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Career Cultures and Climates in Organizations

Douglas T. Hall and Jeffrey Yip

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Edited by Benjamin Schneider and Karen M. Barbera

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[–] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines how the lens of organizational culture and climate can further an understanding of careers and career development. More specifically, the discussion focuses on the implications of a climate perspective on careers and considers the interaction between individual career orientations and climate. Also discussed are how organizations can have multiple climates, how such climates are shaped by organizational signals, and the consequences of mixed organizational signals and weak career climates on organizational identity and identification. Where an organization's career culture is entrenched in stable structures and symbols, its career climate can vary by a combination of social information and individual processing of this information. By considering the interaction between individual perceptions and organizational reality, the concept of career climate opens up new levels of analysis. The chapter concludes with a consideration of how career climate and the interactions that produce it, can be a rich area of inquiry for career scholarship and for helping leaders and organizations understand the conditions that shape both organizational identity and employee identification with the organization.

Keywords: alignment, career, career climates, career cultures, identity, learning, organizational career signals, protean career orientation

Introduction

A longstanding interest in organizational behavior is the understanding of how behavior is a function of both the person and the environment. Lewin (1936) aptly describes this in his formula of $B = f(P, E)$. However, career research tends to be divided along disciplinary lines and between individual and organizational explanations of career processes and outcomes (Khapova & Arthur, 2011). Vocational psychologists are focused on individual differences in career orientations and motivations, economists on resource allocation, and sociologists on social patterns and predictors external to the individual. The lens of organizational culture and climate however, as discussed in this handbook, suggests a meso-level approach. The implications of this perspective as it applies to the study and practice of careers and career development will be described.

This chapter considers how the lenses of culture and climate uniquely apply to the study of careers. First, the relationship between career cultures and climate are discussed. Building on Schein (2004) and Schneider's (1990) writings on organizational culture and climate, the authors define career culture as norms, assumptions, and artifacts that shape the meaning of careers within the organization, and career climates as the meaning employees attach to career policies, practices, and procedures within their organization. Career climates are shaped by an organization's career culture through a social information process that can result in varying degrees of alignment between the two.

Organizations are constantly transmitting social information about careers, which is then interpreted by employees. In most instances, organizations send mixed career signals to their employees and this has an effect of weakening

an organization's career climate and ultimately its culture. A culture and climate perspective on careers can shine a light on these processes and their consequences on career identities and identification. Throughout, the chapter discusses how an understanding of career cultures and climates, and the social information process that connect them, can be a generative area of inquiry for career scholarship and practice.

Organizational Culture, Climate, and Careers

Culture and climate are two organizational constructs that are often linked together, yet it is important to distinguish them conceptually. Whereas organizational culture is a set of identifiable symbols, rules, values, and beliefs shared by individuals in an organization (Schein, 2004), climate considers the inferences that people make of these meaning systems. More specifically, an organization's climate refers to the meaning organizational employees attach to the policies, practices, and procedures they experience and the behaviors they observe (Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Schneider, 1990).

As Schneider and Rentsch (1988) suggest, culture is a way to understand "why things happen the way they do" and climate is a way to understand "what happens around here." More elaboration of the differences between the two concepts is presented by Kuenzi and Schminke (2009):

"Organizational culture generally encompasses deeper and different dimensions than organizational climate (e.g., beliefs, myths). Culture research typically focuses on trying to understand the underlying assumptions of the organization, often so deeply embedded as to be unconscious, hidden, and taken for granted (Schein, 2004). Therefore, organizational culture tends to exist at a higher level of abstraction than climate. By contrast, climate pertains more to surface-level manifestations (i.e., how things are done)."

Accordingly, an organization's career culture is defined here as norms, assumptions, and artifacts that shape the meaning of careers within the organization, and career climates as the meaning employees attach to career policies, practices, and procedures within their organization. Where an organization's career culture can exist independently of any one individual, its career climate is shaped by how individuals actively experience and perceive the organization. This interaction between individual orientations and culture is one that makes career climates a fascinating area of inquiry.

To illustrate the connections between career culture and climate, consider the example of Josie Samuels (not her real name), who is a recent MBA graduate working in a Boston-based high tech firm. Identified as a high potential young manager, Josie was a member of the corporate strategic planning group. She has a passion for sustainability and a strong work identity as a change agent and a socially responsible citizen. Although it was not part of her job description, she came up with a business plan for a system of solar panels that could be installed easily on the roofs of the many data warehouses that the company operated. Accordingly, when she mentioned the idea to her boss, he encouraged her to pursue the idea. Not only was the plan accepted, but as she was discussing her passion for alternative energy work with her CEO, they jointly came up with the idea of creating a new position of Manager for Sustainability, and that part of her identity is now a large part of her formal organizational role.

Josie's organization has a longstanding culture and tradition of providing supportive autonomy for employee careers, with resources devoted to career planning and policies that allow employees flexibility to craft jobs that are aligned to their personal values and the organization's business. An artifact of this culture is the hosting of career communities by the human resource function. These informal career communities meet bimonthly to discuss shared career interests and exploration. The presence of these communities has a signaling effect through the organization, strengthening the climate and perception of the organization as one that is values driven and supportive of career exploration. Similarly, Josie's career orientation is protean, driven by strong values and a self-directed approach to her career (Hall, 2002). She would probably not stay in any one organization for too long if it did not give her the opportunity to pursue her strong interests. Expressing that part of her career identity is very important to her. In fact, she has had two offers, at much higher salaries, from larger, highly successful technology companies in the last year, and she has turned them both down. Because her company has a climate that aligns with her career orientation, one that encourages employees to take initiative and pursue business ideas that spark their passion, the firm is able to retain young talent like her. Furthermore, the organization has established a strong reputation within Boston as one with a protean climate, distinguishing itself from other organizations, and attracting

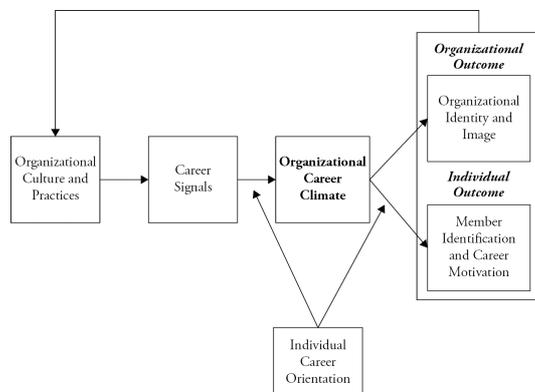
similar talent like Josie. Josie's experience is just one of many ways that the culture and climate of an organization can influence its external reputation and how employees relate and identify with the organization.

Career Climate: A Link between Organizational Culture and Career Outcomes

Although much has been discussed about organizational and occupational cultures (Becker et al., 1968; Gunz, 1989; Hughes, 1958; Kunda, 1995; Schein, 1984; Van Maanen & Barley, 1984), organizational research has not advanced the implications of a climate perspective on careers. The authors suggest that this is primarily driven by sociological and ethnographic studies of occupations that lend themselves to a culture perspective. However, the lens of culture does not provide adequate consideration of individual differences or changes in perceptions of the organization's environment for careers. To address this gap, this discussion focuses on the implications of a climate perspective on careers and consider how individual and organizational forces interact in shaping careers in organizations.

An organization's career climate is a critical link between organizational culture and career-relevant outcomes at the individual and organizational level (see Figure 12.1). The ultimate source of a member's experiences in an organization is the culture of the organization, along with the organizational practices (decisions, actions, policies, etc.) that enact that culture. The authors propose that organizational culture and practices transmit social information that communicates the degree to which the organization values its employees and their careers as well as how employees should enact their careers.

This set of information employees experience is described as "organizational career signals." Such signals include perceptions of organizational and member characteristics, career policies, compensation practices, leadership directives, and other cultural artifacts and practices that communicate career priorities within the organization. Such priorities are often not directly communicated or evident. Instead, organizational culture and practices provide information that employees *perceive* and then *interpret* to make meaning of the organization's career climate. This in turn shapes how employees see themselves and assess and enact their careers within the organization.



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Figure 12.1 Organizational career climate as the link between organizational signals and career outcomes.

One of the few empirical studies to examine the link between organizational work climates and career orientations was a study by Hall and Schneider (1973) of priests in an archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church. They found strong evidence for the links among organizational signals (represented by leadership practices, career assignment policies, etc.), perceptions of the work climate, the priest's identity, and outcomes such as work satisfaction and organizational commitment. These variables were related to one another through a three-step self-reinforcing feedback process:

1. "Certain relevant personal characteristics, values, and (to a lesser extent) self-image incline a person to identify with his organization.
2. "People with challenging jobs [and more developmental work climates] are more likely to be committed to the organization than those with less challenging jobs [and less supportive climates.]
3. "Identification grows as a function of the person's length of service. People in higher positions are more

committed as well, but the effect of position appears to be due to the greater tenure of the incumbents” (Hall & Schneider, 1973, p. 159).

Going deeper into how the climate process functions, Schneider and Reichers (1983) suggested that climate perceptions produce behavioral outcomes by informing individuals that certain types of behaviors will lead to the achievement of individual and organizational goals. A strong career climate can provide employees with multiple social and psychological resources and strengthen the social exchange relationship between employees and the organization. In contrast, a weak climate can lead to mixed perceptions of behavior-reward relationships as well as unstable judgments about appropriate behaviors (Guzzo & Noonan, 1994).

Employees are constantly processing career signals that communicate expectations about how careers progress and develop within the organization. Furthermore, employees can interpret these signals in different ways. To illustrate with an example, an organization may send a signal that it takes an inclusive approach to career development by providing mentoring programs for underrepresented minorities in management. This would likely resonate with recipients of the programs. However, majority group employees not considered for the program might perceive the career climate as an exclusive one with respect to their identity group. In addition, members of minority groups other than those that are considered underrepresented may also feel excluded. The effect of organizational signals on the career climate is thus contingent on how these signals are perceived by individuals and on the groups with which they identify.

One of the questions that often arises in discussions of culture and climate is what the difference is between the two concepts. To many people, they seem to mean the same thing. The process reflected in Figure 12.1, however, suggests how they relate to each other and how each is distinct. As stated earlier, the organization’s culture is the ultimate source of climate, as climate consists of members’ perceptions of signals emanating from the organizational practices and actions that are based on its culture. Also, culture is a phenomenon that exists independently from individual perceivers—it can be examined through observation of concrete actions and objects found in the organization (Schein, 2004). Climate, on the other hand, is more *subjective*, and involves the interaction between organizational culture and individual perceptions—it is how individuals perceive actions, policies, and practices that take place within the organization. For example, a newcomer to an organization may in a short time form an impression of the organization’s career climate and that perception could be different from the longstanding culture that exists independently from the individual. In general, the more a person gets to know the inside workings of an organization, the greater the alignment of their climate perceptions to the actual organizational culture.

As Figure 12.1 also suggests, and as Hall and Schneider (1973) found, an organization’s career climate is a critical link between organizational signals and career outcomes at the individual and organizational level. This relationship is shaped by individual differences at two levels. First, individuals perceive organizational signals differently and climate perceptions are a product of this interaction. Second, the effects of an organization’s career climate are moderated by individual career orientations, such that individuals with career orientations similar to the organization’s career climate are more likely to have a stronger identification with the organization. Conversely, individuals with career orientations that are different from the organization’s career climate are likely to experience a dissonance between their preferred career approach and what is expected within the organization, which could result in decreased career motivation within the organization. Obviously, the more an organization creates a climate for careers that meets a large proportion of their employees’ preferences, the more positive will be the aggregate career motivation of those employees.

Beyond individual outcomes, an organization’s career climate can have a signaling effect in shaping organizational identity and image, as perceived by stakeholders external to the organization, such as investors and potential employees. For example, awards and rankings of organizations as “best companies to work for” are a reflection of how career climates are a critical component of organizational identity and image. With the advent of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, signals within the organization are amplified to external stakeholders. And these external images are “mirrored” back to members and affect their identities and thus the extent to which they identify with their organization (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Such processes serve to further reproduce the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) processes that Schneider (1987) describes, and these in turn can either strengthen or weaken the bonds between the individual and the organization. An extreme example of this mirroring process, in a negative direction, is found in Petriglieri’s (2011) study of what she called “identity loss” for

British Petroleum (BP) employees following the 2011 oil spill and BP's responses to it. A detailed discussion of the ways that organizations can provide experiences and signals that promote the growth of a member's identity is found in Hall's (2004) discussion of organizational practices for creating more self-aware and complex leaders.

The ability of organizations to attract and retain talent has been established as a critical component for business success (Breugh & Starke, 2000; Cappelli, 2008; Collins, 2007; Turban & Greening, 1997). A strong and distinct career climate can contribute to this success by signaling internally the commitment the organization has for career development, and externally by building a valued image in this respect. This image in turn can have an effect on attracting talented employees and reinforcing the organizational actions that link career development with business success. Research has shown how people with similar career interests, identities, and personalities tend to gravitate toward the same organizations and occupations (Holland, 1997; Trice & Beyer, 1993; Schneider, Smith, Taylor, & Fleenor 1998).

Types of Career Climates

By examining organizational careers from a climate perspective, researchers can begin to consider how career climates vary across organizational levels, units, and functions. Because the organizational context is experienced differently across individuals and groups, an organization may have multiple career climates, just as it could have different subcultures. There could be multiple signals that members perceive that could result in co-existing career climate perceptions. Career climate dimensions are not necessarily orthogonal. For example, the traditional organizational career climate and the protean career climate, which are described in the following section, can function side by side, because employees may simultaneously operate highly autonomously and be driven by values of traditional organizational objective success (high pay and high positions), as they strive to climb the organizational promotion ladder. These perceptual differences reflect an area that will be further explored in describing how the organizational context may have multiple climates, and also strong and weak climates.

The authors will examine what they consider to be three of the more salient types of career climates found in contemporary organizations. Each type has its counterpart, so pairs of climates will actually be discussed. The first is the protean career climate (vs. the organizational career climate). The second is the inclusive (vs. exclusive) career climate, in the sense of valuing diversity. And the third is a mastery (or learning) career climate, vs. a performance-goal climate. Each of these career climates is shaped by organizational norms and artifacts that constitute the organization's career culture. The difference between culture and climate is that culture is a stable social structure, constituted by organizational artifacts and assumptions. In contrast, career climates are dynamic perceptions, influenced by culture, but also by individual differences in informational processing.

Each section begins with a discussion on elements of the career culture, followed by a discussion on career climate. The distinctions within this typology of career cultures and climate, and some examples, are summarized in Table 12.1. Let us consider each of these in turn.

Protean and Organizational Career Climates

One frequently-discussed issue in the contemporary careers literature is the distinction between traditional organizational careers and the newer forms of careers associated with the postindustrial or digital economy. These newer forms have been called the "new careers," although that term is itself becoming dated because it was first used in the 1990s. More specifically, the different career models included in this group include boundaryless careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), postcorporate careers (Peiperl & Baruch, 1997), and protean careers (Hall, 2002; Hall & Mirvis, 1996). Although each model has its distinctive qualities, they share certain characteristics: an agentic view of the career actor, a correspondingly lower level of power over career moves attributed to the employing organization, and a heightened focus on a subjective or internal frame of reference for defining success.

Table 12.1 A Typology of Career Climates and Cultures

Type Of Climate	Climate Elements	Cultural Artifacts	Examples
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Inclusive	<p>Inclusion as a management priority</p> <p>Equal career opportunities regardless of social identity or background</p> <p>Diverse representation of identity groups at all levels of the organization</p> <p>Diversity is valued</p> <p>Targeted efforts to recruit and retain minorities</p>	<p>Diversity Networks, Affinity, and Resource Groups</p> <p>Equal opportunity policy</p> <p>Diversity Awards</p> <p>Inclusion Councils</p>	<p>IBM</p> <p>Eli Lilly and Company</p> <p>Marriott International</p>
Exclusive	<p>Demographic composition different from local community</p> <p>Discriminatory practices</p> <p>Dominant identity groups in management</p> <p>Hiring and promotion biased toward dominant identity groups</p>	<p>Glass ceilings</p> <p>Old boy's club</p> <p>Identity-blind policies</p> <p>Discrimination lawsuits</p>	<p>Surgery</p> <p>Law Firms</p> <p>Accounting firms</p>
Protean	<p>Respect for individual values</p> <p>High individual autonomy</p> <p>Support for development</p> <p>Job assignments influenced by employee's development needs</p>	<p>Autonomous business planning process</p> <p>HR systems (e.g., benefits, career management) with high employee choice</p> <p>Career and life planning workshops</p>	<p>HP</p> <p>The former Digital Equipment Corporation</p> <p>Google</p> <p>University faculties</p>
Organizational	<p>Value for long service</p> <p>Job assignments based on company needs</p> <p>Focus on objective success measures (e.g., pay, promotion)</p>	<p>Employee anniversary celebrations</p> <p>Benefits, "perks" linked to tenure</p>	<p>Government organizations (Civil Service)</p> <p>Military</p>
Learning	<p>Organizational support for career exploration and mastery</p> <p>Emphasis on learning from experience</p> <p>Relationships-oriented toward personal and professional growth</p> <p>Employee empowerment, engagement</p>	<p>Job Rotations</p> <p>Mentoring programs</p> <p>Internal and External Career Coaching</p> <p>Training programs and development centers</p>	<p>High-tech startup</p> <p>Cisco</p> <p>IBM</p> <p>Boeing</p> <p>Deloitte</p> <p>Universities</p>
Performance	<p>Career advancement tightly coupled to work performance</p> <p>Shared belief in meritocracy</p> <p>Competition between</p>	<p>Career timetables</p> <p>Up or out contracts</p> <p>High potential programs</p> <p>Pay for performance and spot bonuses</p>	<p>General Electric</p> <p>Professional Service Firms</p> <p>Sales</p>

	<p>employees</p> <p>High levels of social comparison by work performance</p> <p>An emphasis on individual achievement and performance metrics</p> <p>Low tolerance for mistakes</p>	<p>Forced Rankings</p> <p>Recognition of "Star" Performers</p>	<p>organizations</p>
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For the sake of simplicity, the authors focus on the model that they know best, the protean career. The protean career orientation, as defined by Hall (2002), is characterized by high levels of self-direction (personal agency) and values expression. That is, people with a strong protean career orientation have a passion for being in control of their own careers and for living out their deeply prized values in their work.

It is important to note that although positioned as a protean vs. organizational career climate earlier, the protean career is not the opposite of the traditional organizational career. The main distinction is simply who is in charge. For the protean career, the individual is in control, whereas in the traditional career, control rests with the organization. But that does not mean that a person with a protean career orientation cannot still aspire to organizational rewards, such as promotions, pay raises, and formal recognition. If a person has the good fortune to be employed by an organization that (a) shares his or her commitment to particular values and (b) provides autonomy and support for people owning their careers, then that person, as in the earlier example of Josie, can pursue a protean career within the boundaries of that organization.

Protean Career Cultures and Climates

What does it mean, then, when one looks at an organizational culture that reflects the protean career orientation? This issue can be approached in terms of Schein's three levels of organizational culture: artifacts, values, and basic assumptions. The protean career culture would be one in which the *basic assumptions* include a deep appreciation and acceptance of individual autonomy and self-direction. The former Digital Equipment Corporation comes to mind as a good example, with a deep basic assumption of individual freedom as a defining characteristic of the culture (Schein, 2004). The artifacts that reflected these assumptions included a business planning process that allowed for a high level of local control, and traffic signs in company campuses that reflected the quirkiness of the autonomous engineer ("Speed Limit: 14.999 MPH"). Another artifact reflecting a protean career culture was the human resources (HR) system that stressed the alignment between the personal plans of individual professionals and managers, on the one hand, and the organization, on the other (Baird & Meshoulam, 1988). Another example, from Hall and Schneider's (1973) priest study, would be parishes in which the pastor provided a work environment that combined a high level of autonomy with a high level of support ("supportive autonomy," as the authors termed it).

Concerning the *values* of the career culture, another example of a protean career culture would be the original Hewlett-Packard (HP) culture, as exemplified by the "HP Way," which also stressed the values of dignity, freedom, and creativity of the individual (Packard, 1996). Another critical value of the HP Way, according to long-term HP alum Brad Harrington, was that the individual values of the employee were to be respected and that the alignment of the individual's values with the values and goals of the company was critical to individual and organizational effectiveness (Harrington & Hall, 2007). Thus, HP was a pioneer in creating organization-wide career and life-planning workshops (designed by Harrington), where employees would engage in deep self-assessment, values clarification, and exploration of possible career paths within and external to the company that would provide career fulfillment and work-life integration (Harrington & Hall, 2007).

Thus, the protean career culture would be found in an organization where:

- The guiding basic assumptions were that: (a) individuals can be autonomous and self-motivated in the service of company and personal objectives, and (b) the dignity and individuality of the individual is worthy of respect and encouragement.
- The values include individual personal development and growth, alignment of personal and organizational

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objectives, decentralization and local autonomy, and structural transparency to enable individuals to identify and navigate moves around the organization.

- The artifacts reflect valuing of autonomy, equality, integrity, individual differences, development, and person-organization alignment.

And what would a protean career climate look like? As Schneider (1990) has pointed out, one way to think about organizational climate is that organizations have *climates for* a particular kind of behavior. Examples would be climates for service or climates for employee safety. Thus, the *protean career climate* would be one that is congruent with the elements just enumerated for the protean career culture, but the climate would consist of the *members' perceptions* of the degree to which the work environment of the organization supports employees who have a protean career orientation. More specifically, a protean climate is defined as perceptions of an organization's support for self-directed and values driven careers.

An example of an organization with a protean career climate might be Google. Even though it is now introducing more structure in areas such as performance appraisal and training, and although performance is certainly important, it is still a climate that one former HR manager described in the following way:

“You've got to be quick, own your own career, not rely on anyone else, and figure out the role on your own in a very innovative environment. It's like being in a pool—sink or swim. For me, I learned by doing. There's not so much learning from stable managers—I had half a dozen managers over five years.”

An example from Google that represents the opportunity for self-direction of the protean career culture is the notion of “20% time,” in which people (primarily in engineering) can sign up for projects in their areas of interest, beyond the scope of their core roles. Some of these projects are initiated by the individual, and in other cases the individual signs up to join an existing project. In the lore of the culture, there are many stories of big products and services that have resulted from 20% time.

Our informant also pointed out that, in her experience, she observed that there can be a human cost of a strong protean climate: burnout. It can be draining to be working constantly on driving your own career, on the edge of what you know, always having to figure things out for yourself. And the freedom of practices such as 20% time is not an automatic entitlement granted to everyone; you have to demonstrate strong performance in your core role before you are granted the freedom to explore and learn new areas.

Two other examples of protean career climates would be specialty cafes and the surfer community. In certain specialty cafes in which coffee brewing is taken very seriously, the expertise, passion, and autonomy of the skilled barista is a critical and visible element of the climate of the store. The barista is dedicated to producing each cup of coffee as a work of fine art, driven by the value of coffee excellence and highly intrinsically motivated. Artifacts of this high-end coffee culture include very specialized and expensive brewing equipment, artistic presentations (such as intricate designs in the foam of a latte,) and esoteric conversations with baristas and customers over the finer points of the coffee preparation process. (Not all specialty coffee shops have this career climate, of course, but the highest quality ones do).

Another example from a retailing environment would be serious surf shops with a strong surfer culture. Kopelman, Feldman, McDaniel, and Hall (2012) describe the example of a surfer named Mitch who is dedicated to the values and ethics of the surf community. He sees his work in a surf shop as something like a calling, dedicated to helping customers pursue their passions in the most authentic way. One is bombarded with artifacts of the surf culture when entering a shop—the equipment, the clothes, the language, and the pace.

Mitch, in a holistic way, sees a strong connection between the surf lifestyle, the sport of surfing, and his job in the surf retail store. Kopelman, Feldman, McDaniel, and Hall (2012) describe the ways that Mitch proactively made career choices over the years in ways that let him stay true to these surf values:

“This holistic approach to his career helps him serve customers with informative authenticity. Another arena in which this approach helps Mitch is in relation to hiring decisions. In fact, Mitch believes that how someone surfs signals what kind of coworker he or she will be:

“When you surf, your personality comes out. You can learn a lot about somebody that you don't know by

just surfing with them. The beliefs and attitude on the water also surface on the sales floor. If they're all gnarly out in the water, very talkative and loud—you kinda might not wanna work with them. But somebody that shares waves, that says 'Go! Go! Go!' and somebody that's stoked when they see you on the wave, you go 'I'd like to work with that guy!' You can picture a team player, jumping in when you're overwhelmed, swamped with two or three customers...you can trust that they got your back."

(Kopelman et al., 2012, pp. 6, 7)

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In contrast to the protean culture, the organizational career culture would be one in which the artifacts, values, and basic assumptions all are oriented toward the following career characteristics:

- Long-term tenure in that organization
- Objective measures of success, such as promotions and financial rewards
- Career choices and job assignments are influenced primarily by the organization, based upon the needs of the organization
- Low power by the employee to influence career and job choices
- Low awareness and concern by the organization for the personal or family needs of the employee (Hall, 2002)

Artifacts that support the organizational career culture would include events and objects that celebrate long service with the organization, such as service anniversaries (e.g., 25 year dinners, with silver cups or ship's clocks), as well as promotion parties, larger offices, and special privileges, such as reserved parking, for people who attain a high-ranking position in the organization. The concomitant values would include loyalty and sacrifice of personal and family needs in the service of meeting one's job responsibilities. The basic assumptions would include the idea that a "good" employee is a loyal and self-sacrificing person and that long-service employees rightly deserve more rewards and benefits than shorter-service employees.

Accordingly, an organizational career climate is defined as perceptions of organizational support for long-tenured careers and behaviors that demonstrate loyalty to the organization. The organizational career climate again would reflect employee perceptions that are commensurate with the organizational career culture. That is, in an organizational career climate employees would perceive that long service is, in fact, rewarded. That is, employees would believe that long tenure would be a positive factor in promotion decisions, as well as in layoff decisions, should staffing cuts be necessary. (Many governmental organizations, with their Civil Service systems, would be examples of the traditional organizational career). In an organizational career climate, employees would also perceive that it would be career damaging to turn down positions that might conflict with their personal or family needs. Thus, overall, employees would perceive the organization's internal environment as being a climate for an organizational career.

It is important to note that the protean career culture and the organizational career culture are not the opposites of each other. The same is true for the protean and the organizational career climates. They are orthogonal (Briscoe, Hall, & Frautschy DeMuth, 2006). It is possible that a person could be very self-directed and values driven and still have strong personal values around advancement and financial rewards as representing success. And the person could make his or her own personal choices that would subordinate personal and family needs in the service of these organizationally-based rewards. One example that comes to mind is people who work in very demanding areas like investment banking and management consulting with elite firms, who see the personal sacrifices that they will make early in their careers as paying off with the opportunity to retire early, in their 40's, at which time they will pursue their protean dreams that go beyond money and power.

Inclusive and Exclusive Career Climates

As populations become more mobile and societies more diverse, the trend in organizations has been to reflect this diversity in their workforce. Although progress has been made in the recognition given to gender and ethnic diversity in the workforce, social identity (e.g., age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and nationality) continues to be a factor that has been identified as a systematic barrier for career advancement. The dimensions of inclusive

and exclusive career climates are at the heart of these concerns.

Inclusive Career Culture and Climate

An inclusive career culture contains the basic assumption that there should be equal career opportunities and greater support for employees who are underrepresented in the organization. In an inclusive career culture, the assumption is that demographic diversity and the career success of minorities is important for business success. The artifacts that reflect these assumptions are diversity networks, affinity and resource groups, diversity committees, inclusion councils, diversity awards, and inclusive career practices such as equal employment opportunity.

Although at first glance, inclusive career artifacts such as affinity groups (e.g., a Hispanic employee resource group) might be singling out a particular identity group; from a careers perspective, they serve an inclusive career function by providing support and development for employees who are underrepresented in the organization and in management in particular. For example, GLEAM (Gay Lesbian Employees Advocates and More) is an affinity group at Eli Lilly and Company that provides coaching and career support for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered employees. Diversity awards are another example of inclusive career artifacts. At Marriott International, awards are given in recognition of business units or departments that promote diversity and inclusive career practices.

An inclusive career culture is a culture that values diversity, but goes beyond that to ensure that diversity of representation is supported by inclusive opportunities for career development. An organization can have a diverse culture but not an inclusive career culture—this is when the organization has a diverse employee base but not equal opportunities for employees to develop and advance. Law firms are a good example of this. Research by Burke and McKeen (1996) reveals that many law firms tend to hire equal numbers of men and women but fall short of career practices that support the promotion of women to higher ranks. Organizations with inclusive career cultures enact a value for equal opportunity by actively promoting career advancement through policies and practices that affirm the social identities of its employees. These policies and practices, in turn, are seen by employees as elements of the climate that reveal the values of the organization.

As a manifestation of an inclusive career culture, an inclusive climate is one in which there are shared perceptions of inclusive career pathways and support within the organization. Such perceptions include perceptions that there are equal career opportunities for employees regardless of their social identity or background, that there is a diverse representation of identity groups at all levels of the organization, that diversity is valued, and that there are targeted efforts to recruit and retain minority employees.

The strength of an inclusive career climate is subject to the level of agreement in which employees perceive organizational practices and procedures as being inclusive. For example, a study by Parker, Baltes, and Christiansen (1997) found that positive reactions toward affirmative action policies were stronger for minority members than for white males. The diverse reactions to affirmative action provide one example of how the climate for career inclusion might vary by policies on issues that are socially polarized. Although identity-blind practices have been found to be better received by both minority and majority employees (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995), they are less effective in creating a demographically diverse workforce.

An inclusive career climate is more than just the sum of policies such as equal employment or affirmative action. Climate perceptions are also affected by social interactions and observations, and this is shaped by demographic diversity within the organization. For example, Riordan and Shore (1997) found that in an organization managed by an exclusively Caucasian management team, African American employees perceived fewer career opportunities than Caucasian employees. Similarly, in organizations in which there are no women in management, women employees will rate their organizations low on career inclusion, and conversely, high on exclusion.

Exclusive Career Culture and Climate

An exclusive career culture contains the basic assumption that it is acceptable for career resources to be disproportionately allocated or that members of certain social identity groups are more likely to perform better at work than others. This assumption is manifested in practices that selectively hire, promote, and privilege members of certain social identity groups over others. These practices are often a manifestation of dominant social norms,

for example gender inequalities or ethnic stereotypes.

Artifacts of exclusive career cultures include exclusive hiring practices, discriminatory lawsuits, the presence of “old boys clubs”, and “glass ceilings” for groups of employees. For example, studies of women surgeons have revealed the symbol of an “old boys’ club” has come to characterize the career culture for surgeons (Garguilo et al., 2006). Oakley (2000, p. 328) describes the old boy network as “an informal male social system that stretches within and across organizations, and excludes less powerful males and all women from membership.” The members of the network reinforce the social structure of inequality wherein entry to the elite membership is easier for men than women. Similar forms of exclusion are present in law firms (Gorman & Kmec, 2009) and accounting firms (Anderson-Gough, Grey & Robson, 2005), particularly as it concerns the career of women professionals.

An exclusive career climate is one characterized by shared perceptions that groups of employees are systematically disadvantaged in their careers as a result of their social identity. Avery and McKay (2006) described a number of cues that employees and prospective employees use to inform such perceptions. These cues that employees look to in determining whether the climate is an inclusive or exclusive one include targeted efforts designed to recruit minorities, promote emphasizing equal employment opportunity, and make managers accountable for the success of diversity initiatives. McKay and Avery (2006) further propose that the presence of minority employees in an organization can send “direct and unambiguous” cues about an organization’s approach to diversity. When these cues are missing or conflicting, an employee is likely to perceive a career climate that is more exclusive than inclusive.

An exclusive career climate exists when employees perceive that collectively the organizational management practices are biased. The climate for exclusion may also vary by levels within the organization. Hersch and Viscusi (1996) found that even in organizations with upward mobility for women, these mobility structures tend to be on job ladders with little opportunity for women to advance to management ranks. Baldi and McBrier (1997) found that determinants of promotion differ for different racial groups; minority employees had proportionately less opportunity for promotion in a firm with a high percentage of minority employees.

The presence of exclusive career climates suggests a reproduction of societal inequalities into the workplace. Whereas extant research focuses primarily on the categories of race and gender, the authors suggest that physical disability, sexual identity, age and generational differences are other important societal variables to consider. In addition, educational credentials are increasingly becoming a proxy for assessing organizational talent, and this can lead to the exclusion of capable individuals from career opportunities, as a result of organizations that make career decisions solely based on credentials instead of holistic assessments of ability. It is also possible for an organization to have a culture that values career inclusion but falls short in enacting this in practice. This could be a result of managers who enact exclusive career practices in their selection and promotion, in conflict with the inclusive values of the organization. This would in turn weaken perceptions of inclusivity within the organization and give rise to perceptions of an exclusive career climate. Further research is needed to situate career climates within this context and in particular unpack the processes by which career exclusion in organization is linked to broader social inequalities, organizational policies, and managerial practices.

Learning and Performance Career Climates

There has been discussion in recent years about two different types of personal orientation that can motivate individuals in their job behavior (Briscoe, Hall, & Frautschy DeMuth; 2006). One is a *learning goal orientation*, in which the person is motivated to explore and master the responsibilities and expectations of the job. A quite different approach is a *performance goal orientation*, in which the person strives to achieve a high level of performance in the job. The latter approach is more narrowly focused on specific demands of the job, whereas the former entails more general inquiry and exploration.

Career Learning Culture and Climate

Extending the reasoning in the previous section argues that there are career cultures and climates that represent either a learning or performance orientation toward career advancement. A career learning culture contains the basic assumption that continual exploration and mastery are required and essential in an employee’s career. Artifacts of this culture include formal policies and organizational resources allocated to employee training and

development. Expect to see this culture reflected through artifacts such as the large organizational learning centers found at Boeing and Deloitte. In addition, job rotation programs are increasingly used to facilitate cross-functional learning. At Cisco, the organization has taken this further by supporting career development through short-term attachments with nonprofit organizations. Cisco employees are given the opportunity to serve in a range of 1- to 2-year volunteer assignments in a nonprofit organization, matched to their professional expertise and the strategic priorities of Cisco. Through placement in experiences that hone and shape existing abilities, participants are able to further develop and acquire mastery in new and different situations and as a result develop in ways that they may not have in their existing roles (Yip & Wilson, 2010).

With the increasingly global nature of work and careers, organizations are looking to cross-cultural assignments as a way to develop future leaders and to foster a global mindset toward careers. Companies such as IBM, UPS, Unilever, and Ernst & Young offer cross-cultural learning assignments, with opportunities for employees to work in emerging economies and to expand their horizons. IBM's Corporate Service Corps places high-potential IBM employees in emerging and developing countries. This experience exposes managers to diverse cultures, policy environments, and societal expectations. At the end of the experience, the employees return to their respective offices with broader career perspectives and mastery of skills that will allow them to excel in international roles.

Another example of a career learning artifact comes from Google. At Google, there is a "Whoops! Award," to recognize the biggest mistake of the week. The award is done in a humorous way, with a stuffed animal passed around to the winners. The idea is to help other people learn from mistakes that are made. Such rewards and recognition for learning are clear artifacts of a career learning culture.

Accordingly, a career learning climate is characterized by shared perceptions that career exploration and mastery are valued within the organization. Perhaps the clearest example of an organization with a strong career learning climate would be a high-tech start-up. At this stage in the firm's growth, which Adizes (1979) has described as the "go-go" stage of development, there would be minimal structure and a great emphasis on learning and experimentation. Such a climate could also entail procedures for people accessing others (Dalton, 1999), creating a spirit of collaboration. In contrast to a performance career climate, where relationships are viewed as more instrumental and oriented toward the purpose of getting work done, a learning climate is one where relationships are perceived as developmental and oriented toward personal and professional growth. The presence of mentoring programs and career coaching are examples of artifacts related to a career learning culture and climate. Sports teams are a good example of this, with coaches whose roles are to help the players master specialized facets of their capabilities.

Another characteristic of a career learning climate is the perception of organizational support for learning. Universities are an example of this, wherein employees are encouraged to learn, and university employees (not just faculty) are given benefits to attend courses and professional development events. Management support for learning is also an important characteristic of a career learning climate. This kind of climate for learning is found in the recommendations of advocates for new leadership styles with high levels of employee empowerment and engagement (Collins & Hansen, 2011; Quinn, 1996; Quinn & Quinn, 2009; Senge, Smith, & Kruschwitz, 2010).

Although the characteristics of a career learning climate might be closely aligned to a protean climate, the distinctions between the two lie in the structure and design of learning opportunities. In a protean climate, career learning is self-directed and oriented toward individual values and goals. In contrast, a learning climate can be organization focused where learning is directed by the organization and explicitly oriented toward organizational goals. Differences in the design of job rotations are an example of distinctions between the two climates. In a career learning climate, job rotations are assigned and expected of individuals, for them to master various career functions within the organization. The Singapore government, for example, has an elaborate system of job rotations for developing public sector leaders (Yip & Wilson, 2008). These rotations are assigned and centrally planned. In protean climates, employees are given latitude to request and shape their job rotation. For example, at Eli Lilly, job rotations are not a formal program but rather a developmental benefit that individuals can request (Campion, Cheraskin & Stevens, 1994).

Career Performance Culture and Climate

A career performance culture is a culture in which career advancement is tightly coupled with performance outcomes and individual achievement is seen as the pathway to career mobility and success. There is a deep

assumption and belief in meritocracy, that individuals should advance based on individual achievement and effort. This culture is characterized by systems of contest mobility (Turner, 1960), with an emphasis on open competition between employees. Other defining characteristics include high levels of social comparison, manifested in the form of forced employee rankings, differentiated career pathways, and disproportionate career support for high performers. Artifacts of a performance-oriented career culture include up or out work contracts, high potential programs, pay for performance, spot bonuses, forced rankings, and a system of recognizing “star” performers. Another artifact of a performance-oriented career culture is the presence of career timetables (Lawrence, 1984)—strong organizational norms and markers that signal when an employee is “ahead of schedule,” “on schedule,” or “behind schedule” in their career. Such implicit timetables are tied to performance outcomes and what individuals need to do to get ahead.

General Electric is an example of an organization with a strong performance-oriented career culture, with its very results-oriented performance management system and practice of letting go employees that are at the bottom of the performance distribution. Other examples of performance-oriented career cultures include professional service firms and sales-oriented organizations in which career advancement and success are based primarily on performance outcomes of revenue generation and individual achievement. In the area of compensation and benefits, incentive compensation schemes with a high percentage of contingent pay would be clear artifacts related to a performance culture.

Accordingly, a performance-oriented career climate is characterized by shared perceptions in career advancement based on performance outcomes. An example would be how performance rewards and bonuses are perceived within an organization. A strong performance climate is one in which performance rewards and bonuses are perceived as important indicators of career success and progress. A weak performance climate is one in which employees have mixed perceptions about the use of such rewards. Accordingly, a performance-oriented career climate would be a good fit for a person with a high need for achievement, someone who loves to be measured by a clear scorecard and is driven to excel against that scorecard. For example, Burke and Descza (1982) found that individuals with Type A behaviors were more attracted to organizations with high performance standards and rewards systems that recognized individual achievement.

In contrast to a learning-oriented career climate, a performance climate is characterized by a low tolerance for mistakes, wherein performance setbacks are viewed as career barriers and derailers rather than opportunities for learning and development. Although a performance climate may serve to attract achievement-oriented employees and foster such behaviors at work, it can also have the unintended consequence of fostering maladaptive response from employees who are struggling to perform, resulting in a feeling of “learned helplessness” (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) about their career.

To conclude this section, it is possible to assess the climate of an organization along dimensions that are congruent with the career orientations of the individual members of that organization. And, furthermore, the degree of alignment between the employee’s career orientation and the career climate of the organization can be measured. An additional point is that it seems logical that there might be positive outcomes related to a strong alignment between climate and career, as mentioned in the introduction to this paper. Certainly, one would expect to see more positive employee work attitudes under conditions of alignment, and also expect that performance (of individuals and of organizations) would be higher under alignment conditions, as well.

Organizational Career Signals and Climate

What are the organizational determinants of a career climate? Multiple factors within the organization are likely to influence member’s perceptions of an organization’s career climate. From an information processing perspective, these perceptions are influenced by the saliency of available information as well as the ways individuals process and interpret this information. As such, the variety of information signals that are monitored, interpreted, and incorporated in relation to career behaviors at work must be considered. A signaling theory perspective can help us do so.

Signaling theory suggests that people and organizations constantly send information signals about themselves and what constitutes social value (Spence, 1973). A signal is an interaction between two parties. People and organizations constantly send signals about themselves, whether intentionally or otherwise. Such signals can

significantly shape employee perceptions and behavior. For example, Aryee, Chay, and Chew (1996) suggest that positive reinforcement through an organizational reward system can enhance career mentoring in organizations, presumably by signaling mentoring as a desirable behavior. Similarly, in a study of financial service firms, Schneider, Wheeler and Cox (1992) found that HR practices (selection, training, performance appraisal, pay, and benefits) shape how employees interpret the organization's climate for customer service.

According to signaling theory, organizational characteristics can serve as "signals" for characteristics that are important and desired from employers (Connelly et al., 2011; Rynes et al., 1991). Suazo and colleagues (2009) propose that employees rely on signals associated with their employers' HRM practices, such as training and compensation, to formulate their perceptions of their psychological and legal contracts. They interpret these signals as information about the organization's intentions, actions, and characteristics (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). The following are organizational signals that the authors propose have a significant impact on career climates: organizational reputation, employment contracts, training and development, rewards and recognition, and management and leadership. Each of these is discussed below.

Organizational Reputation

An organization's public reputation, such as being named as Fortune's "Best Companies to Work For" or in Diversity Inc.'s "Top 50 Companies for Diversity," is a signal to employees of how the organization is perceived by external observers. An organization's reputation signals what employees can expect from the organization and what employers are obliged to deliver. For example, IBM has received numerous awards and has become well known for its inclusive career climate for employees from different ethnic and national backgrounds. Companies like IBM take this further in making explicit how such inclusive practices have driven their business success.

Reputation signals are an important mechanism to the ASA cycle (Schneider, 1987). Providing clear signals about organizational values and ideologies can help attract like-minded individuals, as well as discourage those who are unlikely to fit into the culture from applying to work at the organization. In turn, the perceived similarity of values between employees who are attracted to the organization creates a reinforcing loop to the climate.

Employment Contracts

Employment contracts can communicate intentional and unintentional information about organizational careers and thus shape employee expectations. An up-or-out contract for example can signal an organizational career climate. Up-or-out contracts state that if an employee is not promoted within a certain interval of time, the employee will be asked to leave. Such contracts send a signal that employees must keep advancing in their careers. More than that, it sends a message of short-term payoffs and rapid advancement, which can foster a career culture of "ruthless opportunism" (Rosenbaum, 1989). Employees have little power to influence the direction of their career.

Conversely, employment contracts that convey trust and commitment signal the presence of protean career climates. For example, a flex-work contract, whereby employees are given the autonomy to choose where they work, signals a sense of trust in the employees and a responsibility that they have to manage their own careers. Similarly, an equal opportunity policy in hiring can send a strong signal that the organization is inclusive in its approach to careers.

Training and Development

Training and development initiatives offer important signals to employees on the organizational priorities (by types of training provided) and the target group of such priorities. For example, by providing leadership development and coaching to a specific group of "high potentials," a signal is sent that the identified group is being prepared for fast-tracked career opportunities. Similarly, by providing additional training and development for groups underrepresented in the ranks of management, the organization is signaling that it is taking an inclusive approach to career development (also see chapter 3 by Feldman and O'Neill on socialization and training in organizations).

There are various examples of how organizations have used training and development to shape their career climates. Examples includes the use of career coaching, job rotations, career communities (Parker et al., 2004), and developmental career planning to broaden the scope of career options for employees, and thus signal a

protean approach to career development. In developing inclusive career climates, organizations have paired minority group employees in mentoring relationships with more senior members of the dominant group, to foster better intergroup understanding and also facilitate career development for underrepresented groups in management.

Rewards and Compensation

Rewards and compensation can signal career success and prospects for employees, and also represent what the psychological contract is between employees and the organization (Rousseau & Ho, 2000). Such signals communicate to employees that they are competent and valuable parts of the organization, which in turn can shape their career orientations. For example, retirement benefits and pensions can send signals that an employee is valued by the organization and therefore can expect a long-term relationship with the organization. Similarly, compensation on the basis of seniority would signal an organizational career orientation in which long tenure in an organization is expected and valued.

Rousseau and Ho (2000) make an important distinction between monetary and nonmonetary compensation. They suggest that nonmonetary compensation, in the form of benefits such as social events for employees, is more likely to signal a relational and long-term contract between employees and their organization. On monetary compensation, organizations are increasingly turning to stock ownership as a way of signaling employee ownership and a certain career status conferred onto employees with such privilege. Similarly, pay incentives such as merit pay increases may send the signal that the employee has stable or long-term employment with the organization (Suazo et al., 2009).

Management and Leadership

Managers are primary agents by which employees obtain information about organizational priorities and directives. Employees look to their managers for signals on how they are progressing and the career opportunities they should pursue. Through performance appraisals, managers can signal how an employee's career is viewed within the organization (see chapter 5 by London & Mone). Through advice giving and feedback, managers send important signals about career directions and the career climate of the organization for particular employees. For example, a manager that encourages career exploration and lateral moves is signaling a protean approach to careers as opposed to one that seeks to direct employees along organizationally prescribed career paths.

In addition, the composition of upper management and an organization's leadership team can signal to employees the presence of inclusive or exclusive career climates. For example, in a US-based corporation the presence of international executives in upper management is a signal to other international employees that the opportunities are present for them to advance to a similar level within the organization. In some organizations, however, the message from leadership is mixed. They say there are good promotion opportunities for employees all over the world, yet everyone at the top level and on the board is an American. Senior leadership may espouse the message of an inclusive international career climate, but the theory-in-use says only Americans get to the top. The examples above suggest how the increasing complexities of the work environment subject employees to a variety of different signals that suggest competing approaches to career and career development. Understanding these signals can help further unpack the ASA mechanisms (Schneider, 1987) that consequently define the strength of an organization's career climate.

The Strength of a Career Climate

Organizational scholars have begun to differentiate between strong and weak climates (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004; Schneider et al., 2002) by the shared perceptions of organizational actors. The notion of climate strength is derived from Mischel's (1973) discussion of strong and weak situations. An organization with a strong climate is likely to reflect uniform behavior among members. In a strong climate one would see a stronger similarity of personalities and career interests among the organization's members (Schneider, et al., 1998). In contrast, weak situations are ambiguous and do not generate uniform expectancies concerning the desired behavior (Ostroff et al., 2003). More specifically, Bowen and Ostroff (2004) identified distinctiveness, consistency, and consensus among human resource systems as critical factors in determining the strength of an organization's climate (see

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also chapter 26 on climate and culture strength).

Career climates are weakened when messages from multiple sources are contradictory or inconsistent. Consider the following example: A company may espouse the protean characteristics of self-directed and values-oriented careers but their incentive structure rewards employees who pursue traditional career paths within the organization. This set of mixed signals results in an ambiguous climate toward career success. Similarly, in a study on career self-management programs, Kossek and colleagues (1998) found that the programs, when conducted as an isolated human resource strategy, had the opposite result of decreased self-management intentions. The study suggests a situation in which the signal communicated through the training might have been in conflict with other signals in the work place, the consequences of which result in a backlash effect on the career intervention.

The danger of mixed career signals and a weak career climate is that employees are caught in a double bind (Bateson, 1972; Bowen and Ostroff, 2004). A double bind is characterized by a mixed-message situation in which a person feels trapped or unable to act. It is also described as a “damned if you do and damned if you don’t situation,” in which a person feels caught in between two competing demands. For example, an employee in an “up or out” organization with a manager who encourages career exploration is caught in the mixed signals between an organizational and protean approach to career development. Here are some other examples of double bind messages that occur in weak career climates:

We want you to grow up in this organization.	You are either or out.
We are an equal opportunity employer.	Upper management is an old boys’ club.
We support a diversity of career paths.	Some paths are more valued than others.
We want you to commit to a career with us.	We cannot ensure a long-term commitment to you.

The above examples can be disconcerting but common in organizational life. This is a major dilemma that organizations have to address in order to strengthen their career culture and climate, and ultimately prevent unintended consequences. As Hennestad (1990, p. 269) cautions, “the more double bind situations a person experiences, the more the person could start to see his or her experiential world in a double bind pattern...A common reaction will then be withdrawal from the situation in the sense of reducing the amount of participation in constructing the environment.”

Weak career climates and double bind situations can result in indecisive and unproductive careers. It can also be viewed as a breach in the psychological contract between organizations and employees, resulting in a sense of betrayal and increased motivations to leave the organization. It is then necessary for organizations to identify such competing signals and to strive for consistency in the messages conveyed. Organizations can also seek to ensure coordination between managers and other organizational agents who are responsible for creating and communicating such messages (e.g., recruiters). Human resource leaders should also consider the signals that are transmitted across organizational initiatives, to ensure an alignment in career strategy, process, and practice.

Alignment between Organizational Career Climates and Individual Orientations

The authors would argue that when climate and careers are aligned, organizations and individual members perform more effectively. Support for this idea goes back to a basic idea in career theory and research that when there is a good fit between an individual’s career orientation and the occupational environment, that person is more likely to be satisfied and effective. This is the basic idea of Super’s (1957) notion of career development as a process of synthesizing the person’s career identity and the occupational role. It is also what studies of Holland’s (1997) model have found, that satisfaction with career choice is higher when there is a good fit between personal orientation and the vocational role. At the level of personality, testing a central proposition of the ASA model, Schneider, Smith, Taylor, and Fleenor (1998) found evidence of congruence between a person’s Myers-Briggs type and the dominant type that characterizes the overall organization, as well as the industry. These issues are

explored more in Schneider and Smith (2004).

At the organizational level, the notion of fit is supported by various contingency theories, whether the theory deals with organization design (e.g., Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967) or leadership (Fiedler, 1964; Hersey & Blanchard, 1993; House, 1996; Vroom & Yetton, 1973). There are also more practice-oriented organization-level fit models, such as McKinsey's 7-S model and, more recently, the balanced scorecard (Kaplan, 2005). These models also assert that when different individual and organizational elements are in alignment, the overall system is more effective.

How can one assess the degree of alignment between careers and climate in an organization? One way is to attend to the organizational signaling process discussed earlier. When signals are strong and consistent, this means that the organization has a clear identity, which means that the climate is likely to be strong. And when the climate is strong, there is a secure base there in which individual members can ground their careers. On the other hand, when the organization is sending weak or mixed signals, there is a less secure foundation upon which individual members can base their careers—and thus less alignment between climate and careers.

At this point one can also circle back to the concept of organizational culture. The culture, with its three levels of phenomena (artifacts, values, and basic assumptions), can provide tools for detecting mixed signals. Some organizations make claims to operate in positive ways (e.g., highly ethical or socially responsible behavior). What if a job candidate wanted to have some way of testing the extent to which the organization's management actually "walks the talk?" We could examine the consistency of three basic levels, the artifacts, the values, and the basic assumptions. The "talk" in this case might be artifacts such as the formal mission statement or stated values on the company's web page. The "walk" would be the actual decisions and investments made by the company, compared to its stated values. Inferences could also be made, based on the company's practices and programs, about the basic assumptions that drive these practices and programs. And then once the basic assumptions were clear, we could examine how well they line up with the stated values. The more these levels of the culture are in synch, the stronger the climate would be, and the more likely it is that the climate of the organization and the careers of the members will be aligned. Thus, an examination of the organization's culture provides a way of getting beneath the surface and subjecting the fit between climate and careers to critical analysis.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, this paper has been an exploration of the implications of a new concept: the career climate of an organization. Career climate has been defined as the shared perceptions of *observable* policies, practices, and procedures that are related to career development and success. To illustrate the meaning of a career climate, the authors discussed examples of some contemporary types—protean and organizational climates, exclusive and inclusive climates, and learning and performance climates. The characteristics of these climates are summarized in Table 12.1. The antecedents of these climates were discussed in the form of organizational signals and how mixed signals can result in weak career climates, with consequences on organizational identity and identification.

One of the methods of assessing the nature of a career climate is the examination of signaling in the organization. Because there are rarely explicit messages about what kind of career behaviors are valued in an organization, individuals use signals for communicating about and making meaning of the true nature of the career climate. It is also possible to distinguish between strong and weak career climates. In strong climates, there is a concomitantly strong ASA process, with strong socialization. This produces a stronger alignment between the climate and the employees' careers. Because we would assume that stronger alignment leads to more positive outcomes for both organizations and people, the combination of weak signals and weak climates is not a healthy situation, either for the organization or for its members.

Future Directions

Because the intersection of organizational climates and careers is such uncharted territory, there is a broad landscape of future needs for both scholarship and practice that need to be explored. The following questions need to be addressed, starting with the issue of alignment that was just discussed.

1. *What factors contribute to a high level of alignment between the organization's career climate and the*

individual career orientations of its members? And what are the consequences of high or low alignment?

These are basic questions about the functioning of the career climate model in Figure 12.1. All of the links in the model represent possible hypothesized relationships to be tested. One example of a study that provides some insights into this question is Petriglieri's (2011) examination of the loss of career identity by BP employees following the recent spill in the Gulf of Mexico, as a result of their dramatically-altered view of the culture and signals emanating from the BP organization.

2. How do we operationally define and measure specific career-relevant climates and their corresponding career orientations? At this point, we seem to know more about how to measure certain career orientations than we know about their related climates. For example, we have tested measures of protean and organizational career orientations (Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth, 2006), as well as for learning and performance orientations (Vandewalle, 1997). On the climate side, we are probably further along on elements in the area of exclusivity and inclusion than we are for the other career-related climates that we have discussed here. For example, the work of Cox and Blake (1991) and Cox (1991) has offered enough specific aspects of organizational characteristics related to diversity to provide a good start at generating items for a climate instrument for inclusion and exclusion.

3. What are the most important institutional and organizational factors that affect the organizational signals that shape career climates? In other words, what are some of the key antecedents to our career climate model shown in Figure 12.1? More specifically, how does a particular leader, such as a new CEO, affect the career signaling process through actions such as introducing new reward systems, selection processes, and talent development systems? How does the state of the economy bear upon the dynamics shown in Figure 12.1? And how do industry practices and occupational or professional socialization affect signals that communicate meaning about a "good" career?

4. What other relevant types of career climates should we be examining? This question is on the same order as the classic question of how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. There are as many types of career climates as there are ways of describing human career motivations. But what are the most significant and useful kinds of career orientations in contemporary organizations? One fruitful area would be climates for objective vs. subjective success? That is, what aspects of an organization's culture and internal environment would promote members' pursuits of their unique passions, as opposed to glorifying external measures of attainment, such as pay and advancement? This might be thought of as a "climate with a heart" (Kopelman, Feldman, McDaniel, & Hall, 2012). Also, for people interested in global careers, we would encourage research into international climates. This leads us to the next question....

5. What are the ways that different national cultures affect organizational career climates? Recent work on cross-cultural careers has begun to identify the ways that career motivations and concerns vary across national boundaries (Briscoe, Hall, & Mayrhofer, 2012), but we have just scratched the surface in this area. What aspects of career climate might be unique to specific country or regional cultures, and which ones might be universal? For example, one meaning of career success that Briscoe and colleagues (2012) found to be universal was achievement. Does this suggest that there is such a thing as a "global achievement career climate" that exists in organizations all around the world? On the other hand, do specific countries (or some countries) have their own unique organizational career climates that shape their citizens' careers?

These are just a few of the most obvious questions that come to mind when we think of the intersection of organizational climates and careers. But, as mentioned, this is new and wide open territory. More inquiry into the existence of career climates, along with more explicit attempts to strengthen and communicate the functioning of an organization's career climate and reduce mixed signals, will create more healthy and vibrant work environments.

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Douglas T. Hall

Douglas T. Hall, School of Management, Boston University

Jeffrey Yip

Jeffrey Yip, School of Management, Boston University

