

Careers and HRM: A Resource-Based View

Professor Kerr Inkson

Waikato Management School, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

and

Professor Delwyn Clark

Waikato Management School, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

Careers and HRM: A Resource-Based View

Kerr Inkson and Delwyn Clark

University of Waikato

ABSTRACT

In this exploratory theory paper, we suggest a novel synergy, between the resource-based view of the firm (RBV) as applied in HRM, and career theory. We note the potential of career studies to add value to HRM, as well as theoretical inadequacies in career studies that may be reduced by appropriation of RBV concepts. We show how the RBV can be used to reconceptualise careers and career studies, while career theory and research can supplement the RBV. We use the VRIO (Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, Organizationally Exploited) model of resources, applied to career case studies, to demonstrate how careers can be considered as key resources for superior performance. We note some of the strengths and weaknesses of considering careers as resources.

Keywords: Career development, Strategic human resource management, Resource-based view of the firm

This paper is about individuals' careers, both within and between organizations. It is also about the collaborative accumulation and development of career knowledge resources, sometimes collaboratively and sometimes independently, by individuals seeking to develop their careers, and by organizations seeking to gain sustained competitive advantage. The paper takes a resource-based view (RBV) (Barney, 1991) of both individual career development and organizational strategy-making. So far as we are aware, this explicit link between career theory and the resource-based view has not previously been considered in the literature. This paper, then, is largely conceptual and exploratory.

Although careers are fundamental to human experience in work settings, and can arguably be considered the key guides to individual motivation and action in organizations (Schein 1978) and the building-blocks of wider organizational processes and structures (Jones and Dunn 2007), the field of career studies is fragmented (Collin and Patton, 2009), subject to exaggerations, myths and fashions (Inkson, Ganesh, Roper and Gunz, 2010), and as a result has been unable to fulfil its true potential. The RBV has the potential, we believe, to provide a coherent frame for integrating the discipline of

career studies, and providing powerful links between that discipline and organization studies; and with the cognate professional practices of career counselling and HRM.

As a means of uniting these different traditions and disciplines, we utilize the metaphor of careers as *resources* (Inkson, 2007) which are available for both individual and organizational benefit. Various approaches to career (for example careers as vocations, careers as adult development, person-job matching, organizational careers, boundaryless careers) from the perspective of the increasingly popular resource-based view (Barney 1991; Barney and Clark 2007). Careers, we argue, are dynamic “repositories of knowledge” (Bird 1996). They are therefore repositories of resources that can be drawn on by organizations to build sustained firm competitive advantage in their product markets, and by individuals to build sustained personal competitive advantage in the labour market. These objectives are not always compatible with each other, but strategies can be developed by both individuals and organizations to make such objectives complementary and symbiotic (Inkson and Arthur, 2001)

CAREER STUDIES

Career studies is based on the view that a career is a lifelong sequence of work-related experiences (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence 1989). Work careers are worth studying in their own right because of their important consequences for both individuals (as ‘hosts’ of the career) and organizations (as locations for the career and as social institutions which may benefit from their members’ career development).

Early studies of career mapped stages of career development on to broader stages in adult development, or took a vocational perspective, mapping the contexts in which careers were enacted in terms of jobs and occupations, and the requirements of these in terms of education, abilities and interests, and attempting to find “fits” between occupational requirements and individual make-up (e.g. Holland 1997). This approach has generated a vast assessment technology that can be applied either by individuals and their counsellors seeking career adaptation and the achievement of long-term career goals; or by organizations using personnel selection and employee development as means of retaining and developing human resources suitable to their strategic goals (e.g. Holland 1997). Notably, though, these vocational theories of career include no concept of organizations as an

alternative set of loci and bases for individual attachment: their client is the individual career actor, and organizations are largely considered irrelevant.

An alternative, organizationally oriented version of career studies arose in the 1970s under the rubric of “careers in organizations.” This tradition noted the synergistic benefits of organizational careers – linear, hierarchical careers conducted over long periods within single organizations – to both the organizations hosting them (loyal workforce, predictable human resource planning, etc.), and the employees experiencing them (secure employment, opportunities for advancement, etc). HRM policies and processes were developed based on organizational rather than occupational matching, development and career paths (Schein 1978).

The notion of organizational careers was however sorely tested in the 1980s and 1990s, when corporate restructurings and other contextual instabilities (the IT revolution, globalization, the feminization of the workforce) appeared to threaten the demise of the organizational career model. In academic circles, Hall and Associates (1996) popularized the ideal of the protean career – careers managed not by the organization but by the individual - and Arthur and Rousseau (1996) that of the boundaryless career, careers that were “the opposite of the organizational career” and that crossed the boundaries of different employment settings. This formulation has caused a decline in interest in organizational careers,. But the authors believe that although these new career models are important in understanding some individuals in some industries and organizations, their importance and growth has been exaggerated, organizational careers are alive and well, and the HRM of careers is far from being a forlorn pursuit (Hall and las Heras 2009; Inkson and King in press).

Career studies as currently conducted in business schools stands at a cross-road (Gunz & Peiperl 2007). On one hand, many scholars (e.g. Sullivan & Baruch 2009) believe that the future of career studies is about the refinement and further development of research and theory based on contemporary flexible career forms. In contrast, we believe that these flexible careers models are poorly labelled and defined, prone to stereotyping, over-generalized as to applicability, and accepted unquestioningly despite major ideological and empirical objections (Inkson et al., 2010; Rodrigues & Guest in press). Also, notwithstanding recent calls for more interdisciplinary studies of careers (Arthur 2008; Collin & Patton 2009), such an agenda for career studies does little to heal the chasms

which characterise both its internal constitution and its relationships with related studies and practice concerning careers. We believe that by taking a step back from both traditional ‘organizational career’ and recent ‘self-managed career’ approaches to career studies we can do better.

THE RESOURCE-BASED VIEW

Over the past twenty years, the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm (Barney 1991; Barney & Clark 2007) has become an important, indeed dominant, paradigm in studies of business strategy. The resource-based logic has also been widely adopted and tested in other management disciplines including HRM, marketing, entrepreneurship, management information systems, operations management, and innovation management (Barney & Arikan 2001; Barney & Clark 2007).

The RBV is derived from literatures on factors enhancing and limiting organizational growth (Penrose 1959), distinctive firm-based competencies (e.g. Hitt & Ireland 1985), and Ricardo’s theory of land rents. The RBV challenges previously dominant, marketing-oriented theories of strategy (e.g. Porter 1980) by extending the focus of strategic thinking internally, from the analysis of external competitive forces, to the internal capabilities of organizations as the basis for strategic choice. In the RBV’s most popular formulation, the VRIO framework (Barney 1991), firm resources create sustained competitive advantage when they are Valuable, Rare, Inimitable and Organizationally exploited. Resources include intangible assets such as knowledge, organization culture, administrative processes and management. Relevant human resources include both the skills and capabilities of organization members, and the capacity to sustain and develop those resources through (inter alia) appropriate organizational culture and effective HRM (Barney and Clark 2007).

The RBV has long been of interest to theorists of human resource management (e.g. Boxall 1996; Boxall & Purcell 2008; Lado & Wilson 1994; Wright, McMahan & McWilliams 1994; Wright & Snell 1991). The resources under consideration are those which the organization either owns or has access to, including those which are the property of employees or contractors - such as their motivation, talents, specialist knowledge and contacts - but which as part of a contractual arrangement are put at the disposal of the organization, and may be capitalised on and even institutionalized by it. However, these are resources located in individuals, which take on true value for the organization

only when linked together and/or to the organization's purpose through such organizational attributes as its culture and its HRM system. The resources developed by individuals in their careers, effectively developed and deployed, provide a basis for tying the HRM function to strategy in terms of the employees acquired, the processes of ensuring their commitment and development in pursuit of organizational goals, and their own self-development of their resources in pursuit of personal goals.

The RBV analysis highlights the importance of human resources and HR practices that are socially complex and therefore difficult or costly to copy. Idiosyncratic firm-specific bundles of HR practices are more likely to underpin superior performance than general skills or individual best practices of HR (Wright & Snell 1991; Lado & Wilson 1994; Barney & Wright 1998). While skilled individuals may be valuable and rare, they are also mobile and likely to transfer to another organization when offered better compensation (Wright, McMahan & McWilliams 1994). Hence, the RBV signals the importance of causally ambiguous team processes, trust (Barney & Hansen 1994), culture (Barney 1986), and group relationships as the basis for firm-specific assets that are difficult to imitate and therefore not transferable across organizations (Barney & Clark 2007).

Noticeably however, the RBV, even when explicitly applied to HRM, is able to provide a good account without invoking the concept of career, which is not referenced in the RBV literature (e.g. Barney & Clark 2007; Boxall & Purcell 2008)? Why would one then complicate matters by introducing the concept of careers within an RBV of HRM? The answer is twofold.

The RBV as a means of reconceptualising career studies

First, in terms of career studies, the RBV enables provision, *at the level of the individual*, of a coherent account of the accumulation of personal resources by career actors seeking to establish personal competitive advantage in an increasingly demanding labour market. The study of careers based on patterns of individual resource accumulation rather than individual mobility is, we believe, a viable alternative to the 'status quo' career theories we have described. The RBV directs attention not only to the acquisition of resources but to the competitive dynamics of resource acquisition and to resource characteristics such as rarity and inimitability that have been neglected in career studies.

Moreover, the RBV of careers already has a strong ally within career studies in the form the “intelligent career” framework recently summarised by Parker, Khapova and Arthur (2009), which focuses on career competencies and the ways in which these are developed over time. Particular attention is paid to the ‘knowing-why’ (motivation, values), ‘knowing-how’ (skills, knowledge) and ‘knowing-whom’ (networks, contacts) of the individual, which respond respectively to the ‘know-why’ (culture), ‘know how’ (competencies) and ‘know-who’ (social capital) of the firm. In a capitalistic metaphor, career capital can be accumulated in all three areas by the individual, then invested in firms with the objective of growing it in value, rarity, inimitability, etc. An RBV of careers enables us to consider whether the VRIO model of organizational resources leading to sustained competitive advantage is paralleled by a VRIO set of career resources enabling individuals to gain sustained career advantages in the labour market.

The vocational view of careers also delineates the resources that individuals bring into their career decisions, such as occupational and organizational choice: for example, abilities, qualifications, and interests (Brown & Associates 2002). Applied in this way, the RBV, like the intelligent career view, has potential for creating welcome synergies among the disparate forces within career studies.

Career studies as a means of supplementing the RBV

Second, from the perspective of HRM, the inclusion of the study and management of careers within the RBV brings the opportunity for new insights. If the objective of firms adopting the RBV is not just competitive advantage but *sustained* competitive advantage, the micro-level concept of career, which is based on individuals’ changing objectives and capabilities over a lifetime, directs attention from immediate organizational behavior and performance to *sustained* organizational behavior and performance. If the key resource of firms is their knowledge then the concept of careers as ‘repositories of knowledge’ (Bird 1996) enables one to understand how, in their career behavior individuals develop knowledge – both explicit and tacit - through their relationships with firms, and transfer knowledge through their mobility between firms. The important work of Lepak and Snell (1999) on strategic ‘HR architectures’ based on the different types of knowledge resources that individuals bring to firms can be given greater sophistication through consideration of the career

dynamics involved, for example the phases that individuals typically go through over time in their pursuit of career objectives, and the way those impact on their organizational commitment.

Bringing careers within an RBV frame also facilitates re-establishment, in appropriate settings, of an ‘organizational career management’ theory and practice (Gutteridge, Leibowicz & Shore 1993) which has been threatened by the current vogue for boundaryless careers and the loss of confidence that careers are manageable (e.g. Cascio 2010). Elsewhere, we have argued that the extension of psychological contracts (Rousseau 1995) to long-term career phenomena provides a good basis for understanding both the complementarity and the conflict inherent in contemporary employment relations and for practicing career-oriented long-term HRM (Inkson & King, in press).

RBV examines the impact of heterogeneous resources and capabilities on the ability of firms to gain and sustain competitive advantages. However, the question of where the resources come from or how they have been developed has not yet been explored and provides a possible area for expanding RBV in the future (Barney & Clark 2007). Our proposal is that examining *career resources* provides a way to explore the path-dependent development of the ‘repositories of knowledge’ which serve as the foundation of organizations’ human resources. Because both strong and weak network ties are strategically important to both organizations and individuals as sources of resources and information (Granovetter 1973, 1985; Burt 1992, 1997), such studies will also contribute to HRM by focusing not only on the creation of skills and competencies (‘knowing-how’), but also on the social connectivity dimensions of careers (‘knowing-whom’).

ORGANIZATIONAL USE OF CAREER RESOURCES: CAREER USE OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES.

Applying resource-based logic provides a new lens to identify the strategic role of career resources in organizations and the career-building role of organizational resources in careers. The VRIO framework provides a helpful structure for this analysis.

First, the economic value of specific career resources is identified by considering how they directly enable the firm to differentiate their products/services (increase sales, revenue and margins) or decrease product/service costs. The focus is on career resources that enable firms to do things that

could not be done, or could not be done as well, by firms without these resources. For the individual, the corresponding career value comes from organizational experiences that add value to his or her repository of career-relevant knowledge.

In a case study example, Catherine, a business graduate with accounting qualifications, joined a Polytechnic as a lecturer in accounting, bringing her career experience of banking and financial analysis to bear on her teaching. Catherine however was intent on making a career in marketing, so put energy into textbook learning about marketing, securing additional marketing classes to teach, and voluntarily helping to market the polytechnic's own programmes. Catherine's value to the organization's competitive advantage came from her career resources of business experience, and career-oriented energy regarding the marketing function. Conversely, the polytechnic helped Catherine by offering the resources of its explicit focus on learning, its provision of opportunities to do so and materials to learn from, and its flexibility in adjusting to her needs.

Second, organizations consider the rarity of the specific career resources by checking to see how many other firms have the same valuable resources. Unless these valuable resources are unique, they will offer the firm at most competitive parity in their market/sector. Correspondingly, individuals seek to capitalise on organizational resources and opportunities that will satisfy their personal motivations: organizations will be able to harness their career resources on an ongoing basis if they can provide relevant experiences that are not easily found elsewhere.

An illustrative case concerns, Julie, an ambitious young woman with tertiary qualifications in drama, who had substantial experience in theatre, both acting and directing, and who was keen to build a career based on her theatre skills. On graduating, Julie was unable to secure any acting roles, and reluctantly took a job in customer service in a large company. Here, she found she had high value to the organization due to her special skills of self-presentation: as she said: "Customer service is just being able to play roles." Eventually she was promoted to a job in sales training, where her directing and coaching talents made a unique difference, and later to other roles in senior management, with a client focus. Skills and career experience such as Julie's are rare in corporate environments. Thus, Julie brought the organization a rare, transferable talent of high value in its client relations, while the

organization's resources provided Julie with the opportunity she craved to utilise her background in drama while also acquiring considerable responsibility and status.

Third, organizations evaluate the imitability of valuable and rare resources to see if it is possible or costly to imitate these specific resources or to obtain substitutes for them. Valuable and rare career resources that are imitable provide only a temporary competitive advantage. Similarly, career actors seek organizational positions, and capitalise on organizational resources, which meet their career aspirations, and they will continue to take advantage of such situations only as long as better positions are not available elsewhere. Resources, both career and organizational, become imperfectly imitable through, among other things, unique historical conditions and social complexity. Resources which are linked to a unique path through history cannot be duplicated (Arthur, Ermoliev & Kaniovski 1987; Winter 1987). Every career involves a unique assembly of historical experiences that cannot be duplicated, and every organization has an institutional memory from which the individual may be able to benefit. Socially complex resources can often be identified but are sometimes not able to be systematically managed; hence they are not easily imitable. Examples include reputation among customers (Klein, Crawford and Alchian, 1978), culture (Barney, 1986) and interpersonal relationships among managers within a firm (Hambrick, 1987). Individuals similarly bring unique complex networks of former business associates into the firm.

Here, our example is Peter, the data processing manager of a travel firm, who, feeling he had outgrown his role there, approached his firm's computer supplier for a job, and proceeded through a number of roles in branch support, sales, and project management. Eventually he was asked to head a project at a travel company, thus enabling the computer company to leverage his earlier experience in, and memory of, the travel industry, as well as social contacts built through his career in both the travel and computer industries. Thus, Peter's combination of organizational knowledge, product knowledge, computer industry knowledge was unique and inimitable, while the computer organization was unique in relation to Peter's career, as, due to the reputation he had established in it in his role as its customer, it was prepared to employ him in a senior role when he sought to leave the travel company.

The fourth and final condition in the RBV analysis of sources of competitive advantage looks at the extent to which the firm is organised to exploit its valuable, rare and inimitable resources. Unless the firm has the organizational processes and policies in place to take advantage of these key resources it will not be able to achieve the potential they offer for superior performance. For example, HR practices need to be co-ordinated as integrated and inter-related systems that complement one another to create synergistic effects and achieve strategic goals (Wright & Snell 1991; Wright & McMahan 1992; Lado & Wilson, 1994). Correspondingly, individuals must be resourceful, adaptable and well-organized if they are to take advantage of the career resource-building opportunities presented to them by the organizations in which they work and others which they may consider joining (Inkson & Arthur 2001). In the examples above, the organizations that employed Catherine, Julie and Peter all appeared to be imaginative, flexible and well-organized in the way they leveraged the career resources of these employees and encouraged autonomy and personalised career development. The employees correspondingly had clear career objectives but were prepared to “think outside the box”, and to be flexible and mobile, to secure a competitive advantage in the labour market.

Our final case concerns John, a prototypical “organization man”. Since his university graduation John has spent 35 years in the service of a large multinational. In that time he has had 25 different jobs, in all functions of the company and at many different locations, and he now occupies a senior management role and is acknowledged to be “Mr (Company Name).” He is a company trouble-shooter who can take on practically any challenge, and who still “hits the ground running” wherever he is, because he knows so much already. His knowledge of the history, products, systems, culture and staff of the company is unique. His career-based resources are certainly valuable, rare and inimitable, and likewise the organization’s resources are valuable, rare and inimitable in terms of providing a venue for his career and its further development. But all this has only been possible because of the company’s culture and HRM systems which favour broad, mobile experience for promising managers, and John’s personal willingness to undertake whatever roles the company puts his way. Due to a fine reciprocity between organizational structure and culture on the one hand, and

individual skills and motivation on the other, both John and the multinational are able to utilise the other's resources to secure and sustain competitive advantage in their respective markets.

It should be noted that while the RBV of careers is most clearly expressed in the case of well-educated knowledge workers, those entering the workforce with minimal qualifications will may also use their carers, or havee them developed by the organization, so that valuable, scarce and inimitable resources are developed from an unpromising base. This is illustrated by the case of Priscilla, below.

Priscilla had no qualifications, but joined an interior design company at age 17 in the hope of becoming a designer. She was a quick learner and developed multiple skills. At age 20 she became the firm's contract manager enabling it to take on new business. When a recession hit, Pricilla knew the ins and outs of the business better than anyone and was kept on as office manager as others left. By age 26 she had unique, organization-specific integrative skills enabling her to become manager of the entire company, able to do every job in the office but also to take a "helicopter view" of the firm's organization. She also has good networks with the company's client base, and it is not impossible that she will one day start her own interior design business.

CAREERS AS RESOURCES: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES.

Examining the relationship between the RBV and career studies, and in particular considering how career case studies fit the theory, we are struck by a number of attributes of careers that appear to promise extension and revitalization of the RBV if they are followed up. At the same time, there are differences between career resources and firm resources which undoubtedly need to be recognised.

Among the positive attributes of careers which may enable them to add something to the RBV, are their *time-based* and *socially-situated* nature, their *mobility*, their *dynamism* and *idiosyncrasy*, their susceptibility to individual *agency*, and the frequent occurrence of *serendipitous* experience. Catherine, Julie, Peter and John all have long-term career objectives, but move between jobs frequently, sometimes in unpredictable ways. The first three direct their own careers rather than being directed by the organization, cross organizational boundaries and find themselves in

unexpected, unplanned situations which nevertheless have potential both for their employing organizations and for their personal career development.

Careers have histories, and career resources are accumulated slowly and laboriously. Like career actors, organizations seeking sustained competitive advantage need to take a long-term perspective. Unravelling career histories provides information not just on the career's resources but also on its objectives and 'trajectory', thus providing opportunities to consider synergies between organizational members and strategy. The socially situated nature of careers means that all careers include, and are mediated by, networks and therefore social capital, and that competitive advantage may be obtained by the utilization of individual networks.

The mobility of careers enables organizations to capitalise on career resources brought into the organization from outside, but also enables competitors to capitalise on the firm's career resources. Career idiosyncrasies remind us that the value of an individual to an organization constantly changes, and that enlightened and effective strategy may sometimes stem not from the question "How do we harness that individual's resources to our strategic plan?" but "How do we adapt our strategic plan to satisfy that individual's current career objectives and resources?"

The issue of individual agency over 'self-directed careers' reminds us that organizations often overestimate their ability to exercise institutional dominance over members. Individuals' control over their resources makes careers unpredictable. Ideally career development is a joint, collaborative process between organizations and individuals. Even today, careers are less unpredictable than is often thought (Rodrigues & Guest in press), and mutual planning, in which organization and individual share information about their long-term futures has much to recommend it (Inkson et al 2010).

Lastly, the key difference between firm resources and career resources is that of level: organizational versus individual.. Individuals bring useful career resources, such as their motivations, values, qualifications, skills and network contacts into the organization, but although at the individual level these provide a basis for personal career planning, at the organization level they make sense only in relation to each other and to collective and complex resources such as the organization's culture, special expertise, HRM systems and administrative processes. This means that individual careers will

tend to influence strategy only at the micro-level, though an accumulation of career synergies or an organization-level career development policy may make a macro-level difference.

CONCLUSION

There seems little doubt that taking a resource-based view of careers would assist career studies to break out of its current state of unfulfilled potential, and contribute in a more worthwhile way to both organization studies and HRM. Whether taking a career-based view of human resources in organizations would add a worthwhile dimension to the RBV of the firm is more problematic. But career behavior certainly provides insights, at least at micro-level, of *how* human resources enter and are developed in organizations. The idea of examining both organizations and careers in terms of their reciprocal exchange and complementary development of resources seems well worth exploring. In future papers we hope to pursue more fully the implications of such a formulation.

REFERENCES

- Arthur MB. (2008) Examining contemporary careers: A call for interdisciplinary inquiry, *Human Relations*, 61: 163-186.
- Arthur MB, Hall DT and Lawrence, BS (Eds)(1989) *Handbook of career theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Arthur, MB and Rousseau DM (Eds)(1996) *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Arthur WB Ermoliev YM and Kaniovski YM (1987) Path dependent processes and the emergence of macro structure. *European Journal of Operations Research*. 30: 294-303.
- Athanasou J and van Esbroeck R (Eds)(2008) *International handbook of career guidance*. Springer, New York:
- Barney JB (1986). Organizational culture: Can it be a source of sustained competitive advantage? *Academy of Management Review*, 11: 656-665.
- Barney JB (1991) Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17: 99-121.
- Barney JB and Arikan A (2001) The resource-based view: Origins and implications, in Hitt M Freeman RE and Harrison JS (Eds), *The Blackwell handbook of strategic management*, 124-188, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Barney JB and Clark DN (2007) *Resource-based theory: Creating and sustaining competitive advantage*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Barney JB and Hansen, M. (1994). Trustworthiness as a source of competitive advantage, *Strategic Management Journal*, 15: 175-190.
- Barney JB and Wright P (1998) On becoming a strategic partner: The role of human resources in gaining competitive advantage, *Human Resource Management*, 37: 31-46.
- Bird A (1996) Careers as repositories of knowledge: Considerations for boundaryless careers, in Arthur MB and Rousseau DM (Eds), *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era*, 150-168, Oxford University Press, New York.

- Boxall P (1996) The strategic HRM debate and the resource-based view of the firm, *Human Resource Management Journal*, 6(3): 59-75.
- Boxall P and Purcell, J (2008) *Strategy and human resource management* (2nd ed), Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK.
- Brown RD & Associates (2002) *Career Choice and Development* (4th ed.), Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Burt RS (1992). *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Burt RS (1997) The contingent value of social capital, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42: 339-365.
- Cascio WF. 2010. *Managing human resources. Productivity, quality of life, profits* (8th ed), McGraw Hill, Boston.
- Collin A and Patton W (Eds)(2009) *Vocational psychological and organizational perspectives on career: Towards a multidisciplinary dialogu.,* Sense Publishers, Rotterdam.
- Demsetz H (1973) Industry structure, market rivalry, and public policy, *Journal of Law and Economics*, 16: 1-9.
- Dierickx I and Cool K (1989) Asset stock accumulation and sustainability of competitive advantage, *Management Science*, 35: 1504-1511.
- Granovetter M (1973) The strength of weak ties, *American Journal of Sociology*, 78: 1360-1380.
- Granovetter M (1985) Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness, *American Journal of Sociology*, 91: 481-510.
- Gutteridge TG Leibowicz ZB and Shore JE (1993) *Organizational career development*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Hall DT and Associates (1996). *The career is dead – long live the career: A relational approach to careers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hall DT and las Heras M (2009) Long live the organizational career. In Collin A and Patton W (Eds) (2009) *Vocational psychological and organizational perspectives on career: Towards a multidisciplinary dialogue*: 181-196, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam.

- Hambrick D (1987) Top management teams: Key to strategic success, *California Management Review*, 30: 88-108.
- Hitt MA and Ireland RD (1985). Corporate distinctive competence, strategy, industry and performance, *Strategic Management Journal*, 6: 273-293.
- Holland JE (1997) *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments* (2nd ed.), Psychological Assessment Resources, Odessa, FL.
- Inkson K (2008). Are humans resources? *Career Development International*, 13(3): 270-279.
- Inkson K and Arthur MB (2001). How to be a successful career capitalist. *Organizational Dynamics*, 30(1): 48-61.
- Inkson K, Ganesh S, Roper, J and Gunz, H.(2010). The boundaryless career: A productive concept that may have outlived its usefulness. *Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings*.
<http://program.aomonline.org/2010/reportsaspnet/Proceedings.aspx>
- Inkson, K and King, Z. (2011). Contested terrain in careers: A psychological contract model. *Human Relations*, 64(1) in press.
- Jones C and Dunn MB (2007) Careers and institutions: The centrality of careers to organization studies, in Gunz H and Peiperl M (Eds), *Handbook of career studies*: 437-450. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Klein B Crawford RG and Alchian A (1978) Vertical integration, appropriable rents, and the competitive contracting process, *Journal of Law and Economics*, 21: 297-326.
- Lado A and Wilson, M (1994) Human resource systems and sustained competitive advantage: A competency-based perspective, *Academy of Management Review*, 19: 699-727.
- Lepak DP and Snell SA (1999) The human resource architecture: Toward a theory of human capital allocation and development, *Academy of Management Review*, 24: 31-48.
- Lippman S and Rumelt R (1982) Uncertain imitability: An analysis of interfirm differences in efficiency under competition, *Bell Journal of Economics*, 13: 418-438.

- Mainiero LA and Sullivan SE (2005) Kaleidoscope careers: An alternate explanation for the opt-out revolution, *Academy of Management Executive*, 19(1): 106-123.
- Parker P Khapova SN and Arthur MB (2009) The intelligent career as a framework for interdisciplinary inquiry, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75: 291-302.
- Penrose, E (1959) *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm*. Blackwell, Oxford UK.
- Porter ME (1980) *Competitive strategy*, Free Press, New York..
- Reed R and DeFilippi R (1990) Causal ambiguity, barriers to imitation, and sustainable competitive advantage, *Academy of Management Review*, 15: 88-102.
- Rodrigues R and Guest D (in press) Are careers becoming boundaryless? *Human Relations*.
- Rousseau DM (1995) *Psychological contracts in organizations*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Rumelt R (1984) Towards a strategic theory of the firm, in Lamb R (Ed) *Competitive Strategic Management*: 556-570, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Schein EH (1978) *Career dynamics: Matching individual and organizational needs*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA:
- Sullivan SE and Baruch Y (2009) Advances in career theory and research: A critical review and agenda for future exploration, *Journal of Management*, 35, 1542-1571.
- Winter SG (1987) Knowledge and competence as strategic assets, in D.Teece (Ed) *The competitive challenge*: 159-184, Ballinger, Cambridge, MA.:
- Wright PM and Snell SA (1991) Toward an integrative view of strategic human resource management, *Human Resource Management Review*, 1: 203-225.
- Wright PM and McMahan, GC. (1992) Alternative theoretical perspectives for strategic human resource management, *Journal of Management*, 18: 295-320.
- Wright PM McMahan GC and McWilliams A (1994). Human resources as a source of sustained competitive advantage, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 5: 299-324.