Exploration of British Army Careers. Understanding Army Careers in Context: The Kaleidoscope Career Model.

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Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas, and contributions from the works of others.

Ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis was approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee on 24 September 2018 and ethical approval is attached as Annex A.

I declare the work count of this thesis is 46,246 words.

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Abstract

This study explores the concept of careers within the context of the British Army, using the theoretical framework of the Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM) and evaluates the use of the model for soldiers' careers within the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME).

Semi-structured interviews with 27 REME soldiers provided the data, which was analysed using thematic analysis. Interview findings demonstrated that soldiers recognise the opportunity for careers in the Army, a traditional organisational career and to be successful soldiers must understand the "rules of the game".

Contributions to knowledge include the exploration of KCM for REME soldier careers, the importance of timing the sequence of moves to align with future aspirations, whilst reflecting the authenticity of service, the need for balance at different career stages and the overarching need to challenge yourself. Army careers are typically within the challenge stage of life, most soldiers leaving do so to achieve balance and stability between work and life. Those who stay recognise the importance of sequencing moves and focusing effort in the "right" places to progress to the next rank.

A Doctor of Business Administration (as opposed to a Doctor of Philosophy) aims to have a practical impact, with contributions to practice including raising awareness of the hysteresis of habitus, the challenge of changing the career model, and the associated lag in the widely understood view of career progression and career management. Addressing the lag has the potential to calibrate performance and expectations that allow "exceptional" personnel to promote ahead of traditional timelines. KCM helps Career Management Officers to have informed discussions with personnel, to think through their sequence of moves during routine assignments and on promotion to have a more fulfilling career that aligns with emerging career policy, ensuring people perform rather than hold back from demonstrating their full potential.

This research concludes by recognising that careers are context-specific; Army careers and opportunities exist as traditional and hierarchical careers as the Army prepares for the future operating environment. Decisions on the size and shape of the Army continue to be based on the assessment of threats to British interests and the need to prepare for future conflict – a modern and agile Army, focusing on people who are the Army – to deliver capability in different environments. The Army career model is changing in response to the environment and require research to help understand it.

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Glossary

1st Line	First Line Support, provided by the LAD within a unit
1RO	First Reporting Officer
2nd Line	Second Line Support, provided by the formation REME unit
2RO	Second Reporting Officer
2iC	Second in Command
3rd Line	Third Line Support, provided by the Original Equipment Manufacturer
AAC	Army Air Corps
AAO	Army Accreditation Offer
Acq	Acquisition, responsible for the procurement of equipment
APC	Army Personnel Centre, the Army's career management organisation
AQMS	Artificer Quartermaster Sergeant (a Warrant Officer Class Two)
ASM	Artificer Sergeant Major (a Warrant Officer Class One)
AT	Adventurous Training (or arduous training)
BATUS	British Army Training Unit Suffield, Canada
Bde	Brigade, commanded by a Brig and consists of four or five Regts/Bns
Bn	Battalion, see Regiment, REME Bns are of equivalent size to regiments
Brig	Brigadier (General Staff Officer)
BT	Basic Training (Phase One)
CAA	Civilian Aviation Authority
Cadre	Cadre (or course)
Cap	Capability, implementation and integration of equipment
Cap & Acq	Capability and Acquisition
Capt	Captain, may command a LAD
Class One	The highest classification in trade, authorised to supervise others
Class Two	Trade classification, authorised to work unsupervised
Class Three	Trade classification, must be supervised when undertaking tasks
CLM	Command, Leadership and Management training
Craftie	Craftsman (equivalent to Private within the REME)
CO	Commanding Officer, a Lieutenant Colonel
Col	Colonel (General Staff Officer)

Comd	Command, functional authority to exercise command over subordinates
Cpl	Corporal (Junior Non-Commissioned Officer)
CQMS	Company Quartermaster Sergeant (responsible for supplies in a sub-unit)
CRARRV	Challenger Armoured Repair and Recovery Vehicle (recovering tanks)
CSM	Company Sergeant Major (a Warrant Officer Class Two)
DSA	Defence Safety Authority
ELC	Enhanced Learning Credits
Full-screw	Corporal
ITT	Initial Trade Training (Phase Two)
JNCO	Junior Non-Commissioned Officer
LAD	Light Aid Detachment (integrated support within a unit)
Lance-jack	Lance Corporal
LCpl	Lance Corporal (a Junior Non-Commissioned Officer)
Line	A workstream, providing trade specialisation and functional supervision
Lt Col	Lieutenant Colonel, may command a regiment or battalion (circa 600 pers)
MAA	Military Aviation Agency
Maj	Major, may command a sub-unit (circa 120 pers)
OC	Officer Commanding, a sub-unit usually a Major
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer
Para	Parachute Trained Personnel
PArB	Potential Artificer Selection Board
Phase 1	Basic Training, initial training to develop military skills
Phase 2	Specialist Training, initial trade training in the chosen specialism
Phase 3	Subsequent Trade Training
Phys	Physical Training
Pl	Platoon, typically three sections – commanded by a Lieutenant/Captain
Pl Comd	Platoon Commander, usually a Lieutenant or Captain
Pl Sgt	Platoon Sergeant, supports the Platoon Commander
PNCO	Potential Non-Commissioned Officer Cadre (course)
PPP	Posting Preference Proforma (to submit preferences for routine moves)
PTI	Physical Training Instructor

RCMO	Regimental Career Management Officer
RDG	Royal Dragoon Guards (an armoured regiment)
Regt	Regiment, a formation consisting of 4 or 5 sub-units
REME	Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
RIFLES	A light infantry regiment
RLC	Royal Logistic Corps
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major (a WO1, the senior soldier in a Regt or Bn)
RTR	Royal Tank Regiment
Sgt	Sergeant (as Senior Non-Commissioned Officer)
SLC	Standard Learning Credits
SJAR	Soldiers' Joint Annual Appraisal Report (annual report)
Smock	Jacket
SQMS	Squadron Quartermaster Sergeant (responsible for supplies in a sub-unit)
SSgt	Staff Sergeant (as Senior Non-Commissioned Officer)
Tab	Tactical Advance to Battle, loaded march
TACOS	Terms and Conditions of Service
Tiffy	Artificer (a senior trade specialist)
Wings	Parachute wings signifying completion of parachute training
WO2	Warrant Officer Class Two (the most senior soldiers in a sub-unit)
WO1	Warrant Officer Class One (the most senior soldiers in a unit)

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“The Army may like to say that it is a mirror of society, but a soldier is far from being simply a civilian in uniform. He is a member of an organisation historically distinct from – and sometimes shunned by civil society. It is an organisation which has learnt to enjoy its own company and which cherishes its separateness. Moreover, it is organisation which has always been expected to perform the extraordinary function, from time to time of killing people and destroying property. This, above all else, separates the Army from the rest of society.”

Yardley and Sewell,

A New Model Army,

1989

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This research project investigates careers within the British Army's Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) from a soldier's perspective. The introductory chapter provides a structure of the overall research journey, from the literature review to identify contemporary thought on careers and gaps in knowledge and to outline the context of the research project. Research purpose, objectives, and context of careers in the British Army are explored as part of setting the scene for this research project before focusing on the investigation of careers within the specific context to generate a contribution to theory and practice.

The purpose of this study is to explore how soldiers make sense of their careers within the REME, a technical branch of the British Army. REME helps to "Keep the punch in the Army's fist" (Army, No Date) by providing technical expertise to service and maintain key equipment used across all branches of the British Army. Roles include Aircraft Technicians, Avionics Technicians, Electronics Technician, Vehicle Mechanics, Recovery Mechanics, Armourer, Metalsmith, Shipwright and Technical Support Specialist. The Corps motto is "Arte et Marte" which translates as skill and initiative. Soldiers joining the Corps follow a structured training programme that includes fundamentals of engineering and mathematics as a common introduction before then following their specific routes to learn their trade.

1.2 Background

Army 2020, a plan to transform the structures and capability of the British Army was announced in July 2012 and included plans to reduce the size of the regular Army from 102,000 to 82,000 (BBC, 2012; MOD, 2012). The reforms should mean a smaller Army is better integrated and more adaptable than previous forms, whilst providing the taxpayer with value for money. The Chief of the General Staff ("CGS") confirmed that such changes were part of a financially driven plan to reduce the size of the Army (BBC, 2012; House of Commons Defence Committee, 2014). The Army structures were designed to meet three purposes, intervention and conventional deterrence, operations as part of multinational coalitions and alliances to prevent conflict overseas at the source and the third to increase the Army's responsiveness to domestic operations (CGS, 2012).

1.3 The Context and Scope of the Investigation

Progression is a linear structure whereby those completing Initial Trade Training are qualified as Class Three Technicians, meaning they are considered competent because of simulated exercises and must be supervised to gain workplace competence prior to being certified as a Class Two Technician. Completing the Class Two Technician upgrade provides the overall certification of

workplace competence and allows technicians to work unsupervised, though all work will still require the inspection and sign off from a Class One Technician.

Class One Technicians have mastered their abilities in the workplace and following additional education and training, are competent supervisors to support Class Three Technicians on their journey to gaining competence and to inspect and certify work completed by Class Two Technicians.

Progression routes vary based on whether the chosen trade is an Artificer or Artisan trade. Artificers follow an eighteen-month education and training programme to become the senior trade specialist within their trade, which allows for promotion to appointments as the Artificer Quartermaster Sergeant Major (Warrant Officer Class Two) in a Company or Battalion, or Artificer Sergeant Major (Warrant Officer Class One) at Company or Battalion. Artisan trades do not have a progression route to Artificer and instead have flatter trade structures peaking at Staff Sergeant as the Master of a trade.

Technicians provide the technical expertise to conduct inspection, repairs, or modifications, where necessary, and servicing to confirm the serviceability of Army equipment. This includes radio and signalling equipment, optical and electronic sighting equipment, rifles, machine guns through to helicopters and engines of the Army's fleet of manned and unmanned aircraft.

Initially, this research planned to focus on the Class One Aircraft Technicians (AT) within the REME as the current pinch-point career group within the Corps. Class One AT provide the niche capability to certify helicopters are serviceable to fly and provide oversight and inspection of work carried out by Class Two and Class Three ATs. Currently there is a retention issue in that personnel who spend circa 6 years to train as a Class One ATs are leaving the Army in higher numbers than expected. Such a shortage of trained personnel impacts on the ability to launch aircraft, which can have a strategic impact on operational activity and reach for combat, combat support and combat service support activities. Following a key informant interview with the Corps Colonel, the retention phenomena for Class One Technicians was not limited to the Aircraft Technicians and the scope widened to encompass all trades across the REME.

REME Technicians are employed across all parts of the Army and are structured in lines of support. First Line Support is provided by Light Aid Detachments, an integral aspect of embedded support capability and are scaled to provide specific support tailored to the needs of the unit. The Second Line Support is provided by REME Battalions, located in each Garrison area providing additional capability to take on more complex or time-consuming repairs and servicing. Third Line Support is

undertaken back at a supply depot by contractors Babcock International or returned to Fourth Line Support with the Original Equipment Manufacturer.

1.4 The Rationale

Research on military careers has typically focused on socialisation training (initial training of recruits and officers) and post-career success (Swain, 2015; Beach, 2008; Higate, 2003; Hockey 1986). This is a result of priorities placed on areas for improvement, such as addressing issues in the training of new recruits (Swain, 2015) and to increase success rates of those completing basic training (Bansham, 2008) or to address post-career problems including those injured during service or those experiencing mental health problems (Neal, Kiernan, Hill, McManus, and Turner, 2003; Turner, Kiernan, McKechanie, Finch and McManus, and Neal, 2005).

Careers do not exist in a vacuum they exist within a context (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009; Inkson et al., 2015). In this case, service within the British Army refers to the lived experience of service personnel, their work experiences both in the firm base and beyond, which changes based on priorities over their lifetime (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009).

This research focuses on the current issue of retaining talent and the trained strength of Class One Technicians within the REME, it aims to explore how REME Soldiers make sense of their careers. Such investigation should help the chain of command better understand their soldiers and contribute to more informed retention initiatives for REME Soldiers to support the Army's operations in the land, air, and sea domains.

Existing research into military careers focuses on transition and secondary careers of US Navy Admirals (Baruch and Quick, 2007; Baruch and Quick, 2009). Senior executive career transitions are fundamentally different to that of junior soldiers exiting the Armed Forces. Baruch and Quick (2009) highlight that senior officers (flag rank or starred officers) follow an up or out model, whereby they secure one appointment at a time and then either secure another appointment, promotion or retire – most improving their income substantially in a second career and very different to the 22-year fixed career model for British Army soldiers. Other research focuses on the socialisation of new entrants to the Army, the importance of basic skills to maintain operational effectiveness; and the changing identity of personnel leaving the service (Ainley, 2013; Swain, 2015; Hobley, 2019). There is a gap in existing literature for research into how soldiers of the British Army make sense of their careers and this study focuses on exploring soldiers' careers through the lens of the kaleidoscope career model.

1.5 Research Aims

This research project is broken down into the following research objectives:

a. To understand how REME Class One Technicians make sense of their careers;
b. To identify the career needs of REME Class One Technicians and to inform retention initiatives;
c. To contribute to an enhanced understanding of how military personnel make sense of their careers, to inform HR policy and practice within the British Army;
d. To explore Army careers, with a particular focus on the Kaleidoscope Career Model.

1.6 Research Design

Methodology is the principles and procedures that underpin research based on the process of logical thought to formulate a strategy that, once applied, helps realise the research aims and objectives (Fellows and Liu, 1997). Research methods are those specific tools, techniques, and approaches to use to gather data and conduct analysis. Outlining such methodologies and methods at the outset provides a focus for this research into how soldiers make sense of their careers within the British Army.

Creswell (2009) suggests the individual experiences of the researcher shape the research design, as do the intended participants, their worldviews. All of which formulate the research strategy, specific data collection methods, through to the conduct of analysis and interpretation of the findings (Creswell, 2009).

Adopting a social constructionist approach to research will help the researcher to understand how REME Class One Technicians make sense of their careers with reference to the KCM, constructing the research questions in a way to explore the concept of careers and specifically their career within the British Army with reference to KCM. The KCM provides three theoretical lenses from which to explore the individual and collective influences of authenticity, balance, and challenge within their career, using an advocacy lens (Creswell, 2009). Rossman and Rallis (1998) support the adoption of an advocacy lens as those without the ability to voice their concerns freely may feel oppressed and compound the negativity felt with reference to their future career within the British Army. Potential issues of such an approach include surfacing thoughts and facilitating an understanding of the individual's career that results in the individual deciding to pursue a different career.

This research adopts an abductive approach to research based on a combination of existing knowledge (deductive) and new knowledge (inductive) to explore the social construction of the concepts of careers within the British Army (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Information gathered via open-ended questions at interviews or focus groups will be analysed to identify themes or categories. Such themes and categories will then be analysed for broad patters, generalisations, or theories to support the creation of new knowledge or theories based on experience and literature

(Creswell, 2009). Kallinikos (1999) highlights that such an approach is necessary to conduct exploratory research that can result in the assessment of the relevance of a contribution to the development of theoretical ideas. This aligns with the needs to expand research of the KCM into wider contexts and add to the existing body of knowledge, therefore a qualitative orientation is best suited.

Glaser and Straus (1967) further suggest that in sociological research, those wishing to generate theory from their research cannot set pre-determined levels of participation to provide rigour. Instead, rigour arises from the "temporal open-endedness of theoretical sampling" that provides flexibility to explore contingencies that arise from changes in the contextual environment (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p74-75). This is further supported by the challenges of validity within constructionist approaches to explore the issues of authenticity, plausibility, and criticality (Easterby-Smith, 2018).

1.7 Contribution of the Research

This research provides the following contributions to knowledge and practice:

1.7.1 Contribution to Knowledge

Investigating the concepts of careers in the British Army as part of this research identifies the contribution to knowledge that confirms the presence of authenticity, balance, and challenge of the Kaleidoscope Career Model within Army careers (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007). Theoretically, career actors describe their early careers as challenging, focusing on their willingness to accept challenge that switches to balance, work-life balance in mid-careers and authenticity in late careers or retirement.

Careers exist in context and this research project explores careers in the context of British Army, extending knowledge through the contribution that conceptually changes the sequence and structure of the model. Research concluded authenticity, balance, and challenge are elements in Army careers, though, they adopt a cyclical model rather than a linear model that recognises contextual difference (Super, 1990; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007).

1.7.2 Contribution to Practice

Practical contributions include providing information to Regimental Career Management Officers (RCMOs), Career Management Desk Officers, and Soldiers on the relevance of the kaleidoscope career model within military careers that can be used to make sense of one's career. The revised KCM structure provides a military-specific model, recognising the need for long-term career management through a series of shorter-term steps that are part of the assignment and appointment selection process.

1.7.3 Policy Implications

The Army's current career model is widely understood and shapes the behaviours of soldiers and officers, to help submit their preferences in the assignment and appointment process, to achieve their individual long-term objectives. The nuanced KCM for military careers, provides the opportunity for refining the implementation of new career management policy emerging from Programme CASTLE and the accelerated promotion opportunities available to overcome the hysteresis of habitus.

1.8 The Kaleidoscope Career Model

The Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM) (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006) provides a theoretical framework appropriate to exploring how REME Technicians make sense of their careers. This supports the basis of a boundaryless career, the challenge of separating work from non-work life that is considered a necessary part of service life, where work and home are co-located (Sullivan, 1999; Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Service personnel work, eat and live together as part of a gated community, each location, being the barracks, a garrison, or a mess, may provide further opportunities for research to understand the changing nature of contextual factors across the British Army.

KCM research focuses on the needs of individuals and their perceived career needs, specifically for authenticity, balance, and challenge (ABC) and the notion of a career with reference to individual's understanding of their own current levels of ABC. Mouratidou (2016) focused KCM research on the application of KCM to Greek Civil Servants in times of austerity. The themes of austerity provide parallels to the austerity measures that resulted in a reduction in the overall size of the Army and conflicts with the notion of secure public sector employment due to the circa 20,000 redundancies made across the Army (BBC, 2012; MOD, 2012; CGS, 2012; House of Commons Defence Committee, 2014; Mouratidou, 2016). However, anecdotal evidence suggests that UK economic improvement that coincides with structural reform in the Army has led to an increase in the number of personnel leaving the army (Chorley, 2014; Farmer, 2015; Giannengeli, 2017; Perring, 2017). KCM further suggests that individuals pursue careers that fit their personal circumstances and career needs, whereby individuals leave as their careers no longer align with their personal circumstances or values (Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006).

Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) suggest that individual's perceptions of their careers will change based on changes in their lives and the ability for the two to exist in an equilibrium, rather than having to be mutually exclusive. The kaleidoscope metaphor highlights the changing nature of careers with reference to external factors that influence the internal perception of a career (Sullivan and

Mainiero, 2007). Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) suggest that those who leave organisations do so because their career no longer provides the opportunity to balance work and family life, they feel their efforts are wasted and non-value adding or non-satisfying (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005).

Authenticity. When individual and organisational values align, and individuals can form constructive links between their work and personal life. Authenticity is an intrinsic sense of value and purpose that shapes the guiding principles of a career, the sense of service to the nation that one would expect service personnel to embody (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006).

Balance. The issue of individuals working to live, rather than living to work (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006) provides a basis to ensure there is balance between work and family life. The dichotomy of professional life and personal life can be problematic for service personnel, based on the needs of the Army must come first and the selfless commitment required of service personnel (Army, 2015). This research seeks to explore the lived experience of balancing work and family life in the post-Afghanistan era and considering recent Defence cuts.

Challenge. Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) suggest challenge forms part of the concept of success, whereby individuals have an intrinsic sense of challenge within their career to remain motivated and to strive for excellence. Within the Army, personnel are constantly challenged, physically and mentally, with even the most mundane of activities being turned into challenges and competitions. Whilst this may help support the development of core military skills such as shooting and physical fitness, it remains prevalent that those who seek to pursue a full career in the Army have challenges to eliminate the monotony of in-barracks activity.

In summary KCM provides an appropriate theoretical framework from which to explore the conceptualisation of careers with reference to the three domains of authenticity, balance, and challenge. Such analysis provides focus of for the research methodology with sufficient freedom for reflexive investigation.

1.9 Thesis Structure

Overall, the thesis is structured into seven chapters that continue from the introduction set out in this chapter that provides background information to explore the context and scope of the research that is developed in the subsequent chapters. The literature review provides an examination of career theories that have emerged from previous research and different contextual studies, which then develops into the focus of the chosen framework of KCM for this research and identifies the need for further research. It supports the development of a research agenda then shape an appropriate methodological approach to conduct the research and following the completion of the data collection, conduct analysis to produce findings to conclude on the contribution to knowledge

and practice of the research whilst acknowledging the limitations that may be used as a basis for further study. Summaries of the remaining chapters:

Chapter 2: Context of the British Army. The chapter provides a contextual introduction to the British Army; the history and formation of the British Army; and the changing size and scope of the Army in response to threats; to protect British interests.

Chapter 3: Literature Review. The investigation of career theory from previous research and literature to provide a body of knowledge to frame this research, exploring career theories and meaning along with justification of the chosen model, Kaleidoscope Career Model. This supports the identification of need to explore the relevance of KCM to REME soldiers' careers as part of contributing to the development of knowledge and practice.

Chapter 4: Methodology. The research methodology chapter identifies the selection of an appropriate methodology and methods based on the philosophical presuppositions of the research design. Epistemological subjectivism rather than objectivism, ontological relativism rather than absolutism and adopting a social constructionist approach that underpins the research agenda. The chapter also outlines the sampling approach and potential ethical considerations for the conduct of the research and concludes with the data analysis and evaluation.

Chapter 5: Findings. Research findings provide the empirical basis of the research, which presents findings from the semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis that are compared with the literature identified in Chapter 3.

Chapter 6: Discussion. This chapter examines the research findings to identify the nature of how REME soldiers think of their careers and the relevance of KCM to careers in the British Army.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Implications. The concluding chapter provides a synthesis of findings from Chapter 6 to reflect on meeting the research objectives, which are outlined in Chapter 1. This also summarises the contributions to knowledge and practice, acknowledging limitations and suggesting opportunities for future research.

2. Chapter 2: Context of the British Army

This section outlines the role of the British Army and provides an outline of the changing needs of Defence. Whilst the implications for the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and supporting civil service organisations are beyond the scope of this research, they remain relevant as part of the broader context as the Army does not exist in isolation. Rather it is an essential cog in the complex machine that is the Ministry of Defence in protecting British interests (Cabinet Office, 2008; Prime Minister's Office, 2015; Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, 2015; Developments, Concept and Doctrine Centre, 2018).

The British Army has a colourful history of service in Defence of the Realm and British interests of a secure and prosperous United Kingdom with global influence (National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review, 2015). Historically, England did not have a standing Army and instead sought as and when required to rise a force of militia organised by the local officials or nobility on behalf of the Crown (Chandler, 1994; Chandler and Beckett, 1996). Trobridge (2015) highlights the historic challenges of raising such an Army based on the indentures that survive from records held by the National Archives, specifying the role of Earls, Knights and Esquires to raise numbers of "men-at-arms" including soldiers to be mounted, armoured and archers for expeditionary operations.

During the English Civil War, the concept of an Army funded by Parliament evolved, the New Model Army that embodied the segregation of duties and responsibilities between a corps of officers, independent of Parliament, empowered to command, lead, and manage the Army and centralised funding to provide continuity to all serving (Rogers, 1968; Chandler, 1994; Chandler and Beckett, 1996).

Following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the subsequent Disbandment Act of 1660 ordered the disbandment of the Cromwellian Army of some 65,000 men to form the English Army with absolute power to call up the militia transferring to the Crown and nobility, from parliament (Charles II, 1661; Macaulay, 1948, St John Williams, 1994; Chandler and Beckett, 1996). Armies of Scotland and Ireland were also financed by their respective parliaments (Chandler, 2003; Glozier and Onnekink, 2007; Clayton, 2014).

Over the centuries that have passed since, the size of the standing Army has fluctuated in size from as low as 20,000 in 1720 to the heights of 275,000 in 1900 (Rasler and Thompson, 1994), rising to over 3,820,000 at the end of the First World War (Summers, 2011), falling to 338,000 in 1920 (House of Commons, 1920) and again rising to 3,120,000 at the end of the Second World War (Summers, 2011). Fluctuations throughout the latter half of the twentieth century saw total numbers steadily

decline from their wartime heights to 201,600 in 1970 (House of Commons, 1970). The Army of 1980 was some 159,000 personnel, which reduced to 110,100 as at Apr 2000 (House of Commons, 2000), the 1979-1980 £9.4bn Defence Budget when adjusted by GDP deflator to 1999-2000 prices, represents a £22.7bn budget in contrast to the actual 1999/2000 budget of £25bn.

Following the Strategic Defence and Security Review (HM Government, 2010), the Army 2020 plan announced the reduction in the size of the Army from 102,000 to 82,000 personnel within the full-time Force (Brooke-Holland and Rutherford, 2012; House of Commons, 2012; British Army, 2013). The fluctuations in size of the Army, including measures that introduce compulsory redundancy schemes must influence the career aspirations of service personnel and challenge their previously held view of a career. The Integrated Review reduced the size of the Regular Army from 82,000 to 72,500 (MoD,2021; BBC, 2021). The reduced force will become more agile, more integrated, and more expeditionary (MoD, 2021) and chimes with the rhetoric of a sense of adventure with increased opportunities to travel.

2.1 Concept of Army Careers

The concept of a career is a socially constructed one, created by various reference points to peers, the internal and external environment that exists because of conversations and the truth relating to an individual career is dependent on the individual experiences and beliefs (Burr, 1995; Schwandt, 2003; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson, and Lowe, 2008). Inkson et al. (2015) suggest the concept of a career originates from the French symbolisation of a journey or "carriere", a journey belonging to the individual as a personal one, formed by their own personal and unique circumstances despite the organisation being responsible for career management (Baruch, 2004).

Early definitions focused on a series of job roles individuals progress through (Wilensky, 1961) that suggest a vertical career based on climbing the career ladder through a series of moves, in contrast with more recent definitions such as the evolution of experiences throughout an individual's working life (Arthur et al., 1989). Sullivan and Baruch (2009) suggest this has evolved to incorporate experiences and relationships beyond the workplace, which have an influence on careers and how individuals understand and make sense of their careers.

Military careers are akin to the more traditional definitions based on the vertical approach to careers afforded to individuals because of the structural hierarchy (Wilensky, 1961), however anecdotally, individuals who seek to progress up the career ladder are faced with the challenges of differentiating themselves from their peers to achieve a more favourable annual report. As such, it is becoming increasingly prevalent for individuals to seek opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, and experiences beyond the Army to advance within it (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009).

The announcement to transform Army structures and reduce the regular Army to 82,000 personnel (from 102,000 personnel prior to the cuts) results in contextual change for those serving in the British Army (BBC, 2012; MOD, 2012; CGS, 2012; House of Commons Defence Committee, 2014). Such contextual challenges present both opportunities and challenges for those individuals serving, including political, economic, social, technological, cultural, and legal factors (Inkson et al., 2015). Inkson et al (2015) identifies that economic factors have a significant impact on perceptions of careers, which for the present study may relate to the fiscal policy and resulting Defence Budget or the broader labour market, where service personnel could seek alternative careers.

The concept of a career for those serving as Non-Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers in the British Army follows a simple journey or directional concept (Inkson, 2007) of a twenty-two-year career from the point of attestation (or eighteenth birthday, whichever is the latter), which if aligned with the linear hierarchy of the Army structures may suggest destinational attitudes from the outset of a career (Inkson, 2007). Careers are managed by Regimental Career Management Officers appointed to each regiment with promotion and progression based on annual reports produced by line management (Army, 2015). This highlights the potential conflict of agency in careers, whereby there are elements of Communion from joining and integrating with the Army, the socialisation and adjustment of accepting other people and the career being based on the interaction with the social norms (Bakan, 1966).

In contrast, agency requires self-assertion and direction to impose oneself on the world, rather than being subject to it (Bakan, 1966; Marshall, 1989). There is a dichotomy of the two phenomena within Army careers, whereby soldiers have a limited ability to take personal action and apply for new roles or promotion, yet action to differentiate oneself from their peers is required to score highly on a grading board to gain a competitive annual report (Marshall, 1989; Army, 2015).

Agency is an essential strand of successful career development, which aligns to the erosion of security from employers and employing organisations, such as the Army, to offer security or automatic promotions to those failing to exercise personal agency (Inkson, 2007). Hall and Associates (1996) also highlight the decline of organisational careers and the need for personal agency in managing one's own career and career development.

Boyatzis, McKee, and Goleman (2002) suggest that lacking passion for one's own role and can be reignited by reflection on personal identity and agency, which may include agentic practice to engaging in coaching and mentoring programmes; self-development initiatives; and exploration of existing domains to develop new tenants of thought or practice. This agentic action can form the

catalyst for future personal and career development, within or beyond organisational structures (Inkson, 2007).

The Military Secretariat and Army Personnel Centre are responsible for the end-to-end career management of Army Officers and Soldiers to meet the needs of the Army within the wider context of Defence by sustaining appropriate numbers of suitably qualified and experienced personnel (Army, 2015). Career management incorporates oversight of the appraisal system, which is a fundamental part of command across the Army.

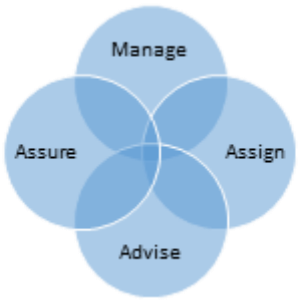

Figure 1: The Four Functions of Career Management

The Army (2015) defines the four functions of Army career management as:

a. Manage. The process by which Officers and Soldiers careers are managed in an efficient and responsible manner to best meet the demands of the Army, whilst recognising the aspirations and needs of individuals.
b. Assign. The system of ensuring suitably qualified and experienced personnel are assigned to the most appropriate positions to meet Army manning priorities.
c. Advise. The need to provide specialist and personalised career advice to Officers, Soldiers, and their respective chains of command.
d. Assure. Providing governance and oversight of the career management process to ensure it remains objective, fair, timely, responsive, and accountable.

The "assign" function results in those serving across the British Army, the dichotomous systems of career management, the arms plot; whereby combat arms[1] are permanently located in a garrison area with soldiers and officers spending their career within a specific battalion or regiment. This is contrasted with the trickle posting system, which rotates individuals to different units for two or three-year assignments that applies to the Combat Support and Combat Service Support personnel. Both systems are subject to fierce criticism due to the perceived benefits of each including the close bond formed between Infantry personnel on the arms plotting system (House of Commons, 1998).

Those serving in the British Army experience career transitions at various levels, be those at the macro, meso or micro level. Macro-level transitions, brought about by structural changes such as the Army 2020 and Army 2020 Refine initiatives to streamline the Army; meso-level transitions such as assignments via the trickle posting system or employment beyond regimental duty and micro-level transitions being the change of individual circumstances or appointments within the same unit all alter the context service personnel operate within and may consequently shape their understanding of their career within an evolving internal and external landscape (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009; Inkson et al., 2015).

Careers researchers have created theoretical frameworks for exploring or explaining the concept of a career, examples include intelligent or protean careers, which provide the conceptual basis from which to conduct further research. Khapova and Korotov (2007) argue that in addition to contextual factors, cultural factors will impact on the validity of such models and their applicability to different countries. Whilst the British Army may serve in countries beyond the UK, they remain part of the British Army and career system. Experience serving with other nations as part of combined operations may also highlight contextual differences and opportunities for employment beyond the British Army such as schemes to transfer into the Australian Army (Australian Army, 2018).

Furthermore, Counsell and Popova (2000) and Baruch and Vardi (2015) suggest that it remains important to explore the concepts of careers within different contexts to extend the extant discourse in understanding careers. Such research will help refine existing models and create new ones that reconceptualise the concepts of careers, enhancing existing, creating new knowledge, and understanding (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009).

3. Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Overview

The literature review critically examines previous research to identify the most relevant theoretical frameworks and concepts that shape the context of this research. It begins with the historical context and concepts of career theory, which is considered traditional and exploring the development throughout time and contexts to form the contemporaneous of the modern and future views of careers. The literature review includes the exploration and analysis of plateaus within a career, the Kaleidoscope Career Model as the chosen framework for this research and the links between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation theories intertwined within careers. The requirement for this research forms the focus of conclusions within this chapter.

3.2 Career Definitions

Inkson et al. (2015) suggest the origin of the popularist term of a career emerges from the French word “carriere”, the metaphorical journey akin to a racecourse; within the contemporary environment, this becomes an apt metaphor for the evolution of employment practices. Baruch (2004) suggests careers belong to individuals, though the organisation often manages them. Ideals of a traditional, organisational career are a distant memory for some or a pipedream for others – political, economic and legal changes result in varying forms of journeys for individuals that may partake on different journeys.

Cultural differences add colour to the career landscape, whereby cultural influences shape employment practices and the sense of a career. Arthur et al. (1989) defines a career as the “evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time” - the definition explores the meaning of work and the experiences of individuals, making sense of their own lived experiences concerning the organisation, their peers and colleagues as well as broader societal comparisons. Exploration of such concepts unpacks the changing meaning of career actors and their interaction within their organisation, a relationship that develops and evolves over time.

Other definitions explore the unique nature of individuals and their career experiences, influenced by factors within and beyond the organisational context, the blend of organisational and personal development that create individual meaning (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Examples highlight the relativity of careers, with routes for progression within a hierarchical structure and to other employers, and the transferability of skills across different industries that may also transfer to other occupations. This allows forms the basis of individual career thinking, formed from making sense of

their career events, alternatives, and outcomes (Blenkinsopp, 2007; Blenkinsopp, Scurry and Hay, 2015).

Sullivan and Baruch (2009) explore the concepts of career events, including the sense of perspective when creating meaning and the differences in perspective that may mean some view job loss as an intrinsic failure to perform (Blenkinsopp and Zdunczyk, 2005). Other individuals may view the same situation as somewhat of an opportunity, an uncontrollable event that requires a sense of agility to flex within the situation to take advantage of emergent opportunities (Seibert, Kraimer, Heslin, 2016; Heslin, Kating, Minbashian, 2018). Perspective underpins the view of career alternatives – understanding the transferability of skills and how people make sense of their skills influences their ability to see limited or limitless opportunities when exploring alternative career options (Blenkinsopp, 2007). Career outcomes, focusing on the result rather than the journey – exploring how individuals define career success. The concept of success includes various personal benchmarks of success and the formulation of relationships with others (Heslin, 2003; Heslin, Gunz, 2005; Heslin, Keating and Minbashian, 2018).

Traditional career theory centres on the concept that individuals have successive, related roles that follow an almost predictable pattern or sequence, which includes a sense of prestige (Wilensky, 1961). The logical approach with the linearity of moves as part of the sequential steps aligns with conventional or traditional career thinking; the one includes climbing the scalar chain of the organisation with increasing responsibility and increasing remuneration at each stage that is unlocked by a sense of loyalty and hard work (Hughes, 1958; Hall, 1996; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen and Barrick, 1999; Heslin, 2003; Reitman and Schneer, 2003).

Baruch (2006) suggests the juxtaposition of the traditional theory that organisations manage careers (Baruch and Rosenstein, 1992) and the sense of the individual working their career within the context of organisational structures that require a sense of balance in managing the two. Balancing the importance of corporate and personal influences aligns with the psychological contract of career anchors, which identifies the individual's needs and values that shape their sense of a career (Schein, 1978, 1990, 1992, 1996). Political, legal and environmental changes that require reductions in organisational structures and redundancies because of transforming the provision of privatised public sector organisations result in decreased organisational careers. External changes result in the need to explore a more relevant, contemporary definition of careers that recognises the evolution from traditional career theory (Baruch, 2006).

When balancing the contrasting views, a sense of a career that belongs to the individual, that the employer manages, combines the personal and organisational influences that are underpinned by a

psychological contract between parties to co-create an equitable system capable of meeting the individual and organisational needs (Hughes, 1958; Hall, 1996; Herriot and Pemberton, 1996; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen and Barrick, 1999; Heslin, 2003; Reitman and Schneer, 2003; Baruch, 2006). Schien (1978, 1990, 1992, 1996) and Baruch (2006) agree that, on balance, careers are managed and planned by the organisation, whereby the individual gathers experience in roles undertaken within the organisation as part of an equitable journey of progression that encompasses meeting individual and organisational requirements to offer satisficing career opportunities. When the individual and corporate values are aligned and equitable, career fulfilment and commitment are solid traits for mutually beneficial development – in contrast to the increase in negative behaviours and broken expectations (Baruch and Winkelmann-Gleed, 2002).

Examining historical attempts for a single definition of careers help demonstrated an understanding of the past and identifying opportunities for further research to test whether the definition is still applicable to contemporary careers. Arthur (1994); Derr and Laurent (1989) identified the historical examples of careers encompassing four domains, monolithic application to all staff and all organisations; the inference of time within the construct of a career as part of a life-long journey; the career being intangible and not belonging to anyone as a notion of interdisciplinary development; the objective view of careers defined by the subjectivity that allow for the social constructivist approach to exploring and creating career theory.

Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin and Schwartz (1997) suggest that whilst the concept of a career should apply, the individual sense of their work will vary. Some may view their work as a job that provides sufficient remuneration to satisfy personal needs rather than a sense of job satisfaction or pleasure (Blenkinsopp, Baruch and Winden, 2010; Blenkinsopp, Scurry and Hay, 2015). The focus on working to live, working to provide sufficient income to gain a sense of enjoyment beyond the workplace and that meets the necessity of existence in contrast to the notion and belief that work provides an insight of a career, which includes the opportunity for advancement and requires the individual's intrinsic motivation and hard work to fulfil their potential that in turn develops a sense of self-efficacy for social progress and advancing a sense of self-esteem (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton, 2007).

Some consider their work as a calling, an intrinsic aspect of their identity and they are motivated to answer their call without the consideration for money or advancement, which shapes the sense of purpose and fulfilment that brings enjoyment (Hall and Chandler, 2005). The calling comes from the ability to achieve personal goals; the achievement of such plans may still be hindered by external

factors such as economic recession that emerge beyond the individual's control and the influence of socioeconomic status that may propel or impede the ability of an individual to pursue their calling.

Regardless of how people view their work, organisational settings and teams may include those whom each share a different view of their work based on their own experiences and expectations (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin and Schwartz, 1997). Research exploring the perceptions of professionals and administrators revealed that those employed in lower-level occupations reported a sense of having a job and a career, the purpose of joining an organisation and that demonstrable loyalty and hard work will unlock opportunities for advancement. Length of service influenced the change in perspective, with those who had worked longer perceiving their work as a job rather than a career, citing the absence of challenge and lack of advancement, resulting in the plateau at a low level or the need to work to provide the daily bread (Terkel, 1972; Bardwick, 1986).

Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechhofer and Platt (1969) developed the theory, identifying that mostly blue-collar workers sought to maximise earnings via secure employment and seeking advancement beyond the organisational context. Terkel (1972) suggested the sense that work provides the basic needs without intrinsic motivation to provide opportunities for enjoyment beyond the organisation. Such a sense of necessity is akin to a sense of violence to the mind, the stifling of creativity, and the requirement to endure the working day as part of getting through each day in turn – the need to perform tasks as required by the organisation in return for a salary and this may leave some dissatisfied (Ruiz-Quintanilla and England, 1996).

Much debate surrounds the interaction of an employee and employer; when the employee is dependent on the employer, the need to follow orders and work in exchange for a salary becomes a necessity – this stifles the individual's sense of fulfilment, erodes the sense of ability to fulfil one's potential and becoming a "machine" to complete the tasks required to survive (Fromm, 1961; Terkel, 1972; Ruiz-Quintanilla and England, 1996; Fischer, 1996).

The dichotomous co-existence of life characterised by work and non-work provides structure to unpack and make sense of the innate motivation to work, to provide the safety needs of job security and salary payments through to the need for fulfilment within or beyond the working environment. Career aspirations and constraints result in individuals enduring emotionally aversive situations as they are stuck having plateaued in their career progression (Ference, Stoner and Warren, 1997; Blenkinsopp, 2007) as part of the emergence of the double bind that emerges from the desire to meet the organisational and individual needs (Thompson, 1967; Wagner, 1978; Bruner, 1986). Such aversive situations focus on those with the dilemma of accepting a job that meets their basic needs rather than pursuing advancement and fulfilment as part of their career. The two paradigms present

a challenge, whereby the existence of earning a salary can result in alienation from work that corrodes a sense of self-efficacy and fulfilment. Fromm (1961), Fischer (1996) and Baruch and Winkelmann-Gleed (2002) support the enduring theme of success and fulfilment arising from the ability to fulfil individual ambition and goals, the ability to become autonomous and craft their occupation that enables individuals to self-actualise. D'Silva and Hamid (2014) identify the need for organisations to understand their employee's work values to develop a shared sense of expectations that support goal-congruence and constructive alignment that shape the working relationship via a psychological contract. Conway, Kiefer, Hartley and Briner (2014) suggest that breaches in the psychological contract erode trust and undermine the individual's sense of motivation, resulting in reduced effort in achieving organisational goals.

The particular context made up of everyone's circumstances leads them to conclude if they have a calling, a career or a job. Contexts change, and the interaction of political and economic influences alter the career landscape that informs perceptions, influence perspectives and experiences that become relevant when exploring the concepts of careers that do not exist within a vacuum (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997; Collin and Watts, 1996, Collin 1998; Baruch, 2009; Inkson et al., 2015).

When trying to distil the career experiences, expectations and aspirations of individuals to form theory, this requires the exploration of social constructionism as an epistemological approach within the research to understand the objective and subjective aspects of careers (Derr and Laurent, 1989; Blustein, Schultheiss, and Flum, 2004). Factors such as length of service, salaries and aspirations are some essential considerations that help provide a colourful picture of the career landscape. Subjective aspects of careers include the acknowledgement and exploration of the socio-economic status intertwined with the historical experiences and cultural norms that create the individual's sense of the meaning of self-worth and social standing, or economic effort (Collin and Young, 1986. Derr and Lauren, 1989; Bluestein et al., 2004; Blenkinsopp, 2007; Scurry, Blenkinsopp and Hay, 2013).

3.3 The Evolution of Careers

Careers do not exist in a vacuum. Instead, they are co-created between the organisation and individual that emerge from their specific social context and are socially constructed (Baruch, 2009). The complex co-creation requires a detailed understanding of the factors that include the individual's past experiences, future aspirations that are influenced by their actions within the organisational boundary, skills developed beyond the organisation and the other external factors that allow for personal development. To understand career theory, researchers must study people within their organisational setting at a specific time and as part of social constructivism.

Kanter (1999) identified the long-term relationships between employees and employers that form the basis of traditional career theory, which may span one or two employers over the entire duration of a career. This focus on climbing the scalar chain within the boundary of a single organisation provided a mechanistic view of career progression and bureaucracy that resulted in limits the span of experience to a single or small number of organisations throughout the employee's lifetime. This theorises careers from the perspective of an individual's experiences and their specific organisational environment, lighting context's significance (Mouratidou, 2016).

Through-life employment may include periods of turbulence associated with the vicious cycle of recession followed by the virtuous cycle of recovery. Economic turbulence influences the sense of security (Blenkinsopp, 2007) that vary in extremis from the polarised experiences of those in public and private sectors (Selby-Smith, 1993). Public sector careers traditionally valued long and loyal service, with promotions available based on accrued seniority in the post and the meritocracy of recognising talent – this is often contrasted with a less linear and more turbulent private sector that includes opportunities across organisational boundaries (Gardner and Palmer, 1997). Economic turbulence in the 1980s catalysed change across the public sector, removing the focus on administration and instead valuing efficiency and management decisions forced a rethink of organisational structures and identities that included downsizing that all had an influence on enduring career definitions that also impacted on the reality and lived experience of workers with a career (Reitman and Schneer, 2003).

Removing the administrative functions of the public sector and privatising them created the trigger for change, whereby the balance of workers employed across the public and private sectors changed. Increasing employment opportunities in the private sector, without the regulation or bureaucracy of the former public sector roles, represents a paradigm shift for those making the transition that does not recognise the norms of accrued seniority being relevant for promotions, the less linear and shorter scalar-chain of flatter organisations that include a focus on efficiency triggered the emergence of contemporary career theory that consists of the protean career, the boundary-less career or the kaleidoscope career model that distil the ultra-modern environment of exploring the sequence of work experiences over time (Hall, 1976, Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). Baruch (2004), Guest and Rodrigues (2012) and Chapman (2015) further the discussion, highlighting that careers mean different things to different people, the structure of progression within a profession or vocation and the opportunity for specialisation as part of the reciprocal and mutually beneficial arrangement between the organisation and individual. This agility approach can provide a resilient response to turbulence that supports a more successful transition from role to role or organisation to organisation.

Emergent career theories include the boundaryless career (Arthur, 1994; Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom, 2005; Briscoe, Hall and Frautschy DeMuth, 2006; Hess, Kepsen and Dries, 2012; Banai and Harry, 2014), the protean career (Hall, 1996; Briscoe, Hall and Frautschy DeMuth, 2006; Cao, Hirschi and Deller, 2013; Gubler, Arnold and Coombs, 2014; Herrmann, Hirschi and Baruch, 2015); the intelligent career (Arthur et al., 1995; Tempest and Coupland, 2016; Arthur, Khapova, Richardson, 2018); the portfolio career (Mallon, 1999; Hopson and Ledger, 2009; Fahami, 2018; Jennings, 2020) and the multidirectional career (Baruch, 2004; Baruch, 2004; Akkermans, Seibert, Mol, 2018). Exploration of career theory in pursuit of new knowledge has created numerous frameworks, and theories, which have emerged. Mouratidou (2016) highlights the challenge that emergent theories create a void, whereby few of the theories are enduring and robust enough to be considered seminal work within the career literature (Baruch et al., 2015).

The most resilient of emerging theories include the protean career and boundaryless careers (Verbruggen, 2012). Inkson (2006) and Arnold and Cohen (2008) critically analysed the frameworks and highlighted deficiencies in the formulation of the theory, which did not fully acknowledge the significant influence of structural factors within the career theory (Inkson et al., 2012). Other emergent theories include the intelligent career; nomadic career; customised career; kaleidoscope career; butterfly career; sustainable career; career resilience and post-corporate career (Baruch et al., 2015). The emergence of divergent thinking highlights the need for further research to explore the application of theory to different contexts as part of a holistic review of the frameworks.

3.3.1 The Boundaryless Career

Arthur and Rousseau (1996) identified the boundaryless career, which centres on the employability of the individual, a person-centred approach that empowered individuals actively manage their own careers – rather than being passive and reliant on the organisation the organisation to manage their career (Arthur, Inkson and Pringle, 1999). The notion of a boundaryless career acknowledges that careers exist beyond a single organisation, which is a polarised stance from traditional organisational career theories – one where careers develop across differing employing organisations (Arthur, 1994; Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom, 2005; Briscoe, Hall and Frautschy DeMuth, 2006; Hess, Kepsen and Dries, 2012; Banai and Harry, 2014).

Emergent or modern career theories that reject the notion of organisational boundaries are juxtaposed with the origins of career theories that emerged from the notion that careers exist within the organisational boundaries that relate to specific positions (Arthur et al, 1996; Arthur et al, 1999; Gunz, Evans and Jalland, 2000). Boundaries are subjective based on the ontological sense of reality, whereby the boundaries exist because of the social construction that creates a sense of boundaries

– created by employees and employers, within and beyond organisational constraints. Much of the debate suggests the rigidity of boundaries having reduced, disappearing and at least blurring. Despite the opaque nature of debate surrounding the existence or nonexistence of boundaries, the concept of a careers that exist within some form of boundary of an organisational or industrial context endure, providing a sense of career structure and allowing organisations to maintain a sense of a career system (McCabe and Savery, 2007; Gunz et al, 2000).

Baruch and Vardi (2016) suggest that those wishing to pursue a truly boundaryless career are required to take on responsibility for managing their own career in an environment where career ladder or scalar chain have changed – the once familiar levels of security and clarity of purpose disappear, which can create new sources of conflict. Anxiety, tension and induced pressures can result in demotivation from the burden of self-career management in the pursuit of a boundaryless career.

Careers do not exist in a vacuum and are context specific – research into emerging industries with convention and exhibition managers identified the butterfly career model (Wrzesniewski et al, 1997; Collin and Watts, 1996, Collinn 1998; McCabe and Savery, 2007; Baruch, 2009; Inkson et al., 2015). The emergence of career theory from embryonic and developing industries provides evidence of the need to explore emerging practice to establish and create theory from meaning as an extension of the boundaryless career model, in this instance the metaphor of a butterfly epitomises a self-managed career and the movement or fluttering between different organisations or industries to develop a personal career (McCabe and Savery, 2007). In contrast to traditional career theory, whereby individuals progressed within a single hierarchical structure to climb the scalar chain, the privatisation of industries and the deregulation of trade results in flexibility to move sideways between competing or complementary organisations to develop a strengthened portfolio of skills for career success instead of being anchored to an organisation (McCabe and Savery, 2007). The butterfly career model reflects the intra-sectoral sequence of moves to progress within a career, including moves horizontally, vertically or diagonally in the search for progression and fulfilment. The absence of a clarity or linearity in career moves is “similar to a butterfly flitting from one flower to another tasting the nectar” (McCabe and Savery, 2007, p112). The metaphorical nectar tasting refers to the process of identifying the knowledge, skills and behaviours developed as part of a particular opportunity before then seeking other opportunities to progress and capitalise on the new human capital developed. The ability to make a series of intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral moves provide the catalyst for development, which individuals seek because of a perceived lack of opportunities within the current organisation or role to develop, demonstrating professional loyalty rather than organisational loyalty. Saxenian (1992) identifies the benefits of new employees arriving

with new ideas and perspectives, which may be the catalyst for others who sought linear progression to make the intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral moves due to the lack of internal opportunities – others may find a sequence of moves to develop, stressful or confusing (Baruch and Vardi, 2016).

Nomads endure the elements, the storms and turbulence around them and through a commitment to collective effort and division of labour, the tribe succeed. Nomadic organisations are those that endure the series of optimal and sub-optimal conditions as part of a post-modern existence (Styhre, 2001). Tremblay (2003) identified the sequential exploration of nomadic organisations because of changing market conditions, which led to the exploration of nomadic careers (Cadin, Bender, and Saint-Giniez, 2000; Tremblay, 2003). The metaphor of nomadic behaviour highlights the ability for extensive movement and sustained travel to achieve specified objectives akin to nomadic tribes or animals (Tarroux, Berteaux and Bety, 2010). Ideas of organisational changes led to thoughts of career changes, which focus on the development of career theory and the nomadic career - the ability to explore opportunities beyond organisational boundaries based on understanding the individual's skillset and consequently, considered as a synonym for the boundaryless career theory (Tremblay, 2003).

Scholars highlight the context specificity when exploring the applicability of career theory to individuals, sectors or professions. The notion that new theory such as the nomadic career theory provides a framework applicable to an entire organisation, industry or generation is unfounded and unsupported (Valgaeren, 2008). The nomadic career theory provides a framework to explore the concept of careers as social spaces, ignoring the organisation boundaries and instead delving into the social or informal networks and communities that exist within and beyond organisational boundaries. This shapes individual identities, learning and career thinking to develop creative thought and opportunities that may be more prevalent in specific industries (Saxenian, 1996; Arnold, 1997; Cadin et al, 2000; Tremblay, 2003; Valgaeren, 2008; Baruch and Vardy, 2016). Valgaeren (2008) identified nomadic career traits of exercising self-determination only during involuntary changes that contradicts original thought of it being prevalent in voluntary moves that highlights the tension between theoretical constructs and the reality of lived experience (Arnold, 1997; Baruch and Vardi, 2016).

3.3.2 The Protean Career Model

Greek mythology includes the god Proteus, considered the god of elusive change as a sea god – the ever-changing tides sea states that can adapt due to the liquidity of water, in changing shape to suit the environment and demonstrating adaptability, agility, flexibility or versatility. The symbology of

changing shape at will, provides the metaphor of highlighting the individually focused career approach that is the protean career (Hall, 1996). Individuals require a sense of self-awareness, self-motivation, continuous learning and development that is underpinned by autonomy and personal responsibility (Hall, 1996). Characterised by the humans have their own unique combination of knowledge, skills and behaviours that are formed by their own experiences and appetite to engage in continuous personal and professional development to fulfil professional goals. The individual desire to grow and develop provides the foundations for rejuvenating or reinventing oneself as they adapt to the changing environment rather than climbing the scalar chain, measuring success by vertical trajectory (Hall, 1996). Such reinvention requires a developmental mindset, one that includes psychological development to understand personal goals, including the personal and professional sense of success. Everyone will have their own sense of success, including the nature of career success, the sense of pride in a job well done, or the balance between work and family life – which may change from time to time.

The perfect mix of autonomy, passion and drive to succeed could apply to all individuals and all sectors – there is still debate surrounding the universal applicability of the protean career theory. Baruch and Vardi (2016) suggest that the protean career model is only applicable to a small segment of the labour market, highlighting the inherent risk of successive career moves that could become "career destructive" (p362). Further criticism highlights the frequent transitions may erode any sense of career identity and limit the ability to sustain the motivation required to continually develop high levels of human capital to reach career maturity or high-level ambition. Blenkinsopp and Stalker (2004) identify that during career transitions, individuals to not transition immediately on assuming a new role or appointment, instead they embark on a journey of becoming the new role as they learn and develop as emergent professionals.

3.3.3 Career Resilience

Baruch and Vardi (2016) identify career resilience as the notion of career motivated individuals being resilient to endure career or organisational turbulence, which allows individuals to be agile and adapt to countering the obstacles ahead of them. The concept of resilience allows individuals to be strong enough to deal with tough times and agile enough to adapt to changes in the economic or social environments. Baruch and Vardi (2016) highlight the challenge of adopting the "jungle fighter" mindset (Maccoby, 1976, p17) that instils a sense of hardship that may not apply universally, the added conflict of considering the cut-throat cultures that exist – applicable to specific organisations and specific times, rather than the universal application, which may arise from a sense of a breakdown in the psychological contract from involuntary career transitions or the need to fight to save one's own career. This Darwinian approach to career theory, suggesting that only the most

agile will survive fails to acknowledge the needs of fulfilment and ability to flourish, rather than exist as part of an organisational career. Further criticism emerges from the sense of becoming resilient, the need to endure hardship as a result of vulnerability can be corrosive and is juxtaposed with the need for secure employment to provide security needs (Fromm, 1961; Fischer, 1996; and Baruch and Winkelmann-Gleed, 2002; Baruch and Vardi, 2016). A failure to address the safety needs of employees will result in further pressures on their psychological needs that are important aspects of well-being, increasing stress and anxiety levels that impact on family life. Baruch and Vardi (2016) also highlight the irony of developing resilient career actors, those who are most able to fend for themselves and make inter-sectoral or intra-sectoral career moves when other opportunities arise.

3.3.4 Intelligent Careers

Conceptually, intelligence and the notion of what constitutes intelligence forms the basis of research and late twentieth century research explored the concept of intelligent enterprise that demonstrates the organisational ability to understand and optimise the employment and deployment of intellectual capital. A focus on intellectual capital rather than physical assets provides a different paradigm for the creation of value and wealth (Arthur, Clacman, DeFillippi, Robert and Adams, 1995). In adopting such a strategy, organisations delayer their hierarchical structure and adopt flatter organisations that erodes the ability for vertical progression and questions the future applicability of traditional career theory. Organisations that focus on developing core competencies, outsourcing non-core activities create turbulence within the labour market and create mixed economy workforces (Crawford and Lister, 2005; Loveday, 2007; Avery and Johnson, 2008). As a result, the traditional theories centred around job security, internal promotion opportunities and vertical progression, organisational loyalty and dependence are no longer valid (Baruch and Vardi, 2016).

Intelligent career theory emerges from the development of intelligent enterprise, the development of the three “ways of knowing: knowing-why, knowing-how, knowing-whom" (Arthur et al, 1995, p9-11). Knowing-why – refers to the ability for individuals to relate to the organisational culture, the attitudinal appetite to develop skills for the future and the ability for organisations to tap into the personal beliefs and values of their employees to realise the synergistic benefits. Knowing-how, relates to individuals knowing how to bring knowledge and skills to their workplace. Knowledge and skills are developed through formal and informal learning and successive career moves that creates the foundation of knowledge and skills that a single employer would not be able to provide - strength coming from the variety of intersectional experiences to create value for the new employer. Knowing-whom relates to the ability of organisations to understand their employee's knowledge, skills and experience to develop professional networks that provide inter-firm benefits.

The development of the intelligent career theory highlights the reality that experiences forming the foundation of the framework may not have universal applicability to all individuals and all employment contexts and the inherent risk of exploiting the knowing-whom competency that may result in nepotism or the social exploitation of networks that undermine the wider organisational development (Arthur et al, 1995; Khatri and Tsang, 2003; Chandler and Kram, 2007; Beeson, 2009; Baruch and Vardi, 2016). Baruch and Vardi (2016) highlight the requirement for an equitable and transparent system to support career management decision making, which may be difficult to maintain with organisational politics influencing decisions.

3.3.5 Portfolio Careers

Entrepreneurial individuals with a desire to develop their knowledge and skills can engage in a portfolio career, the non-traditional structure of a career that requires career actors to contract their knowledge and skills to varying organisations as part of inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral moves to develop their portfolio or as part of a more contractor approach to career development (Fenwick, 2006; Hopson and Ledger, 2009; Noon and Heery, 2017; Fahami, 2018; Newbegin and Shrewsbury, 2018; Jennings, 2020). Conceptually, the ability to develop a portfolio career across different sectors including general practitioners seeking the development of clinical skills via teaching, research and leadership roles (Fahamim, 2018; Newbegin and Shrewsbury, 2018; Jennings, 2020). Portfolio careers include three constituent parts, the desire to maintain casual employment and avoid permanent employment; the ability to develop and sustain expert knowledge, skills and behaviours; and an intrinsic sense of a career being beyond organisational boundaries. The ability to make choices as a result of freedoms from the absence of organisational ties, though this creates tension for others in the labour market by undermining progress for others who seek permanent careers with favourable terms and conditions for their own employment (Arthur and Rousseau, 2000; Fenwick, 2003) or the dark side of emergent career theories and practices (Baruch and Vardi, 2016). Baruch and Vardi (2016) suggest that career actors engaged in portfolio careers may not do so out of choice, as a result of increasing competition and destabilisation within the labour market for those prepared to work for reduced remuneration. The development of a portfolio career is dependent on the ability to engage in work that aligns with their personal interests that helps create a pathway for self-actualisation and fulfilment (Baruch and Vardi, 2016) as the person-centred approach avoids any organisational bureaucracy or nepotism from traditional career models (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 2002; Forrier and Sels, 2003; Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014).

Whilst the post-corporate career provides opportunities for those wishing to regain control over their own destiny, there remains a need to recognise the challenges of work-life balance that can exert negative influences on well-being as part of engaging in a portfolio career (Arthur and

Rousseau, 1996; Mirchandani, 2000; Hall, 2002; Forrier and Sels, 2003; Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014). Portfolio careers provide opportunities to engage in self-fulfilling employment beyond corporate life, typically in smaller organisations or as self-employed individuals that may form joint-ventures or other collaborative partnerships to create and share value (Peiperl and Baruch, 1997) that provides a sense of security no longer offered by the large corporate organisations and provides the opportunity for multi-directional careers (Baruch, 2004) as part of developing the individual's human capital (McCabe and Savery, 2007). The dilemma presented by the emergence and increasing popularity of portfolio careers create tension with the need for certainty and confidence to sustain healthy working relationships between employees and employers.

Dedication to the organisation, the continual pursuit of personal and professional development, the willingness to adapt to emerging themes and trends present the epitome of career-resilience that once underpinned by the individual's motivation to succeed - helps to propel career actors on their own self-managed careers (Waterman et al, 1994; Baruch and Vardi, 2016). The sense of resilience often idealised by those seeking to develop a self-sufficient and determined approach to managing their own career, or the "jungle fighter" career mentality (Maccoby, 1987) that requires an individual to carve their own way through complex and often unforgiving terrain of a corporate career. It is essential to note the tiresome and potentially draining effect on individual wellbeing and ability to sustain efforts to carve a path through the corporate jungle culture where the fittest survive as part of an emerging psychological contract (Ghoshal, Bartlett and Moran, 1999; Baruch and Vardi, 2016).

As individuals increasingly exercise more control over their career, transitioning from organisational careers to more contemporary careers, new theories such as the kaleidoscope career model provide the framework necessary to help individuals make sense of their career and carer priorities to then explain and manage their career (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). The emergence of new career types and structures demonstrate the contextual sense of careers that exist within the contemporary and future environments, though the common and increasingly important theme emerging is the self-managed career that fits with the individual's sense of identity and aspirations beyond the simplicity of an organisational context (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). Increasingly, individuals who explore opportunities beyond organisational boundaries often do so because of the clash or conflict with their own personal values or lifestyle aspirations (Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Blenkinsopp and Stalker, 2004; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). If clashes or conflicts provide the catalyst for changes in direction or for employment beyond the organisational boundary, career theories must recognise the importance and change in career needs to fit with their own values.

Emerging career theory seeks to explore the contemporary context of careers, whilst analysing and challenging historical or outdated theories, which may not provide universally applicable models to contemporary practice. The notion of traditional career theories might continue to apply to those in careers that do not conceptually align with the emerging themes of self-driven professionals committed to networking and their own personal and professional development (Inkson et al, 2012).

A golden thread of the emerging career theory focuses on the flexibility of careers, the boundaryless or protean career models, which are inherently viewed as risky by some that can create unnecessary uncertainty, turbulence in working arrangements and challenging socio-economic status (Hall, 1996; King, 2004; King, Burke and Pemberton, 2005). Empirical research provides evidence of contentious determinants, some resulting in positive outcomes (Marler, Woodward-Barringer and Milkovich, 2002; Volmer and Spurk, 2011; Baruch and Vardi, 2016) and negative outcomes (Valcour and Tolbert, 2003; Chermaine, Sturman and Walsh, 2007; Fuller, 2008; Baruch and Vardi, 2016). In exploring the meaning and definitions of careers, scholars debate the existence of boundaryless careers that are socially constructed concepts rather than definitive career models (Inkson et al., 2012). Critics outline the challenges from reviewing longitudinal career models (Guest and Mackenzie-Davey, 1996) that traditional careers prevail, the contemporary view of careers to redefine boundaries (Walton and Mallon, 2004) and the rhetoric and reality of “new careers” (Gratton, Zaleska and de Menezes, 2004). Research into the protean and boundaryless career concepts highlight the contemporary context of careers, whereby they are considered a mere expression (Baruch and Vardi, 2016) without clear definition of the constructs to determine the career (Inkson et al., 2012).

Empirical research suggests that new career forms succeed traditional organisational careers, though, scholars confirm the enduring existence of traditional careers. Contemporary research highlights the presence of psychological contracts, hierarchical progression and job security remain essential components of careers for employees (Granrose and Baccili, 2006). Nuanced exploration highlights the balance of employees expecting support and development opportunities from the organisation akin to a traditional career model, along with the transferable skills that provide the opportunity to move to another organisation should the need arise. Granrose and Baccili (2006) suggested the need for employees to feel wanted and supported to develop with a sense of security to continue employment and aid the employer’s retention strategies.

Clark (2013) concluded that organisational careers with perceived hierarchies are valued by employees, aligned with the view that careers are widely accepted as defined and linear structures, focused on progressive hierarchical progression (Walton and Mallon, 2004). The existence of

boundaryless careers provides a comparative point of reference, to critically question the de facto nature – that is challenged by a sequence of research confirming the relative stability of employment with circa one third of US employees working for the same organisation for more than a decade (Jacoby, 1999).

Despite the challenge of the de facto boundaryless career, there is evidence confirming the existence of organisational careers – emerging primarily from public sector organisations (McDonald, Brown and Bradley, 2005) that provide stability, long-term progression opportunities within the hierarchical structure. Wajcman and Martin (2001) explore the tensions loyalty to personal career development and the organisational, recognising the need to balance individual and organisational expectations for long-term success, with similar contextual findings from the accounting profession (Smith and Sheridan, 2006); IT workers in Nigeria (Ituma and Simpson, 2006), Anglo-Dutch consultancy workers (Donnelly, 2008) and the requirement for learning and development to fuel flexibility in career development (Pang, Chua and Chu, 2008).

The individual and organisational benefits of traditional careers, provide continuity and stability for sustained learning and development – familiarity with the organisational context and providing continuity by retaining knowledgeable and experienced staff (Wajcman and Martin, 2001). King (2003) identifies the early millennial preference for the stability offered by an organisational career, or long-term careers in one or two organisations. Employees consider the organisational career as favourable to provide a stable and widely understood career path, with job security and support from the employer to realise personal ambitions (Barnett and Bradley, 2007).

In summary, this section explores the contemporary context of careers and that a range of concepts have emerged to define or explain careers as a result of changes in the employment landscape through globalisation and privatisation of once nationalised industries. The emergence of boundaryless careers, protean careers or kaleidoscope careers provide the basis for further scholarly research, they centre on the employee as the lead for managing their own career in contrast to traditional organisational careers, where the employing organisation manages the employees career on their behalf. Empirical research highlights the enduring presence of organisational careers, which are still preferred by some employees that value certainty and that contemporary career models are valid. Baruch and Vardi (2016) highlight the tension of contemporary models, which include the dark side of careers, the need for further exploration to better understand the phenomena and clarify meaning. Clarke (2013) highlights the clear challenge of whether the organisational career should be redefined, or the concept reserved to historical records – noting the evolution of the working environment, requiring a modern definition. Researchers have focused on the exploration of

contemporary career theory, often neglecting traditional forms and highlight the need for further research to clarify meaning. It remains important to explore the validity of contemporary models, with the exploration of the kaleidoscope career model later in the chapter. The literature review next explores the concepts of career plateaus that are the main criticism of organisational careers.

3.3.6 Career Plateau

Organisational careers have a strong focus on progression within the organisation, linear progression within a clearly defined and widely understood hierarchy – reliant on the ability for an individual to perceive their ability to progress with increased responsibility and remuneration. The career plateau is the antithesis of an organisational career, with a stifling of progression (Ference, Stoner and Warren, 1977) and a catalyst for movement beyond the organisation (Feldman and Weitz, 1988) and that everyone will reach a plateau in their career (Godshalk and Fender, 2014).

There are numerous reasons as to why people will reach a career plateau, including their own personal reasons such as the knowledge and skills to continue to progress, with the changing needs of roles and being able to meet the responsibilities (Ference et al., 1977). Organisational reasons include the conceptual hierarchical structure as a pyramid with a narrowing range of roles with additional responsibilities (Ference et al., 1977) and the evolution of organisational structures to that of diamond shapes (CIMA, 2022) that through automation narrow the requirement for staff at the operational level and wide the scope for business partnering to add value through data analysis at the higher echelons thus intensifying competition for managerial roles (Gandolfi, 2013).

Bardwick (1986) categorised career plateaus into distinct groups, the structural plateau relating to one's position in the hierarchy, content plateau relating to the nature of work and a life plateau relating to the stage of one's life.

Structural plateau refers to the individual plateauing within the hierarchical structure, limiting future career progression and remuneration linked to progression – or job enlargement by taking on increasing responsibilities (CIMA, 2011). The increase in status as a result of changes in title, remuneration or other benefits of the increased status provide external and objective measures of career success. Bardwick (1996) highlighted the nature of hierarchical progression and the ever-reducing number of roles at each rung of progression, provides fierce competition and is intrinsically competitive. The extrinsic validation of career progression provides a motivational benefit and the structural plateau results in the employee being motionless without future prospect for hierarchical progression. As organisational structures change from triangular shapes to diamond shapes (CIMA, 2022) this creates a structural plateau, and everyone will plateau at some point (Bardwick, 1986).

Content plateau, defined as the development of expertise and becoming proficient within the remit of the current role, without the opportunity for further job enrichment (CIMA, 2011) and removing the sense of challenge within the role. Challenge is a catalyst for personal and professional development, focusing on the learning of new knowledge and skills in response to the changing external landscape (Bardwick, 1986). Bardwick (1986) and Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) agree on the definition of challenge, as a motivator and linked with satisficing career needs. Bardwick (1986) outlines the mastering of one's role as an intrinsic measure of success, the need to satisfy the desire for accomplishment and taking on additional responsibility to receive additional remuneration as an extrinsic motivator.

Life plateaus, the recognition that individuals are no longer consider themselves to be successful and that they feel trapped in life, despite being committed to work (Bardwick, 1986). Appraisals and performance management provide organisations with the opportunity to address feelings of structural and content plateaus, provided the basis of assessment is clear and transparent for the individuals involved. Criticism of appraisal systems include the compliance approach of "box ticking" and appeasing people through grade inflation, which creates a false expectation of future progression and disappointment when the expected promotions do not materialise. Employee responses include resistance to the plateau, which helps to reignite the desire to progress within the organisation and remain loyal in an attempt to cope with the plateau. Others may respond by resignation, the gradual withdrawal from activities and taking a passive approach to work prior to seeking opportunities elsewhere (Bardwick, 1986).

Career immovability or being "passed over" for promotion presents a challenge for employers to find a way of continuing to motivate the plateauees whilst maintaining effort on those who have the potential for further progression or non-plateauees (Ference et al., 1977). Empirical research has identified that plateauees often feel demotivated and disappointed as management tend to passively reject opportunities for development or challenge through job enrichment or job enlargement (CIMA, 2011). Limited or no feedback provided by management accelerates the demotivation (Feldman and Weitz, 1988) and this reduces the effectiveness of employees and their willingness to contribute to the organisation's success, becoming "plodders" or "deadwood" (Bardwick, 1986). The negativity has a compound effect, between the employee and employer, resulting in a spiralling sense of demotivation in comparison with those non-plateauees who have an upward spiral (Slocum, Cron, Hansen and Rawlings, 1985). Plateauees highlight the lack of challenge as the cause for a less rewarding role, becoming dissatisfied and reducing career aspirations, attitudes to work and reducing their sense of self-worth or consider themselves less marketable (Choy and Savery, 1998).

Hackett (1989) highlights absenteeism being more prevalent with plateauees, who are also more likely to have poor working relationships with colleagues and highlights the need for effective human resource management strategies to help employees overcome their sense of plateaus – providing opportunities to acquire new knowledge and learn new skills that helps to improve the internal employability of individuals and supports talent management strategies (Choy and Savery, 1998).

In summary, all employees will experience plateaus at different times, and it remains an essential part of effective human resource management to motivate employees. Continued research into career theory explores the boundaries of organisational careers and the emergent contemporary views, all of which may include the phenomena of a career plateau.

3.3.7 Context of Careers

Sullivan and Baruch (2009) highlighted that careers do not exist in a vacuum, instead they exist within context – the context of the organisation, the industry or sector they operate in as well as the wider environment. The exploration of military careers focuses on the need to understand careers within the context of the Armed Forces, the need to explore relevant factors including the individual and their aspirations, the institution (regiment or corps) and the wider national and international economic environment, family and personal relationships that coexist to influence as accelerants or detractors for career progression (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009).

Chudzikowski, Demel, Mayrhofer, Briscoe, Unite, Bogicevic, Hall, Heras, Shen and Zikic (2009) explore the concept of career choices and career decisions, which are influenced by social standing or status; family history or expectations; aspirations for future work or finances. These factors are considered relevant in understanding the context of careers and vary based on individual backgrounds. While Khaptova and Korotov (2007) suggest Western career theory, including the contemporary career models are applicable as frameworks for career-based research, they note the cultural differences may limit the universality of application and recommend further exploration to test the hypothesis. Thus, while New Zealand careers are considered boundaryless, focusing on the application to industrialised areas and that other factors should be incorporated to better understand the concepts such as national context, gender differences and ethnicity (Pringle and Mallon, 2003). Yao, Thorn and Doherty (2014) focused their research on Chinese expatriates and concluded that although boundaryless careers are prevalent, psychological boundaries still remain – such as the cultural or social expectations that influence career choices and career models that highlight the need for further exploration.

Culture and context form a central core of management research and helps to encourage further research in different cultures and countries to explore emergent phenomena and continue to

develop knowledge and management practices beyond the Western environment (Berkema, Chen, George, Luo and Tsui, 2015). Most career theory emerges from the USA, which provides a basis for research and exploration to test the applicability of theory to different counties and cultures, there is cause to explore indigenous career theories (Leung, 2008). Research to explore different cultural context provides the opportunity to explore parallels and divergence in theory and capture unique aspects applicable to specific groups (Leung, 2008) and create new career concepts that provide meaning to the specific groups. Research may confirm the universal validity of career models, though it may also help identify the relevance or irrelevance or invalidity to specific groups.

Career theorists should continue to explore the relevance of context to understand career choices and undertake critical evaluation of the career models within different contexts to confirm or extend knowledge (Leung, 2008). Research should identify cultural variables, including those based on values or beliefs, the practices or perceptions that may influence career choices to develop knowledge. Qualitative research methods provide the opportunity to explore the richness of career theory and depth of meaning, which helps to understand the applicability of models to different local, social and occupational cultures and aid the development of the models and frameworks (Repetto, 2001; Leung, 2008). The Armed Forces may be considered a sub-culture in its own right, as the last bastion of organisational careers that provide the basis for exploration.

3.3.8 The Kaleidescope Career Model

Traditional career theory is long since outdated due to the ever-changing labour market and the once familiar long-term employment is now trumped by modern career theories that explore the phenomena of non-organisational careers, non-linear careers and the elements of career needs to establish new theories relevant to the modern and future working world. The Kaleidoscope Career Model provides a framework that explores the career needs of individuals, to help make sense of the conceptualisation of a career (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007). KCM suggests that individuals seek to obtain authenticity, balance and challenge in careers that provides the ability for individuals to adjust work experiences to remain on track with their longer-term career aspirations.

Analysis of the elements that constitute contemporary views of careers, which highlight the difference between employability, the opportunity to be employed and workability, the measure that link between expectations of employees and employers being met (Lawrence, Hall and Arthury, 2015). For careers to be sustainable, they must meet the employee's needs and those of the employer that describes the challenge of career management (Baruch, 2004). Self-awareness is a fundamental trait within understanding the knowledge, skills and behaviours that align with future

career aspirations that includes knowledge of the individual weaknesses to successfully navigate the employment landscape (Baruch and Vardi, 2016).

3.4 The Kaleidoscope Career Model

This thesis examines contemporary careers in a long-established and quite traditional organisation, it was appropriate to locate the research within the context of historical and contemporary research of careers. Having provided the theoretical map, I now turn to a more detailed examination of the career model used in this thesis.

Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) developed the kaleidoscope career model (KCM) using the metaphor to describe the basis by which changes in the external environment (the tube) result in changes in career aspirations and career models. KCM provides the opportunity to reflect on the changes because of life choices or career choices to fulfil their aspirations.

The KCM argues that careers are individualistic and dynamic, meaning is defined by the individual based on their own choices and their own values that allow people to modify their careers as their lives change – this responsiveness chimes with the protean career and boundaryless career, rather than conforming to career norms (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007). KCM recognises that individuals' choices may result in them leaving organisations for new ones or opting for self-employment in response to the perceived lack of concern for work-life balance, family needs or that they have career plateaued (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005).

Critics of the contemporary career models such as the boundaryless career model, highlight the lack of focus on context or concept of boundaries, to suggest that some boundaries do still exist (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009) – including psychological boundaries (Leung, 2008) and that differences in career choices of men and women (Sullivan and Crocitto, 2007). Sullivan and Crocitto (2007) suggest contemporary careers are not boundaryless, instead they have three core components: authenticity, balance, and challenge (ABC) that for the career needs of career actors at different points in time (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). The exploration of the three career needs is a core tenet of the thesis, exploring the applicability of ABC within the context of military careers that underpins the rationale for selecting KCM as the theoretical framework in this research project.

The KCM originally explored the career choices of women, exploring gender differences and subsequent exploration includes generational differences, or career patterns described as alpha and beta models, or late career development and career decision making (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006; Sullivan, Forrest, Carraher and Mainiero, 2009; August 2011). Additional research has explored the careers of Japanese entrepreneurs (Futagami and Helms, 2009); mid-career professionals in Ireland

(Grady and McCarthy); academic sabbatical choices (Carraher, Crossito and Sullivan, 2014); Chinese female managers (Woodhams, Xian and Lupton, 2015), Chinese female doctors (Wang, 2020) and careers in austerity (Mouratidou, 2020).

Further research includes extending the KCM to understand the career needs of mid-career elite head coaches (Dabbs, Graham, and Dixon, 2020); authentic talent development for women leaders who opted out (Knowles and Mainiero, 2021); breadwinner status and the role of gender as predictors of kaleidoscope career model parameters and career satisfaction (Dubin, 2022); women's career journeys in intercollegiate athletic administration: a focus on authenticity, balance and challenge through the kaleidoscope career model (Kapusta, 2022) the investigation of measurement scales (Crull, 2023) crafting career success: the role of high-performance work system, HRM attribution, and job crafting (Tran Huy, 202); and exploring women's career transitions into entrepreneurship during the COVID-19 pandemic (Johnson, 2023).

The application of KCM to various topics, which include talent management strategies as part of human resources development programmes, optimising work-life balance to create family-friendly employment, or work-related stress (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007). Existing KCM research recommends the further exploration of the model, which helps to explore the application of the framework and help to structure this research that aims to overcome the under-researched aspect of careers in the Armed Forces (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007; Sullivan and Baruch, 2009).

The KCM's three components do not represent equally proportionate elements; instead, they represent the fluidity and lack of rigidity that allows people to make sense of their careers, make decisions and transition to meet the needs of families and fulfil their own aspirations (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). The model provides a basis for individuals to make sense of their careers, their own sense of authenticity, balance and challenge that reflect the need for alignment between personal values and their work, to be truly themselves; whilst maintaining the need for work-life balance; and the need for a sense of achievement, sense of self-worth or career advancement.

ABC recognises the benefits of balance, the need to be authentic and challenge – to achieve balance outside of the working environment will limit the opportunity for hierarchical progression, as this requires a commitment to the organisation and role that must be the main effort to climb the corporate ladder (Baruch and Vardi, 2016) and that authenticity may be considered a luxury for both the organisation and individual career actor as a result of the variability and personal nature of authenticity. Service in the Armed Forces is recognised as a challenge, the physical and mental challenge of training to join the organisation and the continued focus on deployments to meet the

needs of the Army create complexities for balancing work-life aspirations to serve authentically – demonstrating the utility of KCM for research into military careers.

3.4.1 Authenticity

Authenticity is the sense of being true to one's own values, which requires the individual to understand their own values and then align them with their career choices – to be truly authentic, people act in line with their thoughts and feelings (Michie and Gooty, 2005; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007). The drive for congruence for values applied at home and work, which requires individuals to identify their own values; and their strengths and weaknesses in demonstrating their values (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis and Joseph, 2008).

People make choices during their career, based on their inner voice and the voice of reason that shapes their willingness to compromise and challenge pre-conceived ideas of what constitutes a career, and their role in shaping their own career (De Clercq, 2015). Those who are truly authentic have a strong sense of their own values, clear priorities and are prepared to pursue their individual preferences. Values and beliefs shape careers, the state of mind that informs career decisions and guides daily actions to fulfil short-term goals and milestones for long-term authenticity. There is an innate sense of fulfilling one's purpose, or raison d'etre and being prepared to compromise where required to overcome difficulties (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007). Career actors need to make sense of their values, identifying the terminology or lexicon to explain these in the context of research to understand if they are authentically living their lives.

The increasing consciousness for longing or belonging, highlight the ability of organisations to help fulfil a purpose and that people can live to work, rather than working to live – the recognition that there is more to life than work, and that it is a necessity to provide means to an end (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). People want to fulfil their aspirations in life, to live a life than has meaning rather than merely existing and that authenticity can be explained in terms of authenticity of experience, awareness, and action.

The authenticity of experience recognises the importance of making sense of the experiences and the external environment and the need to be self-aware and avoid self-alienation (Wood et al., 2008), self-assurance requires consistency to act in line with the values and beliefs held (akin to the KCM definition of authenticity (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006)). The third focuses on the authenticity of action, which recognises the tension of acting according to one's beliefs and the influence of other people. Influences from other people present a challenge for individuals to act according to their own held beliefs or to act according to the expectations of others and suppress their authentic self can lead to self-alienation (Wood et al., 2008). The dichotomy of self-alienation and authentic living;

acceptance or rejection of external influences create the person-centred sense of authenticity (Wood et al., 2008). Marxist views that work is forced upon people challenge the concept of authenticity, recognising the limitation that people are required to work and that this may impede their ability to reach self-actualisation (Fromm, 1961). The authenticity gap of perception vs reality is a matter for further exploration in the thesis.

Authenticity in the context of KCM focuses on the link between a career that provides the opportunity to live and work by their values, the alignment of personal and organisational values to consider the contribution to and from work to be significant (De Klerk, 2005). The sense of purpose, being the individual's rationale for the work they do and what they hope to accomplish from it (Brief and Nord, 1990). The utopian perspective that purposefulness justifies the reason for living, having been able to make a difference and not merely surviving (Lips-Wiersma, 2002). Embodying personal values through work, provides a way of expressing meaning and enable people to contribute in their own way to society – being committed to the fulfilment and sense of achievement to work, enduring difficulties (Ashforth, 1999; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007).

The endeavour for meaning or to find a calling emerges from the turbulence created in the 1980s with the widespread privatisation of once nationalised industries and organisational restructures, that resulted in large scale unemployment (Wrezeniewski, McCauley, Rozin and Schwartz, 1997; Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Dobrow, 2004). Terkel (1972) recognised the importance of work to provide an income, as well as searching for meaning and the modern business environment includes a series of restructures akin to the 1980s. The Strategic Defence and Security Review reduced the size of the Army from 100,000 to 82,000 (BBC, 2012; MOD, 2012) and subsequent changes from the Integrated Review will reduce the size of the Regular Army from 82,000 to 72,500 (MoD, 2021; BBC, 2021). The reduced force will become more agile, more integrated and more expeditionary (MoD, 2021) and chimes with the rhetoric of a sense of adventure with increased opportunities to travel. Employees, or soldiers, are provided with a significant opportunity to serve authentically and realise the sense of meaning from Army service over and above earning a living (De Klerk, 2005). Interesting and challenging work that encourages people to reach their potential provides an opportunity to make money and undertake work that matters, or makes a difference and helps to make work meaningful (Mitroff and Denton, 1999).

Careers in the Armed Forces are a specific type of public sector career, governed by different Terms and Conditions of Service that provide for the unique role members play in protecting British interests and ensuring a safe and prosperous United Kingdom. Recruits joining the Armed Forces are trained to understand the Values and Standards of the British Army, which includes selflessness and

a focus on serving the needs of others that provide meaning (Brewer and Selden, 1998) with the altruistic motivation to serve the nation (Perry and Wise, 1990) that draws parallels with wider public sector opportunities (Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999).

When comparing public and private sector workers, research demonstrates those employed in the public sector value intrinsic rewards such as the notion of meaningful or interesting work, which supersedes the requirement for extrinsic rewards such as remuneration or prestige (Wittmer, 1991). Research suggests those in public office to view their work as a way of contributing to a better society for others, with the focus on community over extrinsic rewards such as money (Taylor, 2005). Money remains an important aspect of the overall remuneration package, though this is a subordinate objective to the primary benefits of public service – including job security, improved working conditions with work-life balance and lower salaries to compensate (Wittmer, 1991; Buelens and Can den Broeck, 2007).

Concepts of authenticity focus on the career need, which allows individuals to embody their values and beliefs at work and at home – the uncompromising aspect of living by the values during a career (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). To achieve authenticity during a career, is recognised as a higher-order need and is demonstrated by research concluding that private-to-public sector career transitions highlighted the indifference to remuneration compared to those in the private sector (Perry, 2000). Research suggests those opting for public sector careers focus on the achievement of higher-order needs, satisfied through the sense of authenticity and self-actualisation though recent studies indicate the limit to this ethos (Mouratidou, 2016).

Authenticity and being true to oneself manifests in many ways, based on the intrinsic sense of authenticity as a unique and personal determination – this requires exploration through qualitative methods, to capture the meaning and leading people to seek careers that align with their values (Cabrera, 2007). Careers in the Army are considered prestigious, based on the selection criteria to join and the rigour of initial training to unlock the sense of adventure and opportunities to deploy across the world – the sense of serving the public and protecting British interests. Uniforms, medals and badges provide an extrinsic and visible demonstration of authentic service and recognition that forms a unique aspect of authenticity for those serving in the military and secure employment from governmental employment (Lewis and Frank, 2002).

3.4.2 Balance

The concept of work-life balance exploring the impact of conflicting pressures from work and home lives emerged in the 1960s. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal (1964) explored the concept of balance between personal and professional lives, which is something unique to each individual

and thus difficult for researchers to define the detail of the concept. When trying to define balance, the commonly understood aspect of maintaining an equilibrium of work and non-work, researchers have sought to promote the importance of growth and the significance of satisfaction from work and home, with minimal conflict (Clark, 2000; Kalliath and Brough, 2008).

While personal and professional lives are often explored through the lens of responsibilities at work and to the family, the contemporary aspect of balance extends beyond the traditional responsibilities to family and includes those that wish to see balance for other non-work pursuits (Sturges and Guest, 2004; Mainiero and Sullivan 2006).

The KCM concept of balance includes the utopian aspect of balancing work and non-work, the need to connect family and context that allow career actors to define balance (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005). The concept of balance includes several elements, including the adjusting approaches that allow people to flex their working arrangements to accommodate changes for raising a family or care-giving responsibilities – instead of taking a career break, people adjust their careers at the expense of personal values (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). Other concepts include the consecutive approach, whereby one partner exists the workforce for a defined period and subsequently re-enters as their responsibilities change. The concurrent approach allowing both earning partners to balance their work and family responsibilities. The alternating approach for one partner to continue working and the other to exit the workforce, to then switch or alternate later and finally, the synergistic approach that allows one to have it all, balancing work and family responsibilities provided they are willing to compromise on the standard of accomplishment (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006).

Modern societies see individuals play many different roles, taking on responsibilities as employees and parents, which give rise to conflicts or enhance one's life and as conflicts arise in one domain they reduce and thus improve the quality of life in another (Carlson, Kacmarb, Waynec and Grzywacz, 2008; Bagger, Li, and Gutek, 2008). Conflicting pressures from work and family provide the basis for exploration of the concept of balance – the experiences of poor physical and mental health, ineffective performance and dissatisfaction or stress that result in a low quality of life (Carlson and Kacmar, 2000; Frone, 2003). The concept of work-family enrichment shapes the overall effective compromise of to allow symbiotic benefits to both roles (Greenhaus and Powell, 2003). It remains important to separate the differences of enhancement contributing to improved resources from one domain to benefit the other, in contrast to balance that aims to optimise the balance of work and non-work responsibilities.

The subjectivity of balance and absence of a universal definition requires further exploration to identify the conceptual components, creating a framework that help individuals communicate their own sense of meaning (Greenhaus and Powell, 2003) that allows them to balance their own priorities and optimise their time.

Joplin, Shaffer, Francesco and Law (2003) created the cross-cultural comparative framework to understand the conflicting priorities of work and life, that interact with the external factors including social and economic variables from the macro-economic environment that make generalisation difficult. The relative importance of family, career and personal aspirations vary and despite the common development of frameworks from the USA, scholars highlight the need for further research to understand the applicability across different contexts (Poelmans, Chinchilla and Cardona, 2003; Thomas and Inkson, 2007). Glaveli, Karassavidou and Zafirapoulos (2013) provide examples of the differences in family-supportive work environments, work-family conflict and job satisfaction within Greece, noting the importance of wider-family support, to include grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins that help the overall family unit in a collectivist society – contrasted with a Anglo-Saxon individualistic approach where caring responsibilities are considered a private matter and the state provides limited support (Polemans et al., 2003; Glaveli et al., 2013).

Women historically joined the Women's Royal Army Corps, to serve in specific non-combat roles that support the Army (WRACA, 2014), with specific terms and conditions of service that required women to resign should they become pregnant (Independent, 2019). Army reforms (WRACA, 2014a) fully integrated women into non-combat roles, and into combat support and combat service support cap badges and disbanding the separate WRAC (WRACA, 2014b) and removed the requirement to resign if pregnant. Recent changes have integrated women into all roles across the Army, including ground close combat (MoD, 2016) and allowing women to serve in the Infantry and Cavalry. Changes provide women the ability to serve authentically in all roles and provide the opportunity through flexible service arrangements to balance parenting supported by the Army Parents' Network (Army, 2022). The Army as a public sector employer, rewards people based on seniority and experience balanced with employee performance and that provide opportunities for parental leave that has a reduced negative impact on career progression, in contrast to private employees (Sotirakou and Zeppou, 2006; Giannikia and Mihailk, 2011). Further research highlights the UK specific context that identified higher levels work-life balance and commitment from workers in the public sector compared to private sector workers (Persaud, 2001).

Careers in the Armed Forces provide the opportunity for balance, to balance the requirements of the role and specific responsibilities of the role, the opportunity to deploy and work in operational

environments along with the wider curricular activities of adventurous training and sport that are essential components of maintaining physical fitness and the desire to win – the survival of the fittest and the need to succeed in conflict, where defeat means death. The context highlights the relative importance of balance and the problem of trying to create balance in other aspects of life, this thesis aims to explore the contextual nuances of balance for careers in the British Army.

3.4.3 Challenge

Challenge refers to the person being challenged to acquire new knowledge and learn new skills that have personal and professional benefits, an element of stimulation and a sense of accomplishment to provide motivation for employees (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). Employees seek challenge that fuels a sense of intrinsic motivation, which creates exciting work (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey and Tighe, 1994). Challenges stretch individuals, requiring them to think creatively to solve novel problems on a journey of self-discovery, the sense of accomplishment that provides an intrinsic sense of achievement and opportunity to make a tangible difference to the organisation (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006).

Careers, described as journeys, provide people with a journey of discovery to find themselves and understand their motivation for work to then realise their potential – “knowing why” (Inkson and Arthur, 2001). To truly understand one’s motivations, one must understand their own personal values and their alignment or divergence with work to develop career capital or competencies. The synergy of knowing why, knowing how and knowing-whom provide a compounding effect to accelerate personal and professional development, which in turn provide career benefits. To realise the synergistic benefits, each must be developed – in sequence or concurrently, through developing “whys” can help inform “hows”. Each competency provides a distinct focus for making sense of a career, which develops knowledge, skills and behaviours for improved self-confidence and capability to perform (Inkson and Arthur, 2001).

KCM highlights the role of challenge, the need to be challenged and the opportunities to learn and develop that underpins the knowing “why, how, or whom” competencies and provide career stimulation. Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) suggest challenge is the superordinate reason people work, money forms a subordinate objective, though, salaries provide a measure of worth and perceived value of contribution. Reform in the 1990s resulted in organisational restructures, mergers and acquisitions, and downsizing that created career turbulence for workers – the continued focus on fair pay, commensurate with responsibilities and recognition from the employer, recognise the alignment for traditional and contemporary thought that remuneration is a hygiene

factor, and a sense of accomplishment is a motivating factor (Snyderman and Mausner, 1959; Lord, 2002; Mani, 2002).

Concepts of motivation and satisfaction explored by academics, with a correlation between age and education, older workers with higher levels of education are more likely to be intrinsically motivated and seek job satisfaction as a motivator (Eskildsen, Kristensen, and Westlund, 2004). Motivation differs across cultures, with western cultures focusing on intrinsic motivation and seeking fulfilment through work, which contrasts with eastern cultures that prioritise financial rewards, career advancement, and autonomy (Kubo and Saka, 2002; Eskildsen et al., 2004). Research highlights nuances of country-specific differences, with Greek women motivated to become entrepreneurs for financial gain, Italian women motivated through self-determination and regaining control of their career (Sarri and Trihopoulou, 2005).

Schein (1980) identified the complexities of individual people, with their own sense of need and motivation that varies throughout their lives, depending on their age, socio-economic status, aspirations and expectations. KCM assumes people work for more than money, the recognition that careers provide income (rather than voluntary workers) and that ego needs are valid, which need to be satisfied by external or organisational validation to demonstrate learning, development and progression within a career. Military careers are portrayed as challenging, with people exposed to the physical and mental challenges through tv and film, books or education – they need to be resilient enough to endure hardship and continue fighting. People joining the Armed Forces expect to be challenged during training and beyond, which provides a sense of accomplishment and fosters the warrior spirit to win for future career success. Financial rewards from the military are recognised as stable, progressive with seniority in rank and with a clear and well-established model for hierarchical progression – the additional rewards of intrinsic and extrinsic recognition through completing arduous courses, earning qualification badges and serving with elite units provide the basis to motivate people. The willingness to fight for their friends, their regimental pride, their sense of duty to the nation – provides soldiers with a challenging future in the Armed Forces, as the threats against national interests change from physical to cyber, the nature of careers in Defence may also change.

3.5 Summary: the need for this research

Reviewing the literature provides a theoretical basis of knowledge that underpins the exploration of the issues, which highlights the need for further research to understand careers in context (Inkson et al., 2015). Contextual differences challenge the universal applicability of career theories and models, which help aid further nuanced understanding of careers – with the exploration of other contexts

helping to uncover meaning and test the applicability or transferability of themes to other contexts (Inkson et al., 2012; Inkson et al., 2015).

Career research emerges predominantly from the USA, who are recognised as a world-leading military power. Adopting a social constructionism philosophical stance for this research balances the desire to understand careers in context and the meaning of careers to individuals (Burr, 2003; Inkson et al., 2012; Inkson et al., 2015; Purkhardt, 2015). The British Army career model is different to that of the US Army, with differing career definitions, terms and conditions of service, recognition of veterans and PESTLE factors. Baruch (2006) recommends the importance of exploring careers in context, the evolving context, to better understand careers and their contemporary definitions.

Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) highlight the importance of KCM as a contextual career model by recognising three distinct components, authenticity, balance and challenge, which provide an emergent and agile career construct that responds to changes in aspirations or external environmental factors. The development of careers through addressing three career needs simultaneously, albeit to varying levels of each, provides the basis for further research.

Careers in the British Army are complex, as the British Army is formed of a collection of different regiments and corps, each with their own role, history and identity – the context of which varies, though the Army's overarching career model prevails. Research acknowledges the importance of authenticity, balance, and challenge as motivational. KCM as a contemporary model aligns with the traditional theory of motivation and adds to the credibility of the model (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007). KCM recognises the importance of context in careers, which validates the selection of KCM as the appropriate framework for this research and how careers are understood in the British Army.

This research project is broken down into the following research objectives:

a. To understand how REME Class One Technicians make sense of their careers;
b. To identify the career needs of REME Class One Technicians and to inform retention initiatives;
c. To contribute to an enhanced understanding of how military personnel make sense of their careers, to inform HR policy and practice within the British Army;
d. To explore Army careers, with a particular focus on the Kaleidoscope Career Model.

4. Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Overview

This chapter outlines the research methods used within this project and provides supporting information to justify the philosophical basis framing the research design, data collection methods and subsequent analysis. This research aligns with the constructivist paradigm to better understand military careers. The concept of careers is by their nature constructivist, Cohen, Duberly and Mallon (2004) highlight the need to explore careers in different contexts, which support the co-creation of meaning within different contexts.

4.2 Foundations of Qualitative Research

Polkinghorne (2005) describes the process of exploring lived experience with the aim of describing and clarifying to distil the knowledge of such experience as qualitative inquiry. Such approaches support further detailed analysis of "how" and "what," exploration of perspective and meaning rather than exploring a cause-and-effect relationship of "why" (Crotty, 1998; Creswell, 2005). Exploration to better understand the depth of meaning requires a qualitative approach to inquiry that is built upon the philosophical foundations of the research design and construct of reality.

Researchers focusing on the advancement of methodological approaches and methodology have different approaches to defining the research paradigms, which are based on philosophical or theoretical world views. These in turn help shape research as a professional practice and the research design, such world views are based on the epistemological, ontological, axiological, and methodological stance of those engaged in research.

Ontology, the study of being, or reality highlights the nature of reality, the potential existence of multiple realities and how this may be defined, distilled, and understood by others (Crotty, 1998; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson, and Jaspersen 2018). Blaikie (2007) highlights the importance of understanding ontological perspectives in the social sciences, which focus on the behaviour of people rather than inanimate objects; their human interactions and how they view reality. Easterby-Smith et al (2018) highlights that aspects of discrimination exist independently of the researcher or research design, which result in different experiences of reality and influence the life choices or career success of others. Such examples highlight the need for qualitative approaches in the social sciences, where there is no single view of reality.

Epistemology, is the study of how knowledge is created, and the credibility of inferences made from such constructs of reality (Crotty, 1998). Epistemological stances are based on opposite positions of positivism and social-constructionism (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018). Positivistic approaches align with

the view that the world exists independently of people, so phenomena can be measured objectively in contrast to the view of social-constructionism that suggests knowledge is inferred subjectively and distilled from those who create that reality via reflection or critical thought (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018).

This research project aligns with a constructivist approach that has a relativist ontological position, acknowledging the existence of multiple realities that are co-created and as part of the research process and aligns with the epistemological stance of subjectivism. In conclusion, the most appropriate paradigm to shape this research project is the social-constructionist paradigm.

4.3 Social-constructionism

The process of exploring phenomena from the perspective of those involved, their experience and actions are based on factors of their historical, cultural, and social contexts (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018) and support research design. Focusing on individuals and their lived experiences, how they create meaning and make sense of their experiences are integral to social constructionism (Burr, 2003; Easterby-Smith, 2018). Exploration of the interaction of people and their world (Burr, 2003) helps confirm the suitability of the approach to help create meaning when exploring military careers. Social constructionism acknowledges that multiple realities exist, thus removing the need to identify a single reality, instead it shifts the focus to how reality and truth are constructed. This is supported by the notion that knowledge is not seen as something people have or do not have, that it is co-created by people through interaction and shared senses of meaning from their individual experiences (Burr, 2003 p9).

Social constructionism applied to career theory highlights the inference of historical knowledge and experience, which may inform personal perspectives, and this create new knowledge. Careers can be defined in many ways, Derr and Laurent (1989) identify the duality or mutual existence of internal and external careers. Internal careers reliant on the sense of identity and perspectives of those individuals constructing reality, rather than external observation of patterns of work within a career field. Such approaches highlight historical and cultural changes in the meaning of a career, thus supporting the appropriateness of social constructionism as the chosen approach to evaluate the relevance of the kaleidoscope career model to military careers that are open to change and include aspects of flexibility.

Language helps individuals explain their sense of reality and explain the phenomena to construct reality, this this highlights the role of language as a sense of action and tool to create reality. The sense of individuals using language actively produce knowledge, a more complex series of interactions beyond the simplistic view of merely expressing one's view. Language as a form of social

action as part of the career theory aligns with aspects of literature, for example, the psychological contract that exists between employees and employers or the construct of career success (Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, and Peterson, 2006 p82) requires language to define the meaning. This exploration of meaning is an active process, one that seeks to create meaning far from the suggestion of passive communication to express feelings (Burr, 2003 p8).

Careers, focusing on the process rather than product or result, align with the various theories of career journeys. From metaphors of careers as a racecourse (Chantrell, 2002 p84); a journey of rowing down a river or climbing a mountain (Baruch, 2003); a train journey, a rollercoaster or white-water rafting (Inkson, 2007). The various metaphors highlight the role developing meaning to describe logical and linear structures or the more turbulent and risky aspects of adventure sports, which reflect the sense of multiple realities rather than a single reality. Structure or lack of, forms the basis of knowledge by comparison with others, rather than existing in isolation.

Social constructionism is the most appropriate paradigm for research on careers, which is underpinned by the need for further exploration of the lived experiences of people transcending different time periods or cultures (Blustein, Schultheiss and Flum, 2004; Cohen, Duberley and Mallon, 2004). Collin and Young (2000) identify the challenges of trying to create a collective understanding of careers across the various definitions and meanings. Such variation provides the impetus for further research that crosses historical, cultural, or organisational boundaries that help support the sense of value in exploring the complexity of the constructs rather than trying to distil theory into positivistic approaches.

4.4 Data Collection Methods

This section outlines the data collection methods used within the research project and explains the appropriateness of the methods and their alignment to the chosen methodological assumptions; the consideration of ethical issues in shaping the research design, data collection and subsequent analysis; and the basis for selecting an appropriate sample of research participants.

4.4.1 Sampling

Quantitative research, originating from a positivistic research design, requires the justification of a sample size that is representative of the total population. In contrast, qualitative research such as this research project, requires a more systematic and informed approach to selecting the sample population. There is much debate on the theme of identifying the most appropriate sample size, which requires further analysis to identify the nature of the research, the implications of arriving at an incorrect conclusion or what is required to produce credible findings (Patton, 2002 p244; Easterby-Smith et al, 2018 p104).

Time limitations and cost constraints apply to research projects, which requires a critical and theoretical approach to identifying an appropriate sampling strategy. The overall research design was informed by the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' Corps Headquarters and insight into the context offered by the Corps Colonel. To explore the phenomena, the Corps Headquarters suggested a stratified sampling approach to reflect the various trade groups within the overall sample population and ensured the representation of the respective disciplines in line with their relative length of service as specified in the research scope (Seale, 2018).

Sampling Type	Explanation	Rationale
Stratified sample	Sampling with the intention of including representation from all trades within the REME.	This research project focuses on the conceptualisation of mid-career REME soldiers across all branches.
Homogenous sampling	Ensuring the sample population includes representation of a homogenous group of soldiers to provide depth.	This research project focuses on REME soldiers employed across the British Army.
Criterion sampling	Ensuring the sample conforms to pre-determined criteria.	This research project requires the participants to meet specific criteria to provide detail of their lived experience to provide depth to the research.

Table 1: Adapted from Seale (2004) and Easterby-Smith et al (2018).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) highlight the requirement for theoretical saturation, which is a sign of having a sufficiently large enough sample population that results in data redundancy. There are challenges in pre-determining the number of required participants, whilst still requiring sufficient participation to provide a credible data set from which to draw meaningful conclusions (Patton, 2002; Easterby-Smith, 2018). Such determination of sufficiency relies upon personal judgement and supported by peer review as appropriate. Nguye (2005, cited by Easterby-Smith et al, 2018 p105) highlights this principle with reference to making chicken soup and the need to adjust the size of the pot depending on the number of people being catered for. Despite this, there is still a need to "taste" the soup to know if there is sufficient salt - a sample representative of the population.

Overall, the sample consisted of 27 REME soldiers across all trades. All participants were male and have served between 4 and 8 years, with different educational backgrounds. Most had completed secondary education, with very few having completed tertiary education prior to joining the Army. During the application process, personnel are required to take an aptitude test to determine their suitability for specific branches of the Army. All had scored highly enough to join the REME as a technical branch of the Army, though there is a distinction between those in Artificer or Artisan Trades that are explored in more detail later in this chapter. The participants varied in rank from Craftsman (equivalent to Private in the REME) through to Sergeant and were employed across the REME Battalions and Light Aid Detachments within the Field Army.

Theoretical saturation can arise from as few as 9 participants. This was not considered to be sufficient to provide credible findings to the Army, who intend to utilise the research findings as part of a review of the career structures of their soldiers. The Corps Colonel suggested that 30 participants should be enough to avoid undermining the credibility of the findings. Practical challenges of access to participants based on mutually convenient dates resulted in falling short of the 30 participants.

Qualitative research does not aim to produce broad generalisations of the total population, instead aiming for rich and detailed accounts of the phenomena based on the lived experience of the participants (Creswell, 2012; Easterby-Smith et al, 2018). The 27 research participants may be considered a small sample, though this was sufficient to arrive at theoretical saturation (Creswell, 2012; Easterby-Smith et al, 2018; Rivas, 2018 within Seale, 2018). Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested theoretical saturation is reached when the findings become repetitive and there are recurring themes that provide empirical confidence that responses to questions are saturated based on previous responses and no new categories of data are found.

Whilst saturation occurred prior to completion of all 27 interviews, discussion with the REME and peer-review suggested to continue working towards the target of 30 interviews to provide a robust data set that informs the review of REME soldier career structures. Whilst some argue continuing provides little value, the continuation provides an essential aspect of credibility to the Army over and above the theoretical contribution to knowledge. This is an important aspect of the research design and gaining organisational consent to proceed with the overall project and is also appropriate for a Doctorate of Business Administration (as opposed to a Doctorate of Philosophy) that aims to have practical impact.

In justifying the chosen approach to the specific sample at the centre of the research project, it aligns with the need for further research to evaluate the relevance of the kaleidoscope career model

within the British Army to support a better understanding of the contextual challenges of soldiers serving in the REME, which extends the discourse of career theory in relation to non-professionals (Gerber, Wittekind, Grote, and Staffelbach, 2009; Lyons, Schweitzer and Ng, 2015; Baruch and Vardy, 2016; Baruch, Wordsworth, Mills and Wright, 2016).

Gerber et al, (2009) highlight the need for extending the discourse by exploring career research spanning various levels of workers across different organisations, which supports incorporating the lack of research into careers across the British Army and specifically the REME. The sampling approach provided a homogenous group, in that all participants shared similar ages; length of service; assignments across battalion and light aid detachments; and levels of education despite the slight within-group differences in rank. This is an ideal approach for this research, which demonstrates the suitability for a work-based case study and avoids the challenges of heterogeneous sampling which may bring additional confusing factors into account (Rodriguez, Bravo, Peiro and Schaufeli, 2001; Wong and Lin, 2007; Qu and Zaho, 2012). Conclusions from Wyatt and Silvester (2015) emphasised the role of expanding research beyond their single UK public sector organisation and develop knowledge of career experiences in other contexts across the UK and internationally to provide depth and meaningful exploration of differences between those of diverse cultural backgrounds, stereotypes, and relative power.

Emergent career theory explores different contexts, to test the applicability of frameworks and create a better understanding of the experiences. Arthur (2008) identified the focus of career research on those in management, consulting and professional roles, further examples of this focus include Baruch and Campbell Quick (2009) exploring career transitions from senior United States Navy Admirals to the civilian sector. Baruch et al (2015) presents a shift in focus to explore careers from a blue-collar worker approach, which aligns with the chosen focus for this research on early career soldiers in technical trades – rather than those senior ranks who have developed further technical and managerial skills to progress further. This supports the development of knowledge in relation to non-professionals and contemporary careers, their experiences, and perceptions to address the void in literature to develop career theory (Baruch and Vardi, 2015; Baruch et al, 2015). This research addresses the void in research for Army careers, in technical, combat service support roles that enable the Army to operate effectively around the world.

4.4.2 Interviews

One-to-one semi-structured interviews using open ended questions provide researchers with the opportunity to start exploring the contextual issues to provide a means of introduction before then asking follow on questions to get into the detail of the research problems (Silverman, 1993; Byrne,

2018; Easterby-Smith, 2018). Benefits include the ability to pursue emergent themes presented by research participants to understand how research participants conceptualise their career and as such may be considered an iterative process (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Silverman, 1993). Such an approach also provides the opportunity for a researcher to spend more time with participants, individually, to explore their perceptions of careers without influence from others to capture their lived experience (Burr, 2003).

Interviews provide access to data that is credible based on the richness and persuasiveness of the participant's own experience and interviews form an integral part of interactions between humans in creating meaning, which helps make sense of our thoughts, feelings, and perspectives (Silverman, 1993; Burr, 2003; Easterby-Smith, 2018). Exploring this theoretical depth, surfaces aspects of the subjective nature of meaning, the experience of participants based on their own journey and the different voices used when describing the personal perspectives (Silverman, 1993). Data and meaning emerges from the conversation, which requires an element of skill in being able to have a conversation to explore meaning whilst being cognisant of the risk of leading participants to a preconceived sense of meaning (Rapley, 2004). Questions require an element of leading the participant towards the topic of discussion to meaningfully engage in the conversation and explain thoughts, how they feel and provide an account of their lived experiences. This requires building an element of rapport to help participants relax, outline the research aims and complete the ethics and consent processes before starting the actual interview. This combines two different approaches –the simplistic approach of encouraging people to talk with the use of simple questions (Terkel, 1972) and the need for rapport to then engage participants actively in discussion (Rapley, 2004).

Participants meeting the eligibility criteria were identified by their chain of command and offered the opportunity to participate in the research, self-selecting participants contacted their chain of command to express an interest and were subsequently granted permission to attend the interview. Interviews were conducted in the Battalion conference room during their break in the working day, this overcame challenges of selecting alternative locations that were accessible to both parties and were free from distraction. As such, participants arrived in a familiar environment at their workplace to conduct the interviews in a relaxed and friendly manner, which helps reduce the disturbance to their working day and have a detailed conversation on their career perspectives. All participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix C) to record their informed consent and explain their rights to withdraw from the study. Interviews lasted between one hour and two hours fifteen minutes that provided the opportunity to control the themes discussed during the interview.

Individual participants who met the pre-determined criteria were identified to participate in the research at each Battalion by the Regimental Career Management Officer. It was imperative to assure participants as to the confidential nature of the study and that access to recordings will be password protected and not shared by the researcher and that comments or quotations used in the thesis will not be attributed to individuals. The focus of the interviews was to explore participants' perceptions of what constitutes a career and adopted a funnelling approach from open-ended questions to start the conversation and then progressively narrow the focus depending on the responses provided. This approach provided a conversational nature to the interview, helping to relax participants and allow participants to discuss their true thoughts and feelings in an honest and comprehensive manner without fear of "giving the wrong answer" or conforming to demand characteristics (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018).

Consistency in the approach to interviews required a subtle yet disciplined start to each interview, asking participants to explain what the word career means to them, to then characterise their careers in a few words to then explore their career experiences in chronological order. Starting with the exploration of the word career provided rich data on the subtle distinction they made between a careers and jobs. This provided insight into the intrinsic and extrinsic sense of meaning that added further depth to the discussion and provided an opportunity to ask follow on questions in line with the semi-structured interview approach to maintain the conversational style (Byrne, 2018; Easterby-Smith et al, 2018).

Interviewees were asked to prepare a timeline of their career, from when they first started thinking about joining the Army through to their career to date and future aspirations. The approach provides a basis to structure the interviews and conversation, with the ability to gain additional insight into specific points of time (Mazetti and Blenkinsopp, 2012). Time spent preparing for the interview allowed individuals to overcome the individual and contextual barriers of qualitative research, which require researchers to use more sophisticated techniques to explore the subjective aspects (Lazarus, 2003; Chell, 2004; Mazetti and Blenkinsopp, 2012). Participants noted the varying quality of timelines prepared, which include important milestones in their careers that provided a consistent structure for discussion and allowing for the exploration of the milestones to uncover meaning. The milestones were important and significant to the individual, the research also incorporates the exploration of time between the milestones to try and explore the meaning of soldiers' careers. Lazarus (1999) identified the situational and personal factors that influence the appraisal and recollection of career events, which the visual timeline helped to surface consistencies in their career choices and progression over time and explained relevant influences over time (Mazetti and Blenkinsopp, 2012). Timelines also helped individuals to consider gaps between

significant milestones, the impact of career transitions between promotions and different units, and consider life events, family pressures or organisational changes.

During the period of data gathering, the researcher kept a journal of notes and emerging themes to support future analysis and reflections on the interview process to adopt a reflexive approach to future interviews. The selection of a semi-structured approach provided a starting set of questions that provide a flexible format to allow the interviewer to “test-and-adjust" the schedule or sequence as appropriate (Brynam and Bell, 2007 p13; Saunders et al, 2019 p437). Saunders et al (2019) identify the added benefits of adopting the semi-structured approach to systematically explore themes with participants, with the added benefits of reflexivity in determining the question structure for future interviews based on the themes that emerge from the participant’s view of reality. The reflexive approach provides a contingent basis to flex the interview structure and format as required to then help convert what may become complex topics into more logical ones by revising the question or altering the sequence as considered appropriate. This provides the interviewer to opportunity to tailor the sequence or re-word questions to provide a more naturally occurring conversation that enriches the depth by adding follow on questions, as necessary. Adapting to individual needs is an important part of the chosen approach, allowing for reflexivity to tailor the questions or sequence to those from differing personal or professional backgrounds (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Byrne, 2018; Saunders et al, 2019). Conducting interviews without structure provides a blank canvass for conversations to emerge naturally, however this restricts the ability to form a research agenda or more specific questions to uncover meaning and resulting in adding an unnecessary layer of complication during analysis and interpretation. Additionally, structured interviews without the flexibility of altering the question set restrict the ability to explore meaning within the themes that emerge within the discussion. This rigidity may result in missing the emergent themes and eroding the richness of the data.

The literature review on career theory and methodological literature shaped the research design, providing a focus on the “what” questions should be asked and “how” questions should be sequenced, in line with the chosen methodological approach. Extant literature on methodology and methods provided the detail of “how” to ask questions, which should be open-ended questions that allow participants the opportunity to express their own thoughts and perceptions without being hindered by any attempt at standardisation (Burr, 2003; Easterby-Smith et al, 2018). Providing the space for participants to think and articulate their thoughts allowed the opportunity to develop follow on questions to explore the detailed meaning of their thoughts to communicate their understanding and co-creation of meaning (Burr, 2003). Simplicity of the questions asked ensured questions were concise and clear, that participants understood the questions asked to then respond

highlighting the emphasis of the language used to communicate (Burr, 2003; Cresswell, 2012; Easterby-Smith, 2018; Saunders et al, 2019). As the series of interviews progressed, iterative changes were made to the questions asked to clarify meaning or responding to the emerging themes (Oliver, 1997; Burr, 2003; Fisher, 2004; Saunders et al, 2013).

Career theory provided the basis of "what" to ask participants, the questions funnelled from generic exploration of the word career and what it meant to participants before then progressing through their career timeline and aspirations for the future. This followed a similar approach to that taken when KCM (Kaleidoscope Career Model) was constructed (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006; Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007a) and further iterations of expanding the contextual applicability of KCM in different contexts (Mouratidou, 2016) and provided a logical approach to conduct this research in an analogous way.

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed ahead of the analysis outlined below. As the conversation developed from generic questions exploring the concept of a career through to more specific questions to surface their thoughts and feelings on specific themes of authenticity, balance, and challenge to align with KCM as the chosen theoretical framework. The literature review provided a basis to form the interview questions that were developed through the conduct of the interviews and consequently allows the analysis to explore parallel or emergent and divergent themes as part of the analysis (Shaw, 2003; Burr, 2003; Pauleen, Corbitt and Yoong, 2007; Byrne, 2018; Easterby-Smith et al, 2018).

4.4.3 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis provides researchers with a structured and methodical approach to identifying the themes within the data collected and allows further analysis to then report on patterns or themes that emerge (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight that thematic analysis provides the value in extracting rich details from qualitative data and as thematic analysis is the underpinning approach in qualitative data analysis it provides rigour and validity to the themes identified. Specific phases of the approach provide rigour to the analysis, following sequential steps of gaining familiarity with the data through transcription and reading, re-reading before generating initial and subsequent codes to then identify themes as they emerge within the process.

Adopting a constructionist approach, this research project aligns with the theory of co-creation of knowledge that requires interaction between people to socially generate knowledge and create meaning, rather than waiting for knowledge to be discovered (Boyatzis, 1998). Knowledge or theory created during social interaction may not have existed prior to the interaction or existed independently of the interaction - knowledge can be co-created during conversation and does not

require existing knowledge. This requires an existing theoretical lens and as such, classical grounded theory approaches must be discounted from the research.

Qualitative methodologies require structured approaches to analysis, which are systematic and align with the philosophical approaches adopted during the design phase. Adopting thematic analysis as the chosen approach provides a systematic approach to code data, which requires the methodological combing of the data to identify "codes" that are given names to reflect their constituent parts. This is a significant step when analysing data as it allows the researcher to gain a sense of the data as part of systematically coding the data, from which the themes emerge and allowing a researcher to make sense of the overall data (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Bryman and Bell, 2007; Guest, MacQueen and Namey 2012). The emergence of themes from the data, as part of thematic analysis, can emerge as part of an inductive and bottom-up approach that develops from the codes identified during the data analysis or a deductive and top-down approach that emerges from the research questions set as part of the research design (Boyatzis, 1998). This research recognises that the research questions inform the questions asked and structure of the interviews, which shape the analysis of the data and theoretically cannot be considered deductive or inductive – highlighting the need for a pragmatic or abductive approach to the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The theoretical approach to data analysis is an important one as it allows the researcher to conduct their analysis and provides the underpinning support for the claims made. Thematic analysis of an entire data set to highlight significant or important themes, which then requires coding and precise analysis to succinctly synthesise the entire data set. When selecting such an approach, researchers must balance and compromise on the depth and complexity to achieve the overall aim of providing the rich overview of the data to provide a strategic or high-level overview of the phenomena. This is most useful in subject areas that do not have substantive bodies of existing knowledge or with contextual population samples whose views have not been part of previous research studies – this applies to the participants within this research project.

Other decisions in selecting appropriate data analysis approaches include the decisions of identifying and selecting the appropriate level to identify themes. Boyatzis (1998); Braun and Clarke (2006) outline approaches as semantic, manifest, or explicit level – the coding of words used alone as part of data collection; interpretative or latent levels – the coding of the researcher's interpretation of meaning within the transcripts. Semantic coding identifies the codes and themes that arise from the pure content of the data, which summarises the face-value of data presented without further interpretation to then identify significant meaning or patterns in comparative study to previous

research. Analysis incorporates stages of description and organisation to highlight patterns for interpretation that attempts to identify the relative importance of patterns; their meaning and implications that are compared to previous research (Patton, 1990; Braun and Clarke, 2006). This research adopts semantic coding, which allows the researcher to critically review the KCM and the interpretation of the data collected informed the overall review KCMs relevance to military careers.

When considering the practical aspects of analysing the data collected, researchers must decide on how best to conduct the analysis. Some suggest manual approaches allow a researcher to stay close to their data, which may not be as possible when using a computer system. This research uses NVivo as a qualitative analysis tool, which provides a level of rigour to the analysis and aids the interrogation of codes and themes to support the overall analysis of the data. NVivo is also widely recognised as an appropriate and widely used tool for qualitative data analysis (Gubbs, 2002; Wiltshier, 2011; Houghton, Murphy, Meehan, Thomas, Brooker, and Casey, 2017; Jackson and Bazeley, 2019) although Hassard, Morris and McCann (2012) highlight that it is also common for researchers to prefer manual coding and analysis over computerised approaches.

4.4.4 Phases of Data Analysis

The six phases of analysis are outlined below to provide an overview of the data analysis process and worked examples illustrating the processes conducted:

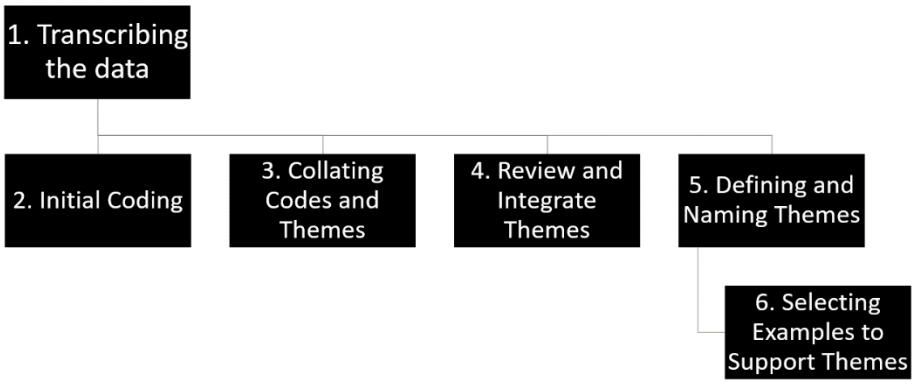

Figure 1: Phases of the Data Analysis adopted within this research project.

4.4.4.1 Phase One – Transcribing the Data

The first phase is the preparatory transcription of the audio recordings in parallel to reviewing the interview notes recorded during the conduct of the interviews. This requires familiarity with the data, reading and re-reading the transcriptions whilst listening to the audio recordings to note initial thoughts and append to the interview notes and diary. This initial phase underpins the rest of the data analysis as it helps become familiar with the data and gain a deeper understanding of the data. Transcriptions were undertaken immediately following the completion of the interviews and included reflections on each interview kept as part of a research diary. The research diary

maintained a record of personal reflections, thoughts and feelings on individual interviews and specific points of interest that arose in the interview that also helped to highlight important themes and support the accuracy of the analysis.

4.4.4.2 Phase Two - Initial Coding

Once the initial transcription was completed, the second phase of initial coding involved the organisation of data based in initial interesting or unique features that relate and are relevant to codes identified. Reading and coding each interview to then collate all information within each code or sub-code.

Quote	Code
If you've just promoted, even if you perform better than others, you'll not get graded highly compared to others with more seniority.	A perceived lack of transparency in performance evaluation and appraisal.
Every year you receive an increment point to earn more, no matter how you perform.	Annual financial rewards are not linked to performance. Financial rewards come from promotion.
When deployed, I have my own truck and complete live taskings, operating across the area in response to recovery needs without micro-management I receive in camp.	The freedoms to operate in a deployed context provide authenticity for junior commanders. Careers have context, different perspectives of being deployed vs the firm base.

Table 2: Initial Coding

4.4.4.3 Phase Three - Collating Codes to Themes

Stage Two identified numerous codes, which then required structure to identify potential themes and synthesising the detail to merge codes and form themes. To highlight this process, the example of "authenticity" arose from the research design and research questions, this included sub-themes of an intrinsic sense of authenticity and an extrinsic sense of authenticity that is co-constructed by colleagues that informs and underpins the intrinsic sense of authenticity – these codes were merged to form a multi-layered view of authenticity.

Quote	Code	Theme
If you've just promoted, even if you perform better than others, you'll not get graded	A perceived lack of transparency in performance appraisal.	Career Management

highly compared to others with more seniority. *People who are senior do not have to work as hard to get good reports.* *Hierarchies of experience mean people who have served longer are treated better even if they are not as good at the job.* *Passed the tiffy board (Artificer Selection Board) and still waiting for the course when others who passed after me are getting on it.*	Seniority recognised, rather than experience. Results from selection boards are not transparent. A lack of feedback. Career managed by the organisation and soldiers are disassociated with them.	
Every year you receive an increment point to earn more, no matter how you perform. *LSA days help top up the salary and the more you deploy, the more you get.* *Time away means more money so I don't mind as much.*	Financial rewards are not linked to performance. Financial rewards come from promotion or deployments. Money is an important aspect of deployments.	Authenticity of deploying.
Medals matter, you see older generations with 10 or more medals and now there are no deployments.	Extrinsic rewards matter, for visible recognition of experience.	Authenticity of medals.

The chance to deploy would be mega, the chance to get my first medal. *I'm lucky, I have three medals from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Cyprus unlike most of my generation who have one.*	Medallic recognition is important, and people want to deploy to receive the medal.	
When deployed, I have my own truck and complete live taskings, operating across the area in response to recovery needs without micro-management I receive in camp. *Micro-management in barracks, going back for the Class 1 course is like going back to school and being treated like a child.* *I don't mind being back at Lyneham, it is a bit like school with a timetable to follow, it's easy though and my family are nearby.*	The freedoms to operate in a deployed context provide authenticity for junior commanders. Careers have context, different perspectives of being deployed vs the firm base.	Careers in context.

Table 3: Identifying themes

4.4.4.4 Phase Four - Review and Integrate Themes

Several themes identified during Stage Three required further refinement to synthesise themes into a systematic approach that aligns with the literature. Integration of themes from the literature and data collected helped provide insight into the patterns forming, which required reading and re-reading the initial and subsequent coding to refine the integration of codes to themes. The

difference between stages three and four centres on the integration of literature, this continuation of this process provided a series of themes and sub-themes structured on the literature identified.

Codes	Themes
Career progression *Clear ladder for promotion* *Clarity of purpose* *Opportunity for more than 22-year career*	Career characterisation = career, an organisational career within the Army.
Exciting/excitement *Deployment opportunities* *Investment in Learning and Development*	Nature of career = opportunities to progress.
Challenge of restructuring *Need to retain people* *Focus on retention to improve lived experience* *Investment in people*	Nature of work = variety of opportunity.

Table 4: Codes to themes

4.4.4.5 Phase Five – Defining and Naming Themes

The penultimate phase required the generation of clear definitions and naming of themes identified following progressive analysis to continually improve the content and naming of themes to support the overall narrative that accurately tells the story. For example, when participants reflect on their own experiences as they recount the best memory of serving in a unit, they referred to the sense of job satisfaction from enabling activities within the units to provide combat power – this sense of job satisfaction emerged and were included within the wider themes of feeling valued and appreciated by others – that were merged into themes of intrinsic and extrinsic authenticity.

Adopting an abductive approach, some themes arose from the literature and others from the data. The merging of themes provided a combination of constituent parts, which help provide answers to the research questions. The first question of "how do REME Class One Technicians make sense of their careers?" helped understand the soldier's notion of a career, followed by the need to explore the relevance of KCM to REME Soldiers – questions driven solely from the literature. Question Three sought to identify the career needs of REME soldiers, which must arise from the research participants and will arise from the data. Question Four explores the sense of military careers within the context of the Army's career model and arises from the existing policy and the data. Question Five seeks to explore the relevance and further development of KCM to military careers, which synthesises the extant literature and data from this research project.

4.4.4.6 Phase Six – Selecting Examples to Support Themes

The culmination of data analysis required the selection of rich and illuminatory examples that support the analysis and how they form links to substantiate the findings (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Results included in the findings section include quotes from participants that demonstrate the themes emerging from the analysis and support the research findings to answer the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethics and ethical considerations are those guiding principles that determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Shamoo and Resnick, 2015). For research to be considered credible and rigorous, there is a need to underpin and conduct research activity in an ethical manner. Issues include the need to conduct research with integrity and transparency, that the right of individuals and groups should always be respected, that those participating should be treated with dignity, and wherever possible, those participating should do so on a voluntary basis and should be informed as such.

As this research project focuses on how individuals construct their own understanding of a career within the British Army, organisational consent is required. It remains important from the outset to outline the differences in definitions of research. Academic definitions focus on the conduct of a study to discover new information, knowledge or understanding (Cambridge, 2018). The MOD provide greater clarity, with the definition of research that aligns to medical research (MOD, 2014). JSP 536[1] defines "Service Evaluation[2]" as a process designed and conducted solely to define or judge current practice, designed to answer, "what standard does this service achieve" and measures current service without reference to an external standard, which may include the conduct of interviews or questionnaires, which does not meet the definition of research or require MODREC[4] approval (MOD, 2014). This is further supported by guidance contained in JSP 536, Annex E, Table E-1. As such, this project constitutes Service Evaluation or for the purposes of the project, organisational evaluation. As part of agreeing the scope of this research, I had an agreement in principle from Director Personnel ("DPERS") (Army), Major General Nitsch CBE. Formal approval was obtained from REME Corps Colonel and REME HQ.

All participants were volunteers who provide their personal informed consent and will retain their right to withdraw from the research at any time. All data and information collected as part of the

[1] Joint Service Publication 536, Defence Research Involving Human Participants, Ministry of Defence – September 2016.
[2] JSP 536, Chapter 1, Paragraph 11, Sub-paragraph b.

research project will be held for the duration of the research and disposed on in accordance with Northumbria University's data protection regulations. Personal participant information will remain confidential. A coding system was used to ensure every effort is made to protect the identity of individual participants and all information gathered will be stored confidentially on password protected university systems. The publication of findings will only identify individuals where additional and specific consent is obtained.

Demands of service life place individuals in harm's way and expose individuals to risks, which may contribute or compound several health issues. Participants downgraded for medical reasons or those identifying as having health issues including PTSD will not be selected to form part of the research.

4.6 Reflections on Interviews

As an early career researcher in a doctoral programme, I acknowledge the challenge of completing a doctoral research programme. Personal challenges have included the need to develop my subject knowledge to support the literature review and my ability to develop a critical writing style suitable to doctoral level. In addition to this, the focus on theoretical concepts, epistemology and ontology are new to me. Whilst this provides a focus for criticality when reading and writing, I recognise the need to balance this with maintaining progress throughout the programme. Balancing doctoral research in parallel to a full-time career at Northumbria University presents challenges too, especially the need to prepare in advance to ensure research banding allowances are taken at times that minimise disruption to students and colleagues. As part of my postgraduate research development programme and early meetings with my supervisor, I identified the need to seek appropriate training in conducting interviews and focus groups prior to data collection. Additionally, I engaged in other developmental activities to focus on data analysis and interpretation skills and scholarly writing for journals.

4.6.1 Personal Orientation

Much of my personal identity is formed by my dual and parallel careers, as an academic, an accountant and Army Reservist. Parallel careers present significant personal challenges to balance time commitments between a full-time career, part-time career, and a personal life. Since the age of fourteen, the Army has been a constant part of my life. Initially joining as an Army Cadet, through to having served fifteen years in the Army Reserve, it is the most constant stream of my parallel career to date.

In my civilian career, I have transitioned from being a Chartered Management Accountant and Finance Manager into Operations Management and then lecturing in Accountancy and Taxation

prior to joining Northumbria University in 2016 as a Senior Lecturer in Leadership and Management. Such transitions are akin to a butterfly career (McCabe and Savery, 2007), a focus on utilising skills and competencies within different industries and sectors.

A military career, as part of the regular or reserve contingent follows a traditional approach that focuses reward on time served and a succession of related jobs that form a hierarchy typical of the typical public service career pathway (Wilensky, 1961).

In March 2017 I joined the Adjutant General's Corps (Educational and Training Services), the Army's educators responsible for the whole life development of soldiers and officers. This has provided a unique insight to how soldiers make sense of their careers, many adopt an unconscious emergent approach to managing their career (within the constraints of the Army Career Management systems) rather than a traditional or rational model (Thompson et al., 2017).

Anecdotally, those approaching key career milestones at 12- and 22-years' service often have spent so long in the Army that they prefer to stay. Those planning to stay can engage in a formal career review and career profiling to highlight their future career trajectory. Milestones also link to eligibility for a half and full pension respectively, however, financial aspects are only one factor of a complex decision-making process of whether to stay or leave.

Whilst developing the thesis, I have spent time exploring how individuals make sense of their careers and this has encouraged me to critically reflect and make sense of my career.

4.6.2 Reflexivity in Research

The chosen research methods incorporate semi-structured interview, which adopts a flexible approach to testing and adjusting the interviews and allowing the researcher to fine tune the interviews over time. Refinements to the approach included the sequencing of questions, to explore careers using the timeline prepared and chronologically discuss the participant's career. During interviews, participants remembered specific points they had missed from the timeline and added them to the timeline that was collected at the end of the interview as a research artefact. The addition of a final and open-ended question encouraged participants to add any other points they consider relevant to their career.

4.6.3 Language in Research

Military personnel use a widely understood series of slang terms and abbreviations in conversation with each other. During the conduct of the interviews, it was necessary to clarify the meaning of certain slang terms and abbreviations used to ensure the researcher fully understood the terminology. Examples include "lance-jack" as a slang term widely used to refer to a Lance Corporal,

a “full-screw” to refer to a Corporal and a “tiffy” to refer to the Artificer. The thesis includes a glossary of slang and abbreviations to clarify the meaning of terms used in interviews and quotations used to exemplify points. The creation of a glossary helped the researcher to learn the terms, helping to build rapport during interviews with future participants and provided an opportunity to assess whether the terms are used across the Army.

4.6.4 Dress and Appearance

Dress and appearance are an important part of Army life, soldiers are astute and will make assumptions based on someone’s dress as to position in the organizational hierarchy. The concept of power dressing is prevalent during recruitment and selection, for the research it remained important to dress as a “university lecturer” during the conduct of interviews rather than being viewed as an Army Officer – to ensure responses are authentic and participants do not conform to demand characteristics. Wearing “jacket and tie” is a clear sign that someone is an Army Officer or wearing a polo belt and “planters” may also be a visual clue. To avoid any confusion, the researcher wore jeans and a polo shirt to conduct the interviews, an informal style of dress not typically worn by Army Officers.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter focuses on outlining the methodology used to support the exploration of careers in the British Army and answer the research questions. The focus for research emerged from my academic interests in the concepts and constructs of careers, with the ability to explore careers in the context of the Army to support research into organisational questions providing impact. Selecting such an approach aligns with the constructivist paradigm (Remenyi, Williams, Money, and Swartz, 1998). The literature review identifies relevant academic theory on careers, which underpins the research objectives and support the exploration of careers in context. KCM as the selected framework provides the opportunity to test the validity of the framework in the British Army, emphasising the importance of context, and the discussion now moves to the findings.

5. Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Overview

Interviews were transcribed and analysed to help answer the research questions: How do soldiers make sense of their careers? What career needs do soldiers have? How relevant is KCM to military careers?

Conducting 27 in-depth interviews provided the opportunity to explore how soldiers make sense of careers as both a generic concept and with reference to their own career. KCM was chosen as the appropriate theoretical framework and this research project aimed explore the relevance of KCM within the context of Army careers. Transcribed interviews were analysed through thematic analysis that allowed the researcher to analyse and organise responses to answer the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The experiences of soldiers from across the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) were captured, from as far north as Leuchars, Scotland and far south as Tidworth, Wiltshire and east as Wattisham, Norfolk to select a cross-sectional sample of participants from different REME units and trades. The research participants formed part of a homogenous sample, all white male – based on the availability of personnel on site when conducting interviews. The all-male sample aged 24-30, all in the 6–8-year point of their careers. A total of 27 soldiers were interviewed, with interviews lasting between 48-minutes to 2-hours and 12 minutes – a total of 37.5 hours of interviews and some 311,481 words. Themes emerging from the analysis include career management; linear career; opportunity; authenticity; balance and challenge.

An overview of the **priori** and *psteriori* themes emerging from the literature:

- **Career**
    - **Managed organizational career**
        - **Role of the Individual**
        - *Meeting the Needs of the Army*
    - **Linear Career**
    - *Opportunity*
        - *Travel*
        - *Job Enrichment*
- **Authenticity**
    - *Service*
    - *Rank*
    - *Medals*
    - *Arduous Courses*

- **Balance**
    - *Variety of Units*
    - *Tempo of Activity*
    - *Work-life Balance*
    - *Work vs Adventurous Training and Sport*
- **Challenge**
    - *Operations*
    - *Arduous Courses*
    - *Adventurous Training*
- *The Need for Variety*
- *Recognition of Skills*
    - *Aviation Licenses*

Despite the changes in Army structure and recent rounds of redundancies, and opportunities for early release as part of the Army 2020 plan and financial constraints – themes of austerity, or career uncertainty did not emerge during the interviews.

5.2 Research Objective 1: To understand how REME Class One Technicians make sense of their careers.

Soldiers interviewed identified their careers as careers, the hierarchical and linear model of progression within the organisation and recognised that careers are bounded to the organisation – with very limited opportunity to transfer. Participants recognised the bureaucracy of career management, an imperfect system that is recognised as fair and widely understood. Participants explained that in the Army context, careers are made up of a sequence of connected jobs – each part of developing a portfolio of experience at each level that helps to provide opportunities to demonstrate potential for the next rank and support recommendations for promotion. It was widely understood that each job is a necessary step in the bureaucratic system of career management to gain experience and that some roles are more highly regarded than others. The array of career opportunities was widely understood, with opportunities for deployments overseas on operations and exercises, the ability to work in the joint environment with colleagues from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force or on loan service with an allied nation providing a diversity of opportunity. The notion of “daily bread” was recognised in that careers provide salaries that help provide for basic needs, it was the array of opportunities that fuel motivation to work hard and progress.

Extracts of how soldiers define careers:

"To have a career, you have to put effort into it. If you have a job without a career, you don't need to put effort in as there isn't scope for progression".

"A long-term goal and working to achieve it" with "clear progression through ranks".

Joining the Army was a conscious decision to pursue a different career path, the avoidance of a traditional career (or less exciting career) and acknowledged the need to understand the Army career model to succeed. Participants also highlighted the variety prevented boredom, content plateaus and provided opportunities to develop different skills across different units in different parts of the country. Many recognised the challenge of such a different career and how this might not be compatible with that of their partners, the compromise with safe and secure employment; with job related accommodation available helped to ease the burden of relocation and acceptance of uncertainty (Hofstede, 1980). An Army career provides the security of financial reward and accommodation, which is exciting and varied to fulfil dreams as the calling many look for and aligns with classical career theory Wrzesniewski et al. (1997); Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton (1997); and Bellah (2007). Academics have many definitions of employment, work, jobs and careers – the necessary aspect of earning a living, making money to fulfil other personal and professional interests that is often defined and measured by salaries and tenure of appointments (Terkel, 1972).

"Army careers are always changing, never the same and you never really know what you are going to do or where you might go in the world... single, with no kids, it is exciting and there are lots of opportunities available."

Careers are considered a series of sequential steps to progress through the rank structure, though the roles and opportunities are varied and diverse – attractive and provide advancement, achievement and recognition that everyone wears with pride, as rank or trade badges and medals to provide extrinsic recognition that everyone can aspire to achieve. The recognition that badges earned from arduous courses or technical trade courses or working in "where talent endures" roles are considered as recognition of the status associated with success.

"Army careers are diverse, you don't always know what you're doing from one week to the next, and opportunities include AT (adventurous training) like snowboarding, motor cross, enduro and karting".

"The career ladder and progression – you could do one thing your whole life and progress, or not if you don't want to".

Participants highlighted the diversity of opportunity and the ability to serve for a 22-year career, with options to extend to 24-years or longer on different Terms and Conditions of Service. The

explanations of life-long journeys and the career ladder recognise the need to follow the organisational career path and that linear progression was the only route to climb the ladder, through a series of assignments or "jobs" to develop a broad portfolio of experience (akin to the portfolio career (Fenwick, 2006; Hopson and Ledger, 2009; Noon and Heery, 2017; Fahami, 2018; Newbegin and Shrewsbury, 2018; Jennings, 2020) and the protean career (Hall, 1996; Baruch and Vardi, 2016)) and recognise the need to become the new role before then progressing (Blenkinsopp and Stalker, 2004).

The Army career management system is a form of organisational career, whereby promotion and progression are managed by the organisation – individuals have a role in managing this, and careerists are required to submit preferences based on their own personalised career path that aligns with the spirit of the boundaryless career within the boundary of the organisation (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). This aligns with the principle that careers exist in context and that as socially constructed concepts, meaning is created between individuals and that there is no single form of career (Baruch and Vardi, 2016; Mouratidou, 2016). Themes from the research highlight the nuanced combination of factors that constitute Army careers, which do not align purely to traditional career models and that careers within a matrix organisation incorporate nuances of contemporary and traditional career models to create a unique Army career model (Baruch and Vardi, 2016; Mouratidou, 2016).

All participants recognised the important role of learning and development that supports career progression, following a clear and documented system to meet eligibility requirements for progression to the next level. The model starts with Basic Training, where soldiers complete their core military training before progressing to Initial Trade Training to learn their trade and then onto their initial regiment or battalion. Courses vary in length; Initial Trade Training (Class 3) for between 16 and 35 weeks, which incorporates the knowledge, skills and attributes required of REME personnel in barracks and on exercises to simulate operations. Soldiers must gain competencies in their unit under the supervision of a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (SCNO) to then quality for Class 2 status – some time ago, the incremental pay rise for Class 2 status was removed, and now there is no financial incentive, participants noted this though, it did not have a detrimental effect and suggests soldiers are indifferent to the former nominal pay rise that is not considered a hygiene or motivational factor. Soldiers recognised the importance of continuing to learn and develop, which helps to accelerate career progression if selected for the Artificer Course and the accelerated promotion that follows successful completion of the course (Wrzesniewski et al., Bellah et al., 2007).

Soldiers highlight the importance of being professionally competent at their trade and in their rank, though, the need to incorporate secondary duties that help to differentiate themselves from their peers at promotion and selection boards, increasing their perceived competitiveness.

> *"Need to keep a balance, to do enough trade work, complete Class 3 to 2 and then get into sport. The need to maintain boxing skills to then compete, travelling to matches for 5-weeks or so each year."*
>
> *"It's important to be seen in different contexts, lots of sport including football, cricket, basketball and boxing, to keep fit and get yourself known".*
>
> *"Never been skiing before, then 5 months in, I'm off skiing with the Army and at the REME Champs [REME ski championships])"*

Soldiers recognise the importance of sport and adventurous training, the need to demonstrate physical and mental resilience in a competitive environment are well known. Others demonstrated this by completing arduous courses, wearing their Army Commando badges (Figure 10 and Figure 11) or Parachute Wings (Figure 8) as recognisable symbols of accomplishment.

Throughout the interviews, participants reinforced the significance of selecting a career that is different to others – the *"mundane things like litter picking or lay on the ground at 0300 freezing for a section attack"* or *"menial tasks... printing and updating noticeboards... anything to keep busy"* or *"on hold for 18-months playing X-Box and being on guard"* represent the demotivating aspects of Army life that soldiers accept in return for the excitement of overseas travel on exercises and operations. Soldiers recognised the limited negative experiences, and that life is generally very good. *"From being on guard in the UK, and then anti-poaching in Africa, it's like a safari"* or *"a weeklong drive out to Norway on exercise, a road trip through Europe, to set up camp in Norway to support the Royal Irish"* or *"deployed in Cyprus and the chance to explore the island in my free time"* that highlight the positive aspects of Army careers. Participants reinforced the need to take the rough with the smooth, a form of balance that develops career resilience (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007; Baruch et al., 2015).

Figure 2: Analysis of the words use to describe Army careers

Soldiers were asked to provide three words to describe their Army career to date, with responses shown in the word cloud above. Soldiers recognise the challenging and enjoyable aspects of Army life, the need to endure hardships that help develop deeper friendships and the excitement and variety of travel opportunities available. Words such as *"painful"* or *"disappointment"* and *"frustrating"* were used to explain the less favourable aspects, of the arduous physical training such as *"in the Falklands, a 9-mile tab [march] with 20kgs and extreme terrain, this was not what I signed up for but never been as fit as that"* or *"preparing for a deployment and then someone else goes instead"*.

The career model is clear and widely understood, with soldiers able to download a career management guide or speak to their colleagues – people behave in line with expectations and follow the model to progress. Soldiers recognise the importance of 'playing the game' and conformance to the Army's expectations, which help to accelerate their own career progression. Careers in the Army are understood to be careers (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997, Bellah et al., 2007, Inkson et al., 2015).

5.2.1 Career Management

The concept of career management emerged, soldiers recognising that their career is managed by the organisation and opportunities for progression are based on the annual report and evaluation of performance and potential. Soldiers recognise the importance of a "good" report, and this requires knowing 'how' to get a good report and knowing 'when' to put the effort in to maximise chances of promotion.

"So, you have to kind of map it out yourself".

"You learn from others, they help you – people tell you what they did to get to their next rank, and it helps to figure out what I want to do"

"I've lost two years because of bad reports, I will mark time until I get two good reports from my next job".

Soldiers explained the process of trying to take ownership of your career, to try and discuss this with their reporting officers. The importance of mapping helps reporting officers provide advice on the next steps on the journey to achieve their goals. It was widely understood that Army careers offer different routes and paths for people to take, and that soldiers need to try and understand options to maximise their chances of success in the Army. The concept of good and bad reports emerged throughout the interviews, often described as the difference between perception and reality – with a widely held view that it is the report that matters to the career management process, someone's subjective review of your performance with little or no input from you.

"So, you have to look at the more transferrable elements".

"Essentially, if I get my class one, I can then get out – people (other organisations) want your experience".

"It's easy, I can stay for my 22 (22-year contract) or get out, there's loads of companies looking to employ squaddies (soldiers) and they'll even pay me more".

"If you want to be here, it's easy, everything is laid out for you, the rules you just have to follow them".

The concept of "getting out" is widely understood, soldiers explained their plans for when they decide to leave the Army. Soldiers might not recognise their actions as long-term career planning, though, they are aware of the opportunity for a future beyond the Army and the ability to have more control over their careers – within or beyond their trades. Soldiers spoke of the need to develop a portfolio of skills, through a sequence of career moves determined by the organisation to develop as broad portfolio of skills – operating in the firm base, deployed on exercises and hopefully, deploying on operations.

"Grading boards determine your report, the more senior you are in rank the better you will be graded. It's not just about being good" "… will get graded more highly as they transferred in and are good at other things like phys (physical fitness) and shooting even though they are rubbish at their actual job… they never get stuck in to fix things and avoid paperwork".

"If you're really fit and people see that, you'll get a good report even if you don't do well in your trade. If you're not fit, it won't matter how good you are at your job, you just won't get graded as well".

"The Army cares about sport, get into a sport you're good at and people notice you more, you'll get better reports because of it"

"..had me and a couple of others that he could delegate tasks to so it helps, helps our careers because it puts us in a new light within the hierarchy… which put us ahead of other people in our in our rank which was good."

"*I started with the artillery, I played for their basketball and football teams, then went to a LAD (light aid detachment, embedded support to maintain unit equipment) and went skiing, then I went to do my PTI course (physical training instructor), it all helps you to get recognised".*

Soldiers explained the challenge of trying to get a 'good report' that some reporting officers will focus on sport and other achievements, your performance in role is often taken for granted as soldiers are expected to perform well in their role – the additional duties or performance in sport help differentiate them from their peers. Soldiers highlighted a perceived lack of transparency in reporting and the longer-term career implications of a 'bad report'. The relationship with the reporting officer was perceived to be critical, to ensure they know you to then write a good report. Some soldiers highlighted that "the boss' ability to write a good report counts" recognising that it is not simply what is written, but how it is written that influences their chance of promotion. Units conduct grading boards, at sub-unit level, the Company Commander convenes the board to performance of each rank group – grading soldiers and ranking each in order of potential for further promotion. Soldiers viewed the importance of being seen by others, in different contexts helped to demonstrate their skills and by being seen to take on additional responsibility helps to test their readiness for progression.

5.2.2 Linear Career

Soldiers understood the linear career model, the visible rank badges worn on the front of uniforms signal your position in the hierarchical organisation to others. A sequence of moves within a two- or three-year posting cycle provides a variety of jobs to develop experience to prepare for future progression. All soldiers joining the Army follow a similar path, from completion of Basic Training (BT) (Phase One) at one of the Army Training Regiments, before progressing to Initial Trade Training (ITT) (Phase Two) at a specialist school. REME soldiers complete ITT at MOD Lyneham, home of the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers – the range of trades include metalsmiths, electronics technicians, aviation technicians and avionics engineers, recovery mechanics and vehicle mechanics.

> *"So, they got us to write down where we'd like to go, you can be posted anywhere. Put your wish list down with your reasoning and we'll do the rest."*
>
> *"I went to 6 Battalion REME first, then to 47 Regiment Royal Artillery, then to 27 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps, now I'm at 7 Battalion (REME) at Wattisham, I've been lucky to pick up (promote) each time."*
>
> *"From Pirbright to Lyneham, from Lyneham to Tidworth, then to Afghanistan and went to Africa when I came back, it is great, upgrade course and post to a new unit for new challenges".*
>
> *"I've been trying to get a lot of platforms under my belt to progress."*
>
> *"Moving is important, we need to move to adapt, you get more opportunities by moving rather than dead man's shoes."*

Regimental Career Management Officers liaise with the Chain of Command to help manage soldiers' careers, recognising the importance of different career moves to gain experience and demonstrate the widening of skills sets from working on wheeled vehicles, to tracked vehicles, from small radio equipment to integrated vehicle communication systems. Soldiers explained progression through a series of moves from Light Aid Detachments offering first line support (equipment operators provide their own support to complete basic tasks), then equipment moves through a REME Battalion providing second line support, and then the Original Equipment Manufacturer providing the third line of support. Moving between the different levels of support provides depth of knowledge and skills to progress – there was no emergent hierarchy of preference for moves between the different unit types, though, there was a strong and consistent view of the importance to gather experience and progress between different lines to avoid being stuck in one area that limits progression.

Soldiers explained the importance of completing their 'upgrade courses' or getting their 'tickets', the essential aspect of meeting the qualifying criteria for promotion, the pre-requisite training that provides the technical knowledge and authorisation to complete tasks, and potentially supervise others.

> *"I can't promote again for another two years; you have to do a minimum of two years'."*
>
> *"The Army unfortunately, is having a manning crisis where they need to prioritise where they're sending people, LADs first."*
>
> *"I want to try for the tiffy board (artificer selection board – an 18-month technical course, with accelerated promotion) next year."*

The career model and promotion timelines are understood, soldiers explained the corporate knowledge of timelines for promotion boundaries that allow them to progress within the hierarchical structure. Soldiers recognised the 'ladder' opportunities available to accelerate progression, the opportunity to compete to become an artificer and complete a Foundation Degree as part of accelerated career progression to Staff Sergeant and Warrant Officer Class Two. Soldiers recognise the benefits of being selected to become an artificer, which allows for progression into more technical roles within Defence and increases opportunities beyond the Army. The concept of a linear career, progressing through a sequence of organisational career moves aligns with the traditional notion of careers (Inkson et al, 2007).

Linearity is also explained by the need to complete a sequence of career courses that provide an increasing breadth and depth of knowledge, across different disciplines to prepare for future moves.

> *"I went to Bordon for my Class Three, that place is closed now. You learn the basics, it's like being back at school again but for grown-ups. The teachers get it, most are ex-Army and they help you. You learn the basics and it gets more and more complex as the weeks go on. They test you at the end with a big exercise, like real taskings to simulate ops. It was mint, to think of how much I had learnt. When I got to unit, I had my Class Two upgrade that took a year to get all of the ticks. Doing a checklist of different jobs to show I can work on my own, and the tiffy has to sign it off – it meant I could do more on my own and wasn't reliant on the Sergeant to supervise me."*
>
> *"Class Ones, they're the ones who can work on their own and supervise other people. You have to go through the Class Three, Class Two and then Class One. You've done all of the jobs, got the experience and then move up."*

"You need your trades to promote. It wouldn't work to be a Sergeant as a Class Three; you wouldn't get any respect if you cannot work on your own and as a Sergeant you need to supervise and mentor the full-screws (Corporals) and lance-jacks (Lance Corporals). It works because the lance-jacks mentor the crafties (Craftsmen) and the full-screws mentor the lance-jacks and everyone knows what's going on"

"There are some who transfer in, they come across from other cap badges and they struggle. They keep their rank, and it's hard as they've only done the courses. They don't know the job; they've learnt stuff from the course and still need to learn the job. Some of them are good, they get stuck in. Others hide in the paperwork and get other people to do stuff for them. One guy came across from XXX and he is fit and a good shot, so people like him. He's rubbish on the tools and hides it well; he gets others to do it (practical work) all for him".

"The ASM is the top dog in the REME, he's been all the way through from craftie to tiffy and ASM. He's probably done all of the crap jobs in between and get is. Everyone respects him. People to go him and the AQ as they've seen it, done it and got a few t-shirts."

Trade progression is linked to the sequence of qualifying courses, which focus on the technical knowledge and development of skills in a simulated environment. The completion of a course provides authorisation to perform specific tasks and work within boundaries, soldiers cannot progress to the next stage of training without completing the workplace training element. Simulation provides the educational certification, though, this must be tested in the workplace and under supervision by someone authorised to supervise, to gain competence. Soldiers highlighted the role of mentoring each other, the importance of working as a team to help their subordinates learn and develop.

"As a craftie, you have to do a PNCO Cadre to promote. It teaches you to be a lance-jack and a 2iC. You learn orders and stuff, to lead a section. You always learn one up. A bit like in basic training, you learn a bit about being a 2iC. The lance-jacks learn to be full-screws, and so on."

Participants explained the importance of Command, Leadership and Management training. The exercise of command, leadership and management at levels appropriate to their ranks, learning the job of the next rank up to demonstrate potential and reach. Examples included the focus for high performers on courses to be given the additional responsibility. The linear model focuses on clear progression, the requirement to master the current role and responsibility to then progress, as a technician and as a solider. Linearity provides a clear and logical sequence of steps, which are widely understood, to enable soldiers to look ahead and plan their job moves as part of longer-term career

management. Each person benefits from someone more senior to them, and each person has a responsibility to mentor their subordinates. Soldiers recognised the importance of formal and informal education, the need to complete their formal education through courses at different career stages that unlock the next step and the critical application of their knowledge outside of the classroom as part of the informal learning to develop their understanding in different scenarios and situations. Soldiers also demonstrated the "knowing why" of learning the job of the one-up, the need for people to be prepared to step up.

5.2.3 Opportunity

Soldiers spoke of the opportunities available in the Army, the opportunity for travel, to compete in sport and to deploy on exercises and operations. Opportunity fuels the excitement of Army careers, prevents monotony and allows people to volunteer for the things they want to do.

5.2.3.1 Travel

> *"Well, I first joined the FUSILIERS and within six weeks we were off to Canada… then Iraq… Afghan… I was then sent to Kenya… and recently I've been back to Canada for winter repair, I love it there".*
>
> *"I've been lucky, BATUS is amazing. Rocking around the prairie doing your proper job. You get left alone; people trust you. It's mint, you get to work with all sorts of units, and they get to see what we do".*
>
> *"Everyone's grateful on ops. You go somewhere and they really need you. The banter stops because they know we can make their lives more comfortable. In Iraq we helped with wiring the air conditioning for people, it was great. They loved us, made us feel part of the unit."*
>
> *"It's been amazing, it's what I love about the Army. I've been most places, Northern Ireland, Iraq, Canada, Afghanistan and even to Spain and Australia. The last two might not count, that was for football. I mean, it's another thing about the Army, sport is part of the job to be fit and be a team player."*

Travel provides opportunities to for personnel to "see the world" the extrinsic validation that comes with recognition of service overseas, the medal earning activities that provide a visible and recognisable emblem of service. Travel is something that is recognised as a benefit of service, for many, it provides the opportunity to travel far beyond their reach to remote places and live in austere environments.

"I used to like it (travel), now I'm married, and I've got two kids, it's time away from them and the Mrs isn't a fan. She has to look after them on her own, it's hard for her and I miss the kids".

"I know some blokes who have known for months that they're going away, and then leave it to the last minute to tell their wives. They'll say they've just found out, spineless really, though they know their Mrs will hate them being away".

"The funniest, one bloke telling his wife he got told he's deploying at short notice. He went skiing, he didn't tell her that bit and well, let's just say she wasn't waiting for him when he got back".

"Travel and all that, it's a single man's game. Now that I've got a family, I let the young blokes go – it's their turn. I've had mine."

Soldiers spoke of the excitement of travel, though, the dichotomy of settling down and starting a family; and the excitement provided a challenge for some. Soldiers recognised the importance of travel, to gain experience in different environments and the complexities of maintaining equipment in different climatic conditions, they also recognised the challenges this places on family life. Many participants shared stories of others who had lied to their loved ones, to say they had been told of a deployment at short notice to avoid upsetting their partners. Others spoke of the equilibrium, the need for people to deploy and the desire of those who are young and single that seek the opportunities. Themes of linearity merge, the sense of taking turns or sense of accomplishment, and allowing others to gain the experience. It was widely understood that travel is an essential part of Army life, from living and working in austere environments to competing in sport to undertaking adventurous training in holiday destinations.

5.2.3.2 Job Enrichment

"REME can go anywhere in the Army, everyone has kit and equipment to maintain".

"As a lance-jack promoting to full-screw, you can do anywhere. You can go be an instructor in Pirbright or Harrogate, or Lyneham if trade is your thing. You can stay in trade. You get so many more opportunities to go beyond REME stuff".

"I've served with the RIFLES, RDG and Gunners – all armoured, all different kit though. Some have been between LADs and Battalions, me, I prefer LAD life. It's better as you see the benefit of your work – to get kit out of the door."

"I went back to Pirbright as an instructor, I loved it. I always wanted to go back; my Corporal was mega. He wasn't like the others; he took time to help people. He really made a difference, all I wanted to do was go and do that."

"I did my PTI course, I get to do trade stuff, but I love it in the gym. Next year, I'm going to try for PT Corps selection and go that route."

Soldiers highlighted the range of opportunities that add variety to the linear career model, a squiggly career, progression through the hierarchical structure for soldiers to Warrant Officer Class One – via a sequence of personalised steps and sequenced career moves, to develop a portfolio career. The portfolio of different skills, from trade specific qualifications and military qualifications for promotion, to instructor qualifications that are not mandatory, though, they enrich a career, to the sporting and adventurous training qualifications that provide variety of opportunity. Soldiers spoke of the need to demonstrate potential in different domains, the "need to be seen in different domains" that help enhance perceptions of performance and potential. Many highlighted the need to perform in PT, the importance of physical fitness to demonstrate physical and moral courage, to compete in different sports to show willingness and the desire to push forward – physical fitness being considered important for success on promotion courses and Command, Leadership and Management courses, for a demanding field exercise and section/platoon attacks. The diversity of opportunity allows soldiers to personalise their own career journey within the framework of options available.

"Battalion life is ok, it's way better to be in a LAD. Battalions get the longer and more complex jobs, you just get jobs in and out, you don't see the benefit other than one more thing out of the workshop. LADs, you see the unit deploy, you go with them, you know it works and they value it".

"LADs, you're part of the unit and get to do stuff with them like PT. They make you feel part of the unit. Don't get me wrong, some people hate it, especially if you got something like the paras and doing their PT is hell."

"Some don't like battalion life, it's very samey… similar jobs on repeat, the stuff that LADs can't do, it comes to us. It's easy though, you learn the more time-consuming jobs and it helps to spend time doing the more detailed jobs."

Soldiers emphasised the enrichment of their skills at different levels of support, First Line support focuses on the maintenance and repair of jobs to keep a unit going – the triage of equipment failures, ensuring that mandatory safety checks are completed, and equipment is held at the correct

readiness. More complex jobs are sent to the Second Line, pools of specialists with additional equipment, in a firm base to then send components back to the LADs. Career moves between LADs and Battalions provide opportunity for job enrichment through the scales of complexity of work undertaken and the tempo of activity, to either offer integral support to another unit or be part of a REME specialist battalion.

5.3 Research Objective 2: To understand the relevance or applicability of the Kaleidoscope Career Model to the careers of REME Class One Technicians.

The discussion moves to explore the relevance of KCM to REME Class One Technicians, the evaluation of KCM required the use of specific questions relating to authenticity, balance and challenge during interviews to identify soldiers' perceptions of their career needs.

5.3.1 Authenticity

5.3.1.1 Service

A recurring theme throughout the interviews included the focus on service, service to the Army and service to the Nation or to the Crown. The concept of service underpins a sense of authenticity and higher purpose, doing something for the 'greater good', the wearing of a uniform to represent the nation.

> *"I joined to serve, the sense of doing something more, you know. An office job, or something, is not the same as serving your country".*
>
> *"My dad is in the Army, my granddad was in the Army, and my great-great granddad too. My brother plans to join, he's only 13. Service has been part of growing up. I don't think they expected me to join, I could have done something else, though, I want to be part of serving my country and not just have a job."*
>
> *"Before the Army, I used to work in McDonalds. I hated it, I hated every bit of it, the uniform, the people I worked with. I applied to join the Army to do something more with my life, they said there was a wait and that they'd call when I could start training. The recruiter rang and said a place is available for a recovery mechanic, you can start in two weeks… I said yes… I never looked back…"*
>
> *"Kenya, it's like being on set in the Lion King. Civvies pay thousands for a safari, I got to see that and more for free as part of my job. We were helping to train people to fight poachers, it was amazing, it felt like really making a difference…"*

Participants emphasised the sense of authenticity of service, the importance of being part of something that is bigger than themselves. A sense of personal sacrifice linked to overseas travel, to

sacrifice freedoms others in society enjoy serving and to meet the needs of the service. It is important to recognise the desire and motivation often emerges as part of a family history of service, to continue the tradition – though, this was not considered essential or a present in most personnel interviewed. Participants spoke of the need to support the Army, the willingness to deploy to austere environments that are physically and mentally challenging environments. Separation from family and friends was commonly cited as a difficult aspect of service, though, they also recognised the considerable effort from the Army to provide WiFi and telephone access to allow people to stay in touch with their families and friends too.

5.3.1.2 Rank

As a uniformed organisation, soldiers wear visible badges of rank as part of recognising each other's position in the hierarchy. Personnel also wear other badges that signify their status within the organisation, the rank structure is widely recognised as providing an externally validated symbol of service – though, many highlighted the importance of 'being' the rank, rather than simply wearing the rank – a sense of performing the requisite role. The ability to perform the role required, allows people to serve authentically and underpins their own sense of authenticity, to be credible in rank – and the importance of adjustment to the new rank on promotion. As part of the formal hierarchy, represented in the badges people wear, there are other recognised informal hierarchies that differentiate people of the same rank and highlight the importance of rank and appointment. Examples include the differentiation of the Artificer Sergeant Major (ASM), a technical appointment for an Artificer, the senior trade specialist within a REME unit who is of equal rank to the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) and with different responsibilities, each with a different portfolio and range of skills required.

Figure 4: WO1 Artificer Sergeant Major Rank Slide

5.3.1.3 Medals

Metallic recognition for service is considered important, the mixture of State Honours and Awards to recognise exceptional or loyal service, differentiated from those for operational service. Medals provide external recognition of service, visible demonstration of service in different theatres of operations and is akin to wearing a CV demonstrating experience. A series of campaign medals, differentiated by different ribbons and each with similar criteria for length of service in an operational theatre, supplemented by the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal recognising sustained deployments overseas provide symbol to others of service – envied by many.

Figure 3: WO1 Regimental Sergeant Major Rank Slide

> *"When I joined, it was great – I went straight to Afghan(istan), the back end of it anyway, I was really lucky, then to Cyprus and within 18-months I had two medals. It's not the same for people joining, there's not really any medals available now."*
>
> *"Seniors, they've got loads of medals. It depends on when you join, they've been to Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghan, Cyprus and some have 8 or more medals. I've got one, for Cyprus... it's not the same as an Iraq or Afghan, they'd finished just before I finished training... it's weird, training for war and there isn't one to fight."*
>
> *"Medals, when it comes to Remembrance (Sunday) everyone shows off their medals, it shows that they've done. I don't have any yet and might get a Cyprus if I'm lucky.... there are no medals going now."*

"Medals are important, probably cost the Army nothing to make but are worth so much to people. Everyone wants the chance to get a medal or two, everyone loves a bit of bling."

Opportunities to deploy are linked to a sense of authentic service in the Army, the sense of service to the nation to protect British interests overseas and promoting a secure and prosperous United Kingdom. Participants recognised the diminishing opportunity for deployments that followed the withdrawal from conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the switch from sustained campaigns overseas had led some to question the purpose of the Army and their reasons for staying. Training courses and exercises focus on preparing soldiers for operations, the need to survive and fight in different climatic conditions and for REME, the need to maintain equipment to keep the punch in the Army's fist. An Army with a focus on sustaining campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan provided a continued purpose and context for training, a Army switching to contingency operations must be prepared for multiple operations – the dilution of focus provides conflicting priorities and increases demands for the cognitive agility of soldiers to adapt.

5.3.1.4 Arduous Courses

Personnel who have completed various arduous courses are often awarded visible symbols to demonstrate the completion of the course. Belts, badges, berets or vests are worn with pride by those eligible and coveted by others. REME Class One Technicians wear a badge that symbolises their status, crossed hammer and tongs – a miniature version is worn on the rank slide on the chest of combat uniform and on the upper right arm of other forms of dress.

Figure 5: REME Class One Trade Badge

Figure 6: REME Avionics Engineer Badge

Figure 7: REME Avionics Technicians Badge

Figure 8: Parachute Wings

Figure 9: Special Forces, High Altitude Low Opening Wings

Figure 10: Army Commando Badge

Figure 11: Army Commando Dagger Badge

Figure 12: Army Physical Training Instructor (source the Telegraph, 2023)

Examples of arduous courses, which are symbolised through different accoutrements include those who serve authentically as parachute trained personnel who support the airborne forces – wearing a maroon beret and parachute wings (Figure 8), those who are commando trained in support of littoral operations – wearing commando green beret and a commando dagger (Figure 10 and Figure 11), and physical training instructors wearing a badge of crossed swords, a white vest and blue jacket (Figure 12). Courses provide personnel with opportunities to serve in demanding roles that enable the Army to fight, additional examples include the REME Avionics Engineer wings (Figure 6) and REME Aviation Technician wings (Figure 7). The physical accoutrements cost the Army very little, at an individual level, though the completion of courses and recognition of the badges people wear underpin their own sense of authenticity and influence their identity. This thesis acknowledges the importance of identity, though, it does not explore the significance beyond the acknowledgement that personnel derive their sense of authenticity through the sense of achievement and associated uniform accoutrements.

5.3.2 Balance

5.3.2.1 Variety of units

The Army's linear career model requires soldiers to move through a series of managed career stages, the 2-3 year cycle of moving to different units to develop a portfolio of skills (akin to developing a portfolio career, as a trade specialist, as an instructor, as leader). Soldiers complete a Posting Preference Proforma (PPP) to record their preferences of jobs and locations, they are preferences

that individuals rank based on their own criteria and personnel have the opportunity to justify their choices to support the boarding process. Regimental Career Management Officers (RCMOs) as the lead for career management, support the chain of command to manage soldiers' careers. RCMOs form an essential link between the Army Personnel Centre (APC) and units, to communicate opportunities and priorities for job fills to meet the Army's needs.

> *"I went to 7 Reg(iment RLC) after Bordon, mainly trucks and landrovers, lots of the stuff to get them out of the door on exercises and stuff... we never get to rest, fixing vehicles to deploy... fixing them when they're deployed, when people breakdown we come and sort it... no rest when we get back, loads of work to do afterwards... it was good, the LAD was great."*
>
> *"Different units can be good, if you get on with them. The Guards were great, got us involved and the OC (LAD) got us involved in Guards life. It was busy, the blokes appreciated it, there was no us and them, everyone getting stuff done... The Paras, if you hadn't passed P Coy (parachute selection), you're not one of them... most of the time I was in the armoury or on the ranges, it was busy just not as fun. I was glad to leave, people weren't as friendly as the guards."*
>
> *"In the aviation world, there's only a few places you can go. Wattisham isn't great, I mean you've seen the place, in the middle of nowhere. It's better than moving from one end of the country to another, I mean, I've moved from 3 Reg(iment) to 4 Reg(iment) and then back to 3 Reg(iment). Not even joking, I had to move rooms each time... we get put in blocks per regiment, you couldn't make it up. The whole place is ok though, people look out for one another, I mean Tesco is like 40-mins away, you'd at least check if someone else was going or wanted anything before going."*
>
> *"Fusiliers, they were mint. Crazy, BATUS with a great bunch of blokes – Medicine Hat, that place... well... fixing warrior (armoured fighting vehicles) is hard work, parts are massive, like MASSIVE... keeping them going is hard, knackered part off and new part on, off they go and we try to fix the thing, they keep going, that's the game. From that to wheeled stuff, boring... it's not the same, there's no excitement with it – a truck breaks down and you can drag it (tow) with a straight bar, get me back to armour."*
>
> *"LAD life is better... in battalion, you get messed around. It's funny, people say it's great in the LADs there's only a few REEMs who work well, to many of them in a battalion and then the bullshit comes in... It's ok for some, if you don't want to be a block-jock, you'd go to a battalion to get closer to home, you wouldn't go for any other reason. LADs have the proper*

work to do, like a proper job... I mean, it's probably ok if you want an easy life, to hide at a battalion, just not for me."

Soldiers recognised the importance of opportunity, the sequence of moves between LADs and battalions that provide opportunities for trade specialisation and the move between different parts of the Army to gain experience of different equipment. Vehicles are grouped into A (armoured) and B (wheeled), with additional qualifying courses required to gain the knowledge and skills to maintain different vehicles – applicable to Vehicle Mechanics. Other trades do not require unit specific training, for example, a Technical Support Specialist's skills apply pan-Army to manage the pipeline of supplies to units and the Land Systems Specialist (formerly Technician (Electronics)) will maintain the same equipment for units regardless of the vehicles they are mounted in. Each unit provides opportunities for soldiers to develop their technical knowledge and skills, those specialising in A vehicles will work directly with combat arms ensuring tanks, armoured fighting vehicles and armoured support vehicles are ready to fight – with their high attrition rate and demand for spare parts, this is a high tempo role. Wheeled vehicles are not as resource intensive, they have lower attrition rates for consumable parts and as a result the tempo of activities reduces.

Sequenced moves between battalion life and LADs provide variety of opportunity, they recognise the need to gain skills and experience; and also provide soldiers with the opportunity to strike a balance between the high demands of a LAD to maintain a unit's readiness to deploy, to sustain their vehicles during deployments and then repairs on return from the deployment – many citing the limited opportunity for rest, in contrast to the remainder of unit they support. Battalion life offers a lower tempo of activity, allowing soldiers the opportunity to maintain balance between work and life, the opportunity to complete career courses and regain from the demands of other roles as the work pattern is planned and consistent. The dilemma of service in LADs versus battalion life is also explored as part of authenticity, the recognition of demanding roles in LADs that allow people to serve authentically and be embedded within a unit that often has high expectations of them in contrast to battalion life that is more predictable.

5.3.2.2 Tempo of activity

Many spoke of the need for personnel to deploy on short-notice activities, the need to work to meet the changing needs of the Army and the need for balance. Soldiers recognise the needs of the Army must come first, the value of selfless commitment an essential component of military service and in return the military covenant that recognises their sacrifice for the nation and in return ensures people are not disadvantaged by their service.

"There's always trawls. Need one bloke for a day, or something. A day on the ranges, it's not as if there's ever much to do anyway – there just in case, you know... the proper stuff, that can be good... well, you know, you get to go somewhere and do a proper job... like when I got trawled for Kenya, I mean the most hard thing was fixing quad-bikes, it was mint, 8-weeks and back... the ally jobs come in now and again."

"Nights out of bed, if you're fit... you're the one going... well, I mean there's a few who cannot deploy because of med(ical) or welfare stuff... I get it, short-notice is short for us, you know... someone needs to go... don't get me wrong, they do track it so it's not always the same person, it feels like it sometimes though, some people get thrashed."

"LADs go out with the unit, it's good you're always busy and doing stuff. Battalion life is steady, too steady at times and there's not much to do – you know, you need to look busy or you'd be sweeping the hangar or some other crap job."

"LADs always have stuff to do, there's always something to fix... my three-to-two was easy, I mean there was everything... some lads have to go to other units to do jobs just to get stuff signed off... battalion stuff is slow, you do the big jobs... like the deep servicing and stuff, like more difficult jobs that you just don't have time to do in a LAD. LAD life is good, busy and stuff... I was bored at battalion..."

"Watchkeeper (unmanned aerial vehicle) is kind a like a plane, without a pilot, well there is a pilot flying it like a PlayStation from somewhere. Its still aviation, like a mini-Apache but I mean smaller... they're new and its hard, new TTPs testing it out and stuff... people think its easy... get me back to Apache... I know, it might be the future... it probably is... just different."

A sequence of moves recognises the changing tempo, allowing people to balance the demands of the Army with their own willingness to deploy. There is an ongoing need for people, who could be trawled from across the Army to meet short-term needs, for tasks lasting days, weeks or months – with recognition that additional allowances offer financial compensation to offset the disruption. Financial recompense was stated as an incentive for some to opt to volunteer for the short-notice tasking, to balance their working relationships and volunteer to avoid their friends or colleagues being sent in their stead and the need to be seen to do their bit.

"You gotta do your bit, you know. You need to do some crappy things, everyone does. I don't mind a bit of it, I mean you don't want to look jack (lazy or selfish)."

"As a young-un, I loved trawls, I was dead keen... I did everything I could. I did my turn, everyone did... you just... you've done it... the young-uns, it's their turn now."

"I mean, if there's a medal going, I'm going... the Mrs won't be happy, she can spend the money... it's fair, she gets the money, she'd be home with the bairns if I'm away. It's hard doing short-notice stuff with young kids though, I need to be home these days."

Soldiers' remuneration is based on rank and trade, accruing annual increments recognising their increasing seniority within the rank range. Additional allowances including Long Separation Allowance offers a daily rate of compensation for those temporarily assigned from their unit to a different location, rates increase based on the number of accrued nights and ranges from £7.89 per day to £36.05 per day. Balancing priorities include the compromise of additional time away from home and families, in return for the additional financial return with some demanding roles attracting additional financial bonuses and Living Overseas Allowance.

5.3.2.3 Work-life balance

Participants recognised the demands of service life, acknowledging this as an attractive factor of service and a reason they joined the service for the excitement of overseas travel and opportunity to deploy. The opportunities are linked to a sense of authenticity, though, participants recognised that deployments are attractive during early careers when soldiers typically have few other commitments and can make decisions in isolation. Soldiers in relationships, married or with children have more complex factors to consider and may struggle to balance the needs of the Army with the needs of their families. It is widely understood that Army life is difficult to balance and requires soldiers to make conscious decisions of the importance of their job preferences when submitting a PPP. Some may opt for a battalion role, one that offers stability and is more of a 9-5 role that provides limited opportunity to deploy and time to invest in family life. A sequence of rotation also provides balance, to engage in the excitement of a busy unit for a defined time period and then return to a lower tempo unit to maintain balance over their career.

Participants recognised the importance of balance, if they have just promoted and a willingness to challenge themselves if they are approaching a promotion window. Soldiers recognise the need to balance their effort over their career, to avoid 'peaking too early' and investing effort at the right time to maximise recognition for their efforts that may be at the expense of family time. Striking a balance between investing effort at the optimum time, to increase their likelihood of promotion linked to the widely understood career model. The need to balance effort demonstrates a conscious effort to hold back, to avoid wasting energy and having to 'thrash themselves' for a sustained period.

"They (the chain of command) don't expect much of you when you first arrive, so there's no point in working too hard, it's pointless. You need to know when to work hard, you know, to get recognised. If you're new and you're pushing too hard, it's like wasted energy – you won't get recognised for it. People who've been there longer will be graded higher than you and that's just the way it is… they (the chain of command) know them, they get more opportunities because they're known… you know, you have to sort of wait your turn to get the opportunities."

"You need to know when to shine and when to push. It's a game, knowing when you're in with a chance and then push otherwise you're just wasting effort that you'll need to put in more of later".

"My sergeant is great; he tells you how it is. He helps people to know when they need to start pushing, to get themselves out there, to get recognised to get recommended (for promotion). He's been there, done it."

The Army career model is understood by soldiers, based on informal communication and networks of colleagues who have served in the Army to experience the career management model first hand. Soldiers are perceived to perform well, if they promote every three years – the common view of a high achiever, who promotes at the first opportunity when eligible for promotion. A three-year window aligns with the 2-3 year job rotation cycle, allowing soldiers who arrive in a new unit time to settle in, progress to master their role and perform well to then be eligible for promotion.

Programme CASTLE aims to transform career management for soldiers, recognising talent early and allowing those graded as EXCEPTIONAL to run to a promotion board rather than requiring the usual three years of seniority to filter to a promotion board. A new initiative, which is one that soldiers acknowledged the current cadre of SNCOs and WOs progressed through the 3-year cycle, many are sceptical of the model and continue to behave in the 3-year cycle. Hardy (2002) defines the hysteresis of habitus as the phenomena when the field (or rules of the game) change and there is a time delay between the change and individuals or groups responding to the change. The Army's career model has changed, allowing for accelerated promotion for those graded as exceptional and a yet the habits (or behaviours) of personnel have not changed in response to the opportunities available. A contextual factor to consider, as Army career models change and the need to develop communication strategies to promote opportunities to personnel. The absence of role models who have benefitted from the new system limits the diffusion of the policy change and it is widely understood that only one person at each rank can earn an EXCEPTIONAL grade within the unit. Some personnel consider this beyond their reach and as a result, are not willing to try to be exceptional.

5.3.2.4 Work vs AT and Sport

Soldiers explained the 'Arte et Marte' motto of the REME, 'by skill and by fighting' as the need to perform well in their trade and as a soldier, the need to balance two competing skill sets – to be an Army Mechanic, or an Army Armourer, or an Army… Each soldier must be proficient in military skills and trade skills, the need to balance their commitment to a chosen trade or profession of arms, and electrical or mechanical engineering.

> *"You can be good in the field, and good on the tools – if you're good on the tools and rubbish on phys, you're just rubbish. People who are unfit get a reputation for being rubbish, even when they're good on the tools. To be good at both is hard. Others who are good in the field or good at phys are often just seen as being good all-rounders, just because they're fit and that's all people see".*

The dichotomy of excelling at soldiering and a profession requires a division of effort, it is easier to excel in one than it is to excel in both. Soldiers recognised the need to maintain their physical fitness and to develop their technical knowledge – balance between the two is difficult to maintain, when the emphasis is often placed on physical fitness rather than their chosen profession. Balancing priorities requires compromise, the need to recognise the competing objectives and the need to make decisions to be perceived as competent.

> *"There are some people who are rubbish at their actual job, so they just get fit. You can be super fit, and people see that as a good thing, even if you're useless in the workshop. Being useless at your actual job isn't as bad as being unfit – you kind of…, you know…, have to be good at both to be classed as good"*

Balance is struck between competing priorities, which may vary depending on the perceptions of reporting officers, though, each must continue to strike their own personal balance and determine their willingness to excel in either or both aspects of the role to compete for promotion and progression. It was widely understood that physical fitness is a critical part of being in the Army, to show moral courage to continue despite being exhausted. Soldiers also recognised that being fit is not enough, you still need to be considered competent and perform the technical aspects of their roles – a balance that is for individuals to strike based on their own subjective interpretation of the environment they work within.

5.3.3 Challenge

The demands of service life include the requirement to deploy and fight to defend British Interests, the need to deliver precise and lethal violence to defeat the enemy. REME personnel explained their role is to enable the Army to operate, the need to maintain their equipment and fight as required.

Soldiers explained the importance of challenge, the desire to challenge themselves and join to serve authentically in the REME. Each has their own reason for joining, though the demands of service life are unique and provides and interesting and varied career.

Participants also accepted the challenge of Army life, the need to challenge themselves, at the right time to be demonstrate their potential for promotion. Conscious decisions to move into demanding roles, to push themselves into more prominent positions to fit with their perceived potential for recognition and increase their chances of promotion at the relevant promotion boards. A conscious decision to make sacrifices when appropriate, and also a willingness to hold back and conserve effort for when the appropriate time comes to maximise the potential reward.

5.3.3.1 Operations

Soldiers emphasised the importance of deployments, the desire to deploy doing their job in different environments, linked to authenticity above. Operations test the resolve of personnel to perform in high-tempo environments and respond to threats – a personal and professional challenge.

> *"I was lucky, I went to Afghan(istan) with Apache (attack helicopters) and it was crazy. My job was to make sure the helicopter could take off… the start-up routine, when the radio goes… I do the pre-flight checks and clear any error messages… one of the best things I've ever done… I could hear the radio, an infantry unit being ambushed, their panic… calling in fire support… the pilots ran over, I did my bit and I could hear the guys on the ground, they were getting desperate… I could hear the pilots getting close… it was like magic, the taliban knew when they could hear apache approaching, they'd had it… the sight or sound of helicopters sent them into hiding… the infantry guys came to thank us a few days later, that never happens… people usually just expect it (REME support)."*

Soldiers recognise the importance of their roles to deliver effect, the force multiplying effect of enabling the Army to utilise different equipment platforms that allow the Army to move, to fight and to win. The challenge of completing the various engineering checks to certify the readiness of equipment for use, with a specific emphasis on the challenges of the climatic conditions that limit the serviceability of equipment.

> *"In Aghan(istan) there was always something going wrong, the helicopters fly at high altitude in the mountains, they needed specific checks on the rotor blades… the microscopic checks for the integrity of the rotor blades only became an issue after an American crash… the mix of sand in the air during take-off and landing meant the engines needed intensive maintenance, the rotor blades… everything just takes more maintenance…"*

"Everyone found that vehicle engines were breaking, everyone was confused… the air filters used to fill with sand and dust, every so often they (drivers) would stop and bang them to get the dust out… no one thought to stop the engine so most of it (the dust) ended up in the engine… madness really, instead of fixing the problem, they made it ten times worse"

Participants highlighted the importance of understanding the tactics, techniques and procedures of units to provide effective equipment support – the need to work with units to provide additional support, more frequent maintenance and updating equipment maintenance schedules helped to increase the levels of preventative maintenance that in turn reduced the levels of reactive maintenance, helping to keep equipment serviceable and ready for use. Engineering challenges, in austere conditions that are physically demanding.

"BATUS was mint… out on the prairie, orders would come through on the radio to deploy and off we'd go… my job was to fix stuff for the RTR and keep them going. The ground was crazy, hills and valleys, the water and all. Winter was the worst, trying to fix stuff when most things are frozen, it was hell."

Varying climatic conditions present a challenge, to perform physically and technically, the need to balance the demands of each task to support equipment in extreme conditions. The challenge of maintaining personal kit and equipment, to navigate to personnel and respond to fix the equipment – a mixture of personal, logistical and engineering challenges.

"The last thing I heard was 'the next person to sink a vehicle is in front of the brigadier' and sploosh, I was stuck in a swamp. I had to swim out, everything was full of water… it was ok, REME stick together, the recy mech got us out with the CRARRV and everything was ok once things dried out – no one higher up had to know."

"The arctic was the worst for me, it sounds dumb to say it but everything froze, literally everything. Things would snap and break, diesel would freeze if people didn't use the additive, the wiper blades froze. There's a limit to what we can do when it's that cold. It's funny looking back, at the time I hated it."

Soldiers recognised the challenges of demanding tasks to support equipment around the world, the career challenge of providing engineering support and maintaining equipment despite that is considered a routine tasking. The sequence of routine moves allows people to opt for service with demanding units, the option to join units that are at high readiness recognises the willingness to challenge oneself for a pre-determined period, based on the understanding of the units role within the readiness cycle.

5.3.3.2 Arduous courses

The visible emblems awarded on completion of arduous courses are explored in the authenticity section, this instead explores the challenge dimension. Some challenge themselves, opting for demanding roles and others are challenged by the Army who assign them to demanding roles and reduce the agency or willingness to be challenged.

> *"I went to the paras because they're always going places, they go first. There isn't much to maintain other than their weapons. I had to do p company, to be credible in the unit and you know, to get respect from people, they treat you differently once you've passed and the sense of achievement to get my maroon beret and para smock."*

Soldiers recognised the demands of service life, the sense of achievement from completing arduous courses and the support available for those willing to challenge themselves – the support by allowing time to complete pre-course training, the time to invest in themselves, the support available from others who have been through the process and encourage others. It is important also to recognise that demanding roles must be filled, in priority units that require critical support – some may be assigned to roles they did not include as part of their preferences as a last resort to meet the needs of the Army.

> *"Wings, everyone recognises them, the sign of being airborne… it's terrifying, when you go milling, you all line up in height and weight order, and then you're paired off… bare knuckle fighting with one another, there's blood, broken noses, black eyes and I'm not a fighter, I just had to do enough and fight for my life…"*

> *"Wet and dry drills almost broke me, you know… you're soaked, then get into your dry kit and get 10-minutes sleep, then they wake you up, get back into your wet kit that's freezing for some pointless exercise and then repeat… it pushes you, beyond what you thought your limit was. Once you get the green lid, people respect it – if you know, you know."*

Soldiers recognised the challenge of completing an arduous course, their willingness to be challenged and the expectation of completing the courses by joining an airborne or commando unit. The challenge is one that soldiers accepted, the willingness to prioritise the arduous course over other things, the need to push themselves physically and mentally, to be considered successful in their current role and the world-wide recognition that comes with the badges symbolising the completion of arduous courses.

5.3.3.4 Adventurous Training

The Army encourages soldiers to participate in adventurous training, the willingness take risks to develop physical and mental resilience – a widely recognised benefit of service, to participate in

activities that are often considered out of reach by many, subsidised by the Army to encourage participation and to develop people. Soldiers recognised that AT is an integral aspect of careers, the opportunities to participate in arduous activities and progress to gain qualifications to instruct the various disciplines.

> *"I'd never been sailing before, it was mint… waves crashing over the front of the boat, bouncing through the Solent, one bloke was so sick he had to get off on the Isle of Wight and get the ferry back the next day. It was proper AT."*

> *"Skiing, I'd only been in the unit for a month, and the Sergeant said who want's go to skiing, £100 for a fortnight, I'd never been before, and it was crazy. They lent me the kit, they taught me… it was surreal, they got us racing by the end of the first week… slalom, super g, you name it, totally out of my comfort zone from when I touched the snow until I got back… I got to go back for a few years on the bounce…"*

The importance of developing mental resilience emerged from AT, the need to engage in challenging activities and to be recognised as someone who is willing to challenge themselves. Calculated risk taking, the ability to learn new safety critical tasks and be disciplined to follow protocols help to foster trust in teams and contribute to the wider success of the Army.

5.4 Research Objective 3: To identify the career needs of REME Class One Technicians and to inform retention initiatives.

This section explores themes identified as career needs for REME soldiers, KCM highlighted the existence of authenticity, balance and challenge – additional themes emerged during interviews that highlight career needs.

5.4.1 The need for variety

Participants recognised the need for variety, an essential element of a fulfilling career in the Army and the thing that separates Army careers from others and provides a variety of opportunities to maintain their interest to continue serving. Participants recognised the challenges of moving, to a role, to a new unit, to a new location, and new equipment to maintain that can be challenging for them and their families. Personnel benefit from the safety of Defence policies that provide relocation leave, financial support for relocation costs and the Armed Forces Covenant helps to provide additional support to the spouse or children relocating – the range of support available within the unit and via the other support agencies, and being part of a community of people who move routinely help to create a safe environment that alleviates uncertainty.

"Nah, the HIVE are good, you know, they give you a list of schools and the like, it helps but it's all pretty good when you get somewhere you wanted to go. Life is easier then."

"Moves, I mean you get a week to relocate, I only had to move from Ripon to Catterick, it's like half an hour away, don't get me wrong, you have to move everything, box it all up and drive it over, but a week is nice so you don't have to do it all in a day or a weekend."

"It's easy, you put in where you want to go, and they do the rest... I've been lucky... I got my choices... so it's nice, one armoury to another, it's kinda the same stuff, just different places and it's all about the blokes you work with that make it".

"Doing the same job would drive me mad, my civvie mates do the same stuff every day, I mean, I know I have to move every few years, I get to see different places and do different stuff, it keeps me interested... you know, doing the same stuff every day in a factor is good for some people... the Army, nah, you sometimes don't know what you're doing from one day to the next."

Participants identified the importance of safety within the Defence environment, the importance of a shared community to support one another and help provide variety of opportunities that differentiate Army careers from civilian ones. A recurring theme with a fear of 'doing the same stuff' emerged during interviews, which recognises the importance of certainty of job security underpinned with uncertainty of location or roles for moves or deployments.

5.4.2 Recognition

The Army Accreditation Offer (formerly the Army Skills Offer) provides Army personnel with civilian accreditation for military courses, a pan-Army offer that is fully subsided. Accreditation is available via the Chartered Management Institute and the Institute of Leadership and Management for Command, Leadership and Management courses – rank dependent, with JNCOs receiving a Level 4 Certificate in Leadership and Management; SNCOs a Level 5 Leadership and Management; and WOs a Level 7 Award in Leadership and Management. Participants considered the qualifications as important to recognise their investment in learning and development, to maintain parity with civilian counterparts.

"You get the quals(ifications) for free, you don't have to do any extra work. I mean some people say they're worthless, they're free and help show I've actually done something in the Army. When you get to Warrant Officer you get degree level quals."

"I mean you get the qual(ification), they don't make you do any extra work which is nice, I mean, I don't know if anyone outside of the Army cares, I didn't get much from school, so these help. People outside the Army know what they mean.."

"mate, they literally give them away... yeah, someone in the Army pays for them somewhere, it shows we're not just doing Army stuff, they're civvie quals that companies would pay thousands for, don't get me wrong, we do have loads of courses to do, it helps."

"my civvie mates don't get anything like that from work, if they're lucky they get to do courses, that's it, the Army looks after us, they'll help if I ever want to leave."

Recognition of qualifications and experience via the Army Accreditation Offer provide consistency across the Army, recognising the knowledge and skills required of specific ranks with the hierarchy and having an organisational focus on command, leadership and management training to support the performance in rank. Army Career Management policy requires soldiers to complete Part One, the Military Training prior to being awarded substantive rank; Part Two, a Unit level induction; and Part Three, an educational course focusing on Defence Studies and International Affairs.

Qualifications are valued, and expected, as hygiene factors and align with the completion of the academic phase of career courses that support personnel progressing on to further and higher education. Costs of qualifications are paid for by the Army, which may undermine the value as personnel repeatedly see them as "free quals" and that they "have no extra work to do", rather than recognising the course design and assessment methods may have changed overtime to offer the accreditation.

5.4.3 Aviation Licences

The Military Aviation Authority (MAA) regulate and assure the Defence Air Operating and Technical Domains (MOD, 2023), supported by the Defence Safety Authority (DSA), licencing REME aircraft technicians and avionics engineers. Engineers follow comparable systems of work for safety critical activities and have broadly similar governance systems to certify the airworthiness of aircraft. REME personnel are licenced by the MAA and their civilian counterparts by the Civilian Aviation Authority (CAA) – due to the different licencing and regulatory bodies, personnel wishing to transition from military to civilian aircraft must re-certify with the CAA at their own expense.

"You used get a retention bonus, you know, if you stayed for 8 years and then agreed to 12, then you'd get £15,000. Now you only get £10,000 and then they tax it as well... Yeah, it would be better if the licences were CAA'd rather than getting the bonus, if I had to get the CAA tickets I'd need to spend more than £20,000 and some civvie companies pay."

"Licences, yeah, the MAA give us ours, we do literally the same stuff civvies do, then they say, oh wait, you're in the Army you need to do the courses again when you leave if you want to go into aviation."

"I'm pretty chilled, I mean I can work alongside civvies doing the same job, it's just mad that we don't get the same tickets as they do, I get it because if you did get them people could leave and go earn more with less hassle, but then you'd just do the same stuff everyday and be a civvie – I want to be in the Army so its not that important now, I know some lads who are getting out and doing other stuff... it costs too much to requalify and there's the bullshit of another course to do what you've done for years."

Soldiers recognised the tensions of being granted licences by the MAA, allowing them to maintain military aircraft and respecting the governance systems that ensure crews operate within a safe system of work that mandates specific work/rest patterns that enable personnel to complete safety critical tasks. Personnel value the Army Accreditation Offer that provides civilian qualifications, though, there is tension between the provision of civilian accreditation for military courses and yet a restriction to applying this for MAA vs CAA licencing. Aviation governance is far beyond the scope of this research, it remains important to recognise the inconsistency in recognition of qualifications and skills creates tension in so far as civilian accreditation is valued, a hygiene factor and expected – the lack of CAA licencing or a system to support the transferability of knowledge, skills and experience is a demotivating factor.

Authenticity emerged as a strong theme in the research, which consistently featured as sense of authenticity, as part of recognition rather than equity denied to participants. The exploration of authenticity relating to the specific recognition of skills and provision of licences is explored in relation to the intricacies of the Military Aviation Authority vs Civil Aviation Authority regulations and recognising the validity to a claim to be recognised and qualified with fairness as an underlying principle. Recognition of skills and experience helps to develop a sense of professional authenticity and validation awarded by the Military Aviation Authority. Organisational barriers create limitations for the transfer military skills to civilian careers and is more relevant to those transitioning to careers beyond the Army that is beyond the scope of this research.

5.5 Summary

Authenticity, balance and challenge of KCM are widely recognised in Army careers, the relative importance of each is linked to perceived promotion boundaries, whereby soldiers recognise the need to 'play the game', knowing-when to put effort in and knowing-how to be recognised by networking, to be seen and maximise their chances of success in progressing through the sequence

of moves within the Army's hierarchical career model. The thesis progresses to discuss the findings within the context of existing research and evaluate the relevance of KCM for Army careers, exploring themes that emerged from the interviews - the thesis now progresses to develop links between the themes and previous literature to develop a working model for Army Careers.

6. Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Overview

This research fulfils the objectives set in Chapter 1, exploring REME careers in context of the British Army. Linear, organisational careers sequenced require career actors to progress following the widely understood career model, noting the hysteresis of habitus that recognises that soldiers know the model has changed though they are sceptical of the implementation of policy and do not recognise that may directly benefit them. Careers are understood in a way that recognises the context and attractiveness of organisational careers, this chapter develops links between existing career theory and the findings of the research to develop a working model for Army Career theory to support a contribution to practice.

6.2 Research Objective 1: To understand how REME Class One Technicians make sense of their careers;

Participants recognised their careers as organisational, the progressive sequence of steps to navigate and completion of mandatory training unlocks the next career stage. Participants recognised the universal offer of a career, for those who choose to continue serving to their 22-year point and that their careers placed unique demands on them and families. To be successful in an Army career, participants recognised the importance of sequenced moves to develop a portfolio of knowledge and skills that increase their chances of further promotion and the critical nature of knowing 'when' to invest effort into their career, or to consciously hold back based on perceived benefits.

Themes identified the need for variety, the need for civilian qualifications, and recognition (licences for ATs and AEs specifically). Participants recognised the importance of progression, and the importance of extra curricula activities that help improve the perception of their performance, though, the optimisation of timing of effort helps to maximise potential returns for promotions etc. Each subjective experience shared similar themes, valuing the variety that differentiates an Army Career from a civilian one and that personnel who identify as having a career focus on self-fulfilment or pleasure rather than earning their daily bread that demonstrates the contextual differences from the classical theories of Wrzenieswski, et al. (1997) and that looking beyond financial rewards widens opportunity for a successful career, embodying the selfless commitment value and contradicts Bellah, et al. (2007).

Classical definitions of careers (Wilensky, 1961; Kanter, 1989) are still valid, careers sequenced through a series of "jobs" as part of the organisational model, focused on investing in people and their learning and development. Soldiers must continue to learn and develop, warfare is Darwinian and to win, people must learn and adapt – adaptability, responding to the environment is a widely recognised as important though the application of the principle to careers is not. Soldiers recognise

the steps that are required to moving up the ladder, progressing up the rank structure and provided nuanced examples of the differences between rank and appointment to fulfil their aspirations. Some determine success by rank, others by the appointment – preferring to be a trade specialist rather than a generalist.

Soldiers recognised the importance of completing a sequence of jobs, that avoid stagnation and boredom – providing a sense of excitement and variety to the work and developing their knowledge and skills of maintaining Army equipment. Soldiers did not see their work as daily bread or necessity, that is opposed to Terkel's (1972) research for the American Great Depression – instead, they recognised the need for variety, the excitement and the need for challenge. Participants highlighted the Army's retention issues, the personnel outflow exceeding inflow and creating gaps at critical points for those with qualifications and certifications as Class One technicians (those authorised to supervise others).

Findings recognise the contextual differences between careers in the Army compared to other public sector workers. Despite operating in a period of austerity with successive defence reviews, the size and capability of the Army is reducing, concepts of austerity never emerged during the interviews. Mouratidou (2016) identified the prevalence of austerity and safety needs for workers in the Hellenic Public Sector, similar themes did not emerge during the interviews and participants did not perceive their careers as 'daily bread', nor focusing on payment – instead they do so for enjoyment and sense of service with purpose for the nation that aligns with Ruiz-Quintanilla and England (1996). Defence reform does reduce the size of the Army, though, the overarching structure does not change – soldiers continue to recognise the linearity of a career, the developmental opportunities available to support progression and the importance of their annual appraisals to report on performance and potential for promotion. Soldiers did not recognise themes of frozen careers or experiencing career plateaus – instead they recognised the importance of taking control of one's career in an intelligent way to plan their sequence of moves to 'play the game' and increase their chances of promotion and progression.

Concepts of career plateaus are relevant, noting the structural pyramid of Army careers, each REME Company can only have one ASM with a ratio of circa 100 other ranks to 1 ASM – participants recognise the opportunities to reach Warrant rank if they stay demonstrating their understanding of an organisational career. Bardwick (1986) suggests everyone reaches a structural plateau in their career, personnel recognised that if the current trend of outflow exceeding inflow, that opportunities will exist for accelerated promotion for the 'high-flyers'. Policy changes for accelerated promotion are a new phenomenon and as such, participants were sceptical of the opportunities as

there are very few people who have benefited from the very recent changes. Participants acknowledged the policy change, though, continued to reference careers as experienced by their peers and superiors who had not benefited from the accelerated opportunities.

Bureaucracy is prevalent in Army careers, the need to meet mandatory training requirements to then become eligible for promotion – the requirement to complete Functional Skills at Level 1 in Maths and English for promotion to Corporal, and Level 2 for Sergeant and above is referred to as a challenge for some cap badges in the Army. REME personnel do not face similar challenges as they have higher entrance requirements to join the technical branches, and all REME soldiers will complete a Level 3 apprenticeship during their Initial Trade Training that incorporates functional skills for those who have not yet completed their qualifications before entering training.

Soldiers recognised the importance of progression, the need to 'be seen' to push themselves at the appropriate times, to avoid being 'passed over' for promotion or 'thrashing' themselves by 'thrusting' or failing to sustain the effort required to persistently perform to high standards. The annual appraisal system and three-year optimum window for promotion aligned with the frequency of job rotations – personnel explained the importance of not pushing themselves when new in rank, as they have a lot to learn and adjust to their new responsibilities, coupled with the limited expectations of them in their new rank. They highlighted the increasing temp to push as they approached the second and third years in rank, considered habitual and important to develop a profile and that having served in the unit they should then be recognised for their effort over and above the newer people to the unit. Soldiers highlighted a mistrust of the appraisal system, that those with accumulated seniority in a unit would by default be graded at higher levels than others limited their willingness to exert effort in their early years in unit as it would not impact on their relatively lower gradings compared to their peers with additional seniority. Grading boards, the process to determine gradings used in appraisals demonstrate the importance of 'knowing whom' competency and the importance of being seen by the appropriate superiors to increase the likelihood of a strong performance appraisal to increase their chances of promotion.

Participants recognised the importance of visible symbols of seniority (rank), experience (medals) and qualifications (trade and related badges) to underpin their sense of authenticity. Rank badges worn on the chest of working dress, ivory embroidery on olive green material provide a highly visible symbol of rank to others and help to communicate the relative seniority to others. Rank was considered the most important, as it determines pay and other associated benefits from enhanced living accommodation to forms of address and entitlements to the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess. Medals formed an essential aspect of authenticity, a visible symbol of service worn on formal

occasions and in a specified order of wear to demonstrate experience gained on operations – time spent in training is considered necessary, including exercises that all prepare soldiers for operations. A limited opportunity to deploy on medal-earning tours featured as a recurring theme, participants recognising the varied experience of their superiors who may have accumulated several operational deployments with eight or ten campaign medals – looking at this with admiration of the possibility to continue earning medals, noting their time will come.

6.3 Research Objective 2: To identify the career needs of REME Class One Technicians and to inform retention initiatives;

Soldiers recognised the importance of Authenticity, Balance and Challenge within their careers and aligning with KCM, the research identified additional career needs for variety, qualifications and licences. The additional career needs are contextually different and this, this thesis does not suggest the redevelopment of KCM, rather it suggests the development of a working model of Army careers as part of an agenda for further research.

The Army's career model is widely understood and throughout the research, participants were encouraged to reflect on their career, the choices they have made and to consider their options for future progression. Through encouraged and facilitated reflection, participants sought information to identify pathways and opportunities to enrich their careers and this could help influence individual choices to stay in the Army, accepting the authenticity, balance and challenge themes of KCM. It is important to note that such critical reflection and analysis may also result in participants considering their options to leave the Army and pursue a second career.

Variety, a sub-theme of challenge is recognised as a separate theme that is considered fundamental for a fulfilling Army career and the requirement to enable personnel to serve authentically. Personnel recognise the need to move, to continue to learn and develop; and to progress through the acquisition of new skills in different units - the need to develop First Line support skills within a LAD and the detailed technical knowledge required to succeed in Second Line at REME Battalions or to support contractors and OEMs delivering Third Line support. Variety ensures personnel are consistently challenged and avoids stagnation, the continued drive to achieve allows personnel to thrive in different environments. Soldiers recognised the implications that moves have on their friends and families, the disruption it causes and the need to try and maintain balance between promotion boundaries as a form of compromise.

Personnel value the Army Accreditation Offer, the award of civilian qualifications to certify the learning undertaken as part of Command, Leadership and Management training completed as JNCOs, SNCOs and WOs. The qualifications provide a comparable award to civilian counterparts,

providing formal recognition of knowledge, skills and experience as commanders, leaders and managers that allow for advanced entry to academic programmes and providing confirmation of the investment in self-development. Qualifications provided to personnel without additional costs or without additional work helped to streamline efforts required to gain the recognition, maximising the number of personnel receiving the award. The Army Accreditation Offer is one form of support to provide certification of learning, other routes are still available and did not feature in the interviews. Standard Learning Credits SLCs provide personnel with £175 per year, to fund courses that provide benefit to the service person and to the service – a requirement to develop new knowledge and skills, that could include coaching or mentoring others in sport (rather than simply participating in sport). SLCs represent additional investment in self-development, providing personnel with the opportunity to undertake self-directed study. Enhanced Learning Credits linked to the length of service, for personnel with 6 or more years, they are entitled to 3 x £1,000 claims or a single £3,000 claim; and those who have served for more than 8 years are entitled to 3 x £2,000 claims. Funding must be used for new learning and be of at least Level 3, vocational or academic programmes. SLCs and ELCs did not emerge during the interviews, which presents an opportunity for the REME to promote schemes to reinforce the success of the AAO.

Licences proved to be contentious for REME personnel in aviation, the lack of civilian recognition for their skills and experience is considered a demotivating factor; and the financial and emotional costs of converting MAA licences to CAA licences form a barrier for military personnel transitioning to civilian roles. Personnel identified the lack of parity in recognition, where they praise the Army for the recognition of military courses to civilian qualifications the inability to transfer MAA licences was suggested as an area for further work. Soldiers linked the pre-tax cost of retention bonuses as equivalent to the CAA licence costs and shared their willingness to compromise, to receive civilian licences in lieu of the cash bonus. Given the relatively small sample size of participants included within the scope of this research, the researcher highlights the need for further exploration to confirm the validity of the recommendation.

6.4 Research Objective 3: To contribute to an enhanced understanding of how military personnel make sense of their careers, to inform HR policy and practice within the British Army;

Exploration of military careers in context required the application of a theoretical framework and KCM was selected as an appropriate model, the researcher used questions tailored to KCM to explore how REME personnel make sense of their careers to inform HR policy and practice within the British Army.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the existing research for careers, with an overview of different frameworks that support the justification of KCM as the appropriate model for this research. REME soldiers recognised the importance of careers in context, the linear and progressive career available to them within the organisational boundary. Army careers provide soldiers with variety, the expectation of frequent moves between units, to avoid the fears of a monotonous civilian career. The sequence of moves allows soldiers to make informed decisions, to develop their portfolio of knowledge, skills and experience in preparation for a chosen career stream – as a technician, an instructor or a generalist. REME soldiers have the opportunity for accelerated promotion, the fast-tracked promotion available via the Artificer Course trumps the accelerated promotion available pan-Army and benefits from being an established career model. Each REME company has an Artificer, an Artificer Quartermaster Sergeant, and an Artificer Sergeant Major – they represent the success of the system and contribute to the shared understanding of the routes available to "tiffy". Programme CASTLE transforms promotion timelines, allowing those graded as exceptional to run to the next promotion board regardless of seniority in their current rank, though, as a new system there is limited examples of success that delay the diffusion of belief in the new policy. Soldiers are aware of the changes, though, sceptical of the potential and thus demonstrating the hysteresis of habitus. Personnel explained they intentionally hold back effort, based on perceptions of the limited value to effort ratio of peaking too early, and the need to 'know when' to invest their effort for it to have any potential career benefits. Programme CASTLE is in the early stages of implementation and with a cohort of successful candidates, the diffusion of policy and visibility of the rewards should soon filter down to unit levels and could influence the willingness of soldiers to demonstrate their true potential, rather than hold back.

6.5 Research Objective 4: To explore Army careers, with a particular focus on the Kaleidoscope Career Model.

Soldiers recognised the critical aspects of KCM within their explanation of careers, the importance of authenticity of service and associated emblems of success, the need for balance and to consciously strike a balance between promotion boundaries, followed by the need for challenge and accepting the challenge of service. The posting cycle allows soldiers to submit preferences and progress through a sequence of roles that enable their careers to take different shapes akin to the Protean Career principles to follow a technical (or traditional career for REME personnel), as an Artificer, a generalist route as a Company Sergeant Major, Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant or the Regimental Sergeant Major (a traditional route for soldiers); or to progress as instructors in military or trade training, or venture into capability and acquisition. Soldiers have the ability to select from a matrix of opportunities, and as military career models emerge they will increasingly have

opportunities to move beyond the traditional boundaries of Army careers into tri-service roles or wider governmental roles through a series of lateral moves taking the form of a boundaryless career (noting the limitation of boundaries within governmental organisations, that allows freedom to progress beyond the Army's traditional organisational boundary).

A working model for Army careers recognises the development of KCM, to include aspects of other career models to develop a conceptual contribution to knowledge and practice that forms the basis for further research. The hysteresis of habitus, a lack of trust or belief in the benefits of changes in career management policy constrain progression opportunities as personnel are sceptical of the implementation of the policy changes. A lack of role models who have benefited from accelerated promotion limits the willingness to behave in a way that suggests the policy could benefit them, after all, the linear career model will plateau at Warrant Officer Class One if not before.

KCMs focus on authenticity aligns with the greater purpose of serving in the Army, the desire to do more and serve the country, and aligning their personal values with those of the Army. Courage, Discipline, Respect for Others, Integrity, Loyalty and Selfless Commitment are values that personnel can demonstrate in and beyond the Army. Balance, the equilibrium of balancing work and other commitments, to engage in sport and AT as well as developing technical expertise in trade and making time for friends and family helps to provide variety. Challenge, a motivator to challenge oneself physically and mentally, to develop personal and resilience to meet the demands of service life and progress.

KCM recognises the longitudinal changes of relative priorities over a career, with a focus on challenges in the early career, followed by balance in the mid-career and authenticity in the late career; the contextual application of KCM is somewhat different with a cyclical approach to ABC within perceived promotion timelines. Authenticity, the permanency of Army careers and the focus on service align with the desire for personnel to continue serving the organisation and progressing within the organisational career model. Balance, personnel recognised the dilemma of service life that often includes disequilibria of competing pressures – the need to complete mandatory training, the need to deploy on exercises and operations; and the need to support family and friends. Participants recognised the importance of trying to strike balance between promotion boundaries as a compromise, focusing effort and making sacrifices at critical times to maximise their chances of promotion. Challenge, the willingness to push and progress, to find work stimulating and exciting. Personnel recognised the importance of challenge and variety to have a fulfilling Army career, the need for change to avoid the perceived monotony of civilian careers, and the opportunity to progress rather than plateau.

6.6 Summary

The researcher recognises the importance of developing a working model for Army careers rather than redeveloping KCM with a focus on military careers. A Doctor of Business Administration focuses on a contribution to practice (in contrast to a Doctor of Philosophy focusing on a contribution to knowledge the working model incorporating the kaleidoscope career model, with the protean career model demonstrates the contribution to practice and achieving the research aims of this thesis. The thesis progresses to the contributions, conclusions and implications of the research.

7. Chapter 7: Contribution

7.1 Overview

This chapter reflects on the chosen methodological approaches utilised, the discussion and findings to frame the contributions to professional practice and knowledge. Additionally, this section critically reflects on the relative strengths and limitations of the research to demonstrate the achievement of the research objectives to answer the research questions.

Review of the existing literature (Research Objective 1) to explore career theory identified The Kaleidoscope Careel Model (KCM) (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007), providing a theoretical framework to structure the research and complete the research aims:

a. To understand how REME Class One Technicians make sense of their careers;
b. To identify the career needs of REME Class One Technicians and to inform retention initiatives;
c. To contribute to an enhanced understanding of how military personnel make sense of their careers, to inform HR policy and practice within the British Army;
d. To explore Army careers, with a particular focus on the Kaleidoscope Career Model.

Philosophical presuppositions identified the social construction of careers and the co-creation of meaning amongst individuals and justified the chosen methodology of qualitative research and semi-structured interviews (Research Objective 2).

Interviews were transcribed for analysis as part of the discussion and findings that identified the contribution to professional practice and knowledge, using thematic analysis (Research Objective 3) to achieve Research Objective 4. The research focuses on the use of evaluative criteria to gather data to inform theory to apply without being spurious in other contexts.

7.2 Contribution to Knowledge

The Kaleidoscope Career Model (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007) identifies the combination of challenge, balance and authenticity at different times in their careers – hierarchical progression within an organisational career or to move to other organisations. The theory suggests the dominance of challenge in early careers, balance becoming a priority in mid-careers, and authenticity in late careers or retirement (Fig 1). Army Careers are typically within the challenge phase of individuals' overall career and the Army's fixed 22-year career model for soldiers results in most retiring from the Army in their early 40s.

Super (1990) suggested timing of career stage transitions were driven by individual choices, as a function of their personality and life circumstances rather than age and the career arc, in contrast to

traditional linear career models. The career arc recognises the significance of changing priorities throughout individuals' overall career and this thesis proposes the creation of a conceptually merged theoretical framework to include both the stages of KCM with a cyclical pattern based on individual choices because of the soldiers' own understanding of the Army's organisational career model with reference to promotion boundaries.

Soldiers move in and out of the challenge phase, depending on their perceived proximity to promotion boundaries and the sequence of job rotation moves provide meaningful work coupled with deployments and opportunities to earn medals as symbols of service. The centrality of work to life, with soldiers living and work provides a focus for future research into meaningful work.

To date, no published studies have explored KCM within the context of military careers, providing a contextual contribution to knowledge and providing an additional understanding of the concepts of a career in the British Army in ways that were not previously available. Data gathering focused on soldiers within the REME; their Terms and Conditions of Service provide for a 22-year career predominantly within the challenge phase. Soldiers nearing the end of their service are approaching the balance stage as they transition to second careers beyond the Army.

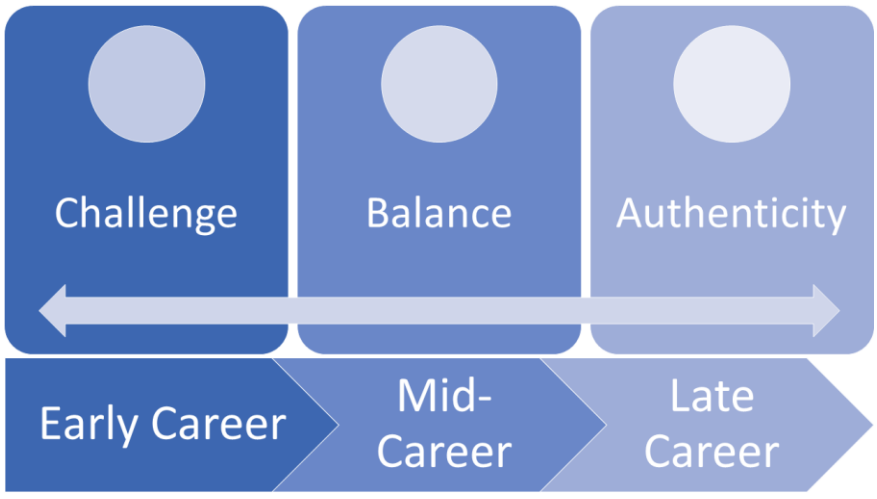

Figure 13: Kaleidoscope Career Model

This research identifies the significance of Army careers as being one of the "last bastions" of organisational careers, with limited transferability between branches within the Army or across organisational boundaries from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines or Royal Air Force. Furthermore, the Army's organisational career model requiring people to move assignments on a 2–3-year rotation changes the timescales for KCM to much shorter timescales (Fig 2) and aligns with cyclical career patterns from traditional career theory Super, 1990; Smart and Peterson, 1997.

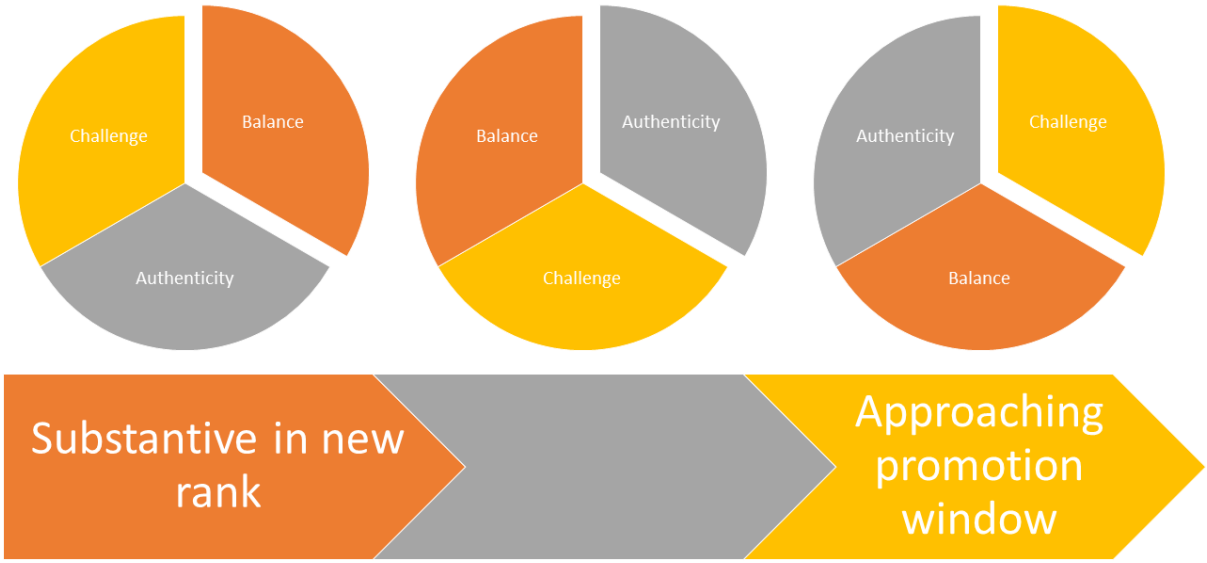

Figure 14: Adapted Kaleidoscope Career Model

This contextual contribution to knowledge extends the relevance of KCM to military careers, supporting the opportunities for further research outlined later in this chapter. This research also identifies that the Army career model is widely understood by Army personnel based on perceived wisdom shared through informal and formal internal communication channels. Soldiers behave in line with the widely understood model of challenging themselves when approaching a promotion window, with a balance period having just been promoted to the next rank. Soldiers' careers, a maximum of 22-years, forms the challenge phase of careers and KCM emerged as a series of cyclical moves based on perceived promotion boundaries that all occur within the challenge phase of their careers (Fig 13) – participants discussed the benefits of leaving the Army for true balance as they settle down in life.

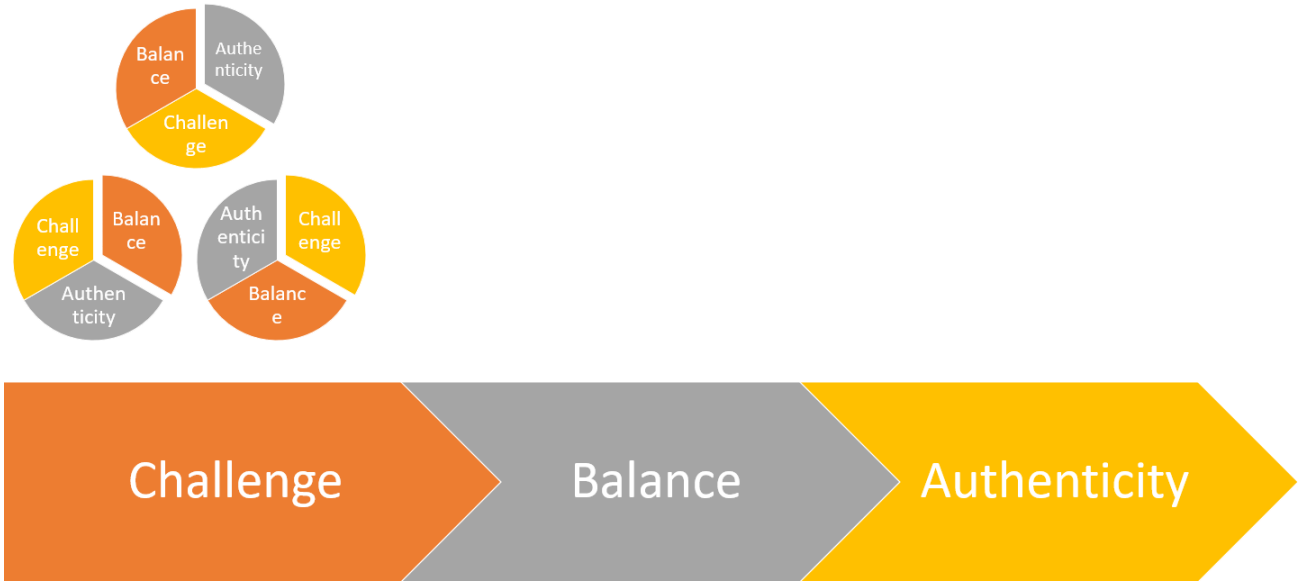

Figure 15: Contextual Application of KCM for military careers

Initiatives such as Programme CASTLE shorten promotion timelines for those graded as "exceptional" in their annual appraisals, becoming eligible for promotion to the next rank with one report (compared to the previous model of three reports). The "hysteresis of habitus" (Burke, Scurry and Blenkinsopp, 2020) recognises that the contemporary career context has changed, with new rules of the game and the impact of holding an outdated understanding of the career model shared by formal and informal networks – aligning contemporary theory of Reay, David and Ball, 2005; Burke, Scurry and Blenkinsopp, 2020 with the findings of this research.

In a similar way, Reay, David and Ball (2005) identified challenges of changing internal narratives of careers as the policy and practice of careers change. Conceptually, the organisational career model is documented and disseminated across various levels and should filter down to all personnel. The geographical dispersion of the Army, the size of the workforce and the 2-3-year rotational career model for Career Advisors result in the time lag between changes in the policy and those changes becoming widely understood by all, a factor identified from the graduate recruitment market (Burke, Scurry and Blenkinsopp, 2020) and equally applicable to Army personnel in this context.

The relative strength and subsequent duration of the hysteresis of habitus are determined by the social standing of career participants; those with connections and social capital through occupying higher-profile roles are better able to understand the shift and consequently "catch up", leaving others to lag behind.

Research aims included the focus on understanding careers in the context of Army careers for soldiers in the REME; this is the first study selecting a specific focus on KCM careers in the Armed Forces and helping to provide a contextual contribution to knowledge. Careers in context, or specifically the organisational career, is widely understood as a sequence of "jobs" and soldiers being able to submit preferences for posts advertised on the "jobs list" for their next assignment – aligning to previous calls for clarity on definitions of careers (Burr, 1995; Young and Collin, 2004; Thomas and Inkson, 2007). Publication of a jobs list available to all on similar career timelines provides openness and transparency of opportunity to all, providing personal career agency in determining the next appointment based on a series of personal factors, including an aspiration to reach their perceived potential through linear progression via the vertical career stages, aligning with the traditional theory of career success and self-actualisation and recognising the change throughout both the stages of their overall career and sequence of appointments in contemporary career theory of KCM (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2007). The sequence of moves allow individuals to make choices that take their careers in different directions, from specialisation in their primary trade, progression into instructional roles for trade training or military training, or more technical roles in capability and acquisition – aligning with the principles of a protean career within the overall Army career model – thus creating a working model to recognise the combination of a contextual contribution for KCM and protean principles.

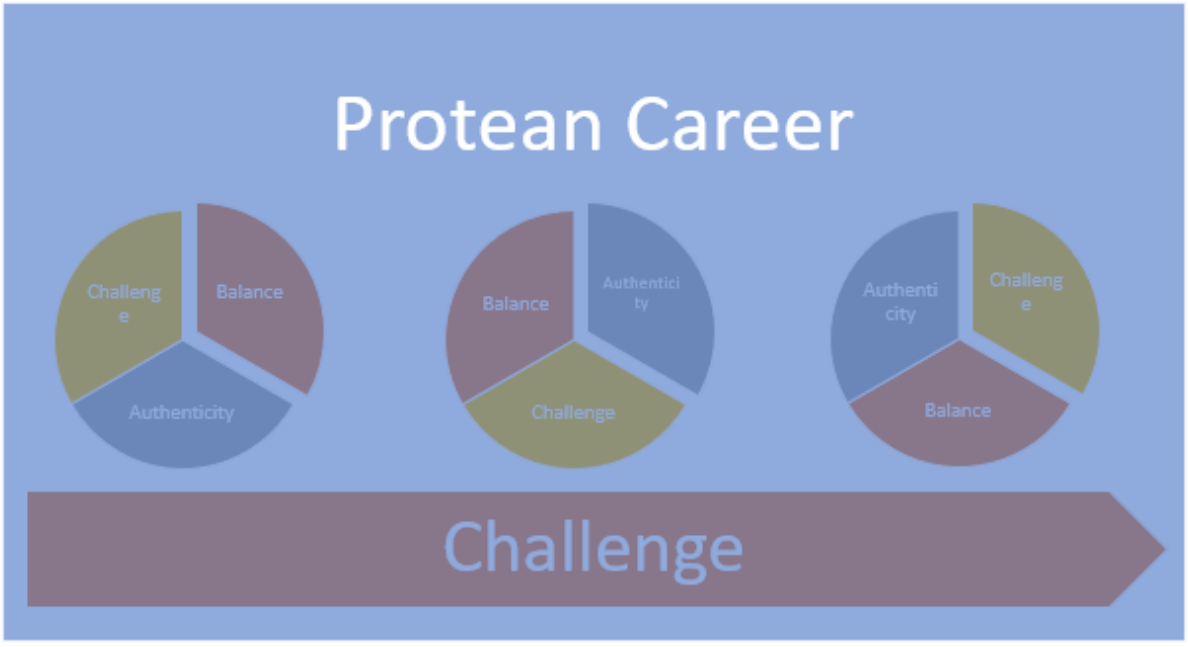

Figure 16: Army Careers: a working model

The second research aim explored the relevance or applicability of KCM in the context of military careers, and as the first study of this kind it provides a theoretical contribution to knowledge.

This study also aimed to identify the career needs of soldiers and to inform retention initiatives, the exploration and examination of careers within the context provides a contribution to military career literature, an under-developed area of research.

The fourth research aim provides a contribution to HR policy and practice developed later in this chapter. The contribution to practice includes the requirement to reduce the hysteresis of habitus and recalibrate the widely understood view of career theory that does not align with the contemporary career management practice.

Finally, the research aimed to explore KCMs relevance to military careers, findings from this research extend the applicability of KCM to include military careers, adding the unique perspective of military career contexts to the literature.

7.3 Contribution to Professional Practice

The study aimed to explore the concept of careers for REME soldiers within the context of the Army's organisational career model, understanding how soldiers make sense of their careers and evaluate the relevance of the Kaleidoscope Career Model for REME Class One Technicians to identify their career needs and retention initiatives. Contributions to professional practice are linked to the development of Army career thinking and implications for practice. Specific contributions to practice include:

Awareness. Regimental Career Management Officers (RCMOs) – a working model that incorporates KCM in the context and principles of a protean career, with a specific focus to enable RCMOs to have more informed discussions with personnel to focus on the career aspirations of individuals (Figure 16).

Development of a career development intervention tool as part of the appraisal system to support soldiers to think of their career aspirations when submitting appointment preferences by creating a career discussion guide using a visual timeline of the career journey to date and future aspirations.

Awareness of the hysteresis of habitus, informing the Army's Programme CASTLE team of the lag in understanding of the career model changes to transform the opportunities for high-performers within the Army. Addressing the lag between policy changes and the widely understood view will help improve understanding and has the potential to offer retention incentives to others – changing the "job orientation" of selecting preferences based on perceived promotion windows and recognising the opportunity for "exceptional" personnel to promote from a single report.

To understand the importance of KCMs authenticity, balance and challenge components in discussing military careers – the sense of purpose, belonging and self-actualisation as part of a

career orientation, rather seeing it as a means to an end. Soldiers recognised the value of civilian accreditation of their military qualifications and experience as hygiene factors.

The military specific application of KCM provides the opportunity for constructive alignment of soldiers' career needs and management/Reporting Officers' ability to manage soldiers in line with evolving career policy – improving retention of talent and maximising talent.

A widely understood career model of 2-3-year rotations with high performers promoting on a 3-year cycle demonstrates the perceived bureaucracy of career management, stifling aspiration and plateauing efforts until approaching a perceived promotion window. This opens opportunity up for all to demonstrate their potential for advancement, rather than holding back.

In summary, these contributions help to disseminate the knowledge of changing career structures and policy across the Army and allow for the convergence of career behaviour and contemporary career policy.

7.4 Implications for Policy

The contributions to knowledge and practice identified earlier in this chapter are inextricably linked and intertwined with the development of career management policy for the British Army. Research has confirmed the applicability of a nuanced KCM for military careers, which does not impact on specific TACOS or requires the development of additional policy – instead, outlining the requirement to develop the implementation of policy to encourage career actors (soldiers) and career managers to apply KCM in the context of aligning aspiration and opportunity for advancement in line with the accelerated promotion opportunities from Programme CASTLE.

7.5 Reflections on Methodological Approach

The chosen methodological approach of semi-structured interviews is well established, the introduction of a visual method for participants to prepare a career timeline ahead of the interview provides an opportunity to refine the methodology for KCM research. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) used to analyse findings, again is not new – the combination of using semi-structured interviews supported by the career timeline and thematic analysis provides a methodological contribution to with reference to the use of KCM in different contexts to further explore the theory.

Visual timelines allowed participants the opportunity to reflect on their careers and consider their future career aspirations ahead of the interviews, allowing for a more informed discussion. Participants used their timelines to support the conversation and helped to sequence their thoughts and make sense of their careers. In parallel, the researcher maintained a diary of notes to capture significant points during the interviews and to follow up with additional questions as a reflexive

practice that enhanced the researcher's preparedness for future interviews. Both the timelines and research diaries helped support the transcription of interviews from the voice recordings and supported the analysis by allowing the researcher to listen to the recording, review the diary notes and reflect on the timelines provided.

7.6 Limitations of the study

Research, by design and scope will inherently limit the study and must be acknowledged to support the overall validity of this research project. The Army is an organisation that employs in excess of 120,000 people including those serving in the Army, Army Reserve, Regular Army Reserve and the Army Reserve Reinforcement Group – all employed on various Terms and Conditions of Service (TACOS). The complications of various ranks, trades and TACOS provide a complex web of factors that are relevant for understanding the concepts of careers within the British Army context.

This research project included 27 semi-structured interviews with Class One Technicians spanning all trades within the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. The design focuses on a specific grouping of people at a specific career point and as such, generalisations may not be applicable to the rest of the Army – rank or trade groupings.

An intersectional study explored the concepts of careers at a specific point in time, for further understanding additional research to identify changes over-time, across rank ranges or other branches within the Army might provide different results based on differing personal and professional journeys and aspirations.

Data collection ceased at 27, which provided theoretical saturation for the purposes of this research project and itself is a limitation in the research design. The selection of other methods, such as quantitative methods for a REME wide census might provide additional data to support the triangulation of the data and validity of the research findings.

Methodological limitations consider the challenge of whether during interviews and data collection, participants share their assertions of career decisions or whether their assertions become conscious during the discussion and are only surfaced through the interviews.

Finally, the conceptual contributions identified in this case study-based research present the beginning of a research programme rather than ending a research programme. Careers are socially constructed and there is a perpetual requirement from scholars to continue research into the meaning of careers.

7.7 Challenges arising during the research

REME soldiers are geographically dispersed across the country, balancing the availability of willing participants and the logistical ability to conduct interviews at mutually agreeable timescales. The organisational aspiration of 30 interviews proved challenging, although, an important consideration to provide credible contributions to practice and knowledge – despite reaching theoretical saturation at circa 11 participants. Overall, 27 interviews were completed and was subsequently considered sufficient.

Data analysis included transcription of almost thirty-eight hours of recordings, that became transcripts of 311,481 words for analysis. Iterative cycles of data analysis were considered in an attempt to reduce the volume of data by narrowing the scope of participants based on several factors – to do so would have resulted in arbitrary decisions to remove participants and as such, the research included data gathered from all participants.

The methodological contribution identified above acknowledges the use of a visual timeline to aid the discussion, prepared in advance and allowing soldiers to have an informed discussion of their careers during the interviews. Analysis of the visual timelines is excluded from the scope of this research and presents an opportunity for further research outlined below.

7.8 Opportunities for further research

Career theorists highlight the requirement for further research to explore the meaning of careers and jobs to develop new models, frameworks and theories – this research project provides an example of furthering existing research on KCM with reference to REME Class One Technicians.

On completion of this research project, further research exploring the use of the revised KCM theory to others in the Army. The complex web of Regiments and Corps, ranks and TACOS present the opportunity for further exploration in addition to the application of the revised KCM within the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Air Force with their organisational career models and comparable TACOS. Each service has their own sense of identity, linked to their historical and contemporary roles that underpin careers in their context.

The development of KCM in different contexts provides the opportunity to explore the relevance KCM, contributing to the wider understanding of careers and specifically focusing on military careers – with opportunities to expand the scope for comparative research with NATO members and allies across national boundaries.

Further research across different contexts will contribute to the developing and shaping professional practice – the process of managing soldiers, that should in turn benefit soldiers as their aspirations

are understood and career management have more meaningful conversations. A research informed approach to knowledge transfer benefits employers and enables the development of talent management initiatives to maximise talent, accelerating the operational effectiveness of their people.

A longitudinal research programme to explore changes in understanding of careers as soldiers advance in both their respective trades/professions and hierarchical progression – noting the challenge of the Integrated Review's reduction in the size of the Army and if this impacts on the concepts of careers within the British Army. Military careers exist as a response of Government policy to provide protection for national interests, the complex web of security measures and the willingness to invest in Defence. As the threat evolves from traditional warfare in the air, on land or at sea – the additional domains of space and cyber provide additional avenues for research into careers within the emergent branches of Defence.

Finally, the limitation of participants in the research – focused on career participants – could be expanded to include career managers, to provide triangulation of career theory from policy to lived experience of soldiers and career managers. The notion of careers could be explored from the perspective of career managers with a sample of RCMOs or Career Management Desk Officers from the Army Personnel Centre.

7.9 Autobiographical reflection

The Researcher Development Framework (Vitae, 2010; Northumbria 2017) requires candidates of professional doctorate programmes to reflect on the development of their professional research skills.

Knowledge and intellectual abilities. Conducting a detailed literature review to explore the concepts of careers has developed my understanding of the subject knowledge, in addition to the development of knowledge of research methods and their practical application. The journey from initial approval to join the programme, to completing the formal research proposal and to finally gathering data – I have developed a series of skills to seek information from different sources, based on evaluating a mixture of academic and practitioner-based resources to make informed decisions of progression within the programme.

I have developed my cognitive skills through the development of analysing information, critically evaluating to prepare a synthesis to be included within the thesis. Data collection included nearly 38 hours of interviews to be transcribed, with 311,481 words to be analysed and required the development of information management skills to store circa 20GB of recordings and transcripts.

Additionally, the iterative process of analysis presented a challenge of dealing with the volume of information and ensuring it is evaluated to provide the required insight into the applicability of KCM to Army careers.

Personal effectiveness. The doctoral programme has presented a series of challenges, to maintain a sense of enthusiasm and determination to succeed over a five-year period. During this time, I have developed a commitment to research and juggled with the various emergent themes that provide interesting opportunities for exploration and struggled with the prioritisation of work to complete on schedule. Balancing part-time study with the commitments of a full-time role have presented conflicting priorities and full-time lecturing commitments have taken priority at the expense of progress with research.

As a early career researcher, the doctoral programme has been challenging and presented several challenges during data analysis to identify the contributions to practice and knowledge, that has taken me far outside of my comfort zone. For balance, this must be off-set with my ability to form professional networks and respond to opportunities – access to research participants and the specific response to organisational priorities provide clear examples of personal effectiveness for future research programmes.

Research governance and organisation. The scope and scale of the research is shaped by organisational consent and priorities, which provides a clear focus for contributions to practice as part of the programme. Balance must be struck with the requirement of finance (funding for programme fees at Northumbria and funding for travel expenses to complete the data collection phases) and the limited opportunity to access further funding to expedite data analysis or researcher development activity.

As part of the programme, I have been supported by Colonel REME in providing access to participants and access to facilities to conduct the research interviews within the parameters of organisational and ethical approvals. All interviews were recorded, uploaded to a secure OneDrive folder for subsequent transcription and analysis – this proved incredibly effective method to securely store files and access them from different devices.

Engagement, influence and impact. In shaping the research design, I met with several key informants to explore the context of military careers and identify opportunities to provide a contribution to knowledge and practice. Engagement included Major General Nitsch, Director General of Personnel; Colonel (now Brigadier) Phillips, Colonel REME (now Deputy Military

Secretary) providing access to participants and shaping the research design through key informant interviews.

Engagement with such senior sponsors within the Armed Forces required the development of communication skills, verbally and in writing to disseminate updates on the research progress and to communicate with their staff. My communication skills have helped to develop a collegiate relationship with REME units across the Army, to conduct the data collection and provide opportunities for further research.

7.10 Concluding remarks

Clarke (2013) identified the need to identify the need to explore organisational careers, to identify if the notion of an organisational career has a place within the contemporary career or if they serve as historical concepts that are no longer relevant. Whilst organisational careers are becoming increasingly rare, giving way to more contemporary careers – the Armed Forces still maintain their own well established career structures that follow traditional models. This research identifies the Armed Forces careers, or Army careers as one of the last bastions of organisational careers and confirms the enduring relevance of organisational career theory.

Using a base of rich career theory, this research aimed to explore the contextual application of a developed and respected career model within the British Army. Contributions to both professional practice and knowledge respond to the organisational call for understanding soldiers' perspectives of careers to inform appropriate retention initiatives and maximise talent. Contributions to knowledge provide additional insight into career theory development within the context of British Army careers, supporting the calls for further research into career theory and the development of new theories, frameworks and models.

This research extends the application of KCM to military careers, noting the contextual nuances in the application of the model and specific alignment to organisational careers in the British Army. Acknowledging the potential limitation of scope and applicability beyond the research design, the career needs of soldiers' mirror those of other professions and the dilemma of widely understood views that can be divergent from contemporary practice, the hysteresis of habitus, requiring the recalibration of understanding. This thesis identifies the need for career managers and career actors to understand the changing landscape to ensure the alignment of aspirations and policy, to maximise talent and avoid dysfunctional decision making or sub-optimal behaviour to only perform when approaching a promotion window. The introduction of a revised approach to make sense of a career, aligned to the evolving career model provide benefits to the individual and organisation – fulfilling the aspirations of the research project whilst extending KCM theory.

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Appendix A: Ethical Approval

Jamie Carrahar

From: EthicsOnline@Northumbria
Sent: 24 September 2018 08:46
To: Jamie Carrahar
Cc: John Blenkinsopp
Subject: Research Ethics: Your submission has been approved

Dear Jamie Carrahar,

Submission Ref: 10052

Following independent peer review of the above proposal*, I am pleased to inform you that **APPROVAL** has been granted on the basis of this proposal and subject to continued compliance with the University policies on ethics, informed consent, and any other policies applicable to your individual research. You should also have current Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) clearance if your research involves working with children and/or vulnerable adults.

* note: Staff Low Risk applications are auto-approved without independent peer review.

The University's Policies and Procedures are here

All researchers must also notify this office of the following:

- Any significant changes to the study design, by submitting an 'Ethics Amendment Form'
- Any incidents which have an adverse effect on participants, researchers or study outcomes, by submitting an 'Ethical Incident Form'
- Any suspension or abandonment of the study.

Please check your approved proposal for any Approval Conditions upon which approval has been made.

Use this link to view the submission: View Submission

Research Ethics Home: Research Ethics Home

Please do not reply to this email. This is an unmonitored mailbox. If you are a student, queries should be discussed with your Module Tutor/Supervisor. If you are a member of staff please consult your Department Ethics Lead.

Appendix B: Interview Question Set

Interview Questions

1. The focus of the interview is to understand your career, please, can you explain what the word career means to you?

2. Using two/three words, how would you characterise your career to date?

3. When did you first start thinking about joining the British Army?

4. Using the timeline, you have prepared, please, can you talk me through your thought process of joining the Army?

    a. Explore stages of the pathway from Phase One through to Phase Three training.

    b. Explore the key promotion hurdles and preparation for future promotion.

    c. Expand on what is valued within a career.

    d. What motivates you and why?

Follow On Questions

5. What does the word challenge mean to you?

6. What has been your most challenging assignment and why?

7. How would you describe challenge within your career/role?

8. What has your most interesting assignment been and why?

9. What does the word authenticity mean to you?

10. How would you describe being authentic within your career/role?

11. What does the word balance mean to you?

12. How would you describe balance within your career/role?

13. What would you like to achieve within your career?

14. How can you realise your future ambitions?

Appendix C: Research Project Statement of Information, Intent and Confidentiality

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a study to explore how soldiers make sense of their careers. You have been invited to participate as you have served between 3-10 years within the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

I (Jamie Carrahar, jamie.carrahar@northumbria.ac.uk) am the principal researcher on this project.

Research Overview
How do REME personnel make sense of their careers?

This research project is broken down into the following research objectives:

a. To understand how REME personnel make sense of their careers;
b. To identify the career needs of REME personnel and to inform retention initiatives;
c. To contribute to an enhanced understanding of how military personnel make sense of their careers, in order to inform HR policy and practice within the British Army.

Participation. Participation in this study involves an hour long, one to one, career history interview lasting no more than one hour to explore how you make sense of your career. In advance of the interview, you will be asked to prepare a timeline of your career within the British Army to be used as an aide to the discussion.

Timeline. Prepare a timeline that demonstrates your journey that shows your thought process prior to joining the Army, through to your career to date and then highlights your future career aspirations. There is no specific format of the timeline, other than a chronological sequence of your career moves to date. This should only take 15-20 minutes and to complete.

Try to include the following, when you first started to think about joining the Army, when you made your decision, when you completed basic training, joining your battalion, subsequent career courses and include the highlights, lowlights, challenges and future career aspirations.

No funding body is involved in this research. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time and can ask to access your information at any time. All information will be stored in a password controlled, secure storage on Northumbria University servers.

All interview recordings, transcripts or notes will be anonymised; at no time will responses be linked to any personal data.

Consent Section
I consent to Jamie Carrahar of Northumbria University recording and processing information resulting from my responses to the questions set in the above research project. I understand that this information will be used for the purposes set out in the information sheet and consent is conditional upon Jamie Carrahar complying with the obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Signed: Name:

Date: