

Chapter 7

Career Stagnation: Underlying Dilemmas and Solutions in Contemporary Work Environments

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Introduction

Imagine a young professional called Steve who has received a master's degree in business administration and who happened to get a promising job. The first 2 years of his professional experience were good. He received positive feedback from his supervisors and he felt good with his career development. However, in his third year, Steve noticed that others around him got promoted, whereas he remained on his position. Steve was very disappointed about the lack of promotion, but did not dare to ask his supervisors for reasons. Steve did not trust in his capabilities anymore, and as he felt badly about his career development, he made more mistakes and consequently received negative feedback from his supervisors. Steve was given less opportunities to solve challenging tasks, and his learning opportunities and mastery experiences were reduced. At the end of his third year, Steve was disappointed, his assertiveness was reduced, and he doubted whether he was competent enough for his job.

Imagine next a young professional called Laura who has graduated in law studies with distinction and started her career in one of the most prestigious countrywide law firms. At first, she was just happy that she had received this good job immediately after graduation. However, after having worked in the law firm for 1 year, she realized that she was seldom invited to customer meetings and that the tasks assigned to her were not very challenging. Laura received no feedback from her supervisors. She felt that her supervisors wanted her to stay at the position she had and did not want her to move up the career ladder.

Finally, imagine Mark – an engineer – who started his career 1 year ago in a large manufacturing company. When he started in his organization, he noticed that his colleagues worked under high time pressure with low job control and that task ambiguity was high. At first, he told himself that every organization has its advantages and disadvantages and that he just had to get accustomed to the situation. However, after a couple of weeks, some of his colleagues often blamed him for mistakes the team made due to time pressure. Moreover, when Mark's colleagues went to lunch, they never asked him if he would like to join them, even when he was standing next to them. Often, his colleagues also made jokes about his appearance, his private situation and his

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comments on work-related issues. The situation became worse from week to week and after half a year; Mark often felt nervous, insecure, and helpless; and he could not concentrate on his work anymore. When he was very desperate about his situation, Mark decided to talk to one of his supervisors. But instead of offering help, his supervisor told Mark that he could not imagine that his colleagues acted the way he has described the situation and that Mark had to solve the situation by himself. These are just three examples of employees who experienced career stagnation.

Most people experience phases in which they do not move ahead or in which they feel that they are not making career progress. These phases can be factual, for example, when someone does not get promoted; they can also be a subjective interpretation, for example, when a person has unrealistic career goals, or a generally pessimistic worldview. In this chapter, we are concerned with *career stagnation* as the involuntary – at least temporary – end of one’s career development. Career stagnation has a negative impact on a person’s quality of life. This negative impact will be the stronger the longer this career stagnation is experienced and the more a person feels unable to overcome it. Career stagnation will become a dilemma when an individual is not able to cope with it and/or if every means of dealing with career stagnation has both desired and undesired consequences.

Career stagnation can have several reasons that may be located in the person (e.g., self-efficacy issues, goal issues) or in interpersonal factors (e.g., dual-career issues), in the organization (e.g., discrimination at work, lack of socialization, bullying), or in the labor market situation (e.g., economic meltdowns, changing job requirements). The above examples illustrate that reasons for career stagnation can be manifold. Steve experienced career stagnation due to personal factors, i.e., a lack of self-efficacy which was, however, reinforced during his stay at his company. He became increasingly insecure, and this had negative consequences on his performance. Laura had a good start, but then she received no more support from her company, she was given no feedback, and she was not promoted; Mark, finally, was exposed to serious social stress with again negative consequences on his performance. He was the target of mobbing tactics and did not receive organizational support.

Moreover, career stagnation may result from only one reason (e.g., lack of self-efficacy) or from multiple reasons (e.g., lack of self-efficacy and lack of support). In some cases, it may be easier to overcome career stagnation (e.g., competence training, antidiscrimination strategies) than in others (e.g., career stagnation due to economic crises, “dead-end jobs”). Unclear goals, for instance, can be relatively easily clarified. However, it is much more difficult to solve career stagnation for people with low human potential or in times of economic crises.

This chapter deals with dilemmas associated with career stagnation and thereby focuses on objective (e.g., promotion stagnation) and subjective (e.g., dissatisfaction) aspects of career stagnation. In the *first section* of the chapter, specific *person-level* and *interpersonal-level* dilemmas (self-efficacy-related, goal-related, attitude-related, dual-career-related) are identified and possible influences on objective and subjective career stagnation will be addressed. In the *second section* of the chapter, specific *organization-level dilemmas* (lack of support, bullying/mobbing, stereotypes/discrimination) are identified and again influences on objective and subjective career stagnation are addressed. In the *third section* of the chapter, *interventions* to overcome these dilemmas will be presented (e.g., self-efficacy and self-management trainings, career counseling, mentoring, anti-mobbing/anti-bullying strategies, recruitment strategies for dual-career couples, and antidiscrimination strategies). Throughout this chapter, we will refer to *unethical behavior* as the injury of the employees’ rights of *balance, respect, responsibility, autonomy, participation, justice, and voice*. More specifically, we will identify topics in which these rights may be ignored easily by the employer and/or the employee, and we will give recommendations on how to deal with these potentially unethical workplace situations. Further topics that may be relevant in regard to career stagnation such as job insecurity, unemployment, or dead-end jobs will not be discussed as they are beyond the scope of this chapter.

Reasons for Career Stagnation

Career Stagnation Related to Individual Factors

Many individual difference variables have been related to work behavior (Hall, 2002; Landy & Conte, 2007). Prominent and well-researched constructs in this domain have been *person-job fit* (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005), different forms of *commitment* (Vandenberghe, Klein, Becker, & Meyer, 2009), *personality* (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999), *self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1986), *goals* (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Locke & Latham, 1990), *adaptability* (Rottinghaus, Day, & Borgen, 2005), *optimism* (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008), and *career attitudes* (Briscoe, Hall, & FrautschyDeMuth, 2006). We will here exemplarily focus on two of the most prominent constructs in the tradition of sociocognitive theorizing (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), i.e., self-efficacy and goals as well as on *boundaryless* and *protean* career attitudes which are two new constructs that recently gained much attention in career research (Hall, 2002).

Self-efficacy issues. *Self-efficacy* is defined as individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to perform some behavior or to meet a standard (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997) can be conceptualized on different levels of specificity. On the broadest level, generalized self-efficacy is sometimes seen as a personality facet (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003). On the most specific level, task-specific self-efficacy is most often used as a predictor of job performance (Smith, Kass, Rotunda, & Schneider, 2006; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). On a medium level of specificity and especially relevant for career progression are occupational self-efficacy (Abele, Stief, & Andrä, 2000), career decision self-efficacy (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996; Betz & Luzzo, 1996), as well as career self-efficacy in terms of Holland's vocational interest domains (Betz, 2007).

Occupational self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his/her capacities to perform occupational tasks and challenges successfully and to pursue an occupational career irrespective of the particular field of occupation (e.g., Abele et al., 2000). A study by Abele and Spurk (2009b) has shown that occupational self-efficacy right after graduation is a significant predictor for professionals' status and salary 3 years after graduation and for status change, salary change, and career satisfaction up to 7 years after graduation. This prospective longitudinal study clearly showed that self-efficacy beliefs result in positive outcomes, at least in the early career phase. Another study by Spurk and Abele (2011) revealed that more distal personality influences on career success (salary) were partly or fully mediated by occupational self-efficacy beliefs which, in turn, had an influence on work-related behavior, i.e., work hours. Both studies showed that occupational self-efficacy beliefs are resulting in positive objective and subjective career outcomes and therefore have a buffering effect on career stagnation (see also Day & Allen, 2004; Higgins, Dobrow, & Chandler, 2008; Kim, Mone, & Kim, 2008; Saks, 1995; Valcour & Ladge, 2008). Mechanisms possibly mediating the positive effect of self-efficacy beliefs on career progress are setting higher goals to oneself (Abele & Spurk, 2009b; Bandura, 1997), persisting longer on difficult tasks (Bandura, 1997), investing more effort (Fu, Richards, & Jones, 2009; Spurk & Abele, 2011), being more satisfied with their jobs (Judge & Bono, 2001), and showing higher performance and a better behavior choice (Sadri & Robertson, 1993).

Career decision self-efficacy (CDSE) is an "individual's degree of belief that he or she can successfully complete tasks necessary to making career decisions" (cf. Betz et al., 1996, p. 46). The construct is built of five key components. These are accurate self-appraisal, gathering occupational information, goal selection, making plans for the future, and problem solving (pertinent research see Gushue, Scanlan, Pantzer, & Clarke, 2006; Li & Wang, 2006; Luzzo, 1993a, 1993b; Niles & Sowa, 1992; Patel, Salahuddin, & O'Brien, 2008; Scott & Ciani, 2008; Shimomura, 2007; Wang, Jome, Haase, & Bruch, 2006).

Remember our above example of Steve, who was very dissatisfied with his lacking career development over a longer period of time. With higher occupational self-efficacy and with appropriate CDSE skills, he would have been better off. Confidence in capabilities and motivation to successfully solve his occupational tasks might have led him to increase effort, to seek information from others, and to better perform his job. Appropriate CDSE skills might have helped him to make fast and correct choices for his future career development. For instance, an intervention study by Gati, Gadassi, and Shemesh (2006) revealed that clients who completed a computer-assisted career decision-making system for better career decisions were significantly more satisfied with their occupation 6 years later.

To sum up, a combination of high occupational self-efficacy and high CDSE may be particularly helpful for overcoming career stagnation. People with high occupational self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to be on a successful career pathway, and therefore the probability of career stagnation is lower. However, if career stagnation is already evident, people with high CDSE are more likely to overcome problems by making fast and appropriate choices.

Goal issues. Goals are a prominent issue in work and organizational psychology (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Lens & Rand, 1997), and the majority of research was inspired by goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2002; Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981). According to this theory, goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. If goals have these attributes, performance in different work domains is usually higher compared to goals lacking these attributes (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984; Luzzo, 1993a; Niles & Sowa, 1992). In the context of career research, these attributes are also relevant, but in addition, goal content is an important issue. Career research is concerned with personal goals (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Maier & Brunstein, 2001), personal projects (Little, 1983), work values (Super & Zytowski, 1973), or specific goal content like, for instance, career-advancement goals (Frieze, Olson, Murrell, & Selvan, 2006; Locke & Latham, 2002; Spurk & Abele, 2011).

Recent research (Abele & Spurk, 2009b) on this topic identified a specific dilemma individuals with high career-advancement goals are confronted with. As would be predicted, both from sociocognitive theorizing (Lent et al., 1994) and from goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2002), high career-advancement goals had a positive impact on objective career success like salary and status. However, the impact of career-advancement goals on subjective success, i.e., career satisfaction, was negative. This is a challenging finding because it suggests an obvious dilemma. Maybe people with extremely high career-advancement goals also have extremely high expectations about their own career, so that these expectations can rarely be met.

Another explanation could be that career-advancement goals are not the type of goals that make people happy as might be suggested by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1980). Studies on life satisfaction show that personal life goals regarding money, power, status, and prestige are negatively related to life satisfaction (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Schmuck, Kasser, & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2004) or well-being like life satisfaction (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Schmuck et al., 2000; Sheldon et al., 2004). Further research about motive–goal congruence (Hofer & Chasiotis, 2003; Schultheiss, Jones, Davis, & Kley, 2008), goal compatibility (Brendl & Moskowitz, 2001; Chernev, 2009), and goal progress (Job & Brandstätter, 2009; Koestner, Otis, Powers, Pelletier, & Gagnon, 2008; Pomaki, Karoly, & Maes, 2009; Schmidt, Dolis, & Tolli, 2009) is needed to learn more about how this obvious dilemma of career-advancement goals can be solved.

To sum up, career-advancement goals seem to have both positive and negative effects. It is important to set oneself challenging career goals, but these career goals should be realistic because otherwise disappointment is inevitable. They should further not be the only goals because goals related to other domains of work (learning, mastery) and life (social relationships) are important for fostering individuals' well-being and life satisfaction.

Regarding goal issues, we see the rights for balance and voice most at risk to be violated by employers. If they impose work goals that are almost unattainable or that are so absorbing that other goals have no chance to be pursued, then they act unethically. Organizations and career developers are responsible to give the necessary autonomy and freedom to their employees to develop and pursue their own goals in addition to the goals provided by the organization. Externally set goals that swamp the employee either with respect to his/her time or regarding his/her competencies are unethical. For example, an employer who imposes extremely high and unattainable goals, or expects employees to work 60–70 h a week, or regards frequent travels with little spare time and time for recovery and refreshment as the norm, would behave unethically. In the above case of Laura, there was also a conflict between her individual goals and the organization's goal. Laura had strong career-advancement goals; she wanted to move ahead, to learn at work, and to obtain responsibility after some time on the job. However, the law firm wanted her to stay at the position she had and did not give her opportunities to engage in challenging and new situations. It is unethical not to inform Laura about the lack of career-advancement opportunities already during the selection process by providing a realistic job preview. Unethical goals impair the employee's well-being and performance. They may make people feel incompetent albeit they objectively are not; they may make people feel exhausted and deprived. After such an experience, it becomes extremely difficult to recover and to be successful in one's career. Therefore, we recommend that organizational career developers consider employees' competencies and career stage and that they set challenging and realistic goals. Consequently, employees can make mastery experiences which help them to flourish and develop. Moreover, organizations should inform employees about career opportunities and thereby give them voice to decide whether to accept a job offer or not or to change the organization at an early time point, respectively, when individual and organizational goals are incompatible.

Attitudinal issues. Attitudes are an important topic in many fields of psychology (Glasman & Albarracarin, 2006; Riketta, 2008), and recent research on careers also focuses on different forms of career orientations (Gerber, Wittekind, Grote, & Staffebach, 2009) or attitudes (Hall, 2002) like *protean* and *boundaryless* career attitudes (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). These concepts are derived from the so-called new career literature that has developed in response to new challenges on the labor market as, for instance, the "new economy" (Arthur, 1996; Peiperl & Baruch, 1997). People with a protean career attitude consider themselves as being the key drivers of their careers. They are values-driven as they shape their career according to their own internal values and beliefs, and they are self-directed as they pursue their careers based on personally defined career goals. Their personal identity is a guide for career decisions. Boundaryless career attitudes refer to *organizational mobility preferences* (i.e., people's physical mobility) and a *boundaryless mindset* (i.e., people's psychological mobility). People with a high organizational mobility preference prefer to work in different organizations and cross organizational boundaries by taking an employment elsewhere. A person with a boundaryless mindset enjoys working on projects with people across many organizations and is energized and feels enthusiastic about engaging in new experiences and situations outside of the organization (Briscoe & Hall, 2006).

The general assumption of respective approaches states that persons with protean attitudes as well as with boundaryless attitudes should be better able to define their individual career and to "make" this career. Consequently, they should also be less prone to experience career stagnation. Until now, however, there are only few studies analyzing these postulated relationships.

De Vos and Soens (2008) showed that a component of the protean career attitude was related to perceived employability and career satisfaction (see also Volmer & Spurk, 2011). Two further studies (De Vos, Dewettinck, & Buyens, 2009; Hall, 2002) found that people with better career self-management perceived more subjective career success and a higher affective commitment to their career. Career self-management also predicted the preferences for both vertical career

moves and moves relating to job enrichment and temporary moves. These moves can be seen as one possibility to prevent career stagnation. Regarding boundaryless career attitudes, Briscoe et al. (2006) found no correlation with the number of jobs and employer changes. However, organizational mobility preference was negatively related to organizational commitment making interorganizational moves more likely (Briscoe & Finkelstein, 2009). A recent study by Volmer and Spurk (2011), finally, found a positive association between organizational mobility preference and salary. One interpretation of this relationship could be that human capital gets enriched through interorganizational moves (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

These studies suggest that at least on the subjective level, protean and boundaryless career attitudes might prevent individuals from the experience of career stagnation. However, they do not answer the question if these constructs add to our understanding of career development when compared to, for instance, self-regulation or self-management (cf. Abele & Wiese, 2008). Maybe protean and boundaryless career attitudes are best conceptualized as concomitants of different forms of self-regulation and self-management in the context of careers.

To sum up, boundaryless and protean career attitudes may prevent individuals from career stagnation because these individuals tend to show higher adaptability, identity, and self-management levels. More research is needed to embed these constructs into research on self-regulation.

Regarding the nature of the above described career attitudes, careers that are “overcontrolled” by the organization in terms of formal programs or prescribed career paths may ignore the rights for autonomy and voice of employees. However, organizations might also exploit employees with high protean and boundaryless career attitudes. In the above case of Steve who experienced career stagnation because he did not get promoted, organizations could shift responsibility on to him. In a “trial-and-error” way, organizations could then only promote people who “survive” in difficult circumstances and outsource people like Steve who have difficulties. Organizations could also exploit people with a high boundaryless career attitude by imposing a high travel load without considering ethical issues of balance, respect, and justice. Again, organizations could rely on his/her career attitudes and behave unethically by not taking responsibility for their employees. Early interventions from the organizations such as self-efficacy trainings, career counseling, and mentoring would possibly have prevented Steve from the discouraging experience of career stagnation. From an ethical perspective, we consider it to be important that organizations intervene and offer support when employees are overstrained with managing their careers. Otherwise, when organizations only build on people who function under the given circumstances, economic and psychological costs may be high in the long run.

Dual-career issues. Dilemmas associated with career stagnation can also be located at the interpersonal level. People usually are not alone when they develop their careers, but they have a partner, a family, and social bonds that are of utmost importance in their lives. This means that an individual’s career has to be attuned to his/her social environment. We will focus here on one recent development that makes attunement relevant, i.e., dual-career issues.

Due to the steady increase of women’s education and their steady increase in workforce participation, a relatively new partnership constellation has evolved. It has existed for about 40 years in noteworthy numbers and has been termed *dual-career couple* (DCC). DCCs can be defined as couples wherein both partners (with or without children) are (often but not necessarily) highly educated (university degree or comparable), work full time, and have high career aspirations (Abele & Volmer, 2011; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1969). Scholars agree that core values within DCC constellations are high job commitment, respect and interest in the partner’s career, and gender and value equality.

In their pioneer research, Rapoport and Rapoport (1969) conducted interviews with 16 dual-career families and outlined five major forms of dilemmas DCCs are confronted with: overload dilemmas, personal norm dilemmas, identity dilemmas, social network dilemmas, and role-cycling

dilemmas. Overload dilemmas refer to the fact that DCCs are confronted with stressors from work *and* life domain but that resources are limited. Personal norm dilemmas result from discrepancies between personal and social norms. For example, working mothers reported to be confronted with societal expectations to quit employment in order to take care of their children but that they also wanted to pursue their careers. Dilemmas of identity can arise because different roles have to be fulfilled in the work (e.g., assertiveness, dominance) and life domain (e.g., patience, caring behavior). Social network dilemmas can result when family and friends have different role arrangements which could trigger the normative dilemma. Finally, role-cycling dilemmas refer to the dilemma to make decisions whether to curtail career engagement in favor of family commitment and to problems resulting from decisions regarding job offers. Rapaport and Rapaport's (1969) research guided later research on DCCs that has mainly focused on the dilemmas, and most studies found that DCCs experience more stress, work-family conflict, family conflict, role ambiguity, role conflict, and overload than single-career couples (e.g., Elloy & Smith, 2003; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992). Yet, work and spouse support has been associated with increased well-being in the respective domain (Crossfield, Kinman, & Jones, 2005).

Contrary to studies on the negative effects of the DCC constellation on well-being, another line of research has focused on the positive effect of the engagement in two domains (e.g., Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). These researchers postulate that engaging in two domains may have benefits and can be mutually rewarding. Results show, for example, that individuals with high job autonomy and a strong network were more satisfied with childcare and that in turn positive family experiences and partner support was positively related to work success (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000).

In contemporary work environments, career development often requires organizational mobility (Ackers, 2004; Challiol & Mignonac, 2005; Feldman & Ng, 2007; Robert & Budoki, 2002). However, relocation decisions are especially difficult for DCCs as compatibility issues have to be considered. Research has shown that even in DCCs, traditional gender roles still exist (Valcour & Tolbert, 2003) and that living in a DCC partnership often has detrimental effects on women's career success as they more often give priority to their partner's career. However, there is also evidence that spouse occupational and informational resources can have a positive impact on the other partner's career upward moves (Robert & Budoki, 2002). Relocation decisions become especially difficult when DCCs have children. The requirement to combine two careers can have detrimental effects on career progression. Research on career patterns has shown that women more often than men interrupt their careers when a child was born (e.g., Abele & Spurk, 2011; Gattiker & Larwood, 1990; Williams & Han, 2003). Moreover, women more often than men engage in "compatibility management," namely, they invest more time in household activities and spend more time for child care or elderly care (Ackers, 2004).

To sum up, interpersonal factors of partnership constellation, here DCC, can influence career development both into the direction of progress and stagnation. Living in a partnership with equal values and attitudes can have positive benefits and offers resources but can also be a strain as demands from different life domains have to be integrated.

Which ethical principles are relevant to the dual-career issue dilemma? Employees might experience a conflict because they feel torn between the fulfillment of both their work and non-work roles and organizations might be afraid that employees who devote too much time and effort to their nonwork domain could cause financial losses. Yet, employees are responsible to organizations, and organizations are responsible to employees; they should reflect upon the training of strategies that can help to integrate both life domains (e.g., stress management trainings, use of support by others, negotiation of goals in partnerships), and organizations should create an ethical environment by granting balance, autonomy, and justice. Quality of life interventions that would alleviate the dilemma might consist of offering flexible work hours, telecommuting jobs,

dual-career hiring strategies, and promotion opportunities also for employees who cannot easily relocate. We recommend that organizations recognize that employees' well-being depends on creating balance between work and nonwork domains.

Career Stagnation Related to Organizational Factors

Lack of socialization/support/mentoring. Career stagnation, of course, can also be related to suboptimal organizational conditions, as was suggested in our above example of Laura who did not receive organizational support. A key facet of organizational support is *organizational socialization* that aims at helping newcomers' adjustment and newcomers' career advancement (Hall, 2002). Socialization tactics are organizational approaches to information dissemination to facilitate adjustment in new roles (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). One widely accepted approach to classify different types of organizational socialization tactics was presented by Jones (1986). Under this approach, the six dimensions provided by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) were clustered within three dimensions. These are *content* (collective, formal), *context* (sequential, fixed), and *social* (serial, investiture) aspects of socialization. Content tactics refer to the existence of clear stages for training and a clear timetable for role adjustment within a specific organization. Context tactics refer to learning task requirements as part of a group and having formal training before starting the actual job. Social tactics refer to receiving positive feedback and identity affirmation from organizational insiders and having a trusted insider to guide individuals within the organization (cf. Jones, 1986). A recent meta-analysis (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007) showed that all these organizational socialization tactics are related to career development. The most consistent and strongest relationships were found for social socialization tactics. These tactics are positively related to role clarity, self-efficacy, social acceptance, performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to remain in the institution, and they are negatively related to with turnovers. As at least some of these variables are positively related to career progress (e.g., Abele & Spurk, 2009a; Feldman & Ng, 2007; Hall, 2002; Hall & Chandler, 2005; Ng, Sorensen, Eby, & Feldman, 2007; Schneer & Reitman, 1997), we identify the lack of social organizational socialization tactics as a key factor for career stagnation of individuals.

An important instrument of organizational socialization is *mentoring* defined as "the relationship between a younger adult and an older, more experienced adult who helps the individual learn to navigate the adult world and the world of work" (Kram, 1985, p. 2). There has been more and more research on mentoring in recent years (Baranik, Roling, & Eby, 2010; Blickle, Witzki, & Schneider, 2009; Singh, Ragins, & Tharenou, 2009). A first set of studies was concerned with who will be more likely to receive mentoring, and hence will be a protégé, and who will not receive it. A study by Fagenson (1992) found that protégés had a significantly higher need for power and achievement but not for affiliation and autonomy than nonprotégés. Allen (2004) has found that the most critical person factor related to protégé selection by mentors was willingness to learn. Additionally, the mentor's motivation was a moderator for protégé selection. Mentors with an intrinsic satisfaction motive relied more on the willingness to learn of protégés, whereas mentors with self-enhancement motives relied more on the protégés ability. Gender composition of the mentor-protégé relationship had no influence. Whereas these studies were cross-sectional, other research (Singh et al., 2009) longitudinally tested the "rising star hypothesis." In accord with this hypothesis, these authors found that persons with a positive promotional history, high advancement expectations, high career initiative, and high skill development had a higher probability of having a mentor 1 year later than persons who did not fulfill these criteria.

Regarding the outcome of mentoring processes, studies often distinguish between career-related mentoring and psychosocial mentoring (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988). *Career-related mentoring* focuses on protégés' advancement within the organization and includes sponsorship, visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments. *Psychosocial mentoring* focuses on interpersonal aspects and relationships and includes role modeling, acceptance, confirmation, counseling, and friendship. A meta-analysis applying this distinction (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004) found that mentored groups generally were more successful both in terms of objective attainments (i.e., compensation and promotions) and in terms of subjective judgments (i.e., career satisfaction, expectations for advancement, career commitment, job satisfaction, intentions to stay). Effect sizes, however, were small (sample weighted mean correlations: objective career .12–.31, subjective career .10–.27). The comparison of mentoring types revealed that career-related mentoring was more strongly associated with objective outcomes than psychosocial mentoring. There was almost no difference between career-related and psychosocial mentoring with respect to subjective career outcomes despite the fact that psychosocial mentoring clearly leads to higher satisfaction with the mentoring relationship (sample weighted mean correlations .63). Another meta-analysis concerned with gender differences in mentoring (O'Brien, Biga, Kessler, & Allen, 2008; Patel et al., 2008) showed that women and men received the same amount of career mentoring, but that men received less psychosocial support. Still another meta-analysis (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008) that focused on specific groups (youth vs. academic vs. workplace) revealed that the relationship of mentoring with performance was strongest in academic settings.

To sum up, organizational socialization is an important means of supporting newcomers' careers and mentoring is an important instrument of organizational socialization. It seems that "rising stars" have a higher probability of receiving mentoring, and this receipt of mentoring, in turn, leads to a positive feedback process of higher objective and subjective success, especially if this mentoring is career-focused. Contrarily, people who do not catch supervisors' eyes have a lower probability to be chosen as a protégé and as a consequence may eventually experience career stagnation. The above findings on occupational self-efficacy nicely fit this picture since people low in self-efficacy – even though they may do a good job – will not catch as much attention as people high in self-efficacy, will not have the same chance to receive mentoring, and will eventually have a higher chance of career stagnation. Remember our above example of Steve. Due to his low self-efficacy, his performance suffered and he experienced career stagnation. Organizations are faced with a dilemma: most often, it might be easier to promote "rising stars" than to give special consideration to employees with low self-efficacy. Promoting rising stars will result in immediate return of investments, whereas supporting employees with self-efficacy problems takes time and – if at all – the interventions might not immediately show the desired effects. The organization could argue that – in line with the new career idea – employees have to take responsibility for their careers. Furthermore, organizations could argue that employees should have the freedom of choice whether they want to increase their self-efficacy or not. Or they could realize that employees bring different experiences and personalities with them making support for some employees an ethical strategy to prevent career stagnation. We recommend providing interventions of socialization, support, and mentoring to employees who show a deficit in self-efficacy. This guarantees employees' rights, especially justice, participation, and voice, and prevents career stagnation. As employees often do not readily realize that they need a training, organizations have to help them and engage in ethical decision-making.

On a societal level, one could also argue that supporting only employees with the highest potential would lead to the outsourcing of low potentials resulting in higher unemployment rates. Due to the fact that a lot of organizations are granted by the state, they also have the responsibility to disburden the state by supporting employees with medium or even low

potential. Therefore, supporting exclusively high potentials represents unethical behavior on a more general, societal level.

Bullying/mobbing. *Bullying and mobbing* are the reverse of organizational support. Instead of helping an employee to develop his/her full potential, persons and groups who bully and mob others cause them social harm and social stress and will hinder them in their career development. Whereas the term bullying is used if the harassment towards one person is caused by one single other party, the term mobbing is used if two or more people show harassment against a single other party (Landy & Conte, 2007). The terms are, however, also used interchangeably with bullying being the more frequent term in the USA and mobbing being the more frequent term in Europe (Zapf & Gross, 2001). Respective research was mainly conducted in European countries, especially in Scandinavia. Our above example of “Mark” illustrates a case of career stagnation that may have to do with bullying/mobbing.

According to Leymann (1990, 1996), the phenomenon is evident if somebody is harassed, offended, socially excluded, or has to carry out humiliating tasks and if the person concerned is in an inferior position. Additionally, this behavior has to occur repeatedly and over a longer time period (see also Einarsen, 2000; Hoel, Rayner, Cooper, & Robertson, 1999). Bullying/mobbing strategies are, for instance, withdrawal from decision-making authority, social isolation, direct attacks on persons, and verbal and physical aggression. Estimates for the prevalence rates of bullying vary between 1% and 3.5% (Einarsen, 2000; Zapf, 1999), and the phenomenon is not negligible at all. Consequences of bullying are severe and go beyond typical stress symptoms like fatigue or agitation (Zapf, 1999). Psychosomatic symptoms like exhaustion, nervousness, headache, and insomnia as well as depressive moods are highly frequent consequences of bullying. Anxiety disorders and posttraumatic stress syndromes also can be seen after severe phases of bullying. Bullying victims often are long-term certified unfit for work or receive invalidity pension (Hoel et al., 1999; Leymann, 1993). In extreme cases, victims retire from the labor market and never return to work (Zapf, 1999).

Bullying/mobbing is an extreme behavior leading to career stagnation on the part of the victims. Research has shown that organizational factors supporting mobbing behaviors are high time pressure, inflexible hierarchies, limited scope of action, low appreciation of tasks, and inadequate leadership behavior (Einarsen, 2000). It has also been suggested that specific persons may be more prone to become victims of mobbing than others, i.e., persons high in neuroticism or low in social skills, or women compared to men. Findings are inconclusive, however (Leymann, 1996).

To sum up, workplace bullying has severe consequences for the victim. Due to severe health problems, bullying victims may interrupt their career or even drop out of the labor market. And those victims who stay in their job may show weakened job performance. Organizations have to be attentive to these processes and have to change their structures such that the probability of these unethical behaviors is reduced. Future research on these extreme social stressors is warranted.

Regarding bullying, the organization is faced with a dilemma. For instance, in the case of Mark, who was treated badly, the organization could take one of two perspectives. On the one hand, the organization could realize that bullying violates Mark's rights for freedom, justice, and voice. This would suggest that Mark needs support from the organization and that the organization puts emphasis on anti-bullying strategies and programs with the goal to respect Mark's rights of freedom, justice, and voice. On the other hand, the organization could blame Mark for being mobbed. The organization could argue that his personality and his behavior do not fit organizational values. In this case, the organization would not give support to Mark. Instead, it would expect that Mark himself will take initiative but not the organization. The company would mainly be concerned about the organization's image in the public. However, there may be severe and long-lasting consequences both for the individual and for the organization if bullying is just

ignored. We recommend that bullying should be regarded as serious and highly unethical workplace behavior and that organizations place high priority to anti-bullying strategies and programs with the goal to respect the individual rights of freedom, justice, and voice.

Stereotypes and discrimination. Another form of negative and unethical behavior directed at others in the workplace is discriminative behavior resulting from negative stereotypes. Stereotypes are fixed and simplified images of the members of a group. Categorizing a person as belonging to a specific group usually is enough to activate the respective stereotype, which then leads to adding characteristics to this person that have to do with the stereotype, but not with the person. Discrimination is the negative behavior following the stereotype. Race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, and gender are examples for categorizing persons into groups that may lead to stereotypes. There is a huge amount of research on stereotypes and discrimination at the workplace, and due to space limitations, we will here be only concerned with gender stereotypes and with discrimination of women at the workplace.

Women's human capital in terms of education and skills has dramatically increased during the last 100 years, and their participation in the paid workforce increased steadily over the past decades as well [72.3% of all women in the United States (US) aged between 25 and 54 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009) and 59.1% of women aged between 15 and 64 in the European Union (EU) were employed (Eurostat, 2010)]. However, few women are represented in upper management and leadership positions (Stroh, Langlands, Simpson, Stockdale, & Crosby, 2004), women are disadvantaged in personnel selection procedures for management positions (Pichler, Simpson, & Stroh, 2008), women have reduced opportunities to be appointed to challenging positions in the future after a failure as a manager of a company in a crisis situation (Ferris, Jagannathan, & Pritchard, 2003), and women earn on average less than men in comparable positions (Blau & Devardo, 2007; see also Watt & Eccles, 2008).

Although gender discrimination is obvious, it may operate through subtle processes. Women often stop career progression at impenetrable barriers also called *glass ceiling* (Kanter, 1977). The term "the glass ceiling" refers to an invisible barrier that limits the level to which women as a group can advance within the hierarchy in an organization. Recent research has identified circumstances under which women nevertheless do achieve leadership positions, despite the glass ceiling (Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007). Especially in crisis situations, women are more likely to achieve leadership positions (Haslam & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Haslam, 2005), a phenomenon called *glass cliff* (Bruckmüller & Branscombe, 2010). Possibly, men are less willing to take over such risky positions, and women who take them are at risk to fail – and then to involuntarily support the stereotype that "women cannot lead." Related to such risky positions women may obtain is their so-called token status (Kanter, 1977). It refers to the fact that women often have a minority status in leadership positions and their behavior is observed with special attention. Any deviation from expected behaviors may lead to questioning their suitability for this position.

There are many reasons for women's underrepresentation in leadership positions like, for instance, their higher willingness to take over family responsibilities (Abele & Spurk, 2011; Reitman & Schneer, 2005) or their gender-role attitudes (Abele, 2003; Kirchmeyer, 1998). However, stereotypes and discrimination must not be underestimated.

Early research on gender stereotypes in the workplace was concerned with the *think-manager-think-male* phenomenon (Schein, 1975, 2001) which describes the close association between "masculine" and "managerial" attributes. Subsequent research (Sczesny, 2003) has shown that it is in fact much easier to imagine a male manager than a female manager and this differential association could be a factor in stereotyping women as less suited for leadership than men. In their role congruity theory, Eagly and Karau (2002) go one step further and demonstrate that there are two types of stereotypes and prejudices against women in leadership

positions. First, women are regarded as less competent for leadership positions. This is the above “think-manager-think-male” phenomenon. Secondly, women who hold a leadership position are evaluated more negatively than respective men as they act against expected gender-role stereotypes (cf. the social-role theory, Eagly, 1987). Stereotypic views of women can serve as an excuse for excluding women from leadership position (glass ceiling) and/or evaluating her performance mainly through a gender perspective (token status).

To sum up, there are still many instances in the labor market in which belongingness to a certain social group reduces an individual’s chances for career progression irrespective of his/her performance and motivation. Discrimination of women has clearly observable effects since women are less successful in their careers than they could be due to their human capital. Discrimination is based on gender stereotypes that define women as less suited for leadership positions than men. Gender stereotypes may, however, also be a plea for underlying reasons of discrimination like fear of competition or fear of losing status. People responsible for personnel selection and personnel development should be especially attentive for possible group stereotypes that may hinder individuals’ careers. Avoiding discrimination at the workplace is very important, and organizations not paying attention to discrimination behave in an unethical way because they hurt the principles of respect, justice, and responsibility. Diversity management strategies that acknowledge differences among employees and value these differences are recommended as work life interventions. Giving, for example, equal opportunities to men and women and thereby granting an equal amount of voice, justice, and respect independent of gender will help to establish an ethical environment that pays attention to employees’ rights. Decisions regarding promotion and salary should be based on qualification issues and not on gender.

Interventions/Resolutions Addressing Lack of Career Opportunities

We have now described a number of ethical dilemmas that can arise with some of an organization’s employees. These dilemmas first of all are individual dilemmas because for many different reasons persons cannot live up to their goals and expectations. However, these dilemmas are also dilemmas of the organization. Organizations usually express high ethical standards, they express values, and they want to live these values. Organizations, of course, also want to make money, and at times it seems that living up to ethical standards and earning a high amount of money are incompatible. Recent literature (Ordonez, Schweitzer, Galinsky, & Bazerman, 2009) suggests that unethical behavior can indeed lead to profit gains in the short term. However, unethical behavior does not pay in the long term because it will harm the organization and will eventually even lead to insolvency. Hence, it is extremely important to not only consider short-term consequences of more or less ethical behavior but also to consider the future. Outsourcing “difficult” employees might help in the short run. However, the image of the company might suffer, people might be less interested to work in this company, the climate in the company might impair, etc. Conversely, research on ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006) which is characterized by an emphasis of the leader on ethical standards and moral management has been shown to be positively associated with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009). OCB in turn has been positively associated with numerous important individual- and organizational-level outcomes (e.g., Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009). Applying ethical rules strictly may be beneficial for both the individual and the organization, at least in the long run. The following part of this chapter will therefore describe some interventions that aim at helping the individual and the organization in dealing with ethical dilemmas.

Interventions/Resolutions at the Individual Level

Self-efficacy trainings. Throughout this chapter, we have advocated the relevance of self-efficacy beliefs in self-managing one's career and in overcoming career stagnation. Therefore, self-efficacy training seems one important intervention at the individual level to overcome career stagnation. Wood and Bandura (1989) suggest four different strategies for increasing self-efficacy (cf. also Landy & Conte, 2007): Employees should be provided with guidance and technical/logistic support so that they most likely experience success on a challenging task. They thus will experience mastery and, as a first strategy, mastery experiences should help to strengthen beliefs in one's capabilities. Second, modeling can be effective in strengthening people's self-efficacy. When an individual observes that another person who has a similar background (in terms of abilities, experience, etc.) successfully completes a difficult task, this can strengthen the focal person's self-efficacy. To implement modeling at work, one could pair an individual with a fellow coworker who has been successful in completing a difficult task in the past. Third, social persuasion can increase self-efficacy. When an individual is encouraged by others who express confidence in his/her ability, an individual's efficacy beliefs will raise. Individuals should experience feedback and reinforcement by significant others (supervisors, mentors). Finally, physiological states can play a role in influencing people's self-efficacy. When people experience feelings of stress or fatigue, they tend to interpret this as signaling lack of competencies. Stress reduction strategies that reduce the experience of stress or fatigue will be useful steps.

A recent research conducted by McNatt and Judge (2008) is an example for a self-efficacy intervention study. They randomly assigned participants (71 newcomers and recent insider financial accounting auditors) to treatment and control conditions. Participants conducted 15–20-min interviews followed by written researcher-drafted communications at weeks 3, 6, and 9. In the self-efficacy treatment condition, participants' self-efficacy was enhanced by verbal persuasion and modeling. The interviewer stressed that the participant was selected in a highly competitive selection procedure and possessed the skills to be successful at his/her job, and the interviewer also reminded participants of their past successes. At week 3, 6, and 9, participants received messages – allegedly – from top management (from credible expert sources) with self-efficacy-enhancing communications (e.g., by communicating support and reassurance). In the control condition, participants did not receive any self-efficacy-increasing communication statements during the interview and only informational mails from management at respective times. McNatt and Judge (2008) found that the self-efficacy intervention indeed raised employees' self-efficacy and improved job attitudes. Although the effects were relatively small (average effect of $d = .17$), results indicate that self-efficacy is malleable even with little intervention.

Self-management trainings. With changing labor market conditions (see above, Arthur, 1996; Hall, 2002; Peiperl & Baruch, 1997), the responsibilities for career management have shifted from organizations to individuals and a call for more proactive, self-directed individuals who care for their employability (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Individuals are considered to take charge for their careers. There are many theoretical approaches to self-management, including self-control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1990), social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991), motivational-volitional theories (Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 2008; Kuhl, 2000), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1991), life-span theories (e.g., Baltes & Baltes, 1990; e.g., Brandtstädter, 2006), and career-related self-management models (e.g., Abele, 2002; King, 2004; Kossek, Roberts, Fisher, & DeMarr, 1998).

Kossek and colleagues (1998), for example, propose two dimensions of career self-management: (a) *developmental feedback seeking* about one's strengths and weaknesses (in order to make self-directed decisions regarding career strategies) and (b) *job mobility preparedness* (gathering information about new career opportunities and preparing to act on them). Abele and colleagues

(Abele & Spurk, 2009b; Abele & Wiese, 2008) stress the self-regulatory importance of expectations (occupational self-efficacy) and goals (work and private goals) as well as of behavioral strategies of goal optimization and of concrete career planning. King (2004) presents a conceptual framework of career self-management and argues that people use three types of career self-managing behavior, namely, *positioning* (ensuring that one has the contacts, skills, and experience to achieve one's desired career outcomes), *influence* (attempting to influence key gatekeepers to desired career outcomes), and *boundary management* (balancing the demands of work and nonwork domains). King (2004), however, also points out that career outcomes are – to some extent – outside an individual's direct control and are based on the particular political and economic context given at a time.

Many studies found self-management to be effective for subjective and objective career success (e.g., Abele & Wiese, 2008; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Frayne & Geringer, 2000; Keith & Frese, 2008; Klein, König, & Kleinmann, 2003; Latham & Frayne, 1989; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005; Raabe, Frese, & Beehr, 2007). For instance, Abele and Wiese (2008) examined the effect of general self-management strategies (i.e., selection of goals; optimization as implementation of goal-pursuing behavior) and specific self-management strategies (i.e., career planning) on subjective and objective career success. Career planning was positively related to all success measures, but most so to objective success. Moreover, there were indirect links from the generalized optimization strategy to the outcome measures. Abele and Wiese (2008) conclude that it is less important which specific goals one selects than rather knowing how to implement them. Ng et al. also found career planning to be positively associated with objective career success (salary, promotions).

We will outline three studies that are examples for self-management trainings. Latham and Frayne (1989) evaluated the effectiveness of self-management trainings on job attendance with 20 unionized state government employees (see also Frayne & Geringer, 2000). The training builds on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Trainees were taught in 8 weekly 1-h group sessions to (a) set proximal and distal goals, (b) write down a psychological contract with themselves, (c) self-monitor their behavior, and (d) think about potential problems and solutions. Additionally, one-to-one meetings between trainer and each trainee were held to discuss sensitive issues. Findings revealed enhanced self-efficacy and increased job attendance, which was also found 6 and 9 months later.

Klein and colleagues (2003) studied a self-management approach frequently used in clinical psychology (Kanfer & Goldstein, 1991) in a work-related context applying a 3-month before vs. after measurement design. This training program focuses on small, individualized steps and prepares for drawbacks. It consists of the following seven phases: (1) establishing optimal starting conditions, (2) increasing trainee motivation, (3) analyzing behavior, (4) setting goals, (5) planning and executing actions, (6) evaluating progress, and (7) stabilizing success and triggering transfer. Klein et al. (2003) found that the training was effective in terms of knowledge of self-management skills, in terms of self-efficacy, and in terms of life satisfaction.

Raabe, Frese, and Beehr (2007) conducted a career management intervention. Self-management was trained in 205 white collar employees from a large technology company. Trainees were encouraged to set goals for the next 5 years and to make a plan on how to achieve them. Moreover, trainees reflected upon their own career motives and driving forces. Self-knowledge, career goal commitment, and career plan quality were positively related to self-management behaviors, which led both directly and indirectly to career satisfaction almost 10 months after the intervention.

Career counseling. Compared to the intervention approaches discussed above, career counseling is more individualized because it refers to the client's specific needs. People require career counseling for a number of different reasons, for example, because they do not know about their career opportunities, because they have low career decision-making self-efficacy, inappropriate

problem-solving skills, or because they experience low goal stability. Meta-analyses on the effectiveness of career counseling (Brown & Ryan Krane, 2000; Oliver & Sponake, 1988; Sponake & Oliver, 1983; Whiston, Sexton, & Lasoff, 1998) reveal moderate effect sizes (e.g., $d = .45$; Whiston et al., 1998).

Brown, McPartland, Walsh, and Savickas (2005) suggest five features could make career counseling interventions even more effective: (a) writing down goals of what should be accomplished after counseling had terminated seems to increase effectiveness, (b) individualized counseling sessions are more effective compared to computer-guided interventions, (c) clients should evaluate and compare in writing different possible options, (d) considering sources of support, and (e) ensuring adequate information searches make counseling outcome more effective. Finally, individual consultation showed to be more effective compared to group sessions.

Amundson (2006) suggests a client-centered, holistic, and dynamic career counseling perspective with an inclusion of (virtual) counseling centers, mentoring, career coaching, and the inclusion of social enterprises as part of the counseling process. Different kinds of coaching (e.g., child and adolescent coaching, manager coaching) should be integrated as a developmental lifelong coaching perspective becomes more central. Career counseling can “no longer be centered around helping people achieve their own potential as independent individuals, but rather by helping people achieve their own humanity, through collectively helping others achieve their own humanity, each in his or her own way” (Guichard, 2003, p. 318, as cited in Amundson, 2006). This implies that individuals and organizations have to integrate their conceptualizations about the centrality of personal and work domain. It would be unethical to give career counseling without considering employees’ social and cultural context.

Employees’ social context includes – among others – their partner and family constellation. As outlined above, more and more employees want to reconcile their career with that of their partner (DCC issue) and career counseling also has to respond to these needs, for instance, regarding time management, role assignments, child care responsibilities, stress reduction, and so forth.

In summary, there are both a number of intervention strategies that could be applied in groups like self-efficacy training and self-management training and more individualized interventions like career counseling that could respond to individual – and couples’ – needs. They have been shown to be effective, although the effect sizes are moderate. These interventions should address issues of changing work requirements and should respond to the need for more holistic and developmentally oriented advice.

Interventions/Resolutions at the Organizational Level

Mentoring. Mentoring can take place on an informal level when a supervisor occasionally gives his/her employee feedback and career-related advice. This informal mentoring is highly desirable but cannot be seen as a large-scale intervention strategy or career development tool systematically planned by the organization (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). Studies on mentoring effectiveness usually showed that informal mentoring is superior to formal mentoring and both mentoring forms are superior to no mentoring (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Fagenson-Eland, Marks, & Amendola, 1997; Scandura & Williams, 2001). Formal mentoring is a mentoring relationship that usually develops through the assignment of mentor and protégée by a third party and lasts between 6 months and 1 year on average. Formal mentors are not necessarily intrinsically motivated but may rather do the mentoring in order to meet organizational expectations.

Regarding formal mentoring, Ragins and colleagues (2000) found that meeting frequency was related to perceived program effectiveness and having a mentor from a different department

was associated with stronger satisfaction with the mentor, greater commitment to the organization, and fewer intentions to quit than having a mentor from the same department. Viator (1999) also found that protégés were more satisfied with their mentor when they had influence in the matching process, when they had regular meetings, and when they set goals and objectives. Allen, Eby, and Lentz (2006) analyzed the effects of several aspects of the mentoring program (training quality, matching input, hours of training, working in the same department, difference in rank) on four different mentoring outcomes (mentorship quality, role modeling, career mentoring, psychosocial mentoring). Regarding protégés, training quality and matching input had positive effects on all outcome variables except for psychosocial mentoring. Working in the same department was positively related to mentorship quality and career mentoring. Difference in rank negatively predicted role modeling, and hours of training positively predicted psychosocial mentoring. For mentors, matching input positively predicted mentorship quality and career mentoring and working in the same department and training quality positively predicted psychosocial mentoring. Hours of training were negatively related to all outcome measures except for psychosocial mentoring. Taken together, these studies suggest that high training quality (e.g., goal setting, setting of objectives, frequent mentoring sessions) as well as input on the matching process by mentors and protégés have consistently positive effects. Results regarding working in the same or another department are equivocal. Finally, hours of mentoring provided were positively related to outcomes in case of protégés and negatively in case of mentors. As a methodological limitation, however, it should be stressed that these data are all self-report. Future studies should also include other data sources.

Some conclusions can be drawn from these studies as practical guidelines for implementing formal mentoring programs. First, planning and providing of infrastructure is highly relevant. Second, mentoring implementation starts with recruitment and personnel selection, and the matching process of mentor and protégé seems especially important both in terms of “fit” and in terms of at least partial controllability by the protégé. Third, appropriate training of mentors should be provided. Fourth, mentoring processes and structures are implemented with an adequate mix of instruments. Fifth, careful monitoring and program evaluation should be conducted to optimize future mentoring (Allen, Finkelstein, & Poteet, 2009).

For further information on detailed formal mentoring program designs and instruments, we recommend writings by Allen and colleagues (2009) and Finkelstein, Poteet, Allen, and Eby (2007). For an overview of how mentoring programs are implemented in fortune 500 companies, we recommend a paper by Hegstad and Wentling (2004).

Anti-mobbing/anti-bullying interventions. Help for bullying victims is a serious concern in work and organizational psychology. It can be maintained through individual counseling and – if necessary – psychotherapy (De Pedro, Sanchez, Navarro, Izquierdo, & Howard, 2008; Sperry & Duffy, 2009). Most importantly, organizational interventions and prevention strategies are also warranted. As already mentioned, there seem to be certain organizational structures that facilitate the occurrence of mobbing, and organizational strategies should focus on these structures. Several instruments that can be implemented in organizations have been discussed, but mainly because of reputation concerns organizations do not focus on anti-bullying interventions (Duffy, 2009; Fox & Stallworth, 2009; Resch & Schubinski, 1996). The instruments include changes in work design, changes in leadership behavior, improving the social position of each individual, emphasizing moral and ethical values in the organization, and offering mediation techniques and alternative forms of conflict resolution as well as anti-bullying training. Resch and Schubinski (1996) distinguished four forms of interventions depending on the time since bullying has started: (1) prevention (no bullying), (2) early-stage interventions, (3) middle-stage interventions, and (4) support in late stages. For example, workplace changes, changes in leadership behavior, improvement in the social position of each individual, and raising moral standards in the department

can be seen as prevention strategies. Having impartial mediators, conflict de-escalation strategies or individual coaching/therapy may be the best alternative in early, middle, and late bullying stages. Since bullying can be theoretically explained both by stress theories and by conflict escalation theories, intervention programs usually are built around these approaches (Dormann & Zapf, 2001; Zapf & Gross, 2001).

The workplace anti-bullying training by Fox and Stallworth (2009) can be taken as an example. According to these authors, workplace anti-bullying training should include several features. First, awareness and recognition of the problem should be strengthened for all members of the organization including bullying victims, coworkers, and management. Second, a definition and delineation of dysfunctional behaviors should be established within the organization. Third, prevention techniques should be incorporated. Fourth, the development of effective and timely responses to bullying is central. The authors recommend internal and external conflict management strategies. Finally, the problems arising from bullying should be addressed at individual, workgroup, organizational, and societal levels. For readers who are particularly interested in conflict management related to bullying, we recommend Pruitt, De Dreu, and Gelfand (2008) and Zapf and Gross (2001) for further reading.

To sum up, organizations and organizational developers have several tools for prevention and intervention regarding workplace bullying. However, the efficacy of single interventions or whole programs cannot be evaluated because there are no intervention studies yet. The question still remains if organizations are willing to implement such programs because of potentially negative public attention. However, this extreme form of social stress causes immense costs both on the side of individuals but also on the side of organizations, and therefore, organizations should be interested to deal with this problem – out of ethical reasons, but also out of economic reasons.

Recruitment strategies for dual-career couples. The increasing number of dual-career couples does not only necessitate these individuals to cope with their specific problems of reconciling dual-career issues. Organizations interested in attracting highly qualified candidates in a competitive market must also be concerned with the DCC issue and must consider it in their hiring procedures. They can no longer regard applicants as “singles” without social ties but will have to address couple-based recruitment strategies. It becomes more and more important to provide tools to help couples arrange their “linked lives” to prevent career stagnation due to partnership constellations. So-called dual-career services have acknowledged that “recruiting the best” often means “recruiting the best couple” (e.g., Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, & Rice, 2003). Often, one partner’s relocation decision also affects the other partner’s career development. Twin assignments attempt to enable a more egalitarian and diverse workforce. In the USA, for example, the proportion of dual hires at university faculties has increased from 3% in the 1979s to 13% in the 2000s (Schiebinger, Henderson, & Gilmartin, 2008). Further strategies such as flexible work arrangements (e.g., flexible working hours, sabbaticals, virtual workspaces), support for child-care (e.g., company-led child care opportunities), and support for domestic duties can help couples integrate goals from life and work domains. It is important to emphasize that individualized solutions should be considered, acknowledging on the one hand employees’ goals and on the other hand organizational goals.

Antidiscrimination strategies. People responsible for personnel selection and personnel development do not also have to be responsible for dual-career issues, but they also have to be especially attentive for the discrimination of certain groups that may hinder the career of individuals’ belonging to one of these groups. One strategy aiming at avoiding discrimination at the workplace has been called *diversity management*. It means managing the diverse groups (gender, age, race, education, etc.) that make up an organization and creating a climate in which all groups feel that they are treated in a fair and just way. Another means of overcoming discrimination are specific *antidiscriminatory actions* pursued by organizations’ officials.

Diversity is a challenge for organizations as, for example, the *similarity–attraction paradigm* (Byrne, 1971) suggests that people prefer to be in contact with people who are “like” them, and self-categorization theory (Tajfel, 1981) also suggests that diversity triggers “in-group” vs. “out-group” perceptions. Diversity management has to ensure that irrespective of their group belongingness, employees have equal career opportunities. Unsuccessful diversity management will lead to perceptions of injustice and might affect organizational citizenship behavior, performance, and turnover rates (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Johnson & O’Leary-Kelly, 2003). Cleveland, Stockdale, and Murphy (2000) have identified some characteristics of “good” diversity management. They suggest that diversity management should be an enduring process that does not end after an individual has entered an organization. It should be exhibited both formally and informally. Moreover, they recommend that discriminatory practices have to be rooted out immediately, that commitment and attachment strategies should be implemented among all members – not only in-group members – and differences among employees should be acknowledged rather than organizations pretend they do not exist. Herriot and Pemberton (1995) suggest that career development and diversity training should be available for every member of the organization and that support and networks should be provided for diverse group members. Experimental research shows that persuading groups of the value of diversity (Homan, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef, & De Dreu, 2007; van Knippenberg, Haslam, & Platow, 2007) or selecting team members high in openness to experience (Homan et al. 2008) can increase performance of groups high in diversity.

Diversity management can also mean that regulations for working hours are adapted to the specific groups’ needs or that child care facilities are provided in the organization. The above discussed strategies regarding dual-career couples are relevant in the context of diversity management as well.

Regarding antidiscriminatory regulations and actions, there are different approaches across countries and across different organizations. They are based on antidiscrimination laws and on the general principle that irrespective of race, gender, age, etc., people should have equal opportunities. *Affirmative action* means positive steps taken to increase the number of women and minorities in areas of employment in which they have traditionally been underrepresented. Sometimes those steps involve *preferential* selection of members of discriminated groups, like, for instance, quotas for hiring women or quota for having women on higher levels of management. Preferential selection usually generates intense controversy whether it is justified or not, but despite this controversy this principle is one means of reaching gender equality at the workplace, especially at higher positions in the labor market (Cleveland et al., 2000).

To sum up, diversity management is one means to acknowledge the differences between people employed in one organization. It aims at giving justice and fair treatment to these different groups and at optimizing the conditions for collaboration between members of these different groups. Affirmative action is a means of specifically supporting discriminated groups by giving them special treatment, possibly also preferential treatment.

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations of Future Research

Career stagnation is a multifaceted phenomenon, and multiple factors can lead to career stagnation. We know some of its determinants, but the interplay between several determinants is not well understood yet. Research clearly suggests that high occupational self-efficacy and career decision-making self-efficacy protect from career stagnation. Nevertheless, self-efficacy may not be enough if the partner’s career has to be reconciled or if the person suffers from incompatible or unclear goals. Similarly, research clearly suggests that high career-advancement goals protect against career stagnation. However, high career-advancement goals may be accompanied by

reduced career satisfaction which – in the long run – could lead to health problems, reduced work motivation, and eventually also reduced objective success. As another example, the “new career” literature suggests that people with boundaryless and protean career attitudes are better suited to self-direct their careers. Again, interpersonal issues or labor market conditions might interfere with a strict pursuit of these attitudes. Furthermore, attitudes are not enough if respective behavioral self-management skills are lacking. As another example, an individual’s personality structure could have an influence on his/her supervisor’s behavior that, in turn, influences this person’s task assignments and reward structures. As a final example, organizational structures such as low job control and low moral standards can influence an individual’s frequency to be a victim of mobbing or bullying behavior and individuals low in self-efficacy might be more affected than those high in self-efficacy. Future research therefore should increasingly study the interplay of multiple determinants of career stagnation.

Since career stagnation is a multifaceted phenomenon, research on career stagnation should apply not only one conceptualization of career stagnation but should at least distinguish between more objective and more subjective forms of career stagnation. Research on career success has already demonstrated that the mechanisms of more objective and more subjective success are different (Abele, Spurk, & Volmer, 2011). The developmental aspect of career progress or stagnation has also largely been neglected so far.

A related issue is the plea for more theoretical discussion and possibly integration. There is a multitude of concepts in career research, and it is often not clear enough how these concepts interrelate. As an example, boundaryless and protean career attitudes could be regarded as antecedents of effective career self-management. They could, however, also be regarded as specific selection and optimization strategies in the context of a broader self-regulatory approach.

Still another issue awaiting future research is the implementation and evaluation of intervention programs. Our knowledge of programs aiming at preventing career stagnation or aiming at overcoming career stagnation is still scarce. Most respective studies refer to psychological interventions on the individual level like self-efficacy trainings or goal-setting procedures. There are only a few studies on more large-scale interventions, and these often suffer from the fact that they use self-report data only. Classical evaluation criteria (Kirkpatrick, 1975) could seldom be fulfilled, and findings are sometimes equivocal. Moreover, although evaluation studies show the effectiveness of most of the interventions presented here, there is a lack of evaluation studies comparing different types of interventions with respect to different problems. This research strategy has the potential to match interventions with underlying problems and should be conducted in the future. We also need more studies in which prevention or intervention programs are outlined in detail and in which the strategies applied are derived from a clearly articulated theoretical model. Research in the field of program implementation and program evaluation is generally difficult due to a multitude of reasons. However, more of it is needed.

A further issue is a diagnostic one. Interventions have to be based on a prior and thorough diagnosis of reasons for career stagnation. Only when these reasons are – at least roughly – diagnosed can an adequate treatment be provided. If the underlying reasons are, for instance, associated with a lack of self-efficacy, unclear goals, suboptimal career planning, and a lack of socialization, mentoring could be the optimal intervention strategy. Alternatively, when problems are more related to attitudinal issues or career self-management, career counseling is probably the best intervention strategy.

Finally, and most importantly, organizations and assigned career interventions should respect the needs and rights of employees. Not every intervention fits equally well to every employee, and the employees’ rights for *balance*, *respect*, *responsibility*, *autonomy*, *participation*, *justice*, and *voice*, as mentioned in the above subsections, should be respected at all times in the phases of career progress and stagnation. Finding ways to overcome career stagnation is relevant for both individuals and organizations, because it does not show only ethical behavior but is also important for the survival and effectiveness of the organization.

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