Dries, N., Verbruggen, M. (2012). Fresh perspectives on the 'new' career. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 82 (2), 269-270.

“The career is dead, long live the career!”, Hall wrote 15 years ago. The ‘new’ careers literature seems to have adopted the title of his 1996 book as a mantra, advocating that while the traditional-organizational career is becoming both less prevalent and less attractive, the boundaryless career is flourishing. Other new career forms described in the literature are the protean career (e.g. Briscoe & Hall, 2006), the postindustrial career (e.g. Gershuny, 1993), and the kaleidoscope career (e.g. Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). In recent years, however, an increasing number of scholars has expressed doubts about the new career literature’s claims as concerns the speeds and inevitability of the demise of the traditional-organizational career (Guest & Mackenzie Davey, 1996). In fact, Hall himself, in a recent piece, proclaims: “we were wrong: the organizational career is alive and well” (Hall & Las Heras, 2009, p. 182). Either way, the discussions that are arising between advocates and adversaries of the new career paradigm are important and stimulating. To date, however, they have remained largely at the conceptual level. In order to truly further our understanding of new career phenomena, it is necessary that career scholars tackle the next stage of the research cycle, i.e. empirical study. This Special Section contains four papers, each approaching the ‘new’ career from a different angle. Their common goal is to contribute to the advancement of the contemporary careers literature by applying nuance to a number of seemingly taken-for-granted assumptions such as “the organizational career is dead” and “boundaryless careers are better for people” through empirical research.

In the first paper, Nicky Dries, Frederik Van Acker, and Marijke Verbruggen test three sets of contrasting assumptions based on a comparative review of the talent management literature and the new careers literature. They found that the ‘best’ employees (i.e. high potentials and key experts) are more often found in traditional-organizational careers than average performers; that traditional-organizational careers yield higher career satisfaction;

and that career type is determined by performance indicators more than by career orientation. Taken together, their findings contradict a number of central assumptions advocated in the new careers literature.

The second paper, written by Narrelle Hess, Denise Jepsen and Nicky Dries, studies the effects of exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement concerns on career and employer change intention. The authors found that organizational commitment moderates this relationship, in the sense that affective commitment reduces the motivation to make a change, while normative commitment reinforces change intentions. Their findings imply that employer and career change are distinct outcomes. The paper concludes with a call for further research on the interplay of the myriad of factors that influence boundary-crossing career behavior.

In the third paper, Marijke Verbruggen examines the potential downsides of pursuing a boundaryless career. In particular, she looks into the effects of psychological career mobility on career success. Results showed that having a boundaryless mindset was positively related to wage and promotions, while organizational mobility preference was associated with fewer promotions, and lower job and career satisfaction. Physical career mobility was found to act as a mediator in several of these relationships. The author calls for more work on the conceptualization and operationalization of psychological career mobility.

In the fourth and final paper, Katharina Chudzikowski reports how the frequency, form and impact of career transitions have changed across two cohorts of Austrian business graduates. Her study tackled two main assumptions: first, that careers have become more turbulent and complex in recent years; and second, that the emergence of new types of career constitutes a positive evolution for individuals. Although she found some evidence for changes in the career patterns of the graduates over time, these changes were marginal rather

than dramatic. In addition, her results indicate that making more career transitions is not necessarily associated with achieving career success.

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