

DEFINING CAREERS

Maria Humphries and Bev Gatenby

*University of Waikato,
Independent Writer and Researcher*



Abstract

The emerging career literature increasingly redefines the individual as the primary repository of control, responsibilities, and benefits of 'the career' and promises individual empowerment and liberation. 'The career' is being conceptually decoupled from its historical employment or occupational related limitations. Individuals become the authors of their diverse and multidimensional destinies. Women are promised equal career opportunities with other diverse human beings. Through a longitudinal, feminist participatory action research project, we aim to encourage research participants to engage in career exploration and planning. We note the attempts of participants to devise broadened definitions of 'career' consistent with the 'protean' or 'boundaryless' notions now finding favour in career literature and to live out those aspirations embodied in their definitions. We invoke the analytical contributions of critical theorists to caution against the prevailing optimism for women's career opportunities implied in contemporary career writing which take scant account of persistent capitalist and patriarchal exploitation.

Greenhaus and Callanan (1994:3) suggest that the examination of the concept 'career' can enhance our understanding of the relationship between people and work; a relationship which "has plagued scholars, mystified organisations and frustrated people in all forms of occupations". They suggest that understanding of "career dynamics can provide a framework for individuals to manage their careers more effectively and for organisations to develop policies and practices to help their employees with the task of career management" (Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994:4). Their work makes explicit the subtle shift in emphasis from organisational or occupational dominance prevalent in traditional career definitions to a more individually focused one. These changes reflect the modification of the very meaning of 'careers' and are both reflective and enabling of the wider social changes which affect people and their work. In particular we are interested in the ways in which these changes affect the career experiences of women.

In this paper we focus on the definition of 'career' as a site of negotiation or contestability of the relationship between people and their work. We begin by setting out the theoretical approach which informs our research agenda. Our focus is on the processes of 'making meaning' and the influence of meaning making on the contextualisation of human experiences. In the first section of this paper, therefore, we examine the way in which a male orientation, an occupational or organisational emphasis, an implicit professional elitism, and a managerialist bias informs a still generalised and normative definition of career.

In what is being characterised as the 'boundaryless career'

and the 'protean career', the very characterisation of human beings and the nature of their work is under reconstruction. In this genre, popularist writers, managers, and researchers have moved away from the focus on the categories of difference in a surge of emphasis on individual diversity and empowerment. This move obscures the persistent inequality of opportunity and the predicted peripheralisation of most women in the globalising labour market. The popularisation of the politics of optimism diminishes the impact of a critical perspective which strives for a genuinely liberatory society.

The second section of this paper describes aspects of a project in which we draw on feminist commitments to design a longitudinal career development project which engages a group of women in describing their 'career' experiences, enhancing their understanding of, and empowering their action with regard to their 'careers'. Our working definition of 'career' was purposefully left imprecise. We focus on the aspect of our project which encourages participants to reflect on their use of the term 'career'. We are interested in understanding how their working definitions reflect their expressions of values and aspirations in other parts of the research project, and we examine the fit between these definitions and their organisational experiences.

Section three of this paper draws on the contributions of critical theorists whose work stands as a caution against the naive optimism implicit in much contemporary, normative and apolitical career literature. We examine the way in which the popularisation of 'the new paradigm' genre, overshadows critical perspectives and exerts a distraction from the still necessary work of emancipation. We conclude

with a speculation of how we might work with our participants in the future and how we might develop our broader research agenda to meet our feminist aspirations.

Making the meaning of 'career'

The formulation and re-formulation of concepts and words which become taken for granted as representations of entities in our everyday lives are not merely reports of observations of 'real' things. "The sign is always an arena of material conflict and competing social relations as well as ideas" (Kincheloe and McLaren 1994:144). For example, the concept of 'career' has become inextricably linked to the construction of specific types of workers for the various iterations of western capitalism.

In this section of the paper we introduce four distinct developments in theoretical discussions of careers.

1. The 'traditional' concept consistent with a modernist conceptualisation of society. It is expressed in its most developed form in the career literature generated from the United States.

2. The challenge to this traditional model in 'adding-on' those who have successfully argued that they have been excluded from consideration.

3. Feminist attempts to challenge the model itself and from which perspective the 'add-on' approach is merely assimilationist and non-liberatory. They have provided a lexicon for the new assimilationists we shall call 'the new paradigm writers'.

4. The new paradigm writers suggest that through the celebration of human diversity, and the liberation of the empowered individual from the constraints of the organisational bonds, women and men have the opportunity to devise careers more consistent with their individual needs and values.

The traditional 'career'

During the early decades of this century the people who were employed by American organisations were often referred to as 'boomers', 'floaters', or 'five day men', likely to quit after any pay day (Jaques, 1996:71). "With the coming of the organisation of scale, the economic value of a stable workforce grew by orders of magnitude. Increasingly, employers were willing to risk the commitment implied in claiming employees as 'theirs'" (Jaques, 1996:72). In keeping with the increasing necessity to retain technical experts, the notion of the 'professional' with its implied values of loyalty and vocation became increasingly embedded in the notions of 'career' - of people who were not so easily replaced, who were employed for more than their manual labour. The legitimacy of the nineteenth century professional came to rest on expertise, science, and education (Jaques, 1996:90). These avenues of 'the self' were closed to most women.

The concept of career in the traditional literature might be described as an organisationally or occupationally deter-

mined vehicle of opportunity or constraint for an individual. This individual is predominantly characterised as the male professional, who is healthy, able bodied, sober and motivated, who views life and success as sequential, progressive, and upwardly mobile, whose loyalties are organisationally or occupationally based, and whose commitments are unencumbered by any family, domestic, or community demands. The 'career', (defined by an organisation or occupation) defined 'the incumbent'.

Among the more obvious and frequently quoted examples of traditional career theory is the work of Daniel Levinson and his colleagues. This work is often cited as pivotal in career management and development research. Their research was conducted through biographical interviews with 40 American-born males aged between 35-45 who were employed as executives, university biologists, novelists, and industrial workers. From their research they surmised that there are four stages of the human life cycle. Individuals go through periods of stability and transition "in infinitely varied ways ... [but] the periods themselves are universal" (Levinson et al, cited Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994:99). These phases are linked to career stages deemed to match life transition periods. Youth and career exploration, middle-age and career plateauing, late adulthood and career decline, are paired in the model. However the tidiness of this model does not express the lives of most women or indeed of many men (Pringle, 1995 a and b).

Adding gender to the 'traditional' career

The traditional definition has advantages and disadvantages for those who most nearly fit such a description. It is not a useful fabrication to convey the interests of the majority of human beings who seek to live meaningful lives. Yet this concept has had a normalising impact on countless lives, groomed aspirations and evaluations of 'success' and 'failure'.

Greenhaus and Callanan (1994) are an example of prominent writers who have attempted to provide a definition which is more mindful of human diversity and can take into account forms of non-professional types of work. 'Career' for them is "the pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life" (Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994:5). They argue that their definition does not require that a person's work role "be professional in nature, stable within a single occupation, or characterised by upward mobility. Indeed, anyone engaged in work-related activities is, in effect, pursuing a career whether or not the person perceives it as a career" (ibid). For women and men who have been engaged in work not traditionally recognised and valued as being part of significant 'careers', this broadened definition seems to open the opportunity for renegotiation of their identity, contribution and value. Also up for apparent renegotiation in this broadened definition is the meaning of 'work'. The 'work' of caring for home, family, relationships, and communities might now be reconsidered and renegotiated. Perhaps activities once made invisible by western theorists might now be recognised as 'work'.

Certainly some challenges to traditional career models have begun to find their way into mainstream career management and development texts. In many texts we now see gender 'written in' or 'added on' to prior theorising. While Levinson et al cite research indicating that women go through the same developmental periods as men, for example, Gallos and others claim that there are important gender distinctions to be made (Greenhaus and Callanan 1994:99). In their discussion of this controversy, Greenhaus and Callanan write:

It is also possible that the sequence of developmental issues is reversed for women and men. While many men in early adulthood are preoccupied with achieving career success, Bardwick (1980) believes that women's early adult transition is dominated by a concern for balancing career, family, and dual-career issues, because of society's pressure on women towards marriage and because of women's definition of themselves in terms of their interpersonal relationships. Even women's pursuit of career in their thirties is coupled with concerns about balancing multiple life roles (if they are a parent) or about the ticking away of the 'biological clock' if they are childless. On the other hand, middle adulthood, when many men are reducing their involvement in work, can be a period of professional involvement and accomplishment for women as they become somewhat freer of family demands (Bardwick, 1980; Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994:100).

The traditional model is left in tact. Women are said to experience the stages differently. 'Woman as Aberration' is established. Greenhaus and Callanan perpetuate the model itself and the inaccurate assumptions about the nature of women, the minimalisation of their unpaid responsibilities, and the persistent nuances of professionalism embedded in it. Below we explore these three assumptions more fully.

Women AS relational

Statistically women may indeed remain the primary caregivers in most societies. Increasingly they are also held to account for their own financial wellbeing and frequently the financial responsibility for their children as well. This fact so glibly embedded does nothing to challenge the limited responsibility of men in the complex work of caregiving. If caregiving were a more expected characteristic of a successful male, maybe men too would begin to prioritise these tasks in their consideration of their careers. The expanded definition of career as "work-related activities" clearly has not included such 'caring work'. If it had, it would no longer make sense to distinguish these tasks from a person's career. If men were equally held to account for these responsibilities which may require them to move unpredictably between paid and unpaid work, homes and families may be less distant (geographically and emotionally), work-places might be much more flexible and significantly more 'family friendly'. The phases described in the model may have little application to anyone in that position. It would appear that the model assumes a stability and predictability that no one with significant responsibilities for dependents could seriously consider as useful.

Caregiving: limited to early adult phase of women's lives

For those who have taken seriously the work entailed in relationship maintenance, in the care of those who cannot care for themselves, in the work to ensure all the unpaid tasks of communities of all sorts are achieved, the simplistic limitation of Greenhaus and Callanan's discussion of Levinson is outrageous. Small babies become toddlers, children become teenagers, adult children produce grandchildren - and all remain in need of care. Many may have periods of being seriously sick, disabled, or traumatised. Sometimes parents, relatives, friends, or neighbours become sick and dependent - just as the model says "women" will "become somewhat freer of family demands"! Else (1996:133) makes the point "as people live longer, they need more help. It all adds up to a substantial increase in family time, just at the point when we used to expect the pressure to ease off. One US analyst has worked out that the average working woman is spending 17 years raising children, and 19 years caring for ageing relatives. She jokes that 'Middle age is the 15 minutes in between'". Attempting to force the experiences of diverse women and a limited understanding of the complex work of caring they have been ascribed, into Levinson's four career stages is severely limiting.

Careers AS professional

Greenhaus and Callanan, in the paragraph quoted, assume a classless society. However most working class people cannot afford to slacken their commitment to employment between 45 and 60. Similarly, the characterisation of family related issues as concerning only women in their thirties illustrates the ongoing professional elitism of the model. In many countries, the thought of controlling births in relation to the work of existence or survival, is not realistic. Babies may be born to women as young as thirteen. Career issues for the sole female caregiver and financial bread-winner for several sometimes rebellious teenagers in an urban housing estate, are miles away from those of a professional couple coping with a newborn, and worlds away from the lack of choice for daughters sold into sexual slavery for financial gain. According to Greenhaus and Callanan's definition (1994) all these women have careers, whether they know it or not, but most would have difficulty recognising themselves in the passage under discussion.

The pervasiveness of the traditional career model is evident. Its very pervasiveness drives gender as addition. Despite their willingness to explore the 'gender debates', despite their broadening of the very definition of 'career' to include all work related activities, the discourse in this text remains riddled with the assumptions of those limited models. The gender additions consolidate the model as 'universal' and women as 'added others'. Tellingly, in their illustration of the significant objective and subjective elements in a person's career, Greenhaus and Callanan (1994:6) concoct a picture of a person clearly professional, decidedly upwardly mobile, and seemingly not responsible for any non-occupational 'work'. It is difficult to visualise the person in this example as female. It is clearly a man: "Between the ages of 40 and 44, this person 'Feels Need to 'Make his Mark'. Has

something to say”.

Attempts to include the experiences of women in a model designed to describe the experiences of a rather limited category of males, is not only inadequate, but perpetuate the ‘women as different’ genre of writing which casts women into the role of ‘other’, of deviant from the norm. Women do require that their experiences and desires are accounted for - but it may not be most useful to begin this accounting for these in terms of variations or contrast to an established model.

Feminist re-visionings

Wide reaching feminist critiques of employment generally and career literature specifically have pointed to the rather more ‘disorderly’ lives of women (Pringle, 1995a:1) compared to the ideal (male) characters upon which traditional career models were based. There is no doubt that neither the lives of many women and men were ever as orderly as the models seem to imply. One may speculate on the normative intent of such models. However, there is considerably more ‘order’ in the lives of women when one takes into account the multiple levels of responsibilities they are often trying to meet.

More appropriate ways to discuss the careers of women are being devised (Limerick, 1995; Ornstein and Isabella, 1990; Gallos, 1989; and Marshall, 1989; cited in Pringle 1995a). Limerick, for example, offers ‘the patchwork quilt as an explanatory metaphor. We like the implicit association with ‘many hands in the making’, the many threads, the many scraps (of fabric) of the past (garments) that are stitched into a beautiful and useful artefact. We find a ‘kaleidoscope’ - with its moving patterns and colours - a fun metaphor. Pringle herself offers ‘career’ as “dances of diverse steps and rhythms” (1995b:7). These are metaphors (models) which move us radically away from thinking of how and why the supposed stages of men’s lives and the correlated ladder of professional stages, does not fit women.

However, not only feminists have been shattering old icons! The gurus of the new age, where diverse individuals are promised liberation from the constraints of their old organisations and occupations, have been hard at work building new conceptual tools for career considerations.

The new paradigm gurus

Work such as that drawn together by Greenhaus and Callanan, usefully illustrates contemporary attempts to shift the discussion of careers away from an organisational or occupational basis and to expand the traditional definition to include previously excluded ‘others’. Rather than individuals being the incumbent of an organisationally or occupationally based notion, the individual now defines his or her career according to a unique pattern of work related experiences. However, we perceive this type of theorising as merely straddling the more traditional and rigid models of a ‘modernist’ world and the radical alternatives proposed by new paradigm gurus - often associated with the popularisa-

tion of post-modern concepts. The ‘post-entrepreneurial career’, for example, is introduced by Kanter as a response to the demise of the ‘dad-at-work-mom-at-home-two-kids’ myth (1989:298). This career, unlike those linked to organisational hierarchies, or to professional knowledge or reputation, is based on the ability to create a product or service of value (ibid:131).

In “The Career is Dead: Long Live the Career”, Hall and Associates (1996:front sleeve) write that the “career - a series of upward moves with steadily increasing income, power, status, and security - has become a relic of the past. Yet...if we redefine careers as a series of lifelong work experiences and personal learnings, the career will *never* die”. In keeping with the radical restructuring of economies around the world, they argue, employees cannot expect to give or receive long term stability or loyalty. The contract between people and their organisations is based on short-term exchange of benefits and services. It is now a ‘one day contract’. “This means that managers should expect employees to be loyal only as long as today’s expectations are being met, and the firm does not deserve any more loyalty than that. Likewise, the company’s commitment to the employee extends only to the current need for that person’s skills and performance” (Hall and Associates 1996:17).

The relationships and loyalties embedded in the traditional career model are now deemed counter productive to this brave new world. Survival in these times of limited commitment and stability is more likely to occur if one ascribes to the ‘protean career’, driven by individuals not organisations. Such careers are ‘boundaryless’. ‘Boundarylessness’ is identified as disconnection from “any one organisation (or to an organisation, period) and even from its exclusive association with paid employment. Building and managing a protean career includes recognising that people are ‘relational’ and ‘interdependent’. “Thus, in the new career, notions of caregiving, mentoring, caring and respect, connection, and colearning (that is learning through relationship with others), especially colearning with others whom one regards as different, provides the clues to growth and success.” (Hall and Associates, 1996:4). In this new characterisation of the individual who drives a career, we see a re-valuing of the human traits so staunchly denied men because the traits were deemed to be soft and feminine. We see the inflation of the value ‘unpaid work’ - at least now, unpaid work ought to be a legitimate career consideration!

Pringle (1995b:3) draws attention to some of the limitations of this model:

Implicit in this flurry of thinking set in a context of business globalisation are the assumptions of educated, free optimistic actors who are flexible and welcoming of change. These people are quick to relearn, to confidently network with those of influence and are able to turn misfortune into personal challenge. What of the two thirds of the female workforce still clustered in the occupational categories of clerical, sales, shop assistants, cashiers, nurses, and teachers? What of the men redundant in their thousands from the shrinking manu-

facturing sector ...

The hope that the legitimisation of unpaid work as intrinsic to the new definition of career may encourage the re-valuing of the unpaid work of women in homes, families, and communities around the world has not yet been borne out in empirical evidence. In fact, such evidence suggests the trends are moving in the opposite direction. Work necessary for the maintenance of our communities is, by virtue of the diminishing interest of the state and the inadequacy of the predominating market models of labour exchange, increasing in invisibility and in sheer volume (Else, 1996; Waring, 1988).

We urge a growing feminist critique of the seemingly apolitical position of the emerging career metaphors. We hope Pringle's steps and rhythms include some war-dances! We fear that the creative exploratory metaphors of feminist challenges to women's exclusion have been co-opted in 'the new paradigm'.

Although Hall and Associates call attention to the fact that the advantages of the protean career are not accessible to all, this does not seem sufficiently alarming to question the approach. The disparate power of large, transnational corporations is a given. Human beings should shape themselves to survive in the climate these powerful entities create. It is hard to see this as liberatory. Second, the enlightened view towards work and women, and the revaluing of feminine traits, would have one think that women do stand a more realistic opportunity to adopt a concept of career which would fit more neatly with their assumed 'feminine' selves and might more adequately accommodate those activities once studiously ignored in traditional career definitions. However, the continued unequal distribution of domestic and dependency care responsibilities between women and men, and the ongoing attribution of selected human qualities to women and men differently, warrants the continued re-examination of women's experiences as distinct from those of men.

The brief introduction above to a variety of approaches to the conceptualisations of 'career' leaves no doubt that in all renditions, gender remains at the heart of many tensions. Our experience in practice is that among our students, 'gender' is not a popular issue for discussion. Many believe that concern with sexism is an issue long resolved. In professional circles, the pendulum of balance between the sexes is sometimes argued to have swung too far in favour of women. Many men feel that they are now the disadvantaged. The next judge, the next professor, the next surgeon, they cynically predict, will most certainly be a woman - because, somehow they feel, women are getting an unequal advantage in the interest of political correctness. The reality is that only a small group of women may indeed be achieving some form of recognition for their talents. For many more, however, it's 'business as usual' on the gender agenda!

The optimism generated by the new paradigm researchers has several faces. Opening the definition of career to include all work-related experiences allows the myriad of skills

women develop to be recognised. It also allows unpaid work to be a valid 'career' choice itself. In paid work, the 'feminine' skills of women in relating to others make them ideally suited to the new-look organisations managed democratically through flattened hierarchies. 'Womanly' attributes will be valuable and valued. Women and men will develop careers including more time at home because of the current changes in the way work is organised. Organisations themselves, will become more 'family-friendly'. Indeed they will need to be so, because employers will need a more diverse range of people as the pool of available white males for the labour force diminishes. In an economic sense, sexism and racism are constructed as irrational, so organisations will hire the 'best person for the job'.

It is difficult in this paper to do justice to the serious contradictions and tensions these popular myths represent. The task to re-establish a notion of work that is greater than paid employment, the valuing of such work and recognising its contribution to an economy is to be recognised, is a challenging one. The re-negotiation of this 'site' alone has the potential to re-name and re-value much of the contribution of women to human wellbeing (see for example Else, 1996; Waring, 1988). The vested interest in this renegotiation will ensure it to be an enduring task.

In promoting 'career' as 'protean and boundaryless', as 'a pattern of work-related tasks', individuals weave together a tapestry of commitments and responsibilities consistent with their values. Taken at face value, this should mean that for women the supposed instability of their employment record would diminish in relevance - as by definition, all employees are mobile (and hence unstable), that unpaid work-experiences may be an asset, that through technological innovation, geographic location may become less relevant. Stitching employment into complex lives around important relationships may become more possible for women and for men. However, in the light of the global economic changes, for many people the downwards pressure on wages, and the insecurity of jobs, have meant both parents in a marriage (when there are two) are required to work increasing numbers of hours, and accept decreasing conditions of service, merely to meet rent. When women alone head families, poverty is often the stark reality.

That the so-called 'feminine traits' are no longer to be minimised - by women or men - and may be recognised and even valued in the employment context, is often cited as another note of optimism for women's careers. This rings alarm bells for two reasons. First, although it is possible to make the case that for a few individual women, recent advances into management indicates improved access to opportunity it must be remembered that those advances occurred when many better paying management jobs were being lost. Women are entering management just as management is being downsized. Women may have been brought in to use their relational skills in the restructuring of organisations and the labour-force. When men have learned to be relational, what will prevent sexism returning as a way of selection?

Second, while the appearance of some women in more senior organisational roles than ever before may excite some to believe that the glass ceiling has perforated, Calas and Smircich suggest that we look again. They suggest a scenario in which a limited number of women are promoted based on the 'feminine' skills they are assumed to have. Citing Grant (1988), they illustrate the way in which this difference is promoted. Grant argues that "women may indeed be the most radical force available in bringing about organizational change" thanks to the qualities gained in experience with their families and communities. In Grant's view, women's skills in communication and cooperation, their interests in affiliation and attachment, and their orientation towards power as a transforming and liberating force to be used for public purposes rather than personal power over others, are critically needed human resource skills in contemporary organizations (Calas and Smircich, 1993). Calas and Smircich do not challenge the accuracy of this scenario, rather they ask "Why are they being spoken?" and "Why are they being spoken now?" (ibid). Their answer is that, as in other times, women are experiencing a (perhaps temporary) valuing out of an instrumental rationality in which the traits associated with the feminine stereotype are useful for the feminising of the national economy under the conditions of globalisation. In this scenario, women as senior executives at the national level, will service the globally strategic decisions of men. They will fill the vacated domestic (national) positions and use their (motherly) skills to convert diverse people into homogenous team players. They will "keep the national (home) fires burning" for "the heroic 'boys' who serve abroad" (ibid:75).

Thus, the career literature pertaining to the issues of interest to women is complex and often contradictory. In its optimism, it draws attention away from the exploitative nature of the employment relationship. While this must be a concern for all people, in this research we are interested in the impact of this on and by women. Although we intended in our research to problematise the assumptions embedded in the literature, we recognise that many of the issues we raise above, are not attractive discussion topics for people. We note the resistance in our students who would rather study 'the good news'. We are, however, motivated by a concern that all will not be well for most women, and some women will become functionaries of a system which will exploit the majority. We hope, that through our work, some of these tensions will become easier to express, understand, and counteract.

We took, as a starting point, the notion that thinking and talking and exploring the very idea of 'career' could be used at least as a vehicle for career enhancement (whatever definitions of 'career' were favoured). Potentially, we believe, our research could be designed to facilitate a process of consciousness raising about the subtle collaboration of women in continued gender inequality under the guise of new paradigm freedom. The research might contribute to empowering some change in the lives of some of the participants, and organisations and communities in which they live and work. An ambitious hope!

The supposed lack of attention to good planning is used to help explain women's unequal status in employment. We took this finding at face value. Armed with a rather loose definition of 'career', we decided to encourage a group of students from a 'women and management' course, to commit to a research project that would prompt them into career exploration and planning. In the next section we describe the research project that evolved. The project seeks not only to explore varying definitions of careers and their application in the complex lives of participants, but to work with them to seek workable definitions which take account of their complex commitments to employment and non-employment related aspects of their lives and to empower them to negotiate these definitions into their personal lives and organisational contexts. Our broad definition of 'career' is in keeping with the broadened definitions in the literature. We were interested, in part, to see how realistic these definitions were in the lives of contemporary management graduates. We are mindful of the professional bias of our sample and seek to expand the research to question, with our participants, the broader implications of the predicted changes to the lives of women in general.

The project

Eight years ago, a group of colleagues taught for the first time a 'women and management' course as an elective in an undergraduate degree at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. The course went well and students and some staff felt that their conversation on the associated topics had merely just begun. Mindful of the often contradictory developments in career literature, and in the women and management literature in particular, and motivated by a feminist inclination to contribute to emancipation of women, we invited graduates from the first and four subsequent classes to volunteer for what was to turn into an open ended, constantly challenging research agenda.

As a result of their participation in the course, research participants had taken an interest in the gendered dimension of our social lives. They had studied the complex relationships between women's paid and unpaid work, women's under-representation in numerous occupations, and their relative absence from the upper organisational echelons. We introduced them to the literature which speculates that the position of most women in the globalising labour market is vulnerable. We challenged their own optimistic notions that in time, through no particular positive intervention, the gender issues under discussion in the literature, would be resolved. We introduced a notion that vulnerability for most women may mean, in principle, vulnerability for all.

The foundation project for our research agenda was conceived as a longitudinal career development project. A feminist participatory action research method was chosen as the method most likely to generate useful and detailed insights for both researchers and participants, and to facilitate emancipatory outcomes for the participants themselves. The method aimed to identify and challenge discriminatory practices in the organisations and communities of our participants. In the project we would engage in discussions and

activities intended to enhance the careers of participants and, through our reflexive approach, seek to understand the social construction of gender.

While a feminist agenda clearly informs our teaching and research work, we fully accept that not all those who agreed to participate in the research share this agenda. However, we hope that the project would also provide a safe place to develop a more feminist approach to the gendered aspects of their lives. Our commitment to feminist research and teaching not only informed our tentative beginnings as co-ordinators of the project, but became elaborated and strengthened as a result of our work. We choose to engage at a level of complexity of theorising and reflexivity for ourselves, with our participants, and with those who would indirectly learn from our project. As part of our commitment, we are interested, not only in describing female experience, but working in ways that might enhance the lives of women. Our project was therefore devised not only to encourage our participants to engage in conscious reflection on their aspirations and their plans, but to examine and enhance their developing definitions of 'careers' and also to examine and support them in manifesting their aspirations in practice. Our research method itself is constantly being reviewed and developed to expand our understanding and our influence (Gatenby and Humphries, forthcoming).

One dimension of the project is the design of instruments (questionnaires, interviews and workshops) that very specifically explore the opportunities and tensions which may be examined when we assume a definition of career which extends beyond the notion of paid employment, which welcomes the consideration of unpaid work of relationship building and maintenance (with spouses, partners, children, parents and communities). In this paper, we discuss the attempts of our participants to formulate meaningful definitions of 'careers', their attempts to manifest these into their lives and observe how their attempts are challenged or contradicted by their descriptions elsewhere of aspects of their employment and off-job experiences.

Upon joining the project, most of the participants were in their early 20s. Most were completing a Bachelor of Management Studies but the group also includes some graduates in social science and science. Some were already married. Many were in relationships with boyfriends. There is also a group of older professional women who had taken the course as part of a Diploma or higher degree. Only one woman publicly identified as a lesbian. Most moved away from Hamilton, the university city, soon after graduation. As with many young mobile New Zealanders, many of them have spent time overseas. Issues of mobility and name changes associated with marriage makes them a challenging group to keep in touch with. The number of active participants fluctuates around 70 to 80 at any given time. Participants who may be lost for a while are sometimes reconnected through a variety of circumstances. We make considerable efforts to keep in touch with our participants. For the most interactive of them, we have a large file of details including personal letters, photographs, invitations to visit, and so forth.

Formally, participants are sent a package twice each year. This package includes a lengthy questionnaire designed not merely to generate information, but to stimulate reflection and action on life aspirations. Once every two years, project participants are invited back to the university campus for a two-day workshop. This workshop is an opportunity to reflect on their experiences, to share stories, and to develop their relationships with each other and with us. Through the structured aspects of the workshop they engage in a number of career development activities - some facilitated by professional career development consultants, others by ourselves. Out of the workshop three regional networks have developed and these have been the place from which some creative activities have been generated either in support of issues for the members or as outreach activities initiated by individuals - supported by the network (Humphries and Gatenby, 1996).

In the next section we transcribe from a sample of participant files attempts to come to a workable definition of 'career' and set out some of the issues the participants themselves have framed as examples of 'sexism' from their experience.

Defining careers

Many career definitions do not ascribe value to the work of relationship maintenance, unpaid domestic work and the work of child rearing and dependency care, - responsibilities our participants frequently map into their definitions. By asking a wide range of questions about relationships, employment, social involvement, professional development, and so forth, we aimed to keep open the boundaries of career definition beyond those that typically focus on paid employment. The gender dimension of the study is made explicit in only one question which asks participants to describe any experience they have had which they would consider sexist. Towards the end of the questionnaire they are invited to provide a definition of 'career' which they feel is in keeping with their experiences.

We have selected a range of examples from within several files across time:

Participant: TM
2/93

Career is your way of life. Preferably, the way you have chosen to lead your life. It integrates all aspects of your life, but particularly your job. I think your job is the most significant because it is often rigid. The other aspects of your life often have to fit around your working life.

7/93

Career is all aspects of your working life - not only your job, but your family, friends, sporting activities etc.

Participant: PH
8/91

An amalgamation of your work - whether it be paid or unpaid, which you aspire to, and endeavour to reach (personally defined) level of achievement and com-

petence

11/93

A moving arrow that constantly moves forward, even if slowly or sideways at times, but never-the-less towards its target of personal achievement, fulfilment and satisfaction. The arrow may change in shape and form as part of its 'natural' course and is susceptible to positive and adverse influences from personal relationships, the community and society at large.

Participant: ML

Date: 7/92

A career is how someone occupies their work time - work being an exertion of energy which may be paid or unpaid. It is an ongoing concept - changing and evolving through a person's working life - as their goals and ambitions change. A means to an end ...

Date: 4/94

A person's purpose behind the expansion (sic) of time and energy. What a person is dedicated to achieving or what motivates or drives a person. I see it as being interlinked and inter-acting with the concept of 'life' - thus making a concept that varies depending on the individual and their perception of it.

Participant: NK

Date: 7/92

My concept of career has developed to include my whole self not just "my financial earning combined with my formal title/status". Now my career is really my entire development within an entire industry - all my personal developments should be able to be poured into my paid working life and vice-versa. My career is being 'successful' in my physical/emotional/spiritual and intellectual self".

Date: 7/93

As much as I think of career as being the whole of what I do in life I still tend to use it to refer to my paid work. However, to define it ... In my life I have my own personal mission statement ... to treat people with the utmost respect (and ensure others treat people with respect). My career is my endeavour to achieve this mission statement. It may be in my paid or unpaid work environments, the way I choose to live, the friends I choose, etc.

Date: 3/94

My life's path.

Date: 6/95

I still come back to 'my life's path', however more with a 'service to humanity' element. So: "the services" I offer humanity while on/throughout my life path.

Participant: RN

Date: 5/90

This is a hardie. I think a career is what one chooses to do with one's life. This does not mean a career involves financial reward - it doesn't have to. 'Career' can involve anything from personal fulfilment to market success. (I tend towards the personal fulfil-

ment/happiness side).

Date: 8/91

How one chooses to live one's life. What one does on a regular basis.

Date: 12/92

What one does with oneself for long periods of time each day on a regular basis whether it be paid or unpaid.

Date: 12/93

A career is that thing which a person does that is productive in some way to their personal fulfilment and to their external environments, namely the economy. It changes and grows as the individual changes and grows.

Date: 7/95

That which you do in your life which brings you personal fulfilment and enables you to live financially, as well. An income bearing living which brings *good* (good being personal wellbeing, growth and physical wellbeing).

Participant: HM

Date: 7/92

Vocation, life's achievements, series of situations encountered by a person. Generally refers to paid work, but I consider a career incorporates unpaid, voluntary work, hobbies (these shape your personality and views) and family/life activities. To me, career is an *active, motion* word. (You have to go out and earn it) rather than passive (it just happened) concept (although there is an element of good fortune in there too).

Date: 7/93

At the moment 'career' for me is anything not done within the confines of a 100sq.m. apartment. Career also involves remuneration and that gives me a notion of some *value* placed on the activities carried out by an individual. I never thought of this before. At present, the value placed on my activities is *nil*.

Date: 9/94

That which a person devotes time, energy and thought to, to produce something in the society in which they operate and in return are provided with something to aid survival. For me and my career I would say that it will be something which inspires and excites my mind and creativity. Something I enjoy and grow from. I do not believe this will be in one area but instead will grow and change as I grow and change.

Date: 9/95:

Something that women sacrifice in order to keep the peace, to stay in marriage/partnership with the man they love and which men seem to think is their god-given right to progress in because (generally) they earn more so it makes economic sense.

Discussion of findings

Although there are many joys and achievements, there is a strong impression that organisational life and the matching of personal values and aspirations with paid employment is a struggle for many. Some of these struggles are generalisable,

others have a distinct gender dimension.

In their relationships, the equal sharing of domestic tasks is a struggle for some: "I spend a lot of time asserting that I am not his mother" (MD). Concerns about how to reduce the numbers of working hours, and levels of stress, and how and where to fit in child bearing, and how to find 'balance', are common themes. Organisations are nowhere near as flexible and family friendly as they had hoped. Nor have the expressions of sexism associated with traditional organisations disappeared. From the question seeking description of experiences they would name as specifically sexist, we provide a profile below:

- lack of appropriate role models/mentors for women
- managers who seem not to be comfortable with women
- difficulty of getting promoted - when males seem to
- being paid less than male equivalents
- sexual harassment
- exclusion from boys network
- sexist language - endearments
- being given 'women's chores' (making coffee/taking notes)
- not being given good/high profile projects
- assumptions that they will be wives and mothers and can therefore give only limited commitment to organisations
- increasing difficulty in combining public and private lives.

Findings from this aspect of our project illustrate the struggles that participants have in finding a durable definition of 'career' which suits their multi-dimensional lives but which also allows them to enter into meaningful discussions and planning for their organisational affiliations. Although the centrality of employment in the taken-for granted notions of 'career' is very evident in a number of cases, on the whole the expanded notion of career to mean 'any work related activities' can be seen as a consistent theme among many of our examples. Participants try to expand their definitions but note themselves how difficult this can be. We also have examples from participants who would not reply for several iterations of the questionnaire because they had not found paid work - because they believed that their 'career' had not yet begun. Similarly for some travel overseas was often discussed as a precursor to career - despite many working in quite sophisticated forms of employment as part of that travel experience. The tension in trying not to privilege the consideration of paid employment over other important aspects of their career is evident. (See definitions provided by TM and NK for example. Note RN's less common move from the minimising of the financial aspect of her career immediately after graduating from university, to a more prominent focus on this dimension in a later attempt).

ML was already married when she graduated with her Masters degree. She believed her employment prospects were good. A wonderful job opportunity for her husband entailed a move to a distant country. Employment for her was difficult to find. Just as she establishes herself in a promising job, her husband was transferred to yet another country. There seemed no job prospect for her there. They decided to have a baby. A seemingly good opportunity to gain some experience came in the form of a high level

consultation contract which seemed to fit well with the assumption that working from home part time, suits women who are raising a family. When her baby is almost two she writes:

"However, working from home also has its disadvantages. I miss getting to know other people and making new friends at work. They even forgot to invite me to the Christmas party. Sometimes I don't get documents I should have and this can be very embarrassing and I appear incompetent. I wonder if this impression may lead others to reject homeworking opportunities for women with children. It is also hard to appear 'professional' when you answer the phone at 11.30am to find a colleague on the other end with an important query. "Old MacDonald" is playing on the stereo, the washing machine is on the spin cycle, a small child is banging on a drum shouting "Bang bang bang, Mummy!" To top it all off, you have no pen and paper, and the relevant documents are in the other room under a pile of yet to be folded washing."

Over the years choices willingly made still reflect a sense of frustration in her series of definitions, so that her definition of 'career' becomes "something that women sacrifice in order to keep the peace..."

In another woman's account of establishing her own business we read of the pleasure in doing the creative work she has always dreamed of. We read of her joy at being able to do some of this, and at being the author of her own destiny, but also of her struggle to achieve merely a subsistence income, enormously long hours of work, and a need to employ other women as out-workers on casual, low, piece-meal rates of pay.

In their efforts to find a durable definition of 'career' which is consistent with their multi-dimensional aspirations, we discern a number of tensions which together provide a lens which not only describes the women's contemporary career experiences, but also provides a lens on the contemporary social construction of gender. For some, reflection on such tensions challenges both the career definitions that they had uncritically assumed and the institutional constraints which sustain these. For others, 'feeling' the tension between an enhanced definition of 'career' which allows for the multi-faceted commitments enables them to locate, challenge, accommodate, or work around the limitations of institutionalised sexism in and outside of their employment. Most feel optimistic that they can carve out a 'successful career' for themselves. Many acknowledge the limitations of institutional opportunities to meet their multi-dimensional aspirations by planning to establish themselves in their own businesses. Some actively solicit from us more stimulating ideas to examine their understanding of their lives and aspirations and their gendered dimensions. It is among this group that we hope to stimulate opportunities to develop potential feminist leaders for the future (Humphries and Gatenby, 1996).

In the definitions themselves we see the efforts of our participants shaping themselves (as professional people, as

partners, as wives, as mothers, as adult daughters, and as community members). Unpaid domestic and childcare responsibilities are frequently mapped into their discussions under several sections of the questionnaire. Many foresee themselves as eventually leaving the type of organisations they work for and beginning a business of their own - often in tandem with their child-rearing plans. Many plan to become 'consultants'; to develop a kind of portfolio of roles which they anticipate will allow them time with their children while still 'keeping their career on the boil'. Our ongoing examination of the types of issues raised in the sections above, will encourage them to examine these aspirations for their viability.

Discussions and conclusions

The construction of the traditional notion of 'career' was derived from the experiences of and expectations of the professional white male. Women were conceptually and structurally excluded from consideration. Contemporary challenges to this exclusion has forced the expansion of the discourse to accelerate the gender discussion. While some believe these new formulations of the concept of careers describe a future of individual empowerment and a form of emancipation through increased global democratisation, others suggest that if we reflect on history we will see these changes are mere modifications to the consistent need to fabricate individuals who will be compatible with the specific needs of capital. Boundaries to legitimate economic or commercial activities (such as those de-marketed by nation-state governments which sought to protect the conditions of service to capital for its citizens) are now diminishing. Capital is becoming increasingly freed from the constraints of national democratic government invented to protect citizens when the consequences of its first flush of freedom proved so inhumane. Along with mobility of capital comes the need for flexibility of process and of people.

Opening the definition of career to extend beyond paid employment has opened opportunity for women to reclaim and revalue other types of work and other concepts of careers. It has also been one of the several prerequisites in moving responsibility for career oversight or control away from employers and from occupational representatives. To create the flexible, mobile, unencumbered worker for the future entails loosening constraints which may tie individuals to quickly outdated modes of organisation, skill, and location. What is the power balance between individuals and employers in the future?

While some individual women's stories are held up for celebration that indeed, today, women can succeed even in the managing of capital, Calas and Smircich (1993) invite us to look again. In the pivotal tasks of the global labour market, service roles are for women, the raid and conquer roles are for men. We suggest acceleration of interest in gender has more to do with a new wave of pragmatism and assimilation than a principled move towards greater democratisation of economic activity (Humphries and Grice, 1995). Opting for 'self employment' to fit in with family commitments, especially as consultants, as many of our participants anticipate,

may not be a viable solution. In "False Economy" Anne Else writes about the difficulties in combining working from home and childcare. "The number of self employed 'consultants' swelled in the late 1980s, in the wake of private and public sector 'downsizing'. In private, you'd often hear the bitter comment that consultancy was just another word for middle class unemployment. Some consultants earn good money per hour, but any kind of short-term contract work brings much more income insecurity. It is another form of casualisation ... (Else, 1996:71).

Decisions seemingly made by women as a personal choice to integrate employment and family, may be a response to the entrenched patterns of rigidity and sexism in some dimensions of our organisations and our communities. However, these choices may also represent the successful imposition of the trend to limit the numbers of employees to be retained in the core workforce. Women may indeed provide both the 'relational team leaders' for restructured organisations, and the flexible workforce for the transnational. Despite the occupational promotion of some, by and large women will congregate in the vulnerable periphery of economic activity (Chomsky, 1994:65). This does not look like female emancipation or empowerment to us.

Critical researchers enter into an investigation to expose the contradictions accepted by the dominant culture as unproblematic, natural, or inviolable but which may "conceal social relationships of inequality and injustice" (Kincheloe and McLaren 1994:140). The emergence of a scholarship driven by a dialectical concern with the social construction of experience and the associated "discourse of opportunity" has offered new hope for emancipatory forms of social research (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994:139). We hope our project is one way to bring such contradictions and tensions now embedded in the career literature out from their 'taken for granted', 'self evidence' and examined and challenged for their risk to women.

We acknowledge the risk we take in devising strategies for examining taken for granted concepts relating to 'careers' for their embedded contradictions - for sometimes making the gender tensions more difficult to ignore, for 'troubling the boundaries' (Butler, 1990) of taken for granted realities. We discuss these concerns with our participants when we can find ways to do this. We try to ensure that for those who do not want to enter into these activities, there are still many more fruitful reasons to be party to this research. To be effective, career exploration must be realistic (Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994:54-57). Realism for women must entail an evaluation of the changing patterns of their access to employment. Realism entails the challenge to organisations as not merely benign facilitators of occupations and opportunities. Rather, there is no reason to believe that the exploitative intent of either capitalists or patriarchy has abated. Realistic career exploration requires an acknowledgment of this.

We observe that even when participants articulate damning expressions about their institutions, their male colleagues, and yes, sometimes about the structures of their private lives

and personal relationships, they are quick to reign in their critique and assure us that, really, everything is fine, they're nice organisations/blokes on the whole. They proceed then, to misrecognise symptoms of oppressive regimes and express them as ideosyncratic events to be personally addressed, perhaps, not dwelt on too long. Why might women want to hold onto such 'misrecognition' of contradictions and tensions?

"This wilful misrecognition on the part of both dominant and subordinate groups creates a quarantined site where the political dimension of everyday life can be shrouded by common sense knowledge and, in effect, rhetorically disengaged (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994:141).

Critical theorists begin from a challenge to social injustice and subjugation. Early western critical theorists analysed "the mutating forms of domination" that accompanied the changes in capitalism (Kincheloe and McLaren 1994:138). Developing a term like 'the boundaryless career' provides an opportunity to move away from the shortcomings of definitions which were organisationally based and controlled. It is at best a way of helping individuals understand the apparent instability of their lives and at worst a way of reducing expectations so that instability seems totally normal, even desirable. While this tolerance is to be encouraged in individuals, capital seeks as far as it is able, to influence global conditions in its favour. As individuals assimilate the idea that capital must move freely, that it is entitled to change its demands for the types of human beings it will favour (now independent protean types, not loyal dependents), that organisations have no ultimate responsibility for individual well-being, hegemonic control is achieved through the collusion of individuals and institutions in creating such 'entrepreneurial selves'.

We posit a human being can be categorised as belonging simultaneously to an oppressing and an oppressed category. Women managers are oppressed even in their oppression of others by being the vulnerable and dependent instruments of globalising capital. Despite the promises and hopes for a future of greater equality between and among women and men, our experience is that in our social context sexism, racism, and the oppression of labour is a long way from being eradicated. Contemporary career experiences are still affected by gender issues and prescribed by economic opportunity contextualised in the manufacturing of a rapidly globalising labour market. These experiences continue to affect our sense of self as predominantly gendered and economic beings. Contemporary sexism, racism, and the oppressive nature of the globalising labour market has become obscured by the celebrations of a small group of female achievers whose position at best may be characterised as service roles to men who continue to make the important decisions. The generally apolitical perspectives of those who celebrate women's occupational and economic achievements, blind them to the contribution of these women to the contemporary hegemonic movements of capitalism and patriarchy and ensnare them as privileged functionaries in the maintenance of a system predicted to disproportionately disadvantage most women.

Employers are being educated to realise that discrimination is not rational. They have been told that there will not be the pool of white males available to them to conduct their business in the future. They are encouraged to see that racial and sexual harassment will be costly, not only in terms of legal expense, but also in terms of down time, demotivation, and loss of good staff. More research on the specifics of contemporary acts of sexism will help dispense with the myth that sexism has been conquered.

However, the achievement of a diverse workforce free from sexism or racism does not mean the achievement of a society that is just. The interest in 'the management of diversity' may merely be a form of assimilation of diverse people into a labour force whose overtly diverse dimensions are a minor feature compared to deep and underlying homogeneity with regard to their citizenship in 'an enterprise culture' (Wilson, 1992). As good citizens of such cultures, their rationality is at least not resistant to the exploitative intent of roving capital.

Thus in the celebrations of the achievements of some women, and in the valuing and voice of diversity, "the concept of totality, which locates the particularity of experience in wider totalities such as patriarchy and capitalism, must not be forsaken" (Giroux, 1993, McLaren, 1993, cited Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994:146). Ideologies are inscribed in the materiality of social and institutional practices (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994:140). Developing a term like 'the boundaryless career' and its associated practices, is at best a way of helping individuals understand the apparent instability of their lives and at worst a way of reducing expectations so that instability seems totally normal, even desirable. It ensures compliance/hegemonic control, a collusion of individuals and institutions in creating such 'entrepreneurial selves' best suited for the conditions of increasingly mobile capital.

We are concerned that our project does not merely nurture the achievements of our already relatively privileged participants, and discuss the potential of our conversation about 'careers' to stimulate some of our participants to enhance their understanding of and commitment to feminist leadership for the future (Humphries and Gatenby, 1996). Already out of their efforts to make sense of the many dimensions of their lives, we have seen some participants take what might be described as feminist action to attempt to affect their relationships, their organisations, and their communities - thus illustrating the dynamic creation of self and society through reflective action. Also consistent with our feminist commitments is the intent to influence policy and practice. Such influence can be illustrated through impact our participants are having on their organisations and through growing policy-maker interest in our research. This will be the subject of a future paper.

Future research

We urge researchers to address other aspects of the many taken for granted concepts that underpin emerging organisational models and theories as we have done, in this paper,

with the emerging career literature. We recommend continued and vigorous examination of the limited capacity of much of this theorising to address historical inequalities precisely because the theories and the models themselves were bounded by a particular rationality characteristic of societies blind to such inequality. We urge researchers to invent new ways of working in collaboration with their communities so our theorising and modelling will more closely honour values of human freedom and participation in all those activities which make us fully human. For those with a feminist interest, we urge the investigation and challenge of the assimilationist agenda which predominates in the discussion of issues pertaining to paid and unpaid work of women, notions of career development, leadership, and success epitomised for example in the emerging 'women and management' literature. We suggest that the fields loosely defined as management studies, while attempting to become more inclusive in its reach, still generates concepts which limit our understanding of the diverse needs, interests and opportunities of human beings. We believe researchers must not merely document these, but be engaged in their challenge.

References

- Butler, J.** 1990 *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*, New York: Routledge.
- Calas, M. and Smircich, L.** (1993). Dangerous liaisons: the 'feminine in management' meets 'globalisation'. *Business Horizons*, March/April, 71-81.
- Chomsky, N.** 1986 *Secrets, lies and democracy*, Odonian Press, Tucson.
- Else, A.** 1996 *False economy*, Tandem Press, Auckland.
- Gatenby, B. and Humphries, M.** (forthcoming) Feminist commitments in organisational communication: participatory action research as feminist praxis, *Australian Journal of Communication*, 23 (2)
- Greenhaus, J. and Callanan, G.A.** 1994 *Career management* The Dryden Press, Orlando.
- Hall, D.T, and Associates,** 1996 *The career is dead, long live the career*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.
- Humphries, M.T. and Gatenby, B.** 1996 Career development: leadership through networking, *Proceedings of the Women and Leadership Conference, February*, Massey University, Palmerston North.
- Humphries, M. T. and Grice, S.** 1995 Equal employment opportunity and the management of diversity: A global discourse of assimilation? *Journal of organisational change management*, 8(5):17-33.
- Jaques, R.** 1996 *Manufacturing the employee: management knowledge from the 19th to 21st centuries*. Sage, London.

Kanter, R.M. 1989 *When giants learn to dance; mastering the challenges of strategy, management and careers in the 1990s*, London, Routledge.

Kincheloe, J. L. and McLaren, P.L. 1994 Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. *Handbook of qualitative research*, London, Sage.

Pringle, J. 1995a Keynote address to: Fourth International Women in Leadership Conference, "Dancing on the Glass Ceiling" Perth, November.

Pringle, J. 1995b Redesigning careers to fit the lives. Lessons from 'the' women. *Paper presented to Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management conference*, Townsville.

Waring, M., 1988 *Counting for nothing*, Allen Unwin, Wellington

Wilson, D.C. 1992 *Strategies of change*, Routledge, London.

Authors

Maria Humphries is senior lecturer in the School of Management Studies, University of Waikato, Private Bag 3105, Hamilton. E-mail: humphries@waikato.ac.nz

Bev Gatenby is an independent writer and researcher and an honorary lecturer in the Department of Strategic Management and Leadership, University of Waikato, PO Box 3105, Hamilton. E-mail: bgatenby@waikato.ac.nz