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Allin, Linda and West, Amanda (2015) Careers in the outdoors.
In: Routledge International Handbook of Outdoor Studies.
Routledge, London, pp. 159-167. ISBN 9781138782884

Over the last two decades the notion of career has become more prominent in outdoor literature, along with references to the outdoor profession (Thomas, 2001; Humberstone & Brown, 2006) and the outdoor industry (Barnes, 1999; Humberstone, 2000). Increasing numbers of organisations, educational institutions, and websites also are offering opportunities to train or gain qualifications for an outdoor career. Yet outdoor careers are complex and hard to define. Barnes (1999) suggested that to refer to the notion of a career in the outdoors is problematic, as he argued working in the outdoors is more akin to a lifestyle than a career. However, an initial frame of reference to begin a critical discussion is important. In this chapter we recognise the common association of career with work and working lives (Arthur, Hall, & Lawrence, 1989). We also highlight that while popular views of working in the outdoors focus on the provision of adventure activities, the field of outdoor employment is broader and not easily harnessed into a coherent sector. For example, a recent exhibition on outdoor careers in the UK (www.careersintheoutdoors.co.uk/exhibitors.html) included representatives from adventure travel companies, outdoor activity centres, youth development charities, expedition organisers, field study centres, and outdoor equipment manufacturers. To provide a delimitation and to exclude areas of the outdoors such as agriculture or fishing, we have drawn on Martin's (2001) mapping of the outdoor sector and Humberstone's (2000) definition of the outdoor industry, which includes working in the outdoors to deliver adventure recreation, education, leisure, youth work, management training, or therapy.

The literature on careers in the outdoor industry is, like the industry itself, fragmented and lacks a coherent theoretical underpinning. There are small pockets of research on outdoor practitioners or outdoor graduate careers (e.g. Barnes, 1999; Prince, 2007; Stott, Zaitseva, & Cui,2012), including a growing body of outdoor research that has explored women's outdoor

leadership or outdoor education careers and highlighted how such careers are gendered (e.g., Allin; 2003; Jones, 2012; Loeffler, 1995). However, relatively little is known about careers in the outdoor industry for either women or men. To find a way forward, we bring together the literature that exists and situate some of the key issues within contemporary career theories. We critically examine the extent to which the notion of the *boundaryless career*, which is prominent in the career literature, can be used as a preliminary framework to examine current understandings of careers in the outdoor industry. We suggest that whilst it has its flaws, the concept of the boundaryless career is intuitively appealing and resonates with what we see as key elements of careers in the outdoor industry. We propose that a critical examination of these elements can provide the basis for future outdoor career research and areas for the industry to consider regarding policy and practice.

Careers and the Outdoor Industry

A broad perspective of career is that it involves the unfolding sequence of a person's work experiences over time (Arthur et al., 1989). The dimension of time is important to the concept of career, and distinguishes it from the notion of a job or occupation. Careers also have objective and subjective dimensions. The objective face is about routes or career paths, where researchers seek to examine career or organisational structures. The subjective face of career refers to how an individual sees his/her career, or makes career choices or actions. The objective and subjective aspects of careers intertwine since personal decisions may influence or be influenced by career structures, or vice versa. This inseparability of objective and subjective career is highlighted in the work of Everett Hughes and the Chicago school of sociologists, who focused on life histories approach to understanding careers in different life arenas and not just in work (cited in Barley, 1989). This approach has been taken by authors such as Allin and Humberstone (2008) and more recently by Lorimer and Holland-Smith (2012), and can illuminate the complex lives of people working in the outdoor industry. For

analytical purposes, however, and to develop key areas of potential focus in outdoor research, we begin by critically examining the outdoor industry in terms of the traditional, objective notion of career.

The traditional understanding of a career is that of linear progressive steps and advancement through a series of jobs (Arthur et al., 1989; Wilensky, 1960) where *success* is marked by increasing pay, rank and/or seniority and development, usually within a single organisation. In the outdoors this career model is most clearly seen in development paths through outdoor leadership, where leadership awards (in the UK) progress from levels 1 – 5, or in outdoor centres where an instructor may move to senior instructor and then to a senior management role. Traditional organisational careers can also be evident for outdoor workers in a university or school based structure. However, outside of these contexts, linear career pathways in the outdoors are not easy to see. Even within outdoor centres or leadership careers, opportunities are often limited. Outdoor careers generally are characterised by periods of voluntary or part-time working, limited on-going professional development, and low levels of pay (Barnes, 1999; Stott, 2010). Prince (2007) also showed that although two thirds of graduates sampled from an outdoor studies degree were employed in careers related to outdoor studies, there was no trend towards graduate employment over time, which suggested that increasing pay and seniority over time is not necessarily evident in outdoor careers. Rather, as Higgins and Morgan (1999) suggested, a variety of opportunities within and across organisations exist. Research by Skills Active (2010) in the UK indicated that despite the unstructured nature of careers in the outdoor industry, employment opportunities are numerous. Estimates suggest between 26,400 and 50,000 people are self-employed, freelance or in permanent positions as outdoor activities instructors in the UK (citation needed). Instructors typically work for small businesses with more than half of all organisations having less than 20 employees. However, research about therapeutic

wilderness instructors in the USA found a high turnover of staff with the mean length of employment just 11.85 months (Marchand, Russell, & Cross, 2009). A similar finding was supported regarding outdoor staff in the UK by Barnes (2000). Whilst there are some opportunities for hierarchical development, the typical outdoor career does not seem to fit the traditional career model. Instead, outdoor practitioner's experiences may align more readily with what has become known by career theorists as the boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996).

The Boundaryless Career and the Outdoor Industry

The boundaryless career arose as a way to understand careers in a changing society where increasing uncertainty and unpredictability has left employees facing involuntary job loss, career interruptions, and lateral job movements both across and within sectors. The boundaryless career is not restricted by development within an organisation, but is characterised by a series of employment opportunities across jobs and organisations (Goffee & Jones, 2000; Peiperl, Arthur, & Anand, 2002). In the boundaryless career less significance is attached to organisational structures and more significance on an individual's perceived marketability, both within an organisation and across organisations. A further feature is a focus on individual goals and psychological measures of success, over organisational goals. Individuals navigate their careers against their personal priorities. In this sense, the boundaryless career reflects not only a break with traditional assumptions about careers, but also how career success is defined. DeFillippi and Arthur (1996) contended that boundaryless careers involve developing *career competencies* which can be applied by individuals in relation to shifting job opportunities. More specifically, DeFillippi and Arthur argued these career competencies reflect three different ways of knowing: knowing-why (i.e., an individual's motivations and identity); knowing how (i.e., a person's skills and expertise) and knowing whom (i.e., relationships and reputation). These elements of the boundaryless

career seem intuitively appealing in understanding careers in the outdoor industry and provide fresh opportunities for researching and understanding the careers that arguably has existed in the outdoors for many years. In the following sections, we use the three elements of knowing why, knowing how, and knowing whom, to critically examine what is already known in outdoor career research, and to suggest further avenues that can both aid theoretical development and afford practical implications for the outdoor industry.

Knowing Why - Personal Goals and Motives in Outdoor Careers

The career competency of knowing why focuses on personal motivational energy to understand oneself' (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003), consideration of alternatives, and a separation of the individual's identity from her/his employer. Personal values and motives become more salient than organisational goals such as when individuals may decide against job or promotion because of different values to that of the *firm*, or because of their personal lives (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Consequently, career success is not necessarily viewed in salary or occupational seniority.

This aspect of the boundaryless career resonates with outdoor careers because of claims that a career in the outdoors is more akin to a lifestyle or identity choice (Barnes, 1999; Collins, 1997). Barnes' (2000) article proposed that outdoor practitioners were less motivated by traditional career success. This finding was supported by Prince (2007) since those individuals in her study rated personal motives, values, and satisfaction above salary and as key elements of importance in their careers. Stott et al. (2012) recently explored career identities of students undertaking an outdoor education degree in the UK. They found that outdoor education students had a strong sense of identity and remained committed to working in outdoor education in their future, with money a less important factor to them.

Research also suggests that outdoor practitioners take steps to adapt their careers to help maintain personal and social relationships. These steps include changing the activity

instructed (Lorimer & Holland-Smith, 2012), securing teaching or lecturing positions (McDermott & Munir, 2012) or making changes to work patterns to accommodate family commitments (Lorimer & Holland-Smith, 2012). Boundaries between home and work are also crossed in outdoor careers. Lorimer and Holland-Smith's case study analysis of a male adventure coach, for example, revealed a melding of personal interest and career aspirations. Instructing facilitated the adventure coach's personal involvement in outdoor activities even if his achievement goals had to be subsumed to those of his clients. McDermott and Munir also found through interviews with 20 mountain guides that when not working they reported that rather than rest, they chose to participate in outdoor activities for personal enjoyment.

However, the boundaryless career like the traditional career pays insufficient attention to gender. Enache, Sallan, Simo and Fernandez, (2011) and Valcour and Tolbert, (2003) suggested that whilst women follow a boundaryless career path, men's careers reflect a more traditional career trajectory. The reason is that women are more likely to embrace a boundaryless career through taking flexible or part-time work. While Sullivan and Mainiero, (2007) supported this conclusion, they suggested women actually experienced less physical mobility across organisations due to family or relationship commitments, but more psychological mobility by being able to base their self-identity on multiple roles and not just work. Whilst the extent to which this explanation applies in the outdoors has not been explored, women leaders have highlighted how childcare responsibilities influenced their career pathways as outdoor instructors. Motherhood was a key transition point in their careers (Allin, 2003; Jones 2012). Women also cited how these career decisions were also made in response to lack of facilities or support from outdoor organisations. Hence, the boundaryless career allows women to balance personal and work commitments, but Enache et al (2011) noted the influence of traditional gender roles.

Although knowing why offers the opportunity for individuals to redefine success in personal or family terms, the extent to which this redefinition is freely done as a way to maintain self-identity also needs examination. Allin (2003), for example, found that while some women outdoor educators were able to find career success in multiple roles, women who retained traditional notions of career success felt they had a *failed' outdoor career*. The boundaryless career provides a way to legitimate different career choices as lifestyle choice, but more research into how both women and men in the outdoor industry define and value career success is needed, particularly as their identities shift and change across the lifespan. The boundaryless outdoor career also ignores potential negative and disruptive elements associated with outdoor careers. The overlap of participation and employment in outdoor activities has consequences for instructors' physical and emotional well-being alongside their personal and social relationships (Thomas, 2001). McDermott and Munir (2012) noted from their research that some instructors' intense commitment to an outdoor life and career led to injuries, which as self-employed or freelance workers forced them to work through for their financial security and to create a good impression for potential employers. Older instructors in particular reported chronic over-use injuries to their joints. Instructors' commitment to their careers also meant that some reported spending long periods of time away from home on expeditions, which posed difficulties in both developing and maintaining relationships (Lorimer & Holland-Smith, 2012; Marchand et al., 2009).

Taken together the physical, emotional, and social challenges of working may lead to premature disengagement from an outdoor career. A boundaryless career might offer the prospect of a self-identity that melds personal and professional, but Lorimer and Holland-Smith (2012) suggested that an outdoor life which is all-encompassing could lead to a narrower sense of both social and self-identity. The home–work boundary in boundaryless careers is an interface that also needs closer examination (Clark, 2000) and an area for

outdoor industry leaders to consider in terms of its policies and practices (Warren & Loeffler, 2006).

Competencies and Marketability

In terms of knowing how, the questions about the core skills and competencies of an outdoor practitioner and how these are developed remain important to understanding careers in the outdoor industry. Priest and Gass (1997) identified twelve competencies of an outdoor leader: technical skills, safety skills, environmental skills, organisational skills, instructional skills, facilitation skills, flexible leadership style, experience based judgement, problem solving, decision making, communication skills, and professional ethics. However, Swiderski (1987) suggested that outdoor leadership training programmes have paid insufficient attention to human relations skills, problem solving, decision making, judgement, and critical thinking. Certainly, an emphasis on health and safety in outdoor adventure has meant a focus on technical qualifications (Barnes, 1999). Some evidence within the outdoor literature suggested that researchers are highlighting the importance of outdoor practitioners developing interpersonal skills and generic transferable skills particularly within higher education outdoor study degrees (Prince, 2007). Shooter, Paisley and Sibthorp (2013) also highlighted how interpersonal ability, benevolence, and integrity as well as technical skills influence participant development of trust in outdoor leaders. However, research indicates that technical skills remain valued most highly both by outdoor employers and graduates, at least in the UK. For example, Prince (2007) showed that 41% of graduates in her study highlighted a lack of NGB qualifications and experience as a problem in obtaining relevant outdoor employment.

Research examining skills and competencies required for outdoor careers have been divided into what has been termed *hard* (i.e., technical) skills and *soft* (i.e., interpersonal and related) skills. This distinction has become imbued with binary notions of gender and

gender-related skills, with women being aligned with interpersonal skills and men with physical and technical skills on the basis on hegemonic forms of notions of masculinity and femininity (Humberstone, 2000). Warren and Loeffler (2006) suggested that the privileging of technical skills in outdoor programmes is, therefore, detrimental to women's career development as they typically had fewer opportunities to develop such skills due to gender socialisation, or may be less confident in their abilities. Other evidence in the outdoor career research has supported this. Sharp (2001), for example, observed that male outdoor instructors reported higher levels of confidence about their technical ability than female instructors and attached greater value to technical ability than more interpersonal skills. Many female outdoor researchers have similarly focused on the area of women's physicality and physical competence as a key issue for women working in a traditionally male outdoor culture (Allin, 2000; Jones, 2012; Lugg, 2000). All of these researchers found that women often felt they needed to *prove* their physical and technical competence to be accepted in the outdoor field.

Warren and Loeffler (2006), however, suggested that the gender division in skills competency is misrepresentative. Rather, a mix-match exists between actual and perceived competency for both men and women. They proposed that men over-estimate, whilst women tend to underestimate, their technical skill competency. They noted women need help to reclaim competency and to develop their potential. Moreover, as Warren and Loeffler (2006) and DalleLonge, (2012) highlighted, interpersonal skills should not be seen as the domain of women alone just as physical competency and technical skills are not the domain of men. A growing body of research on women's physicalities (e.g., Dilley, 2007; McDermott, 1996; Wheaton, 2004) highlights how women can find empowerment through adventurous and physical activities. These researchers articulated how a multi-dimensional nature of physicality allows for other forms beyond that of physical competence.

We propose that the binary distinction between physical/technical and interpersonal skills needs to continue to be challenged in the workplace, with recognition of the equal value of different skills and skill sets in the outdoors. Whilst not easy to achieve, Humberstone (2001) noted the diversity of traditions in outdoor education fields, which provides scope for challenging existing hegemonies. We suggest researchers need to go beyond outdoor leadership adventure or education contexts, and seek to explore wilderness therapy, or environmental contexts, which have different historical traditions and may value different competencies more highly. More research is also needed to examine both what are recognised as outdoor career competencies across different cultural contexts of the outdoor industry, and how such competencies are developed and experienced across gender, social class and racial lines. More practical work is needed by organisations and outdoor practitioners to challenge gender stereotypes associated with physicality and technical competence.

Knowing Whom - Reputation

The development of professional networks and relationships is viewed as important in the boundaryless career to facilitate individuals' movement across or through job opportunities. Such networks operate as *social capital* (Bourdieu, 1984), which can facilitate further career opportunities. Professional networks include both internal communities and networks outside of the organisation. However, the ability to forge professional networks is also influenced by structures such as gender and race. Loeffler (1995), for example, found that female leaders in North America reported difficulties accessing the informal networks, which can help secure employment.

Mentoring is particularly valuable in the boundaryless career for providing support, development, and visibility. The full value and extent of mentoring in outdoor careers is unknown, but it appears significant. In a personal story, Berns cited Thomas (2002) and

indicated that without effective mentorship, many outdoor workers may develop low career self-efficacy leading to looking outside the field of outdoor recreation for employment, particularly at the beginning of their careers. The women in Loefler's (1995) study also identified the value of social support as well as professional and mentoring networks as ways to help facilitate the career development of women outdoors. Some of these networks were established with other women and were used to identify career options and opportunities for professional development. Allin and Humberstone (2008) noted that some women outdoor educators applied for jobs because they were encouraged by significant others (often male). However, feminist researchers (citations?) have also challenged the value of male role models or mentors for women, on the premise that they may encourage acceptance, rather than challenge, the dominant masculine values and ideals of what makes a good outdoor leader in the outdoors.

Networks in the boundaryless career do not refer only to mentors or bosses who can facilitate job opportunities. Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom (2005), highlighted the significance of peer and community relationships based on mutual or overlapping interests – communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1990) – which can also help individuals develop a sense of meaning in their careers or career success. Arthur and Parker (2002) suggested that such community support can come from shared occupational, industry, family, ideological or project based attachments. They proposed that such networks can be a resource for learning and not only for career enhancement. This notion of *community of practices* also seems pertinent to boundaryless careers in the outdoor industry given the emphasis in the outdoors as a *like-minded community* (Barnes 2000) and career identities (Stott et al., 2012). It also resonates with outdoor careers where, as earlier, individuals may be involved with outdoor activities in their personal lives, and are likely to socialise and develop relationships with other outdoor enthusiasts. The extent to which outdoor practitioners develop or affirm their

career identities and directions through these communities, however, is unknown, but is worthy of further research. The nature and values of these communities are also worth investigation, and the types of career identities they support. Researchers need to pay attention to the way in which communities and organisational cultures are supportive or inclusive regarding different gender, race and sexual identities (Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008).

Theoretical Developments and Further Thoughts

In this chapter we have used the concept of the boundaryless career as a preliminary framework to critically reflect on and examine current knowledge of careers in the outdoor industry. We have sought to identify where research is limited and where approaches are flawed to provide some direction the future. We have suggested that the notion of career competencies resonates with areas we intuitively consider pertinent about careers in the outdoor industry including: the focus on personal motives and career success, the centrality of skills and competence, the value of social networks, and the existence of communities of practice. In a recent review of the boundaryless career, Brocklehurst (2002) added *knowing where* - a sense of place - as an additional career competency that individuals may apply in considering job opportunities. This idea echoes the stories of outdoor educators' careers, where some of the women interviewed by Allin (2003) indicated that they remained in a particular job due to their love of the beauty and natural location where they were able to live and work. This finding remains largely unexplored in outdoor career research.

We also recognise that the concept of the boundaryless career has been criticised as needing greater clarity, conceptualisation, and measurement (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). The concept is also presented as gender neutral and there is a lack of attention to power relations within different organisations and organisational cultures. These are areas we have highlighted in each section and are avenues where critical perspectives may be applied in the

future. We also are aware that even the notion of boundarylessness needs to be treated with care, as it gives a false sense of the individual as having freedom to negotiate their careers free from cultural or structural dimensions. We feel that research that draws on the interdependence of objective and subjective careers, the intertwining of structure and action, and the recognition of how individual identities are forced and negotiated within different outdoor industry cultural contexts that involve power relations will give the greatest understanding of outdoor careers (see Allin & Humberstone, 2008). We also reiterate Humberstone (2009) to suggest that outdoor career research needs to draw from broader career theory or sociological perspectives to engage more critically and theoretically with some of the key concepts and issues raised.