an organizational perspective, employee loyalty increases productivity and decreases employee turnover (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). A loss of organizational commitment and loyalty can also result in employees abandoning their employment contracts in the event of better job offers (Bernstein, 1998). Possibly an investigation of organizational practices that have been implemented to increase employee commitment and loyalty might provide some answers to this problem.

Further research is needed to find practical solutions that can be used to assist middle aged, middle class, men in securing new work after they have lost long term employment. Kidd (1998) observes traditional career counselling has focused on the importance of decision making, skills acquisition, and self awareness as people enter the world of work. Feller (1995) recommends counsellors move beyond the role of helping the client focus on his/her awareness of self and personal attributes. He suggests counsellors need to educate clients about the organization of work in contemporary society because the system has become far more dynamic.

However, based on the stories of the men in this study, augmenting traditional career counselling with greater awareness of changes in the system seems insufficient. The men had taken career counselling courses that enhanced their awareness of self and changes in the world of work. They acquired additional skills which they felt would lead to employment and they were aware of the changes in the organization work in the society. Their problems pertained to actually securing employment. A challenge for practitioners therefore is how to assist clients in bridging the gap between self awareness, system awareness, and working; that is what do clients need to know and do in order to actually obtain work.

Research that explores the role of emotions in career also seems warranted. Research has been limited in this area and the results of this study both demonstrate the importance of emotions in career and the complexity of how they interact with career. Possibly, a finer grained analysis focusing on people's emotional experiences of career would be helpful. A variety of areas seem worthwhile, for example, career decision making, career change, and career transitions.

Additional research is warranted on the role of multiple violations of the psychological contract. In this study, various men reported that they watched the employer gradually withdraw various "perks" or abandon practices that demonstrated consideration for employees. These changes might represent a sequence of violations of employees' psychological contracts. The men reported that the confidence and trust they had in their employers gradually dissipated as a result of such events. It would be interesting to know, for example, whether people with high levels of initial trust might gradually develop low levels of trust following multiple violations of the psychological contract. This would extend our understanding of Robinson's (1996) findings about the relationship between trust and perceived violations of the psychological contract.

Further research about the underlying structure of career as a relationship seems a worthwhile endeavour. This study focused on the implicit relationship between the employer and the employee and the rules reciprocity inherent in this relationship. It was proposed that the foundations of this relationship were established in one's family of origin. This proposition was supported by object relations theory and Knobloch and Knobloch's (1979) findings that childhood familial relationships become internalized as unconscious schemas that influence people's adult relationships. For example, the men's descriptions of the employer as paternalistic could suggest a role schema of the employer as an authoritarian parent. However, there may be other kinds of relationship schemas that manifest in work and career (with a sibling, aunt or uncle, or childhood friend). These may reflect different distributions of interpersonal power (perceived or enacted).

How might researchers access such relational patterns and how might different relational schemas manifest in career? What models of work and career could represent these different relationships? For example, a sibling relationship might be reflected in professional partnerships. Such a model could reflect interdependent work relationships rather than the dependent relationships of patriarchal work places.

Finally, research from a social conflict perspective of career could enhance our understanding of the dynamics of career in society. This study discovered that the employer/employee relationship, played a central role in the careers of 18 men. The men's beliefs about the reciprocity inherent in career, shaped and constrained their relationships with their employers. A deconstruction of career indicated reciprocity did not result in equality of power between the men and their employers. At best, reciprocity gave the illusion of equality. A future study of career could investigate how the construct of career acts to shape and constrain social relationships within the broader context of society. For example, retirement has provided a means of removing older workers from the work force (Moody, 1986). Similarly, career in society might dictate how people interact until retirement. Such knowledge may have implications for the policy initiatives of education and business, for example, career education programs that include topics such as the deconstruction of career may better inform students about the meaning of career.

Applications of the Study

The findings of this study indicate that counselling and educational interventions for people who have lost long term employment should encompass more than the limited realms of matching interests and work areas, increasing self awareness, and training in new skills. Although these interventions have epitomized career counselling in the past (Zunker, 1998), they were of limited value to the majority of the men who participated in this study. The loss of work in the form of a major violation of the psychological contract for many of the men seemed traumatic. Although they adapted to many events

pertaining to the loss of career, it seemed as though they never grieved the actual loss of career. They got busy finding work but the grief of the loss of careers, its inherent employer/employee relationship, was suppressed.

Kübler-Ross (1969) proposed there are five stages of grieving significant losses. Although this study did not specifically investigate these stages, there was evidence that several of the men had not reached the fifth stage of acceptance. Indeed, various men demonstrated symptoms of earlier stages, for example, depression. Hence, it seems critical that career interventions be designed to help individuals cope with and grieve the loss of the employer/employee relationship that comprised their career. Indeed, completion of such a grieving process could allow for review and revision of an otherwise static construct of career.

The stories presented by the men underscore the importance for counsellors to recognize the importance of individual differences in counselling middle aged adults. Although the violation of the psychological contract was a central experience for the study participants, their life circumstances varied. The loss of employment meant considerable financial hardship for some of the men, whereas, other men did not experience these hardships, for example, they had pensions and a good severance package. Some men had dependents who required ongoing care and this increased the stresses of unemployment and work seeking behaviours. Middle aged adults may have a wealth of experience and wisdom that is brought to counselling. Recognizing the importance of these factors when administering counselling interventions demonstrates respect for individuals. This may facilitate the formation of the counsellor/client alliance. Counselling alliances can create a forum for identifying the specific problems and strengths of the client and finding solutions to these problems (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995).

The results of this study also speak to policies and programs for the education of professionals working in the field of career. We need to consider how our theories and

models of career development, for example, person-environment correspondence (Lofquist & Dawis, 1991), Life-Span, Life-Space (Super, 1990), and typology (Holland, 1992) are used to inform practitioners about work and career in contemporary society. These explanations of career may have reflected the bureaucratic organization of work in society; however, they fail to account for the unpredictability of the adhocratic world of work. Ideally, educational programs would not only include, but emphasize, curricula that help professionals prepare students for the rapidly changing world of work. These programs would include subject matter for young people beginning their work lives, middle aged adults, and older adults. Including the needs of middle aged and older adults is critically important because more adults in this age group are endeavoring to return to work after losing their jobs. These adults, as suggested by this study, may experience significant difficulty in seeking work.

The present study underscores the importance of managerial fairness in dealing with employees, particularly when they undergo employment termination. In the case of long term employees, fairness may be demonstrated by taking into account the value that the individual has given the organization. In the case of the men who participated in this study, employers' provision of adequate notice, compensation, and control over the process of employment termination was helpful. Fair procedures are not only respectful of the individuals whose employment is terminated, they are likely to influence the behaviours of the people who continue to work for the employer (Brockner et al., 1992). Indeed, fairness should not only be done; it should seem to be done.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol: Initial Interview

Initial Interview

Preamble

Thank you for agreeing to be a co-researcher in this study. The purpose of this study is to learn about men's experience of job loss and their perceptions of career since losing work. Because you have experienced job loss I would like to draw from your expertise by having you answer some questions about what it has been like for you. The information you provide will help to build a clearer picture of what it's like for men who lose work, how they deal with it, and where they see their lives as going.

- Review consent form and have participant sign.

Warm up questions: Demographics

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) How old are you?
- 3) What is your educational background?
- 3) When did you lose your job?
- 4) What was the work you lost?
- 5) How long did you work in this area? How long had you been with your last employer?
- 6) How much did you earn per year in your work?
- 7) What is your relationship status?
- 8) Do you have any dependents, e.g., children, siblings, parents?

Exploratory questions

1. Please describe your experiences surrounding the loss of your work?
2. How did you deal with these experiences?
3. What were your feelings at this time?
4. How did other people influence your life at this time?
5. What efforts did you make to get back into work?
6. What was the outcome of these efforts?

7. What was it like at this time in your life??
8. What did you do next?
9. What influence did others have in your life at that time? (e.g., friends, family, previous work colleagues).
10. What kinds of changes did you notice? How did they come about?
11. What were the important things which you organized your time around during this period?
12. How have your relationships with friends, family, and past co-workers changed?
13. Looking back at this period, how did you see yourself at the time?
14. How do you see yourself today?
15. Looking at your life today, what are the most important things in your life and why?
16. Looking at your life today, are there any things in your life that were important prior to losing your job, but now are unimportant and why?
17. What do you see as the most important things in your life in the future?
18. In what ways did your past work (i.e., with company X) influence you in your efforts to find new work (help and hinder)?
19. Have you had any opportunities to return to your previous employment or employment similar to what you did before?
20. If you could, would you return to your previous work? Why or why not?
21. If you were to reflect back to the period prior to losing work, how would you have defined your career at that time?
22. How do you define career at the present time?
23. How do you feel your career will look in 5 years from now?
24. Are there any questions that you feel I should have asked or is there something-else which you would like to add about your experiences?
25. What was the interview like for you, are there any suggestions or recommendations you would like to offer that would help to improve the interview?

APPENDIX B

Follow-up Telephone Interviews

(Member checks as employee)

FOLLOW-UP TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

(Member Checks)
As Employee (n=18)

	Yes	No	SW*
1. Did you intend to stay with your employer? (i.e., to retirement)	16	0	2
2. Did you see future promotion or career development as occurring with your employer?	16	1	1
3. Would you have described yourself as a loyal employee?	17	0	1
4. Would you have described yourself as a committed employee?	17	0	1
5. Did you perform overtime work for your employer?	18	0	0
6. Did you make any sacrifices for your employer?	14	2	2
7. Would you have described yourself as a good employee?	18	0	0
8. Did you believe in reciprocity between yourself and the employer (i.e., one gets back what one puts in)?	16	1	1
9. Until you realized you would lose your job, did you feel your employer was loyal to loyal employees?	18	0	0
10. Until you realized you would lose your job, did you feel your employer was committed to committed employees?	18	0	0
11. Did you believe that being a good employee promoted job security?	18	0	0
12. Did you believe that being a good employee contributed to career development and promotions?	18	0	0
13. Did you believe that being a good employee would lead to training opportunities?	18	0	0
14. Did you believe your employer was fully trustworthy with you at the time your employment was terminated? (with others)	2	9	7
15. Did you believe your employer treated you in a fair manner at the time of the layoff? (others)	2	12	4
16. Did you believe your employer was open and up front with you and your co-workers at the time of the layoff?	2	12	4
17. In light of your job loss experience, do you feel you can count on future employer's for permanent work?	3	11	4

* SW= some what.

Continued on next page.

Continued from previous page.

	Yes	No	SW*
18. In light of your job loss experience, do you feel you can count on future employers to be:			
a) loyal to their employees	0	10	8
b) committed to their employees	0	10	8
c) fully trustworthy with their employees.	0	12	6
d) to give back what they receive from their employees.	0	9	9
19. Do you feel your employer gave you adequate compensation at the time you lost your job?	11	7	0
20. Where did you learn about the rules of reciprocity?			

APPENDIX C

Follow-up Telephone Interviews

(Member checks as agent of the employer)

Eight participants who had supervisory responsibility were asked about their expectations of employees as a means of ascertaining whether employers shared the rules of reciprocity.

FOLLOW-UP TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

(Member Checks)
As Employer's Agent (n=8)

	Yes	No	SW*
As a manager/supervisor, which of the following employee qualities or work habits did you see as important in an employee?			
1. Employee loyalty.	8	0	0
2. Commitment to remaining with the organization.	8	0	0
3. Willingness to perform overtime work.	8	0	0
4. Willingness to make personal sacrifices for the organization.	2	2	4
If an employee demonstrated the aforementioned work habits or qualities, did you feel the employee's behaviour:			
1. Promoted his/her job security.	8	0	0
2. Earned him/her opportunities for increased pay and promotions with the organization.	8	0	0
3. Earned him/her opportunities for development within the company.	8	0	0
4. Earned him/her opportunities for training or education at the organizations expense.	8	0	0

APPENDIX D
LETTER OF CONSENT

APPENDIX E

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT

APPENDIX E

Reliability of Coding

The four categories and their respective samples of text that were used to assess the reliability of coding. The 12 text samples were separated from the categories and cut into individual text clippings. These clippings were shuffled and presented to 4 members of the grounded theory seminar. The members were asked to first arrange the clippings thematically and then link the themes to the four codes provided by the researcher.

RECIPROCITY

You know if you put a lot into it and do well at it, it become obvious to more than one person and you are going to get promoted and all that sort of thing. You know there may be some considerations for you there that aren't there for the person who works 8 hours a day and forgets about it... You know appropriate consideration, you know if he does his time and does well he will be considered in his turn like all others. I think, although it never happened with me, I could see instances in the company where ... you know they knew somebody or it was somebody's son or something like that. That upsets people a lot.

I went to ah I had an undergraduate degree, which ah they paid for from ah Sir George Williams. What at that time was Sir George Williams, I think it is Concordia now. Then when we relocated to Toronto I got a post graduate degree from York, which they paid for. And then when they expected a return on that and ah asked me to transfer I said, no. So in a effect I may have authored my own (chuckles) demise.

I think, ah this is sort of naive but I kind of think that we get what we deserve [hm hm] so if others get screwed, it's like they are out to screw [hm hm] so to speak, it's kind of what goes around comes around.

SACRIFICES

I sacrificed a lot of weekends and nights at one point (laughs) on several points. Went to head office. God I worked 16 hours lots of times. And moved my family around a lot, that's kind of a given, yes, it does affect everyone in the family and everything that happens. I mean it affects everything from your transportation to your social requirements (hm hm). I mean everything is affected .. The curtains don't shut there is nothing unaffected by it so there are major upheavals. I think I said before if you ever heard somebody say that it really doesn't bother the kids to move them around, you have met the most insensitive guy you are ever going to meet (both laugh).

I would have to say I made some sacrifices some rather major sacrifices for the employer. I bypassed a couple of opportunities for career change earlier that maybe in retrospect I would have been better off looking at, both with the OPP and the RCMP, that's true. But at the time I made those decisions, in all fairness I was quite happy doing what I was doing, before I saw the paradigm change within the organization [hm hm] so.

Um, I used to have headaches. Um, you know, over the years I suffered from what was called cluster headaches, I have been seen at -- Clinic and Columbia University, New York, and it was associated with the pressures of just going all the time. I mean, I lived right on the edge, operations ran 24 hours a day so I worked 30 hours a day, eight days a week 400 days a year.

EXPECTATIONS

Ok, I went in, I wanted to go back into work in the computer area. And I have done network designs and I've sold components and I've been sales support. I didn't have any formal PC training. So I decided to go back and get formal training on ahm PC repair, PC upgrading, and on PC networks. Two types of PC networking and that's Novell Netware and Microsoft Windows NT.

*Interviewer:

And so the hope being that by upgrading or getting some skills in those areas you would make yourself more marketable.

*Participant:

I figured I would get a job right away?

*Interviewer:

You figured you would get a job right away.

*Participant:

Yah. And I finished there in November, 1st of November and I have now been looking for 7 months, 6 months, 6 and 1/2 months.

Well I thought that, you know with the new skills was definitely either going to be employed full time or start my own work full time ah I just didn't realize that it was going to be so hard.

at first um, at first um, like I figured, at first I thought I'd find a job easily then I find out that there is no work at all and um, and then when I am going to school there is other guys like me which means they can't find work either that is why they are taking night classes with me

DECEPTION

Now the one thing that I really was upset about when I left too is that, there were two things actually. One was I had applied for another another position inside the company doing ahm a job, I was selected by the manager to be hired and that was in January of 1995. So just a month before. And he wanted me, but he, they gave me this line and gave him a line that oh there was some kind of problem that they couldn't do it. Well I found out afterwards that the MIS department had targeted me in November for release and they wouldn't let me take the position even though I was the best candidate for the job.

Managerial types, yah obviously there was a plan in place that was hidden from me and ah, that's, I mean it was only after the fact that you realize .. it's like living with somebody and you discover after the that they were maybe having an affair all this time and you're going you mean that time we went to the bahamas you were actually, you know .. it changes everything, right, and ah it ah, yah it definitely changes, changed my feelings of trust towards (chuckles).

I guess the .. above all other things they had decided to rid themselves of all solid wood products and divisions.. and went about making that happen. So they would keep saying, that's all we are cutting, that's all we are selling (hm hm). Well they got nothing today. That's where they were headed. I guess they could've been honest in the first place and it became obvious that they weren't and ultimately every person in the company just regarded everything that they said as another dam lie (laughs) which it was (laughs).