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ABSTRACT

Little attention has been given to how adults develop through their lifetimes and what roles their workplace environments play in that development. Research and theory regarding adult psychosocial development have confirmed the developmental life-cycle phases of adulthood. These are: leaving the family (ages 16-22), getting into the adult world (22-29), the age 30 transition, rooting (20-35), becoming one's own person (35-40), midlife transition (40-43), restabilization (43-50), preretirement (50-65), and retirement. Each of these phases is characterized by a distinct set of developmental tasks that must be met to maintain a steady sequence of growth. The supportive workplace for individuals moving into early adulthood provides for resocialization for these younger workers who are breaking away from home and establishing a career identify. The role of the organization can be keyed to two different aspects of the developmental tasks being faced by workers at the midlife transition. The workplace should both treat employees as adults and permit them to grow as persons. Some approaches and specific supports for workers at this stage include financial compensation for performance and productivity gains, diversified job roles and responsibilities, adequate "hygiene" conditions, career counseling, effective assessment centers, and improved human resource planning and forecasting centers. (A final section points out other variables affecting worker/workplace relationships.) (YLB)

ADULT DEVELOPMENT AND THE WORKPLACE

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FOREWORD

Considerable study has been devoted to how youths develop in school and training settings. Far less is known about how adults continue to develop throughout their lives and how the workplace environment affects that development. This concept paper examines that relationship. It presents an overview of the adult career and life cycles and analyzes the workplace variables that affect successful passage through these cycles, especially in terms of worker productivity and job satisfaction.

The National Center is pleased to present this concept by Dr. James Heffernan, who wrote it while serving as a Fellow in the Advanced Study Center of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. Dr. Heffernan is Executive Director of the Washington Center for Learning Alternatives in Washington, D.C.

This paper would not have been possible without the assistance of Dr. Art Lee, Coordinator, Advanced Study Center; Jeanne Brandes, typist; Janet Kiplinger, editor; and all others who helped in this effort.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research in
Vocational Education

INTRODUCTION

During most of its history, vocational education has focused on the training and the career decision-making processes of youth. That focus had been expanded in recent years as vocational educators have considered development of careers across the life span and have involved themselves in the continuing vocational education of adults. With this expanding focus has come a shift in vocational educators' interest in the institutional settings for the career development process, from the school to the workplace. Just as the school setting has had its strong impact through basic skills training and preliminary socialization to work habits, so does the workplace have its effects on adults' evolving vocational identities. Students develop personal, social, and vocational capacities as adults in the formal organizational settings of their workplaces.

A foundation for vocational educators' understanding of how youths develop in school and training settings has been fairly well established by such researchers as Super, Tiedman, and Herr. Less well understood is how adults continue to develop through their lifetimes and what roles their workplace environments play in that development. This paper which represents an initial step in assaying that relationship, is intended to further familiarize vocational educators with the state of our knowledge of adult life cycles and to highlight the workplace and organizational features

that are related to adults' successful passage through career and life cycle transitions. The purpose of this initial paper is to set that framework for an informed discussion of adult development and careers in order to begin a dialogue concerning the critical elements of continuing vocational education, either in the workplace or places of training.

A second, more timely topic that will be touched upon is that affect worker/organization interactions vis-à-vis worker productivity and job satisfaction. It is felt that workers' productivity may be influenced by life cycle or career cycle dynamics and that organizational policies, practices, and environments may play a significant role in adults' "normal developmental transitions." This would be an important point to establish, for two reasons: first, individual workers may define "productivity" for themselves in different ways according to their own life cycles or career "passages"; and second, organizations may hold qualitatively different expectations for the productivity of workers in different life or career stages. If these speculations are valid, then it becomes important in terms of our overall concerns about work force productivity, to ensure that workplaces do not serve to stifle or stymie their workers' life cycle transitions, and that employers indeed seek to enhance or provide support for employees, meeting the normal developmental tasks encountered by most adults.

Before any of these questions and specualtions can be directly confronted, it will be important for vocational educators to be well versed in adult development theories and to examine

some of the organizational/workplace features that are related to that development. Only then can the issues of "productive worker/workplace interactions" be examined and clear roles for continuing vocational education be defined.

This paper is divided into three parts--first, some background on adult development theory and a stage-by-stage discussion of the adult life cycle and transitions; second, an analysis of the critical developmental tasks that are confronted by adults as they move through the recognizable growth periods in their lives; and third, a presentation of some critical workplace or organizational variables that are related to two specific life cycle periods, early adulthood and the midlife transition.

RESEARCH AND THEORY REGARDING ADULT PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOMENT

Since the early 1970s, the field of developmental psychology has generated a number of new insights into how adult behavior and self-concepts change throughout a lifetime, following certain consistent patterns. The thrust of this work, in the words of one researcher, has been to generate hypotheses concerning "relatively universal, genotypic, age-linked adult developmental periods within which variations occur" (Levinson et al., p. 244). Such efforts aim to counter popular and unexamined beliefs that characterize adulthood as a static, stable, and reltively uneventful period after the turmoil of adolescence and before the decline of old age. Adulthood is stereotyped as a plateau, the period of greatest sanity, certainty, and power on the part of the individual. It is popularly assumed that most of one's personal development and

one's ability to make social role/behavior changes has occurred by the end of adolescence.

Most recent empirical studies, however, question this assumption about the "steady state" of adulthood. There is, in fact, life after thirty. As these recent studies point out, there probably is much or more change, challenge, and conflict in the adult years as in the earlier years--engendered, for example, by career demands, marriage and family responsibilities, and community invlovements. In the course of human life, change is constant and inevitable and always brings with it certain pressures. Thus, identity changes and role transformations are a natural part of the unfolding, lifelong process of socialization. Although much of the research is still exploratory and has certain limits to its broad applicability, it has made substantial and consistent demonstrations that adult life is a changeful, dynamic, and differential period, that there are definable periods of characteristic role behaviors that can be linked, if not to precise chronological ages, at least to age ranges, in a predictable fashion.

Earlier theories, (e.g. those of Jung, Fromm, and Erikson) about psychological development through the life span have been relatively brief and nonspecific about the adult years. The more recent studies have sought to develop greater detail and to make more explicit the sequential age-relatedness of certain characteristics. It must be remembered, of course, that these are data derived from groups and are measures of central tendancy, not precise, personalized indices. Thus, despite the relative consistency of age-related behavior patterns, the differences between particular

individuals may be greater within the same age cohort than between succeeding age cohorts. In other words, these theories are group-destructive, not person-predictive.

The descriptions of adult development to follow are derived from the independent research work of Daniel J. Levinson and associates (1974) and Roger L. Gould (1972). The material on the preretirement period is from the work of Bernice L. Neugarten (1964); also incorporated are observations and commentaries made by Gail Sheehy (1975), Arthur W. Chickering (1981), and an extensive literature synthesis by K. Patricia Cross (1981). Although there is some variation in the numder of adult life phases and their respective age boundaries, the overall structure of adult development described in these works are highly similar. In the interest of brevity, this paper will describe the adult development and socialization phases from late adolescence to post-retirement in nine steps: leaving the family (16-22), getting into the adult world (22-29), age thirty transition (29-32), rooting (30-35), becoming one's own person (35-40), midlife transition (40-43), restabilization (43-50), and preretirement (50-65).

The empirical data and discussion of the Levinson work are drawn from a progress report on a longitudinal clinical study of adult males. Forty men, aged thirty-five to forty-five, representing blue-and white-collar workers, business executives, novelists and academic biologists, were interviewed and given the Thematic Apperception Test. Each person was seen six to ten times over a period of two or three months; most were interviewed

in a follow-up two years later. The Connecticut Mental Health Center and the Yale University Department of Psychiatry were the project sponsors; psychiatric, medical, and psychological staff workers produced the bulk of the data analyses and the generalizations about adult life phases. More recent work by Levinson and his associates has expanded the diversity of populations, but the basic outline of the "adult life structure" remains the same.

The structure and the dynamics of the adult life phases outlined by Levinson are similar to adult life span features described by Gould. Gould's earliest work is based on two studies, one of outpatients in group therapy in a psychiatric clinic, the other of nonpatients surveyed through a phases-of-life questionaire. In the first study, seven age-homogeneous groups were established, and, throughout the course of group therapy and clinical interaction, salient features of age group characteristics were derived by clinical staff. (The ten study group members included psychiatrists, psychologists, and an anthropologist; group session tapes were also later assessed by a second group of raters, who picked out the same critical and salient age group characteristics.)

The second Gould study surveyed 524 educated, middle-class nonpatients through a questionaire composed of salient statements heard in the "phases-of-life" group sessions. Sixteen items were developed regarding time relationships, parents, friends, children, spouses, self, job, and sex, and a rank ordering of "major life concerns" and "important others" was included.

As exploratory studies, the Levinson and the Gould studies

bear certain limitations on their general applicability. The study populations were relatively small in size and were not based on random selections; the effects of socioeconomic, cultural, and personal background differences were not controlled, nor were effects of race, sex, income group, or occupation subgroups traced in a systematic way. The value of these early studies lies not in their methodology or in their precision, but in the general and intuitive validity of the patterns they describe and the directions they suggest for further investigation. The authors' later studies and discussions (Gould 1978, and Levinson in Smelser and Erikson 1980) and research by other investigators have confirmed the life cycle patterns, with several variations related primarily to the distinctive life cycle patterns of women. Figure 1 presents the sequence of life cycle phases in schematic fashion.

The Developmental Phases of Adulthood

Leaving the family, or "pulling up roots," begins around ages sixteen to eighteen and requires about three to four years, or until age twenty-two. During this period, the individual ventures into autonomy and independence from his or her family but does not cut all ties completely. The individucal often feels half in and half out of his or her family group. Other "home bases" are developed as stepping-stones or bridges out of the family. Although escape from parental dominance is of paramount concern, the freedom to move in and out of the family structure usually

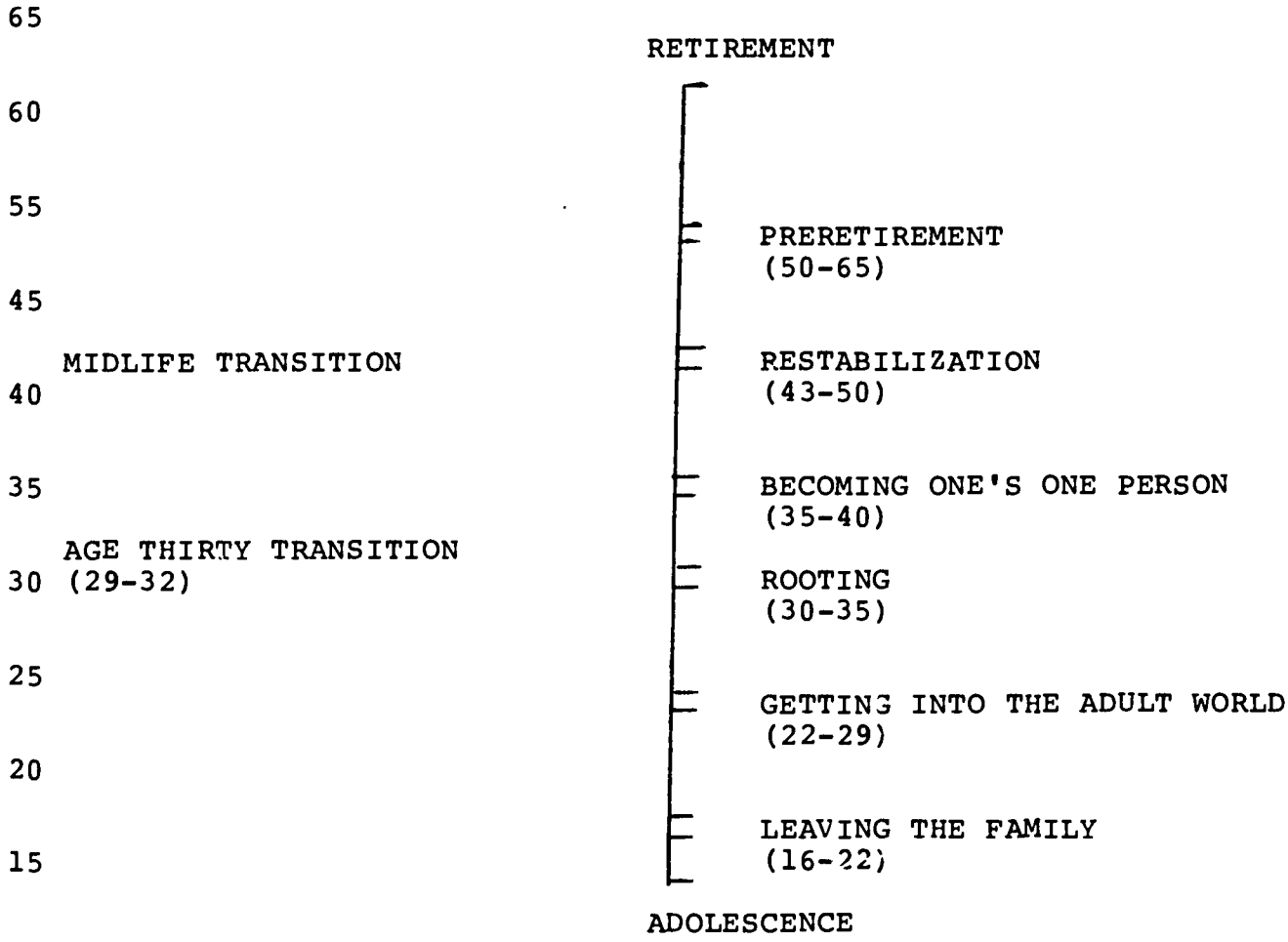


Figure 1. Phases of adult development. (Adapted from Levinson 1974 and Gould 1972.)

is sought.

Peers become increasingly important as substitutes for parents. Individual seek intimacy with others who are not greatly different from themselves or their families. Other social institutions are used to facilitate gaining this tentative freedom from home bound. Going away to college, securing an out-of-town summer job, or moving into an apartment in town--but being handy for Sunday dinner and laundry room visits--are some of the activities characteristic of this period of leaving the family. Practicing "adultlike" behaviors rather than immediately becoming an adult requires certain structures, controls, and opportunities for competence testing outside the securities and nurturance of the home setting. College or the armed forces is helpful in this regard, as are unions, work groups, and sports groups.

Getting into the adult world, or "provisional adulthood" occurs from ages twenty-two to twenty-nine. It is essentially a time of exploring and making provisional commitments to adult roles, the work world, personal relationships, societal memberships, and responsibilities. It is a time of making an initial self-definition of oneself, or becoming self-reliant. Since this period represents a first try at adulthood, there may be a tendancy to overdo it, to insist that what one is doing is one's true course in life. Early in this period there is a bravado, an inflated self-confidence that one has "really got it together", one's vision of his or her life system and identity is overdrawn. In fact, one may not actually be all that confident; fears of still being a child and unable to take care of oneself still persist.

Shaping the vision of oneself, one's life systems and future is characterized by Levinson as the fashioning of the "the Dream." The Dream provides direction, structure, and focus for the individual; often in occupational terms. This Dream is expressed in normative terms: what one "ought to" be doing. The source of "ought to" norms may vary--the liberal or the conservative, main stream America or local ethnic norms. During this period, the Dream is hammered firmly together, either in accordance with prevailing norms--e.g., one should go to graduate school, begin a nuclear family--or in opposition to regnant norms--e.g., antimaterialism, communal living. In either case, a strong set of "should" is developed with no great degree of introspection or individualization of norms. The Dream represents an idealized, externalized vision of oneself, "What I want to be when I grow up." It is not until later periods of life, the midlife transition of the early forties, that the details of this Dream are critically examined in realistic and individual terms.

A second important characteristic of getting into the adult world is securing a mentor. Mentor relationships are found in all social levels and are an important part of development in the late twenties and early thirties. Levinson and colleagues describe a mentor in the following way:

> The mentor is ordinarily eight to fifteeen years older--enough older to represent greater wisdom, authority, paternal qualities, but near enough in age or attitudes to be in some respect a peer or older brother or sister than a wise old man. . . The mentor takes the younger man under his wing, invites him into a new occupational world, shows him around, imparts his wisdom, cares, sponsors, criticizes and bestows his blessing. . . the "blessing" is the crucial element. . . . Few men have more than three or four mentors . . . could be none or one . . . Duration of

> of relationship is typically three-four years . . . one does not have mentors after 40 . . . . It is probably impossible to be a mentor without first having been a mentee.

Thus, the provisional adult of the late twenties utilizes a mentor to help build his or her Dream particuarily in terms of information about the larger social or professional context to which he or she aspires. The mentor is a pricipal vehicle for his or her eargerly sought career socialization.

The age thirty transition is a shorter period, running from approximately twenty-nine to thirty-two. As Sheehy (1978) indicates, this is a time when individuals are asking, "What is this life all about, now that I am doing all that I am supposed to be doing?" It is a time of realization that life is really more difficult and complex than it seemed to be in the twenties.

Before individuals enter the rooting or settling down period of the late thirties, they make a final reassessment of their provisonal adulthood. They may reaffirm their earlier provisional commitments, their Dream, or may reject that life plan and shift to another occupational and value system. This can be a frantic time, for there is a subjective feeling of being at several forks in the road with no later chances to backtrack. Brief excursions down each of the alternative forks may occur before one way is settled upon. Resocialization into a new professional area may have to take place; it probably is more tentative and exploratory that the initial commitment to a career track.

The period of rooting follows the age thirty transition with busy, directed activity. Running until the midthirties, it is

a time of deepening and elaborating commitments, of becoming fully socialized into an occupation and life-style, of settling into a family life. "Making it" and establishing an orderly, managed life become important as one moves toward the realization of the Dream. The structure and the criteria of goals are established, and agendas for accomplishment are set; ambition and upward mobility are basic motivators. Thus, the young adult moves in two directions; downward/inward--toward order and stability in his or her life plan--and upward/outward--with mobility and ambition for achievements within a particular career domain.

This focus on external goals and indicators, says Sheehy, can make people, more than at any other time in their lives, plain boring. This is because building toward the Dream is a narrowing and self-illuminating process. The importance of one's goals are overblown; the meaning of one's pursuits tends to be taken a bit too seriously. The externalities of the Dream do not permit a full reflection of <u>all</u> of the parts of oneself. One strives to emulate a model, not a person. (Later a "de-illuminating" process occurs, wherein the Dream is reassessed, and individuals permit themself to become more rich and expressive in character, more than two-dimensional). The Dream is, after all, extrinsic in nature, most often tied to the setting and requirements of a profession which do not always promote full expression of an individual's human qualities.

The period of <u>becoming one's own person</u> rounds out the decade of the thirties, from around age thirty-five to forty. This is a time of a feeling of one's powers, capabilities, and autonomy; it

is the peak of early adulthood. Levinson found that this period peaks when the junior executive makes a vice-presidency, the blue-collar worker becomes a supervisor, the teacher becomes department head, or the small business person turns the corner to successful years of sales and growth.

The sense of independence and the success in becoming one's own person frequently are accompanied, finds Levinson, by a restlessness, a sense of constraint. The individual feels, at least subjectively, that he is

> overly dependent upon and constrained by persons or groups who have authority over him. (The person who has) successfully risen through the managerial ranks with the support and encouragement of his superiors now finds that they control too much and delegate too little, and he impatiently awaits the time when he will have the authority to make his own decisions and to get the enterprise really going. (Levinson 1975, p. 251)

This feeling of constraint may develop with regard to the realtionship with a mentor as well. The mentees may feel that they are being held back or have profited all they can from their mentors. that they must finally proceed on their own terms. Unfortunately, some mentors cannot let go easily; they resent their proteges' departures. Others find a reflected glory in their mentees and encourage them to become all that they can be on their own.

The midlife transition is a shorter period, lasting from around age forty to age forty-three; it represents a second transitional period between two sets of longer, more stable stages. After the buildup of accomplishments involved in becoming one's own person, the individual is concerned with the signs and the evidence that certify that he or she in fact "made it." The individual fixes on some key event or occurance--a promotion, public

recognition, a child's success--as a symbol of whether or not his or her Dream or vision of a life plan has been achieved.

Levinson points out that many individuals will wait for some sign or other, almost in suspended animation, during this transition period. Levinson also points out that it is not so much whether one fails or succeeds in life, but how great the disparity is between what one has been striving for in terms of external goals and what one wants for oneself as a person--that is, how good the fit is between the life structure--the Dream--and the inner self--"what I really want, for me." At earlier stages, the individual's values, character traits, goals structures, accomplishments, and ambition agendas were related to an idealize, somewhat external model of "making it." Becoming one's own person, becoming independent, growing beyond a mentor were high points of the preceding part of young adulthood. In the midlife transition period, however, the other side of an individual's life begins to gain ascedence. That is, the personal side, those other essential aspects of self-emotionality, playfulness, fantasy--which were early rejected, repressed, or left in the pursuit of the Dream, begin to emerge. Individuals seek to link parts of their life plan ideals to their more personal human characteristics. The potential crisis in this transition may arise from a realization of great disparity between the Dream and one's "human side"; disillusionment with one's professional career as nonfulfilling is not an uncommon feature of this transition crisis.

Another major aspect of this age period is noted by Levinson and Gould, and particularily by Neugarten: The intimations of one's

own mortality. It is at this age one experiences the first realizations of personal aging. A major shift in personal time perspective occurs; one now thinks of "time remaining" or "time until death." An awareness of bodily decline accompanies this change in perspective of lifetime. Essentially, then, the transition is one of a changed relationship to one's inner self, to precede the more mellow, self-oriented stages of middle adulthood.

Restablization begins after the introspection and self-assessment of the early forties die down from forty-three to fifty. This period of re-centering may see a new life structure emerging, a flowing of a more complete personality structure. New intrinsic goals are established, in terms both of one's professional and one's inner personal life. Ambition agendas are put into a finite time perspective, and experiences are emotionalized. Joy and sorrow, rather than glamor or power, are newly important aspects of experience. Children and colleagues are no longer seen as a burden or as restrictive dependents; relationships are humanized, more deeply enjoyed; less instrumental. The earler age thirty transition had been followed by a settling down or restabilization, but into a professional or externally defined life plan. This later restabilization sees the emergence of inner personal concerns, which earlier had been disregarded.

Preretirement, the period of mellowing and disengagement, may commence as early as age fifty. Individuals now begin to consider their eventual departure from, or place less importance on, an active professional life. (The work of Neugarten illuminates this period more fully than the Levinson and Gould

studies, particuarily her Personality in Middle and Later Life.)

This period is characterized by a greater preoccupation with the inner self and less investment in other persons and objects. The individual begins to disengage from the social system, become more aware of the beginning of physical decline and decreasing physical energy. The environment--work setting, home, and social environments--is perceived as more complex, less malleable, less easily shaped by one's own wishes and efforts. There is a greater willingness to withdraw, to accommodate, to deal with less intricate and less complex challenges. Neugarten points out that the "increased interiority" of personality is measurable even in the midforties, "well before the social losses of aging, the decreases of social interaction and the lowered competency of adult role performance have occurred" (1964, p. 194).

An important sex difference related to the disengagements of the preretirement years is pointed out by Neugarten. For men, middle age is typically a period of disengagement and contraction, whereas youth is a period of involvement and expansion. For women, the reverse seemes to be true. Middle-aged men's orientations shift from the outer world and its conquest to the inner world of their own thoughts and feelings, with attitudes of passive rather than active mastery. Women, on the other hand, move from the dependent, passive roles of their young adulthood to more active, direct dealings with their environments. In our society, notes Neugarten, much of women's identity is gained through others--their children, spouses, bosses--in effect, through vicarious achievement. In their traditionally supportive roles as mothers, wives, and

secretaries, and teachers, women's successes are not their own ; they share reflected glory. However, in the middle years, situations change and role reversals occur. Women lose their direct child-bearing role, and perhaps even their role as wife. The often enter the wider roles of a career or job, "plunge into direct achieving roles and feel a new kind of actualization and control of their world" (Schlossberg and Troll 1976, p. 29). Thus, there is a potential crossover of roles at the preretirement period, men becmoing more inwardly oriented, and women becoming more active and achievement oriented.

Summary

> The life cycle thus can be conceived as spanning three broad phases. In childhood and adolescence the focus is on acquisition of those interests, values, propensities, and competencies that make one a unique person ready to live in the adult world. The next 20 years or so constitute a period of differentiation and specialization during which the person finds a place in that world and learns how to function more or less effectively within it. Generally, during this period one's focus is outward, attending to environmental possibilities and constraints and what one needs to do to adapt to and master living in one's life structure. At some time in midlife there tends to be a (not always deliberate or articulated) questioning and reexamination of one's life and a turning inward aimed toward a most effective integration of the whole self and life circumstances. There is nothing magical about age per se; the shift from one phase to another, while fairly predictable, varies considerably from person to person depending both on one's psychological condition and on how one is viewed and treated by others. (Wolf and Kolb 1980, p. 242)

LIFE CYCLE TRANSITIONS: THE DEVELOPMETAL TASKS

Each of these phases of life can be characterized by a distinct set of developmental tasks or challenges that must be met in order to maintain a steady sequence of growth. According to Havighurst,

> the developmental tasks of life are those required for healthy and satisfactory growth in our society. They are the physiological, psychological and social demands a person must satisfy in order to be judged by others and to judge himself or herself to be a reasonably happy and successful person. A given developmental task typically arises during a certain period of a person's life. Successful achievement contributes to happiness and success in later tasks; failure contributes to unhappiness, social disapproval and later failures. (Chickering et al. 1981, p. 25)

Although Levinson (in Smelser and Erikson, 1981) states that the periods in his life structure theory form no heirarchy--"one period is not seen as higher or more advanced than another" (p. 280)--so that no evaluative dimension is implied, others, such as Schein, Van Maanen, and Neugarten, point out that if certain psychic tasks and challenges are not met and resolved according to a timetable of social expectations, (i.e., a set of external expectations for developmenal "progress"), the individual is perceived--by self and others--as not maturing, or stuck at a lower level of development. Hence it is important to understand what distinctive sets of developmental challenges or, to use Cross's term, "psychic tasks", are characteristic of the transition points along the life cycles. Table 1 outlines the life cycle phases and the associated psychic tasks. (For purposes of clarifying the concepts, this outline also includes the marker events that signal those periods and the characteristic stance or personal perspectives typical of individuals in each of the life cycle phases.)

Empirical documentation of these adult life cycle phases and the associated developmental tasks recently has been added by Wolfe and Kolb (1980) in their study of nearly 500 professional

Table 1
Features of Life Cycle Phases

Phase and Age	Psychic	Marker Events	Characteristic Stance
Leaving the Family 16-22	Establish autonomy and independence from family Define identity Establish new peer alliances	Leaving home New living arrangements College entrance First full-time job Selection of mate	A blance between "being in" and "moving out of the family
Getting into the Adult World 22-29	Regard self as adult Develope capacity for intimacy Fashion initial life structure Build the dream Find a mentor	Marriage Establishent of home Getting hired/fired/ quitting job Enter into community activities	"Doing what one should Living and building for the future Launched as an adult
Age Thirty Transition 29-32	Reappraise relationships Reexamine life structure and present commitments	Possible separation, divorce, remariage Possible return to school	"What is this life all about now that I am doing what I am supposed to?"
Rooting 30-35	Strive for success Search for stability, security, control Search for personal values Accept growing children	Establishment of children in school Progress in career or consideration of change	Concern for order and stability and with "making it" Desire to set long-range goals and meet them
Becoming One's Own Person 35=40	Express autonomy and personal agency Prune dependent ties to boss, spouse, mentor	Crucial promotion Break with mentor Responsibility for three-generation family, i.e., growing children and aging parents For women: empty nest; entrance into career and education	"I'm doing it may way-it works and I enjoy it
Midlife Transition 40-43	Face reality Confront mortality and sense of aging	Reassessment of marriage Reassessment of personal priorities and values	Suspended animation More nuturing stance for men; more assertive stance for women "Have I done the right thing? Is there time to change?

Restabilization 43-40	Increase feelings of self-awareness and competence Reestablish family relationships Enjoy one's choices and life style Reexamine the fit between life structure and self	Capping of career Becoming a mentor Launching children; becoming grandparents New interests and hobbies Physical limitations, menopause Active participation in community events	"It is perhaps late, but there are things I would like to do in the last half of my life Best time of life
Preretirement 50-65	Accomplish goals in the time left to live Accept and adjust to aging process	Possible loss of mate Health problems Preparation for retirement	Mellowing of feelings and relationships Spouse increasingly important Greater comfort with self
Life Review 65+	Search for integrity versus despair Acceptance of self Disengagement Rehersal for death of spouse	Retirement Physical decline Change in finances New living arrange- Death of friends/spouse Major shift in daily routine	Review of accomplishments Eagerness to share everyday human joys and sorrows Importance of family Death as a new presence

Source: adapted from a synthesis a research by K. Patricia Cross.

men and women ranging in age from twenty-four to sixty-three. Questions were aimed at determining the relative importance of twenty-four developmental tasks and adult life issues. It was found that individuals in different age groups differed significantly in terms of the importance accorded to the following clusters of developmental tasks:

1. Career: financial aspirations and attaining chosen line of work
2. Competence: learning specialized knowledge, skills, and expertise
3. Career development: a combined index incorporating career and competence
4. Family life: having a rewarding marriage and family life, including rearing children
5. Personal well-being: coping with stress, dealing with change, maintaining physical health and well-being
6. Self-awareness: getting in touch with feelings, changing goals and activities to fit oneself, becoming one's own person
7. Generativity: attaining a broad perspective and making a contribution to society, to community affairs, and to the next generation (pp.260-26)

Wolfe and Kolb were able to factor these clusters further into four major life issue variables, which they termed career development, family life, personal well-being and generativity. As indicated by figure 2, individuals in each of three age groups noted the importance of these areas quite differently. The three age groups were early adulthood (24-40), the midlife transition (40-45), and posttransition period (45-60).

From the Cross synthesis (table 1) and the Wolfe and Kolb findings (figure 2), it is apparent that persons at different life cycle positions would require quite different kinds of

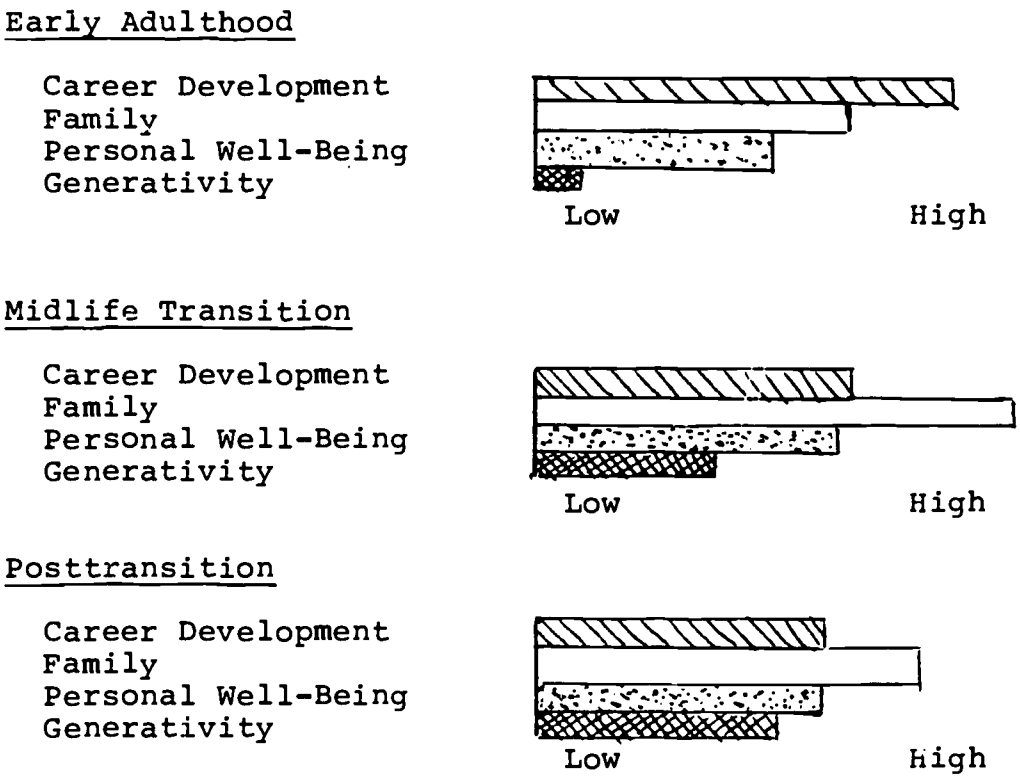


Figure 2. Importance of major developmental tasks by phases of adulthood. (Adapted from Wolfe and Kolb 1980.)

support to enable them to resolve their phase-specific challenges. Different kinds of environmental settings (e.g., workplaces), would be related to the successful passage of life cycle transitions. By defining the principal challenges, then, we can begin to identify some of the critical features of supportive environments. In doing so, we can move a step closed toward defining the workplace features--the organizational environments--that would contribute to adults' "normal" human development; and in doing so, we might also better our understanding of adult workers' productivity and work satisfaction at different points in their lives.

WORKPLACE VARIABLES RELATED TO LIFE CYCLE TRANSITIONS

In the interests of brevity and clarity, this paper will illustrate the linking of age-related life cycle transistions and workplace features in terms of only two of the major periods, early adulthood and midlife transition.

Transitions to Early Adulthood

As indicated by figure 2, the predominant concern in early adulthood is career development. Choosing the right career, getting the right training and education, and developing competence for long-term success are the pressing and the paramount concerns.

Family life is of comparatively moderate importance at this time. Marriage generally occurs by the late twenties; needs for independence from one's own family home and opportunity for intimacy with a new spouse are important, but secondary to career concerns. Although first children are born during this period,

developing a satisfying family life is all too often treated as a "task to be done with the left hand, while the 'more important' work of launching a career receives central attention." (Wolfe and Kolb 1980, p. 263).

Personal well-being is less a concern during early adulthood, behind career development and even family life. Although changes and new situations are frequent and ambiquity is ever present, the individual's sense of personal well-being is not directly endangered. Breaking with the family,establishing an independent life and life-style, establishing a career, and developing and testing career competencies are sources of strees, to be sure, but they are also sources of a sense of growth, potency, and well-being.

Finally, the importance of the issue of generativity is lowest during early adulthood. As figure 2 shows, concern with making a contribution to society, community affairs, or coming generations is quite modest during this phase; career and even family issues are far stronger.

The Supportive Workplace in Early Adulthood

What kind of workplace, then, will best support an individual as he or she moves into this period of early adulthood? This period included the challenges of leaving the family and setting into the adult world. Thus dynamic of "getting out and getting in" would seem to require supports for resocialization vis-à-vis significant new social settings, most commonly the workplace itself. Finding easy pathways to organizational membership would appear to be an essential step in this early adulthood "passage."

The work of a number of social psychologists and management

specialist has pointed up the organizational features that aid in according the pathways to workplace membership. Van Maanen and Schein (1977) define this process of socialization into a new work setting in terms of three stages, entry, encounter, and metamorphosis. In the entry stage, the individual seeks to improve his or her initial expectations and justifications for making a job choice with the actual conditions and work requirements of the "real work setting." For many young adults the success of their entry depends upon the degree to which they have "correctly anticipated the expectations and desires of those in the organization in charge of selections" (Van Maanen and Schein 1977, p. 59). From the organizational point of view, this requires that fair, accurate, and comprehensive information about job tasks, organizational structures, work standards, and work relationships be conveyed as quickly as possible.

Provision of such information early on helps to avoid the drawn-out effect of what Van Mannen and Schein term the encounter period, the major feature of which is the "upending experience," the reality shock of having to make too great a shift between initial, perhaps ill-informed expectations of job tasks and actual tasks encountered. The upending experience may be assignment to job tasks that are either too difficult or too easy, in either case anomie, withdrawl, or poor performance may result. In cases where this occurs, or where tasks simply are too dull and repetitive to generate much personal meaningfulness, the organization must "provide member with alternative sources of meaning and control (such as pay, colleagues, and

variety)" (Van Maanen and Schein 1977, p. 60). The key to cushioning the reality shock is the supportiveness of the individuals in the smaller work group to which an individual is assigned; hence, organizations can temper this period by careful preparation of work groups into which new workers are put.

Having a supportive co-worker group enables what Van Maanen and Schein term the metamorphosis to occur, when "the new member can be said to be comfortable in the environment" (1977, p. 61). This resocialization end state is marked by the achievement of a "final perspective," namely, the solutions the new entrant has worked out for dealing with problems discovered during the preceding encounter only after pre-entry expectations have been "upended" and transformed and the recruit feels at home in his or her surroundings. An organizational support that is felt to be important for this kind of metamorphosis is the formal expression of belonging represented by "status" rituals or ceremonies that allow the person to say 'I am not what I used to be.' Such symbolic events may involve tests and trials, followed by the granting of titles, new responsibilities and priviledges, or the sharing of information that had been withheld" (Van Maanen and Schein 1977, p. 62).

Finalizing the period of metamorphosis for many organizational newcomers also entails the negotiation of what Van Maanen and Schein have called a psychological contract. Such negotiations between employers and workers is often covert, and the "bargaining" may cover many topics as varied as role expectations, evaluation standards, or group membership. The final settling

in or adjustment to a work setting will depend on how well the psychological dissonances are minimized and how complete the contract has become. This contract for a "good start can be affected by the organization itself. Whether it is recognized or not, a negotiation process accompanies all career transitions . . . . It would seem wise for organizations and individuals alike to elevate such psychologicalcontracting from its present sub rosa position to one that would allow mutual interest and constraints to be articulated openly" (Van Maanen and Schein 1977, p. 62).

Indeed, an organization can examine its policies, traditions, and practices regarding the socialization of new workers with an eye toward assessing the ease with which "pathways to organizational memberhips" are traversed. Van Maanen (1975) has outlined a number of dimensions by which organizations can be classified vis-à-vis socialization processes and settings. Most of these dimensions represent areas in which workplace adaptations can be readily made, that is, areas in which organizations have some measure of control over the nature of their work socialization process.

Characterisitics of Organizational Socialization Processes

The following six characteristics, adopted from Van Maanen and Schein (1977, pp. 63-64), are representative of organizational socialization processes.

1. The formality or informality of the socialization process. Usually, the more formal the setting, the more stress there is on influencing the newcomers' attitudes and

values.

2. The degree to which the process is determinate or indeterminate. Fixed and known schedules, clear steps and stages, or more determinate processes make for less anxiety about role failures and greater foreknowledge of what "making it" actually means.
3. The individual tailoring versus collective administration of the process to all new workers. Socialization of newcomers in groups (e.g., the military) is not only less expensive and less time-consuming, it also can result in a common perspective--positive or negative--shared by all in the group and a shared level of morale--high or low. Individually tailored processes are less impersonal and can lead to earlier commitment to organizational loyalty; they are also more difficult to administer.
4. The sequentiality versus the nonsequentiality of the process. The more hierarchical the sequence of training and the pattern of socialization (i.e., moving in a set pattern through job tasks and work groups) and the more each step builds upon the last, the more irreversible the commitment of the individual being so socialized.
5. The homogeneity or the heterogeneity of the group of new recruits being socialized. The more homogeneous the group--in terms of sex, age, race, work experience, or education-- the more quickly the group will develop a common perspective--positive or negative-- on work

tasks and on the organization. Training groups that are set up to be heterogeneous usually produce fewer worker-collective actions.

6. The degree to which the socialization process confirms and builds upon the newcomer's identity or breaks down and rebuilds that identity. Certain organizations (e.g., religious orders, militent labor unions) seek to be "total environemnts" and to remake the values and motivations of newcomers in accord with those of the organization. Other workplaces seek to build upon existing characteristics or to reshape them only slightly. Total-institutional socialization may beget resistance or it may beget confomrity; it is always more time-consuming. Less pervasive socialization may beget less anxiety, but it also results in less certainty of loyalties once the process is complete.

It is apparent, then, that organizations; approaches to bringing younger workers into their world can be very different and can affect the "imprinting" of the individual for the organization. Again, this is a period in the life cycle when breaking away from home and establishing a career identity are paramount, and organizations can obviously affect the establishment of that career identity by the manner in which they go about socializing the individual to new settings.

The Midlife Transition

What are the developmental tasks for persons at the midlife transition stages? How do workplaces provide support for the

individuals at this stage in their lives? Several points are critical here.

First, in terms of predominant concerns, the pattern is quite different from early adulthood. As figure 2 indicates, career development has dropped in importance and family and personal well-being concerns have ascended. The progress of one's career can be a concern, not so much in terms of expansion and "making it," but in terms of a realization that one may not have "made it." Individuals may discover that their Dream has not been attained, that their career has levelled off short of goals set earlier--even though they may have received substantial recognition and success as perceived by outsiders. Thus, this is a time when one's lifework and career are reexamined in a self-critical light. Except for a few cases, not a great deal of energy is expended in making great changes or forward leaps in one's career.

In contrast, concern with family life is quite strong during the midlife transition. Several psychologists point to two pricipal factors. The first is a shift from "making it,' an outer-directedness, to "becoming one's own person," and inner-directedness. In the early adulthood period, the quest for career achievement "often leads one to view oneself in functional terms--what am I good at, and what am I good for? (Wolfe and Kolb 1980, p. 263). As one strives to get ahead, the demand and expectations of others and the achievement of future goals are paramount. In midlife, however, the expectations of others have less influence, and interests in the here and now increases. "Among the things desired is a more authentic involvement in the every-

day warmth and joy of family life which only rarely has been experienced (Wolf and Kolb 1980, p. 264).

The second factor in this increaing importance of family life is the change in time perspective of midlife. As many reach age forty, they begin to perceive that their "life time on earth" is not unlimited and that unless they soon partake of the pleasures and fulfillments that have been denied in the pursuit of a career, they may never get to do so. Indeed, it has been found that "the more one has specialized in and devoted oneself to career development in early adulthood, the more pressing family and intimate relations become in midlife" (Wolfe and Kolb 1980, p. 264).

Personal well-being concerns also become more urgent in midlife. The nature and meaning of one's life, and the effect of one's "busyness" on personal health--physical, mental, and spiritual--are addressed. This turning inward and self-processing, like the concern with family life, represent a coming to terms with one's Dream and the broader elements of life structures--the avocational, the creative--which may have been underplayed or underdeveloped in earlier adulthood.

Finally, generativity begins to emerge as a concern during the midlife transition, again as a function of the individual's questioning of "the ultimate relevance and value of his or her work." The search for a broader perspective on one's life-work and the expansion of one's commitments to the well-being of family, community, and society beyond the span of one's career begins in the midlife transition. The idea of becoming a mentor to a younger person, or passing along one's wisdom and experience

begin to become important, although it may not be implemented until the posttransition phase of the later forties or early fifties--after one's own restablization occurs.

The Supportive Workplace in Midlife Transition

The role of the organization in midlife transitions can be keyed to two different aspects of the developmental tasks being faced by workers at their life cycle phase. The first element is the recognition and affirmation of individuals' "boom" period beginning one's own person; doing it one's own way' being autonomous, self-initiating, productive, and potent. The response of the workplace should be, stated in the simplest terms, to "treat its employees like adults." The second elements is the recognition and affirmation of individuals' self-examination, their inward-turning assessment of their life structures, their "decathexis" of the work world, their broadening of life interests. The response of the workplace should be to permit employees to "grow as persons,' not to be treated simply as job holders, work producers, or interchangeable parts of the production or paper-flow system. Meeting these two needs has taken many forms in workplace design and organizational policies. The remainder of this section outlines a number of approaches and specific supports for workers in the midlife transition period of their life cycles.

The need for the worker at midlife transition simply to be "treated like an adult" is not always met in this country. Centralization of control and routinization of tasks may make

for more streamlined management in our modern corporations, but, save for a few individuals at the top, it does not always provide initiative and potency. Research on workers' alienation indicated that work settings do not always respond to the need of individuals at midlife.

This is not to say, however, that all work settings are "contradevelopmental.' An analysis of worker productivity experiments in this country by Katzell, Bienstock, and Faerstein (1977), and Katzell and Yankelovich (1975) has led to the discovery of numerous supportive work settings. Their research synthesis has specified a series of critical ingredients of work settings that are "efficient--in Barnard's use of the term--that is not only productively effective but also serving to satisfy the needs and desire of their members" (Katzell, Bienstock, and Faerstein 1977, p. 38). The "ingredients" include a number of principles that have a direct bearing on the kinds of organizational sustenance that are imperative to workers at the midlife transition.

From the Katzell and Yankelovich synthesis (1975) the following six findings are of particular interest here.

1. "Financial compensation of workers must be linked to their performance and productivity gains."

   A key to "being treated like an adult" is the feeling that there is an equitable connection between pay and work performance. In the midlife transition, opportunities to work for bonuses and merit pay are an important element in a worker's expression of being his or her own person. For women in the work force this principle is especially important. Fair compensation--equal pay for equal work--has

not always been received by women workers, and women at the midlife transition level, particularly professional women, will be acutely aware of compensation differences between them and their male counterparts, for reasons of personal recognition as well as economic ones.

2. "Workers and work must be matched so as to create a work situation which workers will see as capable of meeting their needs and expectations and where they will have the capabilities and resources to be successful."

The key here is "resources to be successful" that is, sufficient support in terms of co-workers, subordinates, facilities, equipment, and time to do the kind of job that "doing it my way" requires. Persons at the midlife transition are examining their Dream and the external factors that affect it, namely, a supportive or nonsupportive workplace. While the centrality of career development may be diminishing in importance, the desire for continuing career effectiveness as an indicator of the fact that "I've still got it" remains high. The worker at midlife does not psychologically "quit working" as long as there are still supports, resources, and recognition for the work that he or she does.

3. "For workers who deserve it, their work should provide opportunity for full use of their abilities, making a meaningful contribution, having challenging and diversified duties and being responsbile for others."

The "horizontal decalage," a Piagetian term describing the broadening and diversification of interests, which is characteristic of the midlife transition, requires a wider arena for the engagement of workers' energies. Diversified job roles, supervisory resonsibility, and the opportunity to

move out of one's specialty area are important workplace supports for the individual looking inward and questioning how fulfilling his or her Dream may be. Employers' recognition of individuals' participation in civic affairs or in avocational pursuits helps to validate and to encourage the midlife workers' interest in "life beyond the job." Again, "being treated like an adult" rather than a faceless jobholder is important to the individual at this time and is central to his or her continuing productivity and sense of a personally meaningful "connectedness" to the workplace.

4. "Workers at all levels must have inputs to plans and decisions affecting their jobs and working lives."

Particuarily important to the workers passing through the midlife transition is the sense that their ideas and inputs still have validity to the organization. They are, after all, at the senior levels of experience in a profession, if not in a specific company; it is important, therefore, that they continue to feel "engaged" by the organization as they go through the processes of assessing their own self-worth and their remaining time as an employee.

5. "Appropriate resources, including work methods and equipment, must be provided to facilitate workers' performance and minimize obstacles to carrying out their jobs."

As noted in the preceding discussions regarding support and recognition for an individual's continuing value as a worker at a time when he or she is questioning a personal Dream and the role of work life in it, it is important for

the employing organization not to assume that its midforties workers will always present the work support needs readily and clearly. Even persons in senior positions--supervisors, managers--will need to be consulted regarding their changing needs for meeting performance goals and for specifying the kinds of procedures and work methods that are arising as obstacles to their work performance.

6. "Adequate 'hygiene' conditions must exist, including competent and considerate supervision, fair pay and fringe benefits, job security, good working conditions and sound employee relations."

Germane to worker productivity and satisfaction at all age levels, this final point is important for workers at midlife transition in a particular way: if 'hygiene' conditions are poor, they may readily reinforce workers' negative assessments of their Dream. That is, during the introspection and reassessment of their life and work during this period, individuals may focus on the external factors in their work environment as some kind of indicator of career life attainment. If these external hygiene conditions are bad, a sense of "not making it" may emerge as the individuals ponder their careers--for example, "If I'm so successful, why do I work in such a (dirty) (impersonal) (high pressure) (low-paying) (slow growth) kind of workplace?" Individuals may indeed be effective and productive workers but, in seeking external signs and symbols of "making it" and reassessing their Dreams, may

overract to these external conditions as smudges on their success.

Katzell and Yankelovich have also noted other elements in work settings that, while less vigorously documented in the research literature, also appear to be important elements in worker productivity and satisfaction. Like the foregoing, these principles bear special relevance to workers in midlife transition.

Examples of such additonal elements include the following:

> "career structures which afford favorable future prospects for promotion, personal growth and greater reward."
>
> "revised use of time for work and leisure, such as the four-day week, the sabbatical leave, the educational leave, split schedules for couples, and early and partial retirement plans." (Katzell and Yankelovich 1975, pp. 39-40)

The useful point to be gained here is in relation to the increasing sense of importance of family life to workers in midlife transition. Flexible work schedules that allow for greater involvement in parenting activities and practices that encourage the combination of work and family activities (for example, inclusion of spouses and family in work-related travel or company-sponsored conferences and workshops) go a long way in reinforcing workers' capacities for meeting their broadening interests and in affirming their conception that their workplace views them as more than just a unit of labor.

In addition to the Katzell, Bienstock, and Faerstein (1977) synthsis, still other researchers have examined the relationship between workers and their organizations and have come up with a number of useful recommendations that can be modified to

focus on the speical situation of workers in midlife transition . Van Maanen and Schein detail a series of practices and policies that employing organizations can implement to enhance the quality of work life. These include the following suggestions which are applicable to providing support for workers at midlife (1977, pp. 85-93).

1. Improve dissemination of career option information. Characterisitics of career paths in an organization--entry points, specialization opportunities, organizational branches--should be well publicized so that individuals can move easily within the company to meet changing personal needs. The broadening interests of the worker in midlife transition might well be met by opportunities within the same organization, but only if they are known.
2. Initiate career counseling in connection with performance appraisal. At a time of personal reassessment and introspection such as the midlife transition, the responsbile organization can play a role in its employees' self-processing. "Every manager should sit down with each of his subordinates, review the year's performance, and initiate a dialogue" regarding work and career (ibid, p. 85). For midadulthood workers, this dialogue should touch upon more than job performance. It should include discussion of individual goals, aspirations, and expectations regarding their career over the next five to ten years; discussion of the work op-

portunities available in the company for which they are eligible or likely candidates; identification of training or self-development necessary to qualify for job role changes; and the specification of actual next steps to be taken to meet individuals' changing personal needs and expansion of work responsibilities if desired. Thus, performance appraisal would be linked to discussions of employees' emerging interests to help develop a profile of new directions for their career; counseling would be linked to reviewing the Dream in an atmosphere that is supportive rather than self-critical.

3. Develop effective assessment centers. Key to the preceding point about linking performance appraisal and career counseling is the assumption that effctive assessment capabilities reside in the organzation. This has not, of course, always been the case; personnel officials have only recently had the organizational clout to implement systematic assessment. A new model of assessment center has become popular in this country, one that utilizes simulation and real-life settings to assist assessors in analyzing performance of job tasks and in identifying workers' talents and capabilities for other job behavior and on dialogues among assessor, supervisors, and the persons being assessed. Summary and feedback sessions serve to give comprehensive information to the individuals in a nonjudgmental way; again, this kind of structured assessment helps

to provide workers in midlife transition not only information on how they are doing but also a model of how a systematic personal self-assessment can be done.

4. Improve human resource planning and forecasting systems. If an organization is to assist its workers to find career options in the company and to enjoy the benefits of their performance appraisals, then some form of long-range forecasting of humam resource needs must be developed so that human resources can be matched, over time, to organizational needs. Van Maanen and Schein propose a planning system that makes possible matching:

   a. A general forecast of what kinds of products and services, and in what quantities, will be needed over what period of time

   b. A careful working out of manpower needs to meet the forecast--manpower at all levels of management and labor in terms of numbers of people

   c. An assessment of the skills and personal charateristics that are likely to be needed in the various categories of employees

   d. An assessment of the present ages, skill levels and other personal characteristics that may be relevant to the future

   e. An assessment of the career bases of the present pool of employees and the likelihood of their being motivated and talented enough to progress into the needed categories

   f. An assessment of the gap between the needs as defined in steps b and c and the manpower supply as assessed in steps d and e

   g. Identification of the developmental needs of present employees and the need for recruitment of new employees based on the results of steps e and f

h. Development planning for employees at all levels and the generating of development programs consonant with the plans generated

i. Monitoring systems that ensure that the steps outlined above actually take place initially and continue to be implemented over a period of years

j. Evaluative procedures to update the plan and improve forecasting assessment, planning and development activities on a continuing basis (Van Maanen and Schein 1977, pp. 84-85)

Only a few organizations in this country yet have such elaborate and ambitious human resource planning/employee development systems in place, for understandable reasons. Still, a number of the components of such a system have been put into operation by larger coprporations and high-techonology corporations, such as General Electric, where human resources are of great importance.

Several firms also have taken steps to supplement their quality of work life programs; Van Maanen and Schein point up three elements in particular:

1. Career development workshops. In addition to what have been termed "joining up" workshops--for entry-level socialization purposes--a number of companies have sponsored mid-career workshops that enable workers to assess their work lives in a systematic way. The purpose of such workshops for midlife transition individuals is to train them in "how to make life plans, how to think about the role of their work career in those plans and how to develop concrete action steps toward implementing the plan" (1977, p. 90). At the same time, the organizations' point of view regarding promotions and job changes can be expressed, to provide an organizational context, or in

Schein's terms, "the characterisitics of the external career." Thus, the desired ends of such workshops are a clearer specification and mutual understanding of the expectations of the organization--e.g., how the promotional system works--and of the desires and interests of individuals as they contemplate their life assumptions, needs to work, and fulfillment of their Dream beyond a job life.

2. Special assignments and job rotation. In order to provide employees with a range of new work experiences within the company, a number of organizations have established job rotation schemes where individuals occupy positions under "real conditions" for a few weeks or months or up to a year or two. The individual in midlife transition can thus sample under workaday conditions several new work areas and can test his or her skills at new job tasks. Similarily, special assignments, such as task forces and ad hoc committees, can provide exposure to different work settings as part of a career reassessment. Critical to the value of these procedures, points out Van Maanen and Schein, is a mechanism for "good feedback and counseling after the temporary assignment" so that its impacts and insights can be assayed.

3. Sabbaticals, flexible working hours, off-work activities, and flexible reward and promotion systems. A number of corporations have implemented programs that recognize employees' different work time needs. Several of these are particuarily useful in conjunction with the midlife transition worker, in whom needs to pursue personal goals and concerns are strong. For example,

the problem of "plateauing--a lost of motivation accompanying the recognition that not many more promotions can be expected (--may affect the employee in midcareer)" (Van Maanen and Schein 1977, p. 92). A period of time away from the organization would help individuals to explore their self-concepts regarding a "career leveling-off," and to put other work life into a broader life perspective, to develop a more pluralistic Dream. "The organization is likely to continue to need the contributions of such people and therfore must find vehicles that permit them to remotivate themselves. An extended period of time off can often serve that function" (ibid).

Moreover, even if job-related plateauing is not a problem with a given individual, family life and personal well-being concerns could be. Periods of time off--a sabbatical, shorter work weeks, flexible time schedule--could be of benefit to an individual working in community activities or one with family readjustments, a self-development exercise, or an educational pursuit. While such time-off systems require certain levels of organzational size and flexibility, they have been implemented with success in Europe and in the United States for hourly employees as well as managerial and professional workers.

Flexible reward and promotional systems are based on the premise that individual workers should have more choice regarding their types of benefits, more opportunity to individualize their forms of compensation. Indeed, there is a growing trend toward giving workers a choice regarding the manner in which they will receive pay raises--for example, via a salary increase,

increased medical or child care benefits, education and/or training grants and release time, a seasonal bonus, paid leave, stock options or profit share increases, or whatever else best fits with the circumstances of the individual. In addition to "differentiated reward systems," which permit individualization of compensation, many corporations have established multiple promotion tracks, which provides for other kinds of career recognition than the upward movement to managerial or supervisory roles. Functional specializations --marketing, engineering, design, assembly, inspection, purchasing--have had additional titles and role responsibilities added to them to permit mid-career individuals to stay within specialization areas without feeling they have been demoted because they have failed to move up to coporate ladder. This restructuring of what is a promotion has only just begun:

> Ultimately the cultures and norms of organizations will have to shift to recognize that, in an increasingly complex environment, the organization is highly dependent on a wide range of human resources and career development involves many paths besides the path upward (Van Maanen and Schein 1977, p. 92).

Again, it is not every company that can institute these kinds of quality-of-work-life improvements. And it is not ensured that when they are instituted worker satisfaction and worker productivity will automatically increase. Evidence is strong in the organizational development literature that such policies and practices do benefit both employer and employee and that the needs of workers in the midlife transition phase can indeed be responded to. What is also strongly documented in the research is that such measures are effective when they

are not applied in a patched-on, willy-nilly, Band-Aid fashion. If flexible work hours or career development workshops are implemented as temporary palliatives, they have only minimal impact. Longer term comprehensive and systematic changes, what Katzell terms "modifications in the socio-technical systems of work production and organizational strucutres," are what is required. Hence, specific life cycle needs, be they at early adulthood or the midlife transition, can be focused on, but not at the expense of other employees' needs. Supports for meeting developmental challenges can be designed, but cannot be keyed to only a few salient groups in the work setting. What Katzell and others have to say regarding productivity experiments has significance here:

> It is advisable that any plan to improve and maintain productivity be approached in terms of the total social-technical work system itself. . . . that is, the interrelated set of psychological, social, technological, economic and cultural factors which must be integrated and harmonized if the system is to be effective over the long haul . . . . therefore, achieving major improvements in productivity may often require revising the system, making certain that each new step is consistent with its predecessors and with the whole (Katzell, Bienstock, Faerstein 1977, p. 41).

A Concluding Note: Compounding the Variables

The preceding synthesis of research and theory on life cycle phases and developmental supports in the workplace has taken a decidedly simplistic view of the relationship between employees and organizations. This was done in order to highlight just one aspect of the relationship, adults' life

cycle phases and workplace features. Where topic of worker/workplace interface are considered more comprehensively, of course, a veritable fire storm of related issues, intervening variables, qualifiers, and imperatives swirls up. Although the interactive effects of the numerous other variables and considerations affecting worker/workplace relations lie outside the scope of this paper, they should at least be pointed out, both as foci for further research and as cautions to be registered before any generalizations are drawn regarding life cycle developmental tasks and work productivity. In the course of the research for this paper, a number of factors were encountered that would have major bearing on any interventions at the workplace vis-a-vis life cycle changes. This final section briefly records several of the significant variables and issues.

The degree to which life cycle phases will be influential in affecting the relationship between workers and their organizations--namely, productivity, satisfaction--is affected in turn by clusters of individual variables, workplace variables, employment sector variables,and sociocultural variables. (Similarily, the matter of worker productivity is itself a product of multiple forces and factors. See figure 3 for a graphic depiction of the factors affecting job performance and productivity.)

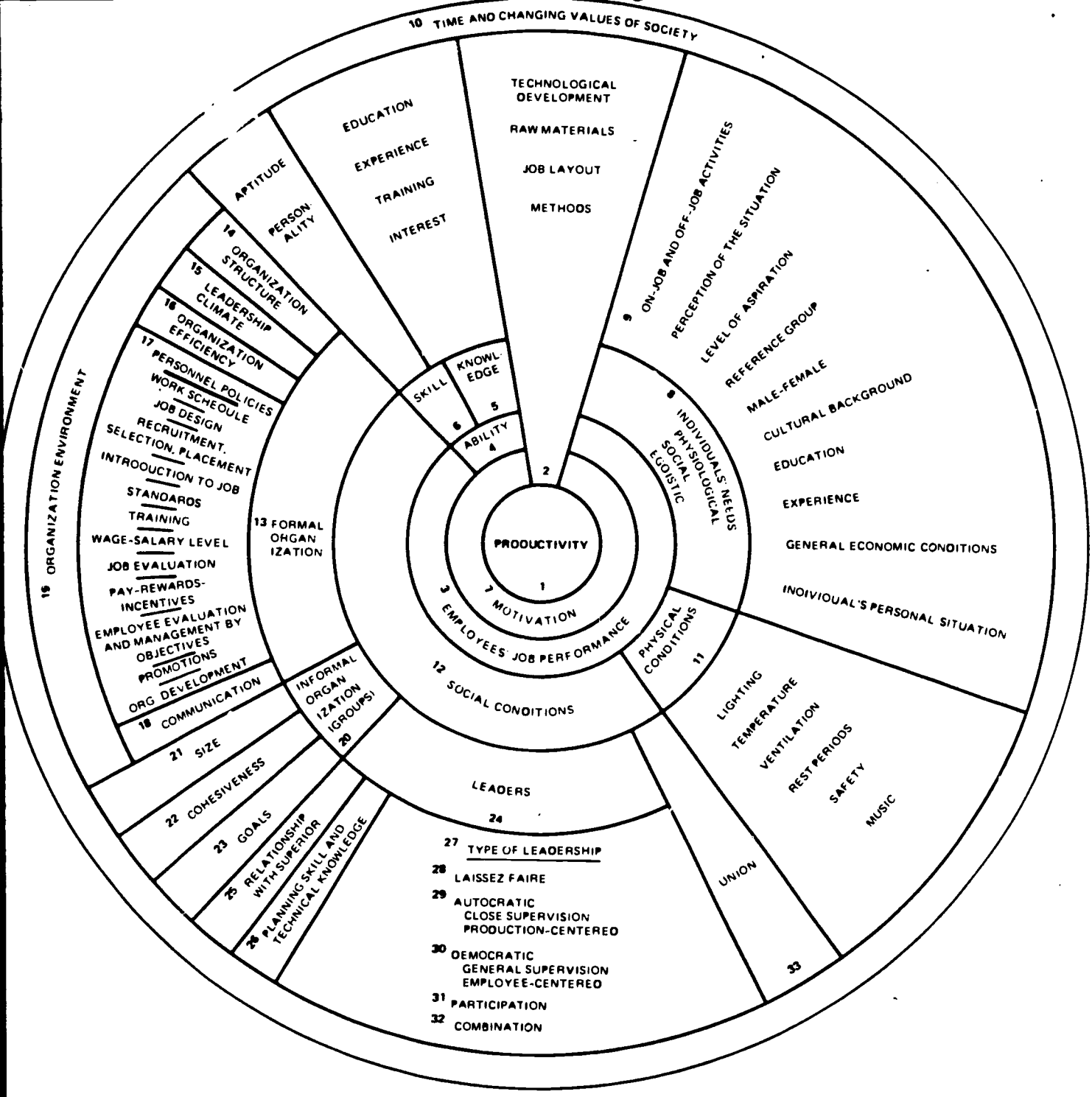
Individual differences will always mute the effects of life cycle characteristics; as stated earlier, differences among individuals in any given cohort can be greater than differences between adjacent cohorts. The principal source of difference currently being assayed by researchers is male versus female

patterns in life structure. Early studies were based primarily on male populations or did not disaggregate findings based on sex differences. Current studies are finding different behaviors, between men and women, regarding life cycle challenges, especially in the responce to the midlife transition. These differences, of course, affect the employer/employee relationship as well.

Another important source of individual variation relates to the matter of a worker's career stage--as opposed to his or her life stage. As Campbell and others (1979) point out, career development problems may arise at any age or life cycle period, depending on the career stage of the individual. They demonstrated that the career development sequence that encompassed preparation, establishment, maintenance, and retirement stages could be replayed several times during the life span, particularly with persons experiencing major career shift or periods of nonpaid employment. Thus relationships with an employing organization would be very different for a twenty-year-old and a forty-five-year-old worker seeking to become established in a work setting or in a profession after the preparation stage.

A third factor of importance in considering life-cylce phases and workplace features is an influence of what Edgar Schein has termed "career anchor":

> ...a syndrom of talents, motive, values and attitudes that provide direction and coherence to a person's career. Each anchor reflects a distinguishable career style--that is, it reflects the way a person approaches his job, interacts with others on the scene and emphasizes some tasks in preference to others . . . . five anchors are useful for describing the interactions of the life cycle with the career cycle of the managers and policeman examined in two studies . . . (They include) managerial competence, technical



1. The size of each segment has no relationship to its relative importance, which would vary with different organizations, different departments, and even different individuals with their own distinct needs.
2. The factors in each segment affect factors in the corresponding segment of the next smaller circle; they may also affect and be affected by other segments in the same circle or other circles.

from Robert A. Sutermeister's
People and Productivity

functional competence, security, creativity, and autonomy/independence (van Maanen and Schein 1977, pp. 71-76 passim).

Research is presently insufficient to tell us exactly how individuals' career anchors change over time as a purely "developmental" process or through the influence of various types of employing organizations. Clearly, the nature of these anchors will be critical ingredients in workers' relationships with their work setting and with their patterns of productivity.

The cluster of intervening workplace variables contains numerous environmental, sociotechincal, and value factors. One overriding element, whether one considers physical settings, organizational structures and processes, work roles, or corporate purposes, however, is the wide variation among work settings with regard to their "quality of work life flexibility"--how much they can or will modify practices to accommodate adult workers' developmental needs. Some work settings simply do not, by virtue of their size, their production systems, their market niches, or their management imperatives, have a great deal of room to maneuver with regard to human resources development. To be sure, a great many may have far more room than they think they have, but in many organizations there is clearly an irrecucible margin for improving work life quality. Most important is the fact that that margin varies widely among different work settings, and responses to adult life cycle needs will hence be differential.

One crucial set of workplace variables has been under-

scored by Melvin Kohn in his analysis of the effects of different job structures on individuals' personality and value orientations. Kohn (1977) has identified twelve occupational conditions* that have a "substantial relationship to men's psychological functioning when education and all other pertinent occupational conditions are statistically controlled . . . the 'structural imperative of the job'" (Smelser and Erikson, 1980, p. 197). The most important of these factors, avers Kohn, is the substative complexity of work: "the degree to which the work in its very substance, requires thought and independent judgement" (ibid). Research has demonstrated that the substantive complexity of work strongly affects workers' intellectual flexibility. And, more importantly work complexity is itself affected by workers' intellectual flexibility. That is, job conditions and intellectual functioning have been found to have a reciprocal relationship workers' levels of intellectual functioning actually affect the substantive complexity of their work, and vice versa. This finding, coupled with the fact that workplaces vary so considerably in the substantive complexity, throws another major intervening variable into the worker/workplace relationship.

Finally, there are the more familiar but equally potent workplace factors that mediate the interaction of life cycle

*The twelve crucial dimensions by which occupational conditions are characterized include 1) ownership/nonownership, 2) bureaucratization, 3) position in supervisory hierarchy, 4) closeness of supervision 5) routinization of the work, 6) substantive complexity, 7) frequency of time-pressure, 8) heaviness of work 9) dirtiness of work, 10) likelihood of sudden change in income, reputation or position, 11) likelihood of being held responsible for matters outside one's control, and 12) risk of loss of one's job or business.

phases, worker productivity, and workplace characteristics, namely, the difference related to levels of employment--unskilled versus skilled labor; managerial and professional levels of employment; or self-employment. Types of occupations and the subroles that they encompass, and the distinctive career patterns of each of these subtypes as suggested by the numerous entries in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, also make for substantial variations in workers' individual career tracks. The influence of employment sector variables on worker/workplace relationships is primarily understood in economic terms. The kind of industry one works in, be it manufacturing, service, or extractive, not only has different characteristics with regard to product supply and demand, labor supply and demand, and economic vitality. Differences among employment sectors with regard to such factors as age of work force, amount of labor turnover, rate of skill obsolescence level of research and development, rate of tools and facilities obsolescence, rate of capitalization, or a host of other factors affect the nature of worker/employer interactions. Indeed, just as each occupational sector or job role productivity and associated supports for life cycle differences, so, too, might each employment sector embody a characteristic pattern of age-related productivity expectations and sustenance for its workers.

Finally, in the broad category of sociocultural variables should be noted the fact-emerging differentiation of career life patterns themselves. The old image of the American worker as a person who, prepared for a specific job, found a career niche

and moved through his work and family responsibilities in a relatively linear fashion is no longer the predominant pattern. The "sole male breadwinner" model is declining. Ingredients in the new pluralism of American work life include dual career families, households headed by single working mothers, patterns of recurrent work and education, major job and occupational shifts, an early retirement--and postretirement--work force, multiple career tracks, and greater emphasis on family and personal well-being over coporate success.

These and other factors have produced widely varying concepts of what a career encompasses (for example, forms of leisure, family life, learning activities, and other elements) and what motivates on to establish a career (growth, security, challenge, etc.). Indeed, Michael Driver has found that at least four distince career structures typify out labor force: the amiliar linear model, a spiral form, a steady state type, and a transitory type (Derr 1980, p. 14).

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