



MONASH University

Burnout, Recovery and the 'Missing Middle': Towards an Organisational Theory of Fallout

Margaret Ying Wei Lee

BComm (Management) (Hons)
BA (Media & Communications)
MPH (Public Health)

A thesis submitted for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* at
Monash University in 2022, Faculty of Business & Economics
Department of Management

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

© Margaret Ying Wei Lee 2022

I certify that I have made all reasonable efforts to secure copyright permissions for third-party content included in this thesis and have not knowingly added copyright content to my work without the owner's permission.

ABSTRACT

This PhD thesis actively responds to the call for a closer examination of burnout as a lived experience in organisations, seeking to recover burnout from the important but confining frameworks of psycho-medicine. It recognises burnout as a lived experience inseparable from organising conditions and contemporary workplaces and advances its organisational dynamics through attention to sociological accounts of illness. In particular, it explores the little known period of life after burnout, herein referred to as 'fallout', through in-depth qualitative research interactions with 43 individuals who have lived or continue to live with its effects. Through three articles, it develops an organisational theory of the 'missing middle' – fallout – that recognises the significant and transformative space between burnout and the imagined possibility of recovery that emerges from, and is shaped by, organising conditions and workplaces.

It begins with a landscape review of the extant burnout literature that complements the literature review in each of the three papers. This also outlines the broad theoretical contours informing the development of the 'fallout' concept, the research questions and some of the methodological and analytical considerations of the study.

Three papers are then presented. Paper 1 articulates a processual view of fallout and traces its parameters through a case of individuals navigating this uncertain period while existing in confining institutional settings. Paper 2 explores the ontological experience of fallout as experienced through a lens of secondary victimisation – a mode of organisational violence that highlights the 'dark side' of organisationally-led interventions. Paper 3 examines fallout and the imagined possibility of recovery through the epistemic dynamics of organisationally-performed narratives. Collectively, these insights provide us with a theoretical and conceptual vocabulary through which to explore and understand what fallout is and how it takes place in, through and because of organisations.

From this, the thesis closes with a concluding discussion. This includes overviewing some of the key contributions and proposing explicit recommendations for policy and practice, including greater legislative protections for burnt out subjects. It also encourages researchers to contribute to this promising set of ideas introduced in the thesis surrounding fallout through embedded methodologies, an exploration of alternative cultural and occupational contexts, and to uphold an explicitly ethical lens when considering the role of organisational settings in burnout, fallout and other phenomena of illness and unwellness.

THESIS INCLUDING PUBLISHED WORKS DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

This thesis includes **three** original papers. The core theme of the thesis an exploration of post-burnout working lives. The ideas, development and writing up of all the papers in the thesis were the principal responsibility of myself, the student, working within the Faculty of Business and Economics, Department of Management under the supervision of Professor Kathleen Riach and Associate Professor Kohyar Kiazad.

The inclusion of co-authors in two papers reflects the fact that the work came from active collaboration between researchers and acknowledges input into team-based research. In the case of Chapter 4 'The Papers' my contribution to the work involved the following:

Thesis Chapter	Publication Title	Status	Nature and % of student contribution	Co-author name(s) Nature and % of Co-author's contribution*	Co-author(s), Monash student Y/N*
4.1	<i>Beyond the Brink? Towards a Liminal Theory of Fallout in STEM Careers</i>	Second round revision at <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	70% development of theoretical approach, data collection, data analysis, co-writing manuscript and revisions.	30% Kathleen Riach; concept development, co-writing manuscript and revisions.	N
4.2	<i>Salted Wounds: Exploring Modes of Secondary Victimization in the Organization of Burnt Out Subjects</i>	Accepted at EGOS 2022, ready for submission at <i>Human Relations</i>	80% development of theoretical approach, data collection, data analysis, co-writing manuscript and revisions.	20% Kathleen Riach; concept development, co-writing manuscript and revisions.	N
4.3	<i>Telling Tales: Recovering Narratives of Life After Burnout</i>	Ready for submission at <i>Organization</i>	100%	NA	

*If no co-authors, leave fields blank

I have renumbered sections of submitted or published papers in order to generate a consistent presentation within the thesis.

Student name: Margaret Ying Wei Lee

Student signature: [Removed for archiving]

Date: 3 October 2022

I hereby certify that the above declaration correctly reflects the nature and extent of the student's and co-authors' contributions to this work. In instances where I am not the responsible author I have consulted with the responsible author to agree on the respective contributions of the authors.

Main Supervisor name: Associate Professor Kohyar Kiazad

Main Supervisor signature: [Removed for archiving]

Date: 3 October 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'Silent gratitude isn't much use to anyone' – G.B. Stern

I cannot possibly indicate all my debts lest this thesis become an enumeration of my creditors. However, I would especially like to thank the following individuals in helping my thesis grow 'legs', if not wings.

Firstly and most significantly, my supervisory team, Professors Kathleen Riach and Kohyar Kiazad who have been vital to this thesis and my sanity. Their steadfast support and kindness in the face of a highly strung doctoral student and a global pandemic have taught me the meaning of gratitude. Thank you both for your fortitude, belief, and unrelenting good nature as my mentors and friends.

My family, the little Lee's, especially my 妈咪 who patiently fed and soothed me through the worst of times and the best of times: 没有你就没有我。

David, a foul weather companion, my personal hype man and an all-round great egg.

To the academic village that helped 'raise' me. My panel team, Professors Gavin Jack, Zen Goh and Jagjit Plahe who gently and kindly guided me towards greener pastures. To my PhD program directors, Professors Dayna Simpson and Pitosh Heyden who helped move bureaucratic mountains and Professors Julie Wolfram-Cox and Michelle Greenwood for their insights and consolations in that critical first year.

From my halcyon days in honours, where it all began, thank you to Professors Leisa Sargent, Bill Harley and Susan Ainsworth who put me on this path with their teaching, supervision and gracious support over more than a decade.

My 'ride or dies' Marina, Will, Bec, Rob, Don, and the cast of thousands who helped me complete my fieldwork during an extremely difficult time in the world: Lucy, Moosa, Cynthia, Stella, Natalie, Leijie, Sara and many, many more.

My fellow lockdown doctoral crew, for whom this was a communal exercise in caffeine, crumpets and claustrophobia: Olivia, Clarice, Eleanor, George, Kat, Jordan and Tianyi.

Finally and most importantly, to all the individuals who have entrusted me with their personal stories and experiences. I am unable to name you, but your narratives course through the body of this thesis and are the animating force to this work. I hope I was a safe pair of hands and may this thesis do your experiences justice.

This research was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship; a Monash Business School Dean's Excellence Award; a Monash University Graduate Research Completion Award (GRCA), and a Monash University Postgraduate Publication Award (PPA).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 A genuine fake? The liminal status of burnout	8
1.2 Burnout as a modern preoccupation	10
1.3 Burnout and fallout: What really happens after the fall?	11
1.4 Research questions	14
CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	15
2.1 The (personal) theoretical journey to ‘fallout’	15
2.3 The foundations of ‘fallout’	19
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY	21
3.1 Fieldwork: an overview	21
3.2 Designing and approaching the research interaction	23
3.3 The effects of COVID-19	25
3.4 Data analysis	27
CHAPTER FOUR THE PAPERS	30
4.1 Paper 1: Beyond the Brink	31
4.2 Paper 2: Salted Wounds	75
4.3 Paper 3: Telling Tales	109
CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUDING DISCUSSION	148
CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION	158
REFERENCES	160
Appendix A. Overview of thesis papers	188
Appendix B. ‘Thought leadership’ article	189
Appendix C. Respondent profiles	194
Appendix D. Forthcoming book chapter	195

CHAPTER ONE | INTRODUCTION

'Our immune system does not exist in isolation from daily experience'

– Gabor Maté (2019, p. 6), *The Body Says 'No'*

Burnout is by no means a new phenomenon. While historians have traced its lineage from as early as the 5th century (Neckel et al., 2017), our contemporaneous understanding of burnout is largely rooted in the work of psychologist Herbert Freudenberger (1974) who, borrowing a term from the drug-using community, identified in himself and his staff a triad of symptoms – extreme exhaustion, withdrawal, and a diminished sense of professional efficacy. More prosaically, he described his own symptoms as: 'I don't know how to have fun. I don't know how to be readily joyful' (NPR, 2016). What initially started as a self-diagnosis has become the foundation of contemporary biomedical and management scholarship on burnout. Sociological accounts of burnout have identified other features beyond symptomology (e.g. Bernier, 1998; Fang et al., 2013; Mazzola & Disselhorst, 2019), a notion supported by other prominent burnout scholars (e.g. Jaworska-Burzyńska et al., 2016; Maslach, 2017; Salminen et al., 2017; Schaufeli et al., 2009). However, researchers from traditions of biomedicine and management psychology have, and continue to, largely focus their attentions on its symptomatic expression (e.g. Burke & Greenglass, 1995; Perski et al., 2017).

In particular, the impressive body of burnout scholarship has over the past five decades provided ample and valuable insight into understanding the emergence (Alarcon et al., 2009; Hill & Curran, 2016; Perski et al., 2017; Shoji et al., 2016; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010), intercession (Ahola et al., 2017; Awa et al., 2010; Gerber et al., 2013; Panagioti et al., 2017; Perski et al., 2017; Shin et al., 2014; West et al., 2016) and progression (Koutsimani et al., 2019; Maricuțoiu et al., 2016; Shoji et al., 2015) of burnout's symptomology, as well as its organisational implications (Crawford et al., 2010; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010). Namely, these psycho-centric approaches consider burnout to be an outcome of failed stress coping – see, for instance, the wide application of Conservation of Resources and Job Demands Resources theories (Demerouti & Bakker, 2001; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Lee & Ashforth, 1996) – and as such, have focused on individual capacities to weather stress as the main conduit through which to

address burnout (Back et al., 2016; Dyrbye et al., 2010). Although a number of studies have highlighted the importance of workplaces in precipitating burnout – such as Leiter and Maslach’s (1999) Areas of Worklife Model (see also: Reichl et al., 2014). What remains poorly understood and increasingly urgent in our current health and labour crisis (OECD, 2022) is an understanding of ‘the highly individual and heterogenous paths of recovery’ from burnout beyond its pathological conception (Salminen et al., 2017, p. 6).

Taking inspiration from Maté’s opening quotation and other sociological accounts of illness (Charmaz, 1995, 1999; Conrad & Schneider, 1992; Frank, 2013; Hydén, 1997; Ware & Kleinman, 1992), this thesis seeks to return to the fundamentals of burnout as a *lived illness experience*, recasting it as more than a somatic outcome of stress and recognising it as a contextually-situated ‘crisis of meaning or values’ (Maslach & Leiter, 2016, p. 108) and a phenomenon inextricably entangled with workplaces. The thesis begins by reviewing the current debates surrounding burnout in the scholarly literature and the social and political context in which our understanding of this phenomenon exists. Next, it outlines the development of the conceptual framework and the methodological approach, paying particular attention to the reflexive experiences of the author. It subsequently introduces the three papers as a mutually supportive program of inquiry, concluding with a discussion of the key implications, contributions and future research directions.

1.1 A genuine fake? The liminal status of burnout

Despite its storied history and vast empirical base, burnout remains an emergent or ‘contested’ illness, that is, a condition with a ‘name but no code’ that is ‘researched, discussed and reported on, but no aspect...is settled medically, legally or popularly’ (Dumit, 2006, p. 578). Presently unrecognised as a medical diagnosis by key biomedical authorities, namely the World Health Organisation (WHO) and American Psychiatric Association (APA), these organisations wield critical influence in designating medical ‘legitimacy’ through a process of nosological classification and diagnostic decision making (see: the International Classification of Diseases [ICD] and Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders [DSM]) with serious implications for sufferers. Such is the influence of these bodies that in a recent address to the British Medical Journal, psychologist Renzo Bianchi (2017, p. 1) likened burnout to ‘a convenient euphemism for depression’, disputed

its prevalence and cautioned clinicians from cultivating ‘urban legends instead of scientific knowledge’ when treating patients with burnout – he supported these statements by citing the lack of formal recognition from the WHO and APA. Specifically, without a diagnostic label, sufferers are materially constrained in their ability to seek medical care, advocate for fiscal support and access sick leave from their employer, social welfare and insurance schemes (Lastovkova et al., 2018).

In the barest of terms, these decisions prevent people from sustainably healing from their condition, and leaves them to grasp at desperate remedies and subject to influence, exposure or manipulation from different markets – see for instance, the parallel growth of the wellness industry now valued at \$1.5 trillion US dollars (Callaghan et al., 2021). Despite a recent ‘upgrade’ to burnout’s classification in 2019 by the WHO, it remains suspended as an ‘occupational syndrome... resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed’ (WHO, 2019) and in effect, an illness ‘you have to fight to get’ (Dumit, 2006, p. 577). In other words, the severity and totality of burnout as an illness experience remains largely unacknowledged by leading medical authorities who have, historically, considered it a problem of individuals: in fact, the WHO previously listed burnout under a section titled ‘problems related to life-management difficulty’ and described the condition singularly as a ‘state of vital exhaustion’ (WHO, 2019).

Interestingly, however, a limited number of nations have diverged from these institutional edicts and trod their own path to recognising and compensating burnout. A recent review of burnout in European Union nations, for example, found eight countries that compensated individuals for burnout (describing them as ‘victims’), of which only five were provided through social insurance schemes – Denmark, France, Latvia, Portugal and Sweden (Lastovkova et al., 2018). Although these represent important first steps in recognising the effects of burnout, these policies are embryonic in addressing what has been rendered visible by recent global events as an impossible problem – and maybe even an inevitable outcome – of neoliberal work structures. For example, accounts of state sponsored burnout counselling sessions in Finland highlight the moral orders through which burnout is both metabolised by sufferers and managed by healthcare professionals (Korhonen & Komulainen, 2019).

1.2 Burnout as a modern preoccupation

Most recently, burnout has been embedded in the social imagination after a cascade of destabilising global events – besieged public health systems and supply chains, fractured financial markets and geopolitical conflict – which have rendered visible existing economic and labour inequalities. These have trickled burnout into the public consciousness through popular commentaries (Malesic, 2022), ‘viral’ public confessionals (e.g. Ariana Huffington (Khazan, 2014)) and even suggestions that burnout may, in fact, be the ‘second illness’ of the pandemic (Aldossari & Chaudhry, 2021; Gewin, 2021; Queen & Harding, 2020). This public interest has created a tension between elevated social awareness and the ways in which employers and scholars have attempted to organise burnt out bodies through aforementioned wellness initiatives (e.g. Dharmawardene et al., 2016), pathological concern (e.g. Parker & Tavella, 2022) and a drive for measurement (e.g. Ahola et al., 2017). Burnout as a scholarly domain has largely become the preserve of two disciplines, biomedicine and managerial psychology – a situation considered by seminal burnout scholar Christina Maslach (2017, p. 143) as one of the ‘critical issues’ hampering progress on meaningful solutions to burnout because ‘there is a bias [in the scholarship] toward fixing people, rather than fixing the job situation’.

This is evidenced in contemporary seams of biomedical burnout research which have sought to give it ‘pathological weight’ by divining biomarkers for diagnosis (e.g. Bayes et al., 2021; Penz et al., 2018), tracking its epidemiology in various workforce settings (e.g. Amanullah & Ramesh Shankar, 2020; Johnston et al., 2020; Peinado & Anderson, 2020; Pressley, 2021), re-examining its symptomology in light of other mental illnesses (e.g. Bianchi et al., 2015a; Tavella & Parker, 2020), and experimenting with personal interventions for stress inoculation (e.g. Ahola et al., 2017; West et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2020), wellbeing (e.g. Anclair et al., 2018; Dharmawardene et al., 2016; Suleiman-Martos et al., 2020) and exercise (e.g. Bretland & Thorsteinsson, 2015; Gerber et al., 2013). These medicalising approaches effectively conceptualise burnout as a ‘clinical deficit’ in individual bodies ‘in an even stronger, more “permanent” way’ (Maslach, 2017, p. 146). This has stigmatising and enduring effects on the way in which burnout and its sufferers move and engage with the social world, and forms the landscape in which the three papers of this PhD are situated.

In parallel, contemporary management and organisational scholarship has identified the structural (Campbell et al., 2013; Leiter & Shaughnessy, 2006) and personal

predispositions to burnout (Alarcon et al., 2009; Hallberg et al., 2007), considered its effects on job performance (Demerouti et al., 2014; Wright & Hobfoll, 2004), organisational attitudes (Alarcon, 2011) and turnover (Lee & Ashforth, 1996), and its potential for workforce contagion (Alkær sig et al., 2018; Bakker et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2017). This body of work also explores the ways in which employees can take an ‘agential’ approach in managing the impacts of their work setting through job crafting (Hakanen et al., 2018; Lichtenthaler & Fischbach, 2019), emotional regulation (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Schabram & Heng, 2022), the cultivation of social support (Halbesleben, 2006) and psychological capital (Wang et al., 2012). While these studies provide foundational insight, they have primarily focused on the prologue to burnout’s emergence, that is, quantifying its causes and intervening solutions in a way that ‘presume[s] that the source of burnout lies more within the individual employee than in the work setting’ (Maslach, 2017, p. 145). In doing so, it localises both the sources and solutions of burnout to individuals, while neglecting the situated lived experiences of these organisational bodies navigating the complex and hazy trajectories of life after burnout. By comparison, this dissertation highlights how, in the words of playwright Odets (Odets in Cantor, 2000, p. 119): ‘it is the day to day living that wears you out’, and it is this distinct and vivacious experience of living with burnout’s effects that this research tends to across three papers. In particular, it answers a call for greater qualitative insights into post-burnout working lives and exploratory studies to ‘not only focus on the risk factors and outcomes of burnout, but also how to recover from it once it has occurred’ (Hakanen & Bakker, 2017, pp. 361–362).

1.3 Burnout and fallout: What really happens after the fall?

As mentioned above, contemporaneous studies of burnout have largely focused on identifying, intervening and quantifying burnout’s aftermath through neoliberal notions of productivity (e.g. sick leave absences, workforce participation, income lost to illness) and ‘clinically significant’ positivist outcomes (e.g. somatic reduction, hospitalisation, mortality and morbidity). While a preoccupation with measurement provides an important vantage point to understanding the broad strokes of burnout’s impact, it reveals little about the complex portraiture of burnout and its aftermath as a lived illness experience for individuals grasping at the prospect of recovery with few meaningful institutional supports. In particular, the global measures of burnout recovery currently used in both research and practice (return to work, number of sick days, absence of burnout symptoms) are poor

indicators of whether individuals are experiencing work or working with others in ways that are successful or meaningful for their long-term health or that of the organisation – take for instance, the significant body of evidence on counterwork behaviour (see: Mackey et al., 2021) – and contribute to two theoretically destabilising assumptions about the nature of burnout. First, that the burnout-recovery experience is dichotomous in nature (burnout vs. non-burnout) – a notion contested by Maslach and Leiter in their 2016 study that recognized a plurality of burnout states or ‘profiles’ (see: Leiter & Maslach, 2016). Second, that a return to a previous state or identity as the preferred goal or outcome of ‘leaving burnout behind’ as implied in other accounts (e.g. Dyrbye et al., 2010; Salminen et al., 2017; Semeijn, 2019; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). These precepts not only place sufferers in an existential bind – an expectation of recovery from an illness of dubious existence – but prematurely circumscribe our understanding of the phenomena without empirically or theoretically exploring its contours, and ‘although one could easily argue for the value of... sociological...analyses, these have not really been forthcoming’ (Maslach, 2017, p. 144).

In response, a nascent body of literature has emerged that provides limited but rich accounts of the complex lived experiences of burnout and its recovery (e.g. Bernier, 1998; Korhonen et al., 2020; Salminen et al., 2017; Semeijn, 2019). These early studies indicate that the period after burnout is more than a brief, linear diversion between its emergence and recovery, and is instead a complex phenomenon worthy of examination in and of itself. One such study by Bernier (1998) found that recovery after burnout was a complex and protracted experience – one to three years amongst her cohort of human service employees – that involved significant self-interrogation and identity work. Most significantly, all but one of her respondents left the profession during this process of self-transformation, a concerning outcome when considering the sustainability of workforces after burnout. Another rare sociological example of burnt out working lives follows a single, in-depth case and explores how burnout, over a period of decades, was negotiated as a form of identity rupture by changing identity goals and trade-offs to rehabilitate and assemble a new self (Korhonen et al., 2020).

This echoes with broader accounts of health episodes which have also recognised the transformational impact of such experiences on the way that individuals ‘self-reckon’ and make decisions related to their work and careers more broadly (e.g. Mathieson & Stam, 1995; Muenchberger et al., 2008; Yanos et al., 2010; Yoshida, 1993). For example, the substantial body of literature on the impact of illness as a transformational experience points to a dramatic re-orientation of self (Gadow, 1982; Kestenbaum, 1982). Here it is

understood that illness disrupts the unity between body and self, and the integrity of self and their environment, requiring a necessary transformation of 'illness bodies' by individuals to preserve a coherent sense of self and a relational equilibrium with the world (Charmaz, 1991, 1995; Kestenbaum, 1982). It is this process of relational transition that occurs between the polar thresholds of 'illness' (burnout) and 'wellness' (recovery) and points to an experience in the lives and careers of individuals that has the potential to provide new horizons into understanding post-burnout working lives through a period we call 'fallout'. That is, in recognising that the period after burnout is inherently subjective and relational to the contextual factors of their environment, we are able to shed light on how individuals navigate ambiguous work trajectories, narratives and environmental strictures in order to create healthy and sustainable working lives.

In recognising and exploring fallout as a theoretical concept, I answer the call for sociological insights into post-burnout working lives (Hakanen & Bakker, 2017; Maslach, 2017) and develop what is the main contribution of this research across three papers. First, I introduce and define the concept of fallout as a transitional period between the domains of burnout and potential recovery in which individuals dwell, renegotiate and recalibrate their work trajectories after burnout (**Paper 1**). Next, I explore how existing 'solutions' or approaches to fallout, as manifested by organisational settings, constitute a 'secondary assault' on individuals (**Paper 2**). Finally, I explore how the prospect of 'recovery' is shaped, mis/directed and mis/recognised through organisationally-sanctioned rituals of narrative performance (**Paper 3**).

In achieving this, I am guided by a number of elements that I introduce on the following pages: four related research questions that seek to explore the contours of the fallout experience and the role of organisations in this transitional period; debates and theoretical lenses relating to social ecologies that provides a foundational understanding to entangled human-ecological interactions which I use as a novel lens to understand the context of work settings and burnout as an emergent work phenomenon; and, a theoretically harmonious methodological approach that recognises and actuates the role of the researcher in co-constituting the generation of data and theory.

1.4 Research questions

In focusing on what might be viewed as the ‘epilogue’ of burnout, this thesis asks the following overall question:

How is working life after burnout – ‘fallout’ and the subsequent reconceptualisation of recovery – experienced by individuals?

It is further guided by the following sub-questions:

1. *What are the variegated ways in which individuals negotiate and navigate fallout within and around the organisational dynamics of work?*
2. *In what ways do institutions, and their organising structures, agents and processes shape possibilities and experiences of fallout within the parameters of ‘recovery’?*
3. *How is ‘recovery’ from burnout, as a contested illness, experienced by organisational members?*

The three papers which constitute this thesis are designed to answer these questions by focusing on what I call, the ‘differing elementals of fallout’. **Paper 1** seeks to answer question 1 and focuses on the experiences, strategies and trajectories of individuals in navigating fallout. **Paper 2** addresses question 2 through an exploration of the organisational and institutional modes of responding, managing and directing fallout towards a particular outcome. **Paper 3** answers question 3 by unearthing how recovery from burnout, as an inherently ‘unprovable’ phenomenon, takes place through individual-organisational narrative performances. I tie these insights together in the closing discussion and use the findings to discuss the implications for the future of burnout research and workforces. See **Appendix A** for a comparative table of the three papers.

CHAPTER TWO | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

'Medicine tells us as much about the meaningful performance of healing, suffering and dying as chemical analysis tells us about the aesthetic value of pottery'.

– Ivan Illich (2000, p. 41), *Limits of Medicine*

The interdisciplinary traditions of biomedicine and management psychology have made significant contributions to our understanding of burnout as an emergent illness. Yet as burnout continues its proliferation, it is clear that new theoretical vistas need to be generated to progress our understanding of this complex phenomenon. In order to do this, I argue that a scrupulous parsing of burnout's existing strictures is necessary, and I identify the theoretical assumptions and parameters which have calcified over decades in the massive body of burnout scholarship. In particular, I focus on burnout's aftermath and adopt a theoretical lens which acknowledges the socially intersubjective nature of work, workplaces and organisations. In doing so, I contribute to and extend this vast body of literature by introducing a conceptual term known as 'fallout' that allows us to begin theorising and articulating a period of transition and transformation that occurs after burnout and the possibility of recovery. In this chapter I detail the paths I took in developing fallout to significantly extend theorising in an existing body of scholarship with strong legacies. I do this by highlighting my theoretical co-ordinates and introduce and explicate the conceptual framework of fallout, its underpinning tenets and importantly, trace its empirical articulation.

2.1 The (personal) theoretical journey to 'fallout'

Having had my own experience of burnout, the literature felt starkly dislocated from my lived experience which was miasmatic, hazy and resulted in confusing symptoms that were beyond clinical and pathological enumeration. I recognised in the organisational behaviour scholarship some of the characteristics of work which precipitated my own burnout – the misalignment of values, workplace incivility and choking micromanagement. However, I was perplexed to find few studies that spoke to the dense, textured experience of living with an equivocal illness that was entangled not with tidy variables and labour conditions but the 'messy' social environment of work. In other words, I could see that my burnout was unrelated and unlikely to be resolved through traditional means of industrial reform, or

through the correlation of neat variables, rather it was akin to a Gatsby-esque 'foul dust that floated in [my] wake' (Fitzgerald, 2004, p. 8).

This is likely to sound as amorphous as it felt, but importantly, it created an agitation and prompted me to explore this intuitive feeling through other perspectives and scholarly disciplines. In response, I intellectually wandered around a wide variety of sources, including the sociology of health and environmental illness (e.g. Conrad (1992), Charmaz (1991, 1995, 1999), Alaimo (2010, 2012b, 2014, 2016b)), ancient philosophy (Galen's work on the tripartite soul, Hippocrates and the 'wandering womb'), modern philosophy (the work of Pascal Chabot (2013b, 2013a, 2022) and Byung-Chul Han (2015, 2017)). I also consulted the substance abuse and trauma literature as well as the justice and rights-based scholarship. This theoretical development was an iterative process during the course of the research program as I 'collided' with new ideas in both live (albeit virtual) and written research communities, but it particularly progressed during fieldwork where the dialectic and co-constitutive interaction between my respondents, their experiences and the data we created 'enlivened' my thinking. In the following section I introduce and enumerate the parameters of the theoretical concept of fallout and how it is manifests in various guises through my three papers.

2.2 Workplace illness as a social experience

There is evidence that re-situating burnout within a broader landscape of health and illness may open new vistas into current perspectives of burnout and its aftermath. For instance, the significant body of scholarship within the sociology of health and illness that has demonstrated the importance of recognising health experiences beyond individual conditions and instead, as part of wider contemporary professional landscapes (see: Moser, 2005; Rogers & Pilgrim, 2014). To broaden existing perspectives, I consider health and wellbeing episodes in and through their context and the structures, systems and collectives that produce lived experiences of work.

In other words, the organisational and organising structures, systems and collectives in which individuals are situated, made and remade simultaneously support and depend upon the lived experience of employees. This has been echoed through social ecology studies that highlight the 'essential relatedness' and interdependence between people and their environment (Howarth, 1995, p. 21). The 'ecospheres' studied in social

ecologies are broad and intentionally invite interdisciplinary perspectives, including: the natural and built environments, material and social habitats, and virtual realms in which objective and symbolic features are considered to be equally significant (Oishi & Graham, 2010). Virtual spheres, in particular, are increasingly recognised by scholars of job stress and burnout as being not only significant but defining features of contemporary work that thwart opportunities for rest by permeating porous work-life boundaries and, as noted by Hakanen and Bakker (2017), constantly expose individuals to cognitive demands.

An early branch of social ecologies scholarship, 'deep ecology', viewed the relationship between human and habitat as essentially harmonious, symbiotic and 'self-healing' (Devall & Sessions, 1985); however, the radical turn in the discipline suggests this co-dependency is characterised by a competitive contest for dominion (Bookchin, 1980, 1982, 1987; Howarth, 1995). That is, in spite of – or because of – a need to co-exist, an inherent tension exists between individuals and their environments in which mutual damage, dominance and control must become possible. When engaging with these variegated debates, it is striking the extent to which the tone and descriptions of such dynamics sound much like the discourses of contemporary work in late capitalism. As such, these tenets and commitments are aligned with this study's approach in which organisations represent an inherently fractious dwelling for humans (Ingold, 2000) who, in the provision of labour, are necessarily tied to sociocultural habitats of work and workplaces. These will be theoretically realised in the three papers that make up this thesis and provides new and novel ways to understand fallout. In summary, I understand this lens as shaping our understanding of fallout in three ways.

First, it allows us to critically turn our attention towards the sociocultural environments in which organisational members 'dwell' and away from the ontological assumptions that exist in current scholarship around the 'impermeable' and self-regulatory body. This positivist bent which has informed much of the extant literature considers organisational subjects as self-legislating and 'sealed' subjects for the means of production. Yet burnout, in being framed as a failure of self-regulation, represents a situation in which the ontological assumption of corporeal impenetrability is challenged, exposing the 'fault lines' of the dominant biomedical constructions of the human body (Jackson, 2005, pp. 332–333). One way in which this is recognised is through considering illness as part of a reciprocal dynamic between bodies and their situated context and sociomaterial environment or natures.

Stacy Alaimo's (2010, 2012a, 2016a, 2016b) work on transcorporeality, for example, suggests that bodies are not impermeable vessels, but reciprocal organisms that exist in a constant state of exchange with their ecological surroundings. The human body, in this framework, is never static and can therefore never return to stasis as per a 'recovery' health ethic. Such an approach expands our current understanding of burnout which presumes recovery and a resumption of 'productive work' to be the singular response to life after burnout and suggests alternative modalities of experience and 'habitation' of post-burnout working life.

Second, it allows us to consider burnout and its associated experiences, fallout being one, as not solely at the locus of an individual and their body, but an inherently relational phenomenon. In the words of sociologist Emirbayer (1997, p. 289), burnout and its organisational actors form a context in which 'relations between terms or units are pre-eminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes rather than as static ties among inert substances'. While Alaimo's work is largely concerned with (literal) environmental toxins, her framework for understanding the social and material connectedness of human bodies to non-human environments within multiple matrices of power is highly relevant to the study of fallout as an ecologically-situated phenomenon. The treatment of workplace ecologies in the extant literature around burnout has largely remained indifferent to the porosity of bodies and the possibility of organisational contamination. Yet this perspective is vital as workplaces exist as social contexts beyond the exchange of labour – they are environments imprinted with the bodies that inhabit them and in which inevitable collisions with other bodies, objects and artefacts occur. There has yet been little research attending to the socially constitutive roles of organisations as 'polluted' ecologies. Therefore, this research posits that if we are to understand how the experience of burnout is borne by human bodies, we need to acknowledge firstly, that the 'human body is radically open to its surroundings and can be composed, recomposed and decomposed by other bodies' (Gatens in Alaimo, 2010, p. 13), and secondly, that organisations function as socially embedded ecologies for the constant and reciprocal exchange with bodies, objects and artefacts.

Finally, a social ecological approach allows us to think about the lines through which burnout and its aftermath comes to be recognised or misrecognised at both a social and corporeal level. This is particularly important for burnout, and echoes sociological studies focusing on a critical ecology of illness that have explored the contested experience of health

and unhealth and its importance to identity, meaning and trajectories of recovery (Clarke & James, 2003; Dumit, 2006; Moore, 2014; Phillips, 2010; Swoboda, 2006).

2.3 The foundations of 'fallout'

In diverging from positivist perspectives of health, wellbeing and workplaces and taking a relational approach to understanding burnout, I have hinted at my ontological and epistemological co-ordinates and will more explicitly address these in the following passages. Theoretically, this research is grounded in a constructivist paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and its imaginings of pluralistic, intangible and relativist realities. In the words of Goodman (1984, p. 29) it 'does not hold that everything or even anything is unreal, but sees the world as melting into versions and versions making worlds'. In other words, I adopt a theoretical position that is both critical and constructive of the ways in which actors influence relations and shape the ways in which the world is experienced. Fallout, under this theoretical paradigm and as I suggest, emerges from the innate entanglements between workplaces and bodies and the inequalities that characterise these relations. In particular, I contest the notion that bodies are 'wiped clean' after health episodes and instead suggest that bodily subjects manifest the stigmata of past experience. Following this, the lived experience of fallout is not only recognised, but co-constructed with the researcher – an aspect which has informed my methodological choices (see **Chapter 3**) which shy away from establishing epistemic causality and instead focus on the idiographic and contextually-inflected constructions of an experience. For instance, I examine specific professional contexts with strong socialising work cultures (**Paper 1**) and how experiences of un/wellness and recovery are shaped by dynamic practices of relational recognition in organisational structures and settings (**Papers 2 and 3**).

Fallout provides a rich conceptual vocabulary to connect the theoretical co-ordinates from social studies of health and illness with the empirical experience of burnout and allows us to explore the parameters of this novel concept, providing insight into a hitherto opaque phenomenon. Through the three papers, I delineate the theoretical contours of fallout and its key concepts that include temporal unease, intersubjective rituals, and a suspension between two 'known', or socially sanctioned positions. In **Paper 1**, I move away from a psychological conception of recovery that bifurcates modes of being into polar states of burnout / recovery and explore the unfolding 'inbetween-ness' of fallout as shaped by social boundaries, processes and legacies. In **Paper 2**, I examine how

organisations – and the power vested in their structures, systems and processes – circumscribe burnt out bodies to the peripheries of organisational life and in doing so, inflame the harms of burnout through a secondary victimisation. In **Paper 3**, I take inspiration from the dynamic nature of social ecologies – in which worlds are made and remade – and explore how ‘ecospheres’ of burnout recovery are made and remade in narrative performances of storytelling in organisations.

CHAPTER THREE | METHODOLOGY

The following section outlines how I approached the research interaction, specifically, the experience of interviewing, the climate in which this was undertaken and how I managed the project, operationally, in a highly volatile environment. As part of this, I reflexively consider my positionality as a researcher and as an individual who has also experienced burnout. In particular, my methodological choices were informed by the theoretical and conceptual tenets that underpin my approach to this research. Namely, a constructivist paradigm that seeks ‘thick’ data to provide the basis for rich theorising as well as invoking and untangling the organisational structures, agents and technologies that featured in their burnout experiences. As such, I chose in-depth interviews as a rich a way to explore the lived experience of burnout and an emergent phenomenon – fallout – through an ‘open-ended, detailed exploration of an aspect of life’ using a method that ‘combines flexibility and control’ (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012, p. 348).

3.1 Fieldwork: an overview

Fieldwork took place between July 2020 to October 2021 and 43 in-depth interviews were conducted with respondents who self-identified as having had a recent experience of burnout. ‘Recent’ was broadly defined as within the last five years but not strictly adhered to – for example a respondent who experienced burnout five years and four months prior was considered eligible. The purpose of the timeframe was to attend to the possibility of poor recall, and to ensure I was able to gather rich, quality data from respondents who were able to evoke the vivid nature of their experience and work contexts.

Respondents were recruited using a selective snowball sampling method across nations with work cultures that broadly represent the Global North: Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, South Africa and South Korea. As burnout is pervasive in nature – existing studies have shown that while burnout can be endemic in some professions (e.g. nursing, medicine and teaching), it is in fact largely indiscriminate of sector (Matthews, 1990; Perregrini, 2019) – and as such I intentionally elected to not focus recruitment on a particular profession though demographic data was collected on occupation and industry. Initial seeds were identified in Australia and were selected based on the breadth and engagement of their social networks. These individuals promoted the

study through their social channels (via direct email and social networking sites Facebook and LinkedIn) using a standardised recruitment message. The study was also more broadly advertised on various platforms (e.g. institutional newsletters and social media accounts such as Twitter). A custom website served as a common referral point and provided respondents with information about the study (see: www.beyondburnoutstudy.com). I also undertook a ‘thought leadership’ piece that was widely circulated (see **Appendix B**) which also helped to generate interest in the study.

Interested candidates underwent a telephone screening process focused on two key questions. The first was via a single-item measure of burnout without a priori explanation of the phenomenon – ‘have you experienced a burnout period that began during your employment?’ – which has been highly correlated with the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Rohland et al., 2004). Second, respondents were asked to provide a description of their symptoms and severity (‘tell us a little about your burnout experience’). From this, extended and rich accounts already began to emerge and were retrospectively coded by the researchers against the Maslach burnout criteria. Demographic data on age, gender, education, work experience and number of burnout experiences was also collected, and eligible respondents were asked to refrain from doing their own research on burnout prior to the interview. The resulting sample is presented in **Appendix C**.

Importantly, the study and all its associated materials (e.g. interview protocol, website content, standardised recruitment message) were granted institutional ethics approval by Monash University (17 June 2020, low risk, project ID: 24085) and respondents were asked to provide written consent to audio recording. The ethics application process at my home institution was extremely comprehensive – a process that involved more than 20 steps – and abided by a national framework for responsible research conduct, The Australian Research Council’s National Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. In addition, I completed a research ethics course as part of my doctoral program training, and I have previously been accredited by a national regulatory body in healthcare research ethics (Medicines Australia) and trained at the postgraduate-level in bioethics and clinical trial design.

3.2 Designing and approaching the research interaction

I dedicated significant thought and time when approaching the research interaction. I specifically use the term research interaction as I believe it appropriately traces the research experience beyond an isolated situational encounter (Buchanan & Bryman, 2007) and describes the outline of fieldwork which took place across several touchpoints, multiple mediums (email, telephone, text) and over a protracted period of time. This is described in more detail over the following pages where respondents voluntarily continued their correspondence before and after the interview itself. These protracted interactions contributed to the richness of the data as ‘an initial interview may not elicit complete information, much less implicit meanings...researchers cannot expect to get beneath the surface with every respondent with one visit’ (Charmaz, 1999, p. 376).

Before entering the field, pilot interviews were conducted with three willing participants. With the participant’s consent, one of these interviews was recorded, and used to refine my interviewing skills through rewatching the interaction and analytical observation from the supervisory team. A number of amendments were made based on these early interactions. The first and most significant amendment was around the word ‘recovery’ in the interview protocol, which was identified as being a value-laden notion and subsequently redrawn in this study as the intentionally more muted and generic concept of ‘post-burnout’. The study was promoted as understanding individual experiences after burnout, and the word ‘recovery’ was intentionally avoided. This allowed me to delve into respondents’ experiences without placing preconditions on the dialectic interaction. Next, was the pacing of the interview to ensure adequate breaks for respondent comfort, safety and wellbeing – as noted by Charmaz (1999, p. 376): ‘we [researchers] need to build trust and to create a safe space in which they can disclose thoughts and feelings as well as facts and acts’. Other amendments were minor and related to wording or sequence of questions.

These pilot interviews were highly beneficial in designing and refining a quality research interaction that allowed me to elicit insight into the environmental, personal and structural factors that affected respondents’ burnout and subsequent recovery experiences. As a number of my respondents worked in medicine, psychology and the health sciences, the protocol was adjusted in situ to ensure they were able to represent their experiences in plain language, rather than rely on clinical training and discourse. For

example, the clinical request to 'tell me about your burnout symptoms' versus the more fluid solicitation of 'please describe your experience of burnout as a metaphor'. In addition to encouraging these figurative responses, I also drew on visual techniques, including drawing exercises ('please draw yourself before, during and after burnout') and a 'visual essay' which respondents were asked to complete as a pre-interview exercise in order to invoke or 'bring to life' their workplace ecologies. Specifically, respondents were asked to collect (primary and secondary) images that best represented their work environments during the time of their burnout (e.g. photographs, drawings, stock images, memes). While the methodological dynamics surrounding these 'artefacts' are not explored in the subsequent papers, they were discussed at length and formed one of many conversational 'springboards' during the interviews which, being conducted virtually, were important in developing rapport and creating safe (virtual) spaces that are critical to participant wellbeing during intimate disclosures. As a result, the interviews were highly responsive, deep, unstructured and often spanned several hours or sessions. The average length was 136 minutes, yielding rich and textured insight and a final corpus of over 1300 pages of transcribed text.

Notably, in many instances, the length of interactions was not dictated by the willingness for respondents to talk, but rather their capacity to engage for a duration of time. Some would discuss how their experience of burnout resulted in ongoing cognitive effects, such as difficulty concentrating or focusing for moderate periods of time – a finding echoed by recent psychiatric trial data (Tavella et al., 2021). Others found recollecting their experiences traumatic. In these situations, the researcher sought to be highly responsive to respondents, giving them multiple options to finish the interview, as well as the opportunity to continue the dialogue at another time. Many of them took up this offer, with extended email, text and instant messaging conversations in the months after the initial interview. During these extended interactions, they often provided additional artefacts such as screenshots of their social media use, old photographs, music clips, news articles, original short stories and paintings, as well as further commentary relating to their accounts that used the 'springboard' of these artefacts to jog memory or reduce the labour of remembering, particularly for those with significant cognitive issues.

Highly detailed field notes and ‘head notes’¹, as inspired by anthropological practice (Sanjek, 2019), were kept during fieldwork from first contact (prior to screening) to ensure respondents felt that they were engaging in a single, fluid correspondence despite the reality of ‘talking in instalments’ (like Orwellian protagonists). These detailed notes were not only useful for subsequent analysis but I considered them vital in building trust and a sense of safety, for example, to ensure that respondents would not need to repeat upsetting or traumatic information. I also kept a journal during this period to help process the data and vicarious exposure to stress I was experiencing on a near daily basis, sometimes for up to seven hours a day. The resulting dataset is large, extremely rich and highly evocative of this period of their lives.

3.3 The effects of COVID-19

This project took place during a time of global urgency. The ravaging effects of COVID-19 have been well documented in both research and organisational practice and continue to be felt as reverberations through labour and workforce instability (OECD, 2022; Sklar et al., 2021). Much of what has been reported focuses on a theme of disruption but in this reflection, I instead consider the effects from COVID-19 in terms of its arresting qualities. The virus and its associated public health measures required me and my fellow residents to sit in the decisions we made, or allow others more powerful or agential to make on our behalf.

In particular, the six ‘hard’ lockdowns in my home city and state of Melbourne, Victoria broke global records for their frequency, duration and austerity (Smith, 2020; Young, 2021). This resulted in nearly half of my candidature spent in lockdown under the following measures: (i) closed international and domestic borders, all individuals needed State and Federal government approval to leave or enter Victoria (ii) severe restrictions on daily movement, including ‘stay at home’ confinement orders with only 60 minutes of exercise granted a day, a 5km radius of travel, and a curfew imposed between 8pm and 5am (iii) a ban on all indoor gatherings and a maximum of two individuals gathering outdoors, and (iv) mask wearing in all settings including exercise (Andrews, 2021). These restrictions were seriously and rigorously enforced by a military and police presence on the

¹ Anthropologists consider head notes distinct from field notes in that they are derived from *memory* of the interaction (i.e. they are retrospective), but are not analytical in nature such as in memoing, which I discuss in Chapter 3.4 Data analysis.

streets of Melbourne, including ‘a ring of steel’ placed around metropolitan Melbourne through road blockades, spot checks, fines of up to \$90,000 AUD, and in some cases, jail time (Ilanbey, 2021; Michie, 2020).

This all naturally affected the environment in which I conducted my research as people grappled with the very practical as well as metaphysical meaning of work, labour and its role in their lives. For example, significant labour market changes – such as the well-documented ‘Great Resignation’ (Sheather & Slattery, 2021; Sull et al., 2022) – and greater public discourse around work intensification prompted an elevated awareness of workplace inequality and a platform for reflection on what a ‘liveable’ future of work might look like.

In practical terms, there were three ways in which COVID-19 had an effect on my project, and specifically fieldwork. First, I was able to gain access to respondents who were typically ‘hard to come by’. A number of my respondents worked in the health sciences but were affected in ways that unexpectedly improved research access. For instance, despite being frontline workers, a number of my respondents worked in a surgical-field (i.e. surgery was a significant part if not the majority of their role as a health professional) and were partially ‘grounded’ due to the cancellation of the majority of surgeries. As such, I was able to have long, deep and unstructured conversations with individuals (approximately two hours on average) who, under typical circumstances, would be unable to make such significant time commitments to research. By this same virtue, I recognise that individuals who experienced significant work intensification – such as those who worked in emergency care and logistics – were unlikely to have the luxury of participating in research and were, unsurprisingly, mostly absent from my sample.

Second, as COVID-19 exposed fault lines in global (health) systems and ways of working, this backdrop provided a point of reflection for some of our respondents around how they viewed their working lives. This seemed to manifest in loquacity (as noted by the average length of interview) but had little bearing on how they perceived and narrated their experiences of burnout and fallout. In other words, COVID-19 provided a platform for reflection but the pandemic itself was rarely mentioned, if at all, unless discussing the logistics of scheduling the research interaction.

Third, several considerations were needed for the international nature of the fieldwork and the timing of global events – namely, worldwide COVID-19 restrictions meant fieldwork was, as noted above, conducted entirely online. Respondents were interviewed using their preferred medium (telephone; Zoom; WhatsApp; FaceTime, Facebook Messenger²); more than half opted for non-video options (i.e. their personal image was not revealed during the course of the conversation). This was considered appealing to many respondents and is best explained in the words of one respondent, James:

I am happy talking to you about this [over the phone], even though you know my name and all my personal details I trust the research process and I feel it's easier to speak to you as a disembodied voice. It would be harder if I could see your face, your expressions, and thinking about whether you might recognise me on the street. This makes me feel more comfortable.

James' response indicates how the richness of interaction was not 'lost' to digital mediums, on the contrary, in many cases the sense of anonymity was helpful to intimate disclosures (Cook, 2012). This was aided by the normalisation of online chat and conferencing platforms during a period of global lockdowns and reduced population mobility as people sought virtual medical care (Barker & Barker, 2022; Stewart et al., 2022), engaged in online learning (Peimani & Kamalipour, 2021) and worked remotely en masse.

3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis took place in a deep, immersive first reading that occurred simultaneously with fieldwork in 2020 with the majority of interviews occurring between July and October 2020. As a result, I was immersed in an intensive period of concurrent data generation and analysis that continued until the final interview in late 2021. Given I was seeking to analytically explore a hitherto neglected experience – fallout – I drew on traditions of grounded theory, specifically, Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory which, in comparison to other grounded theory approaches (Glaser & Strauss, 1979; Strauss &

² The listed web platforms (Zoom, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Facebook Messenger) all offer video and audio chat options, i.e. respondents can choose to reveal their personal image or not. Images were not recorded as part of the interview process but the interviewer made notes on these aspects, such as body language and eye contact.

Corbin, 1997), stresses the role of the researcher in interacting and co-constructing meaning. In particular, Charmaz's analytic method offered systematic but open-ended strategies for interpreting the abundance of rich narratives I had collected while reflexively acknowledging the 'inescapability' of my prior knowledge and its role in generating contextually inflected theory (Locke, 2001; Locke et al., 2020), making it highly relevant for a research project based on a framework of social ecologies.

In this first reading I was able to sketch the initial codes and identify emerging themes. This also allowed me to begin exploring the prospect of a space between the domains of burnout and recovery and the significance of relationality and temporality to my respondents' experiences. This initial reading of the data involved generic coding that allowed me to remain open and attentive to the different trajectories and possibilities it might hold – an important point of reflexivity for this particular type of method (Charmaz, 2006). It was during this period when I also began a 'material praxis' of memoing (Charmaz, 2006), in which I documented early ideas as 'freewrites' during the synchronous data collection / reading process which helped me make the leap from the raw data to a (progressively) clearer interpretation and eventually, theory (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). For example, an early memo documented themes of addiction and related this to the psychoanalytic concept of *l'appel du vide* after respondents made figurative comparisons between burnout and what they described as a 'compulsion' – a sense of being perpetually drawn to a noxious substance or way of being.

After the initial reading, I continuously pooled the data, interview notes, head notes and memos as fieldwork progressed, and engaged in a more focused process of coding, connecting and patterning. This involved grouping the data around several themes that subsequently began to take shape around what became the three papers. First, was the aforementioned theme of 'addiction' which centred around a compulsion to self/harm, a recognition of fragility and had strong undertones of morality and shame (**Paper 3**). Second, the notion of 'stuckness' which entailed a state of suspension that was 'neither here nor there', an absorbing, temporally hazy and confusing time for respondents who lived in this existential tension (**Paper 1**). Third, there was a strong theme of relational trauma, a fracturing of self in relation to, and because of, Others (structures, systems and agents) that denied recognition and aggravated harm (**Paper 2**). Finally, a theme of equivocation also emerged, that is, an apprehension and a need to self/-justify and testify in the presence of a legitimating authority (e.g. a manager, a family member, an 'expert')

researcher, a civil court) in which 'readymade' narratives were tried and tested, retried and retested (**Paper 3**).

As per the traditions of grounded theory and qualitative methods more broadly, this process was far from linear and instead was highly iterative, constantly comparative and interactive in nature. I returned to the data and wider literature numerous times and consistently added to the overall data set with the continued correspondence generated and volunteered by respondents. In these later stages I also engaged in a process of 'codeweaving' that involved subjecting the constructs to a systematic process of 'narrative causality' (Abell, 2004; Saldaña, 2021), in which the theoretic codes were re-situated within the original interviews to explore how they serve as orienting devices for their subsequent practices. For example, two of the themes (equivocation and addiction) were connected in this process of codeweaving and included within **Paper 3**.

CHAPTER FOUR | THE PAPERS

This thesis has been structured as three papers³ which delineate the ‘elementals’ of fallout. It draws on a sociological understanding of stress-related health events as a relational phenomenon to expand and strengthen the brittle contours of existing notions of ‘recovery’.

It begins in **Paper 1** by redrawing the planes of ‘recovery’ to encompass a post-burnout period, ‘fallout’, which traces and explores the lived experience of individuals circumnavigating burnout’s aftermath in highly instituted and rigid work settings.

Next, in **Paper 2** it explores how organisational approaches to fallout constitute a ‘secondary assault’ after the initial injury of burnout, ‘banishing’ burnt out bodies to the peripheries of organisational life.

Finally, in **Paper 3** it considers the ways in which burnout recovery, as a reconfigured position in light of my fallout concept, becomes an ontologically unstable concept and organisational transgression. In particular, it explores how recovery becomes dialectically performed in organisationally-situated narratives.

³ Please note that each of the three papers are written in American English, in line with their targeted journal guidelines.

4.1 Paper 1: Beyond the Brink

Beyond the Brink? Towards a Liminal Theory of Burnout in STEM Careers
(Lee, M.Y.W. & Riach, K.)

This paper was submitted to the Journal of Organizational Behavior, an A* ranked journal by the Australian Business Dean's Council (ABDC), in May 2021 where it has since received two rounds of peer-review.

As I continue through the review process, myself and my co-author have had to necessarily engage with and incorporate psychological theories and frameworks which may seem somewhat disjointed in the broader context of this thesis which takes a more sociological perspective.

This experience of peer review represents an example of how organising processes take place around burnout and how work continuously progresses and becomes qualified within and through organisations and their dominant processes.

The continued progress and positive feedback, however, provides encouragement to us that new perspectives are possibly welcomed to understanding burnout.

At the time of writing, the authors are preparing a response for a third round of review.

Abstract

This paper tends to the burnout recovery experiences of women in STEM and provides a new and novel conduit for understanding (i) how marginalized members in highly instituted settings experience the aftermath of burnout as an illness experience, and (ii) the implications this has for their persistence in the sector beyond measures of productivity and somatic concern. Through attention to the contextual experiences of STEM and developing anthropological accounts of liminality, we conceptualize a transitional period between the domains of burnout and potential recovery – a sphere herein referred to as *fallout* – in which individuals dwell, renegotiate and recalibrate their work trajectories after burnout. Our rich qualitative analysis conceptualizes a model of fallout in the context of STEM cultures and the temporally-inflected strategies used by women, as marginalized members in a rigid occupational arena, to create momentum towards the possibility of recovery. We present a number of theoretical and practical implications for (post-)burnout studies and STEM careers.

Introduction

Over the next decade, employment growth within the STEM sector is expected to more than double that of all other occupations (Zilberman & Ice, 2021). In anticipation of these 'jobs of the future', the preparedness and longevity of STEM workforces has come into sharp focus, particularly with respect to the retention of employees within the sector. Women, in particular, have been a subject of this concern. Despite numerous measures from professional bodies and policymakers, gender equality within STEM education and employment remains elusive and a 'leaky pipeline' of female graduates and workers leaving the sector persists (Sassler et al., 2017; VanHeuvelen & Quadlin, 2021). US government data, for example, pointedly highlights the continued under-representation of women at all levels of STEM employment despite significant numbers in graduating cohorts with a STEM or STEM-related major (Martinez & Christnacht, 2021); global reports into gender equity in STEM reflect a similar situation across OECD nations (Alam & Tapia, 2020; OECD, 2017) with indications that gender equity in STEM has been further stymied by COVID-19 (Kossek et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2021). In other words, the issue of women's participation in the STEM workforce in the Global North is not one of accreditation and skills, rather it suggests that particularities of the social context of STEM workplaces play a role in the difficulties of attracting and retaining women within the sector.

Extant studies on the social experience of STEM workplaces have revealed 'chilly' and gendered environments in which women face persistent structural and interpersonal discrimination throughout their working life, including: wage disparities, fewer mentorship opportunities, less support for advancement from organizational leaders, sexual harassment and workplace incivility, such as negative stereotyping and poorer assessments of competency (Cadaret et al., 2017; Jensen & Deemer, 2019; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017; Wynarczyk & Renner, 2006). These experiences are not only socially isolating but also potentiate job burnout. A study of cross-sex interactions between engineers by Hall et al. (2015) found that daily experiences of discrimination amongst female engineers engendered feelings of incompetence, social rejection and predicted experiences of burnout. Similarly, a study of workplace climate in the STEM faculty of a US university revealed that female academics were more likely to experience burnout while also reporting greater barriers to accessing information (e.g. being part of important workplace discussions) and higher levels of interpersonal conflict, such as being the subject of workplace gossip (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017). These studies accord with the broader burnout scholarship and our extant understanding of the moderating role of

workplace social support in presentations of burnout (Halbesleben, 2006), the role of burnout in precipitating outcomes such as organizational citizenship behavior and turnover intent (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010), the relative ways in which men and women experience burnout (Purvanova & Muros, 2010) and point to the relevance of burnout theory to understanding women's career trajectories within a STEM context. Specifically, we seek to answer the following question to help prevent and 'patch' leaky STEM pipelines: how do women in STEM negotiate or make meaning of work choices and career trajectories in the transitional space between burnout and the prospect of recovery?

Burnout has been recognized as a variegated and multifaceted phenomenon and a nascent body of literature suggests that the period that immediately follows is similarly complex, protracted and transformative (e.g. Bernier, 1998; Korhonen et al., 2020; Salminen et al., 2017; Semeijn, 2019), and experienced through a temporally 'fuzzy' lens in which a dialogue between the past, present and future is significant to individuals' sensemaking processes and post-burnout trajectories (Salminen et al., 2017). These early studies indicate that post-burnout is more than a brief, linear diversion between burnout and recovery and thus a complex phenomenon worthy of examination in and of itself. We significantly advance these studies to explore this question of post-burnout transition in the context of women in STEM. This is particularly significant as despite considerable inroads into our understanding of burnout's antecedents and outcomes, we remain less informed as to how professionals negotiate their working lives after transformational health and wellbeing episodes, particularly those in demanding professional contexts.

To conceptualize post-burnout as a vital transitional phase, we draw on a theoretical framework from the neighbouring discipline of anthropology – liminality. As we show below, liminality provides the opportunity to consider how the 'betwixt and between' of thresholds between burnout and recovery require a transformative reconfiguration of the parameters through which individuals relate and exist in the world (Turner, 1969, p. 359; van Gennep, 1908/2019). In doing so, we make a number of related contributions. First, we theoretically extend the budding literature on the fecundity of the post-burnout experience by developing a theory of the 'missing middle' between burnout and recovery that we term *fallout*. Our analysis provides the opportunity to consider how fallout (i.e. the period between burnout and recovery), provides valuable ways of better understanding and supporting the burnout experience and healthy career trajectories in STEM. Second, a liminal framework enables us to conceptually consider the particular experiential qualities

of the fallout experience – a notion that has been hitherto neglected in the management studies on intrapersonal change (Navarro et al., 2015). By considering how fallout is patterned expands the parameters for recovery that are predominantly focused on linear modes of theorizing burnout and its after effects. That is, a liminal lens illuminates the non-linear pathways to a potential recovery sphere and provides an entrée into understanding why some individuals may remain ‘stuck’ in fallout while other are able to move on. Finally, our rich qualitative analysis provides a valuable evidence base that renders visible an overlooked but vital dimension of burnout work lives of women in STEM whose underrepresentation in the field has proved to be a Gordian knot for policymakers.

From Burnout to Fallout

Since its conception in the 1970s, burnout research has predominantly tended to its triad of symptoms – exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy – (Freudenberger, 1986; Schaufeli et al., 1996), the causes for their emergence (e.g. Hill & Curran, 2016; Leiter & Maslach, 1999), and how to thwart them (see: Ahola et al., 2017). This somatic conception has been foundational to contemporaneous models of burnout in work and organizational psychology which understand the phenomenon as an outcome of failed stress coping in the workplace (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As such, two key approaches to stress have emerged to elucidate burnout’s contours. The first, stress appraisal theories, namely the Transactional Model of Stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), explicate how the cognitive appraisal of stress events informs individual coping strategies. This process is both linear and largely reactive to the proximal moment in which stressors occur and thus, inherently bound to a particular moment that necessitates ‘constantly hark[ing] back to the individual for his or her assessment at that state and time’ (Hobfoll, 2001, p. 340). In the context of exploring post-burnout trajectories in a specific social and occupational group (STEM women), these theories provide limited understanding of how people cope beyond specific moments in time and, as noted by Hobfoll (2001, p. 340) ‘provides few insights for groups or systems... and yield little information about why people make certain appraisals’.

In contrast, resource-based models focus on the human motivation to ‘obtain, retain foster and protect those things they centrally value’, as outlined by Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001; Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 106) and how these resources are balanced and called upon in the face of job stress, as highlighted by the Job Demands-Resources model (Demerouti & Bakker, 2001; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Like

their stress appraisal counterparts, resource theories also remain sensitive to a linear trajectory of time by focusing on the ‘momentum of resource gains and losses’ (Hobfoll et al., 2018, p. 114). However, COR theory’s scientific exposition as a set of falsifiable principles has proven useful in explicating behavior and validating relational outcomes across groups and spheres of work beyond stress (e.g. Kiazad et al., 2014; Lavner & Clark, 2017), and may help us find purchase on the behavioral aspects of the post-burnout phenomena through its principles and corollaries (e.g. loss spirals and resource passageways). Yet in the context of understanding temporally hazy pathways and intrapersonal change – as experienced by those recovering burnout – the theoretical propositions of COR foreclose avenues for deep exploratory insight. This is because while the ‘commerce of resources and their utility’ (Hobfoll 2018 p.120) are an important part to understanding the fullness of burnout experiences, they provide insight into only a fragment of the complex portraiture of post-burnout experiences.

As such, existing stress theories have been significant to understanding the prologue of burnout but offer limited insight into the beliefs, experiences and transformational processes of individuals in the immediate aftermath of burnout. This is because burnout, often reduced to its somatic triad, is not only an *outcome* of stress but also a recognized *illness experience* in its own right. Described by seminal scholars as an inherent ‘crisis of meaning or values’ (Leiter & Maslach, 2016, p. 98; Maslach & Leiter, 2016, p. 108), burnout is existentially distinct from the way stress *events* in earlier taxonomies of stress were generally conceptualized as relatively static or independent (e.g. Lazarus & Cohen, 1977) and its subjective recovery trajectories recounted in numerous popular commentaries (e.g. Malesic, 2022) remain unexplained by current stress theories that confine the contours of the experience to cognitive and behavioral responses fixed in a linear trajectory of time.

As scholars begin to recognize the significance of burnout as an illness experience and the ‘highly individual and heterogeneous paths of recovery’ it potentiates (Leiter & Maslach, 1999; Salminen et al., 2017, p. 1), this invites the opportunity to develop richer accounts of the post-burnout landscape that better theorize the lived experience of those navigating its pathways. To provide a lens through which to develop this, we turn to anthropological insights on liminality as a way of revealing the marrow of fallout, as situated within the STEM context, to illuminate the ‘missing middle’ between burnout and recovery.

Liminality and Burnout

Liminality is an anthropological concept most associated with van Gennep (1908/2019) and latterly Turner's accounts of rites (1969) that refers to the transitional and transformational space between pre-liminal rites (rites of separation) and post-liminal rites (rites of incorporation) (see Figure 1). Through this lens, fallout becomes a threshold concept to understand the post burnout experience as characterized by significant and profound dynamics that demand individual recalibration, reflection and reorientation. The central tenet of liminality in relation to work is a focus on the threshold or marginal experiential spaces that 'elude or slip through the network of classifications', occurring between the separation or departure from a previous sphere and becoming resituated into a new sphere (Turner, 1969, p. 95).

Organizational research more broadly has already recognized the explanatory purchase of liminality in the context of, for example, contemporary career trajectories (Daskalaki & Simosi, 2018; Reed & Thomas, 2021). Liminality has also been drawn upon to understand change at a group level, such as in studies of organizational learning (Tempest & Starkey, 2004) or even organizational-level phenomena, such as culture change (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011). Yet for our purposes, it provides invaluable ways of rendering visible what van Gennep (1908/2019) refers to as the experience of in-betweenness of more established spaces; in our case, of burnout and recovery. In other words, liminality provides an opportunity to conceptualize a new experiential space – fallout – within the burnout landscape that can impact and inform future vistas and trajectories.

**** INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE ****

Fallout, then, is a transitional sphere whereby a burnt-out individual recalibrates, reflects and reorients, as both contained and informed by, the contextual parameters of a given work ecology – a workplace, occupation or sector. In exploring these fallout experiences, it is important to note that fallout as a liminal space does not prescribe ambiguous, indefinite or free-flowing responses, as suggested by some scholarly interpretations (e.g. Erikson, 1959; Horney, 1945). Rather, liminal beings, as emphasized by Ibarra and Obodaru (2016) are transformed through culturally situated and sanctioned rites of passage. In doing this, liminality must succeed in balancing a tension between often opposing forces. On the one

hand needs to ensure space for individual change and transformation. On the other hand it must ensure this is achieved without 'disturbing the life of society' (van Genneep, 1908/2019, p. 13). As such, liminal transitions are not only vital for individuals, but for the organizational and occupational contexts in which they operate – as long as they are able to 'hold together' the tensions between individual and the context in which they experience fallout.

In the context of this study, the liminal sphere is particularly valuable as it affords consideration to a vital transitional period (fallout) which has significant implications for women's retention in STEM-related roles and careers. Given that career episodes are socialized in situ and central to processes of identification (Grey, 1994; Pratt, 2000), liminality must be performatively enacted in ways that are intelligible to others within a particular social or organizational context. Indeed, van Genneep (1908/2019) suggested it is the dance between individuals and their context that can assure destination and directionality during liminal phases, or conversely, stymie and prevent 'moving on'. Such dances of course, only make sense within the context in which they unfold and rely on occupation or sector-specific cultural norms and scripts, and the context of STEM careers is one of historical institutionalization and regimentation.

Unlike other contemporary settings that have been increasingly characterized by fewer instituted pathways and orienting patterns – such as boundaryless, hybrid, kaleidoscope or protean (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) – STEM remains highly instituted and steeped in historical, political and gender-based cultures and norms (Duberley et al., 2006). In counter to Ibarra and Obodaru (2016) who suggest that under-institutionalized settings are likely to enable more creative opportunities for identity growth, STEM represents forms of work requiring significant time and financial investment in an over-institutionalized setting, such as the years of specialized training requisite for many STEM careers, that carry huge implications for self and career. When one goes 'off track', it may require even more creative forms of identity growth. This navigation of one's identity may be even more radical when precipitated by burnout, given that health episodes often prompt a 'self-reckoning' that relate to work and careers more broadly (e.g. Mathieson & Stam, 1995; Muenchberger et al., 2008; Yanos et al., 2010; Yoshida, 1993). Within this conformist arena, we suggest that STEM trajectories therefore provide a particularly salient context for fallout that requires a complex set of negotiations and practices in order to emerge 'on the other side' towards recovery.

In sum, liminality provides a theoretical conduit to a more nuanced understanding of fallout and a way of articulating its importance to the overall experience of burnout. What remains unclear, and is the central focus of this study, is: how do individuals negotiate or make meaning of subsequent work choices and career trajectories during fallout within the social context of STEM? To explore this further, we now turn to introduce our empirical setting and outline the approach to data collection and analysis, we then explicate our model of fallout drawing on the rich accounts of our STEM respondents.

Method

We drew on a qualitative grounded approach (Charmaz, 2006) to build theory around fallout as a liminal experience and provide rich insights that deliberately sought to ‘break our assumed theoretical frames’ (Bansal et al., 2018, p. 1190) surrounding stress and burnout. Central to this was recognizing the power of making meaning from experiences in ways that acknowledge the complex interplay between self and context, which speaks both to studies of stress and burnout (Korhonen et al., 2020; Luyckx et al., 2010), and qualitative analyses of organizational identity and careers more broadly (Kreiner et al., 2006; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). Narrative accounts are particularly important when considering STEM careers where extensive qualification and training socializes individuals into its institutional ‘rules and typifications’ (Duberley et al., 2006, p. 1138). Sociological accounts of STEM, in particular, have highlighted historically gendered norms, power asymmetries and a culture of technocracy that reifies technical ‘brilliance’ and an adherence to normative and established ways of being and working – take for instance, the scientific preoccupation with ‘best practice’ procedures and protocols (e.g. Glass et al., 2013; Price et al., 2014; Sassler et al., 2017; Tassabehji et al., 2021). The strictures of STEM socialization are an important contextual feature in understanding how individuals invest in and enact complex cultural regimes as part of their professional identity (Obodaru, 2017). That is, having been heavily socialised into institutional scripts, STEM professionals experience an intensification of existential meaning making when they depart from these carefully laid out paths (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Duberley et al., 2006).

As pioneering work across the social and political sciences has shown, accounts from relatively small numbers of respondents present no barrier to rich theoretical development (see: Creed et al., 2010; Pratt et al., 2018; Riach et al., 2014). The rise in

experience sampling methods using smaller groups highlights the shift from assuming scale to depth as a way of developing theory that captures the experiential and contextual aspects of people's behavior (Fisher & To, 2012). Methodologically, this also highlights the value of 'liminal cohorts' as a means of accessing the voices of those who are often silenced in accounts of organizational life (Bamberger & Pratt, 2010). We recognize this is particularly valuable for exploring fallout as a phenomenon as it provides valuable and intimate insights into the experience and attrition of women who are consistently underrepresented at all levels of STEM education and employment (Duberley et al., 2006; Jensen & Deemer, 2019; Kuschel et al., 2020a). As a minority within the field, women in STEM also represent an ideal case through which to examine compounded stress effects within highly institutionalized work settings, providing a foil to the 'cultural and historical view of STEM as white, middle class, and male' (Hughes et al., 2013, p. 1985).

Research Design

As part of a larger study of burnout recovery, we conducted 18 in-depth interviews between July and November 2020 with women in STEM who self-identified as having a significant burnout experience in the last five years. Respondents were recruited using a selective snowball sampling method across nations that, despite contrasting employee insurance and healthcare settings, have similar instituted cultures in STEM: Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and South Africa. We identified initial professional contacts and asked them to promote the study through their social networks using a standardized recruitment message. Interested candidates underwent a telephone screening process focused on two key questions. The first was via a single-item measure of burnout without a priori explanation of the phenomenon – 'have you experienced a burnout period that began during your employment?' – which has been highly correlated with the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Rohland et al., 2004). Second, respondents were asked to provide a description of their symptoms and severity ('tell us a little about your burnout experience').

From this screening process, extended and rich accounts already began to emerge and were retrospectively coded by the researchers against the Maslach burnout criteria. Demographic data on age, gender, education, work experience and number of burnout experiences were also collected, and eligible respondents were asked to refrain from doing their own research on burnout prior to the interview. Respondents selected for this paper held a tertiary qualification in STEM (usually at the master's level) and were working

in a STEM role at the time of their burnout – in total our respondents' collective work experience totalled 243 years. While there is no singular classification of STEM, we drew on guidelines from the US Department of Education, South African, UK and Australian Governments to include all areas of the natural and life sciences, engineering, technology and mathematics.

The interview protocol was designed to elicit insight into the environmental, personal and structural factors that affected respondents' burnout and subsequent recovery experiences. As a number of our respondents worked in medicine, psychology and the health sciences, we designed the protocol to ensure they were able to represent their experience in plain language, rather than rely on clinical training and discourse. For example, we encouraged responses using metaphor or figurative representations of their recovery experiences. As a result, the interviews were deep, unstructured and often spanned several hours or sessions – the average length was 103 minutes – yielding rich and textured insight in just under 700 pages of transcribed text.

We were granted institutional ethics approval for our study and respondents were asked to provide written consent to audio recording. Our respondents worked in highly specialised occupations, for example, medical or research specialties in which a very small number of individuals are admitted, in some cases, as few as 30 individuals nationally. To protect their identities, we have only provided broad demographic data, particularly around occupation (see Table 1).

**** INSERT TABLE 1 HERE ****

Data Analysis

In developing a grounded approach, our analysis took place in three key phases which were iterative and dialectic in nature – that is, we moved between readings and re-readings of the data, the emerging themes and existing theory around liminality and identity. This is in keeping with other interpretive traditions of qualitative research and is particularly suited to constructing rich theory in the context of a broader phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006; Locke, 2001) – in this case, we develop a theory of fallout within the existing landscape of burnout. Given the highly iterative nature of the analysis, we describe our analytical method below not in terms of a linear progression between phases, but in the development of the key constructs, themes and theoretical threads. We used

NVivo software for inductive coding and engaged in a process of memoing as recommended by Charmaz (2006). In order to retain the rich emic experiences of our respondents, we also used in-line quotations and summary tables to organize our data (Pratt, 2008). During this process, we worked independently and collaboratively, with both researchers coding and iteratively consulting literature, exploring theoretical possibilities and interrogating data independently and then comparing, discussing and debating to refine our theorising.

In developing our first order constructs, we drew on open coding techniques (Saldaña, 2021) and examined the key subjects, objects and events identified by respondents as connected to their burnout experience. What immediately came to our attention was the recurring feeling from respondents that 'something had to give' in their current situation, and a sense of separation from their existing selves. We also identified particular transformative practices in how individuals responded to this need for change. These initial constructs corresponded with the existing literature on liminality and identity, for example, it became evident that these practices contained a tension between a desire for coherence and stability between two 'known' dichotomous positions – such as, un/well, un/employed, un/successful and so on – and a recognition that they were unable to resolve this lived experience within a tense binary framework (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016; Turner, 1969). This theoretical lens helped to build and provide structure for our second order constructs.

These practices were conceptualized as forms of 'threshold behaviors' that informed the development of our second order constructs (see Figure 2). In adopting the tenets of liminality as our abstract category, our respondent accounts reflected how they were situated 'betwixt and between' two socially 'intact' positions or 'thresholds' (Turner, 1969, p. 359). In this phase, individuals experience 'reclassifications of reality' as they negotiate their 'relationship to society, nature, and culture' while unable to meaningfully reach the next threshold (Turner, 1969, pp. 128–129). This theoretical lens was important as it served to emphasize the labour required to maintain a coherent self (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010) that is intensified during a period of disruption or socially undesirable positioning, such as that characterized by our respondents following burnout (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Petriglieri, 2011). In other words, it allows us to identify various forms of 'liminal work': activities that dwelled within the threshold after burnout but were not yet

clearly situated within a movement towards another recognizable or stable phase of the individual's life.

In aggregating these themes and connecting them to form coherent narratives of transformative change, we engaged in a process of 'code weaving'. Central to this was subjecting the constructs to a systematic process of 'narrative causality' (Abell, 2004; Saldaña, 2021), in which our constructs were re-situated within the original interviews to explore how they serve as orienting devices for their subsequent practices. From this stage, two important discoveries emerged. The first was that there appeared to be a coupling of behaviors ('liminal rituals') that allowed respondents to gain momentum towards the next threshold, culminating in an 'exiting pattern' from liminality. As part of this process of code weaving, we returned to our second order constructs to further explore what distinctive or coalescing features each of these possessed. It was at this point that we identified that the three sets of liminal rituals had different temporal orientations in terms of how they brought together the past, present and future. In other words, it became clear that the liminal rituals were characterized by distinct temporal orientations in the respondents' narratives. Our resulting model of 'fallout' describes how respondents respond to and navigate a period of 'being stuck' between two socially recognized states of burnout and recovery (see Figure 3) as part of a transformative, and often circuitous journey to an intact self.

Findings

Through an iterative dialogue between theory and our data, we developed our theory of fallout for women in STEM by excavating the individual experiences that occur between burnout and recovery that constitute fallout as a state of flux and 'in-betweenness' in which individuals are suspended from recognizable and legitimate professional identities and cultural scripts. Conceptually distinct from other forms of stress-related phenomena, we show how fallout is a transitional period – a crossroads where meaning is attached to individual experiences within broader conditions of possibility that carry long-term consequences for the trajectory of a future career. Fallout provides variegated possibilities for recovery but can itself be an absorbing state in which individuals can remain 'stuck'. For our sample of STEM women who had, by their own accounts, "fallen off" (Tamara, clinical therapist) normative career trajectories, fallout necessitates the practice of liminal rites to re-articulate a selfhood coherent to oneself as well as others within the STEM context.

The model developed from this research describes this journey; it outlines how the experience of liminality separates, suspends and coheres these individuals and the strategies employed in this ‘missing middle’ of the burnout landscape (see Figure 3). We articulate this in more detail by empirically outlining the distinct features of fallout in the STEM context. First, the *transformational entry* into a period of liminality, where the discomfiting experience of burnout compels individuals towards confronting the need for transformational change. Second, the various *liminal rites* enacted by STEM women and the influence of their biographies in navigating – often circuitously and in some instances, unsuccessfully – through fallout. Finally, we draw on intimate narrative portrayals of three of our respondents to demonstrate how each of the liminal modes potentiated an ‘exiting’ pattern to recovery. We highlight throughout, the inflection and influences of STEM work cultures and socialization in the fallout experience.

****INSERT FIGURES 2 AND 3 HERE****

Entering into fallout: Recognizing ‘something has to give’

We first examine how an impetus of change was created amongst our respondents through a ‘moment of truth’ or crisis point. For many, this marked a clear separation from their former professional persona and compelled a move either *towards* a socially recognizable ‘recovery’ space or *away* from a state of immediate burnout. Not all individuals were necessarily cognizant of their burnout at the time; for example, Vicky, engineer: “I just thought I was having a breakdown”. However, amongst the variegated bodily experiences of burning out, such as severe hair loss, acne, uncontrolled bowel movements, amenorrhea and heart palpitations, respondents singularly described “not feeling like themselves” (Nicole, doctor) or a sense that something was “off” (Ramona, clinician) and a recognition that change was afoot. This change was positioned voluntarily, as an active attempt to “get out” of their predicament (Jasmine, data scientist), or involuntarily, experienced through a sense that change would or had already overcome them, like a “creeping condition...like mercury poisoning” (Ruby, clinician). Such acknowledgements signalled the entry point into fallout where respondents began to adopt different path turns and rituals of varying success. These included “hovering” in place (Andrea, doctor), “escaping” from burnout (Catriona, data scientist), or grasping at the possibility of recovery without knowing where they were headed yet feeling a need to be “going somewhere” (Jessica, organizational psychologist). All practices that are

unsurprising given the cultural expectations within STEM to constantly improve, progress and move. These pathways accompanied the beginnings of recognizing their entry into an undefined and hitherto unknown 'place' (fallout). This situated experience of dwelling between the more socially recognized stages of burnout and recovery was articulated by Simone, who in the process of seeking medical care as a doctor, reluctantly realized that the previously clear delineations between 'patient' and 'carer' had become muddled through her illness experience (Klitzman, 2008):

It just psychologically messed me up... when [I was getting treatment] I was in this room with other people on intravenous drips and there were cancer patients there so I felt like I was amongst sick people and then I felt myself like a sick person, and I don't think I really had felt like a sick person [until then], I don't think I had accepted that.

This destabilization was particularly fraying for our respondents who after many years – often decades, despite their relative youth – of socialization, higher education and intensive training in STEM, were highly attached to their professional selves and communities despite their marginalization resulting from burnout. Shelley, for instance, formerly an organizational psychologist, experienced bullying and abusive supervision at work yet professed deep affection for it: “I loved the work, I miss it... I really enjoyed it, I was good at it as well and I miss the people... I'd be jumping, I literally would jump out of bed in the morning with a lot of enthusiasm for it [work]”. At the same time, their shifting positionality was accompanied by a creeping sense of ambivalence that the deep professional attachment from which they derived much pleasure was simultaneously the source of harm. This was observed even amongst those who did not work in the 'caring professions' such as the health and life sciences. For example, Amelia, a software engineer, likened her philosophy to work as having a “customer service mentality” and began to consider her burnout through her heightened sense of accountability and her enjoyment of shouldering not only her own, but the team's workload:

[My job] involves a lot of digging around through the code, trying to find out stuff...I have like this buck stops here kind of mentality where if I don't know I'll try and find out even if it's for someone else...doing that, it made me feel like I was part of something, that I could do something useful.

For others, recognition came in the form of being explicitly severed from professional communities and identities. Ruby, a clinician, was ostracized by hospital management and senior colleagues who used her burnout to actively discredit her despite decades of service:

I realized that to try and explain the situation to some of the other people on the ward was hopeless... They wouldn't believe me. I left that job after 25 years without so much as a farewell card. Absolutely nothing. It was as if I didn't exist.

Overall, for our respondents, the entry into fallout was a deeply perturbing experience for their sense of self and the ways in which they related to others while 'growing up' and existing in the highly prescribed social environment of STEM where deviations from established career paths were highly discouraged or not even known; as Simone suggests: "I didn't even know what else I could do with my life". This entrée precipitated an interrogation and re-orientation of their attitudes to work and attempts to (re-)articulate cohering practices, sometimes for the first time in their lives, while adrift from their normative structures and ways of being. This was an inherently disturbing experience which, at the same time, needed be shrouded from disturbing the life of (STEM) society: "my [supervisor] was male and I didn't know what to say to him as we aren't supposed to talk about these things, especially as women" (Andrea, doctor). In doing so, our respondents entered a liminal space of fallout through a process of recognition marked by ambiguity, complex negotiations and profound reckonings. We elaborate on these liminal rituals of fallout below.

Fallout Rituals

Fallout involved respondents entering a discomfiting state of suspension, aptly described by Andrea as a "hovering" between spheres. An inherently unsettling experience, these women were pulled to 'settle back' into a recognizable social structure and coherent selfhood, namely, in the threshold of recovery. In the words of Shelley:

I would say the burnout is done, but I'm left. These are the scars I'm left with, from the burnout that has completely changed my life. Does that make sense? So I see the burnout as the moment when it all implodes and then once you kind of get over that imploding, you pick up the pieces with what you're left with.

This act of 'picking up the pieces' took place as a series of temporally-inflected rituals which carved a space for negotiating and reconfiguring themselves and their actions surrounding wellness, employability and normative notions of success and coping. For some, such as clinical therapist Catherine, this was liberating and "it made [me] realise what I loved about my job and reminded me to reconnect with my body", while others, such as Vicky, felt "stuck" and paralysed by the lack of recognizable structure where "I felt I was in a rut and I didn't know how to get out of it". These rituals can be further articulated through their perceived cadence of temporality – distinct from a linear experience of time – and how the past, present and future connect with one another in this process of sensemaking.

The first set of rituals were characterized by a *temporal primacy*, the importance of a single temporal state above others. For our respondents this tended to be the past. Looming large in the minds of these individuals, the past was the primary motivation to escape from burnout as well as navigate towards possible recovery. Respondents enacted two contrasting strategies with a temporal primacy: *border building*, through the adoption of guarded postures against the world to avoid further and future harm, or *vigilantism*, which sought to rectify past wrongs.

Those that practiced border building ascribed their burnout to a historically porous perimeter between their work, self-esteem and broader life and sought to stem this porosity by limiting their 'investment' in work, as noted by Lisa:

I have always had this type A...perfectionist personality... and I was always taking work home with me and it was never finished... since the crash [burnout]... I have realised... my job makes me money so that we can live. I do enjoy it, but I won't go over and above if I don't have to. I will still try my best, but it's not taking over my life because my life is not my work.

For Lisa, and others like her, this change was all the more significant given her years of training and socialization as a PhD-qualified mathematician which resulted in rigid expectations – from herself and others – surrounding her work behaviors (i.e. devoted and disciplined) and career trajectories (i.e. linear and planned).

Individuals that opted for vigilantism, on the other hand, were compelled to redress past injustices – for self and others – before a meaningful future could be envisaged. This manifested in both small and large acts of retaliatory behavior, for example, openly contradicting management dictum, engaging in legal recourse and, in the case of Jessica, intentionally wasting company time by attending our research interview: “I am so glad to be doing this [interview], especially when it’s not on my clock...[sarcastically] can you tell I am really engaged with my job?”.

The second set of rituals were defined by a *temporal clash* where the past, present and future were collapsed together as part of a means of negotiating fallout. For these individuals, there was equal significance between their past experience, present condition and future (working) life. In particular, they adopted strategies such as: *cocooning*, an optimistic self-confinement that focused on self-nourishment for a brighter future, and *resurrection*, in which past trauma was used as a foundation for rebuilding a ‘new’ person. A defining feature of this ritual category is the motivation (from past experience) to engage in practices of self-improvement (present practice) in the manifesting of a better self (a hopeful future). Both Jasmine and Lisa, for example, took time off after their burnout episodes but approached their recovery in markedly different ways. Despite having advanced health qualifications and performing a role requiring detailed planning and analysis, for her own health, Jasmine intentionally chose a recovery strategy that was the antithesis of her scientific training – unproven, unplanned and unregimented. She discussed taking a 12-month career break alongside her husband, immersing herself in her home life and personal hobbies in order to ‘recuperate’ (cocooning):

My husband and I took a career break at the same time, just to decompress and enjoy our marriage...really it was just a chance for us to stop and recuperate and to be able to enjoy life a little bit more...I started a creative writing course... and have been doing a lot of ‘nothing’... watching TV, lots of jigsaw puzzles.

In comparison, Lisa sought a more structured yet spiritual response and after only a few weeks, found another role, concurrently completing a three-month program of critical self-therapy to dismantle and rebuild her purpose, self-worth and perspectives on the role of work in these broader discourses (resurrection):

I did this thing called '100 Happy Days' and you had to take a picture of something that happened every day that was happy. And it made you realize that there were days where nothing really happened and nothing really was happy, but it just made you stop and reassess what's important.

A final set of fallout rituals centred around forms of *temporal denial*, in which a temporal state was refuted as a means to escape burnout and seek recovery. For our respondents, this took place in two forms – displacement through denial of the past, and *survivalism*, characterized by the persistent rejection of the future. In denying the past, those that practiced *displacing* rituals circumscribed burnout to a discrete period of time that was 'behind them' and sought to redirect and concentrate their energies on 'moving forward'. In the words of Alicia: "I try to just think of it as this discrete period of time in my life". The particular forms of labour involved in displacement is one of its defining features. Here individuals sought to 'power' through the past and deny any sedimental or legacy effects through a constant and active 'doing' of recovery. By comparison, for those that refuted the future, a mentality of *survivalism* allowed them to escape burnout and cope with the past by focusing purely on the present, and 'taking it day by day' without falling prey to feelings of anxiety and rumination, as described by Amelia, who reflected that: "I do feel like sometimes it's [a feeling of] just surviving".

Importantly, respondents often trialled multiple liminal rituals in attempting to move through fallout. Many cycled through rituals – often over a period of years – to seek the 'best fit'; this could mean more movement (toward recovery or away from burnout) as well as an ethos of impassivity ('just being') and lingering in the aftermath of burnout. Amelia, for instance, had initially attempted to displace her burnout by denying its existence and pushing through exhaustion and feelings of failure by working even longer hours in her role as a computer programmer; a response aggravated by attitudes within the modern technology sector that encourages and prizes mastery over 'human' conditions, such as burnout (Kuschel et al., 2020b). Failing this, she moved to 'resurrection', seeking the help of a therapist to interrogate her underlying feelings about her self-worth:

I just thought I wasn't good enough at my job. And that if I just worked a bit harder than I could kind of power through this thing and the psychologist, she made me feel like it was a normal feeling, but she also said that burnout is real and it's okay to be burnt out. It's not a case of you not being good enough.

At the time of our interview, Amelia was practicing a form of survivalism, which enabled her 'shuffle' towards recovery without falling prey to rumination and catastrophising that often accompanied thoughts of the future (e.g. a chain of worries starting with poor work performance, job loss and culminating in homelessness). Similarly, when describing the impacts of her burnout experience, Vicky indicated that, feeling a sense of being 'hard done by', she had previously practiced 'vigilantism' prior to engaging in counselling and spirituality (resurrecting):

I think the answer would be different depending [on] what stage after burnout you'd have asked me that, because I think if you'd asked me a year ago, I would've still been a bit bitter about it and you know, it's so unfair yada yada... But now I feel like it's probably quite a natural way to learn, it's made me wiser and it's made me more compassionate... it's led me to Buddhism, so it's a kind of personal growth.

This haphazard and shapeshifting trajectory may also explain why two respondents, Ruby and Imogen, were not able to imagine moving beyond fallout at the point of the research interactions. In both cases, their narratives were marked by a dissatisfaction with their current strategies and 'in-betweenness', and a strong sense that there might be the prospect of a 'better' self on the horizon, suggesting they had not yet reached a coherent and recognizable recovery.

Exiting Fallout

We now discuss three motifs which emerged from our respondents' liminal narratives of fallout that characterized the movement towards exiting liminality into a possible recovery space. *Retaliation*, marked a moving on through regaining personal agency and resisting the systems, practices, people or circumstances related to their burnout. *Resolution*, entailed a variety of promises, 'hacks' or declarations intended to create change that 'propelled' an individual out of inhabiting a liminal space. Finally, Reconciliation was marked by a relational negotiation to create an equilibrium between external norms and internalised expectations and find a 'liveable' set of practice. To provide an intimate portrait of how these patterns manifested in relation to STEM work environments, we focus on three narrative portrayals – Kylie, Alicia and Leanne – whose accounts represent how these patterns emerge from liminal ritual practices within the broader cohort.

First, to provide insight into Retaliation patterns, we turn to Kylie, a computer programmer and cybersecurity expert. Kylie worked at a technology start-up and was immersed in ‘hustle’ culture, which she described as the reification of overwork and self-sacrifice typical of the modern ‘tech’ sector. Her burnout was attributed to this with a ‘moment of truth’ occurring when senior executives announced mass redundancies, including Kylie’s position, due to financial mismanagement. In another erratic turn of events, she was rehired a few short weeks after an investor was secured at the eleventh hour. Part of beginning to think about recovering from her burnout was instigating practices that nourished her through a sense of collective justice:

Obviously everyone just felt like shit just knowing how disposable... we all were, that was... so bad. And we all started a Discord [online chat platform] group where we didn't invite any of the management and it was just 20 or 30 of us workers...venting.

Once re-employed, Kylie resigned soon after as a way to ‘settle scores’ (vigilantism), even going so far as entertaining extended negotiations to deliberately “waste” executive time:

The best day was when I decided to quit after they fired me... so I guess that I'm totally spiteful, but... the fact that when I did it, pretty much all the C-levels [senior executives] in the company started begging me to stay...offering me things that they weren't willing to give me before... but by that point I was just completely done with them.

For Kylie, her act of defiance (resignation) sufficiently redressed the perceived injustices and allowed her to regain control over the “corporate chaos”, enabling her to “feel better” and recognize a means of recovery for herself. This resistance to institutional structures and agents continued with other ‘border building’ activities Kylie pursued in fallout, during which she actively considered her place in the world of work and her vision for future workplaces. For example, Kylie chose to crowdfund and self-publish a book (instead of opting for a commercial publishing institution), joined an international labor union, and explored the notion of workers’ co-operatives:

I guess before my philosophy would just be: I need to give the company everything I can in order to be a good team player... now if I was going to go back to an office job, I would see the most important thing as having solidarity with my fellow co-workers and helping them instead of trying to do my best for the bosses.

Kylie's recovery experience speaks to the ways in which Retaliation allows people to regain agency by 'biting back' or resisting the various actors, institutions and systems involved in their burnout experience. Here, regaining a sense of control over her past experiences and future trajectories is achieved through re-orientating herself to solidarity with "fellow co-workers", both concrete and symbolic. These retaliatory moves provided direction for her present energies, enabling Kylie and those similar to her, to leave fallout and move into a sphere of recovery.

Second, we focus on Reconciliation and Leanne, a doctor in an area of medicine marked by high mortality rates and emergency overnight attendances. After nearly two decades of study and clinical training without pause, her burnout experience included failing a qualifying exam and a disciplinary meeting around her perceived lack of commitment to medicine – in part due to her exam results but also because of her request for a job-sharing arrangement:

You are just not [seen as] serious enough because you just decide to take a break after years of exams and training... The higher ups are responsible for hiring you back...so then you feel like you're burning bridges if you decide to deviate from the norm of not finishing the exams or taking a break... it's a very intimidating sort of culture. So I felt intimidated for even wanting to seek help.

After her failed attempt at 'border building', Leanne seriously contemplated leaving the profession as she observed her peers both experiencing and propagating punitive medical cultures: "[this city] is really well known for being very entrenched in that old school culture with medicine... I've had friends who've had much worse treatment than me, like grounds for legal action". We see in her case how the rigid parameters of career trajectories in the life sciences have significant and limiting impacts on the perceived availability of work and career choices, exacerbating the extant difficulties of working through burnout experiences. Ultimately, Leanne defied these strictures, and took a break – spanning

several years – from a normative medical career (i.e. College-affiliated specialist at a major tertiary hospital) to consider alternative pathways. Turning inward and ‘cocooning’ Leanne “indulged” in activities that gave her energy and meaning – she started a blog about her experiences and interviewed other second career medical professionals, produced music, started designing shoes, travelled widely while contracting as a locum and took steps towards a career in the private sector. This period of self-care and exposure to broader career experiences helped her reconcile with her past “failure” and in the process of ‘resurrecting’ a new professional self, cemented a break with traditional medical institutions and pathways:

These jobs I have now are helping me realise that I still [like medicine]... it helped to open my world again, it helped me feel more purpose and... discover a different area of medicine and a different part of...our daily lives that is helping people as well.

While Leanne gained a sense of relational conciliation through distance from the cultural conditions surrounding her burnout, it is also important to note the meandering nature of her fallout experience. She professed to undulating periods of guilt, where she would sporadically enact ‘displacing’ strategies to ensure her new career prospects were “crash hot” enough to justify a break from, yet be recognizable to her peers and former colleagues in traditional medicine. For example, intermittent attempts to monetize her blog or spurts of social media usage to reveal new projects. Leanne’s experience provides insight into the winding nature of recovery trajectories and the fitful role of distal perspectives in how women in STEM, and other highly institutionalized settings might choose to live and labour going forward.

Finally, we turn to Resolution and the case of Alicia, a surgeon at a large tertiary hospital. Alicia worked in a highly specialized area of surgery (less than 30 surgeons nationally) and performed complex and major surgery on patients who were usually frail or at the end of their life. In addition to this high stakes work, Alicia also experienced severe managerial negligence and bullying – a situation further exacerbated by the concentrated power asymmetries and rigid hierarchies frequently found in STEM fields but were especially stark in her niche specialization. Like others following a Resolution exiting path, Alicia remained in her job throughout fallout though, like Leanne, she seriously considered leaving the medical profession and felt emotionally void:

I had got to the point of so much stress that I had no more stress. I was just this automaton them walking in the hall and sliding down the corridors sorting out situations, writing notes... I had become a machine... I was pretty close to [quitting] but to quit at that point would be saying goodbye to 14 years of study. And the alternative is what? I don't have any other qualifications. I don't know what I'd do.

Feeling trapped by her situation, she mirrored the behavior of other respondents in making strategic decisions for “keeping [her] head above water” (survivalism). First, she self-imposed a timeline for decision making: “I just wanted to tread water and not do anything stupid and then reassess at the end... and it was just like, we just gotta get through the year... get through the year, get through the year”. Second, while her own ideals had been shattered by her supervisors, she saw how she could move towards recovery through trying to ‘be the change’ for junior colleagues by modelling ‘ideal’ behavior and being the role model she herself had hoped for (displacing strategies):

[I was] carrying that emotional burden of [supporting] junior staff and saying: I'm sorry...It's not like this at other hospitals. You will get out of this place. You will work in other institutions... your career will be better than this. You are worth more than this. You can go and work some way with someone who will value you.

While this role modelling was taxing and contra to the notion of resource preservation in times of strain, Alicia’s behavior mirrors the pathways towards a recovery space exhibited by many of our (life) science respondents who felt a need to serve others, or to live through the higher ideals of the occupation (c.f Tomlinson, 2014). With few perceived options outside of medicine and a defining need to ‘help’, Alicia hopefully sought new employment at another tertiary hospital to support her transition out of fallout while still working: “I slowly knew I was better when I went for a walk [around the hospital] and...not to sound crazy, but like rebirth, you know? I actually felt like there was a purpose”.

Lastly, while she felt “marked” by the experience, she consciously chose to circumscribe this as a discrete and painful period of the past while using its ‘learnings’ and resolutions (“I have vowed to be more... understanding, I used to be very finicky”) to move forward with her medical career (resurrecting). Alicia’s case illustrates how individuals recover by making a series of promises, to themselves and others. This thrust

them into a 'neat' Resolution in which the loose ends of their burnout and fallout experience are knotted and packed into the folds of the past in order to 'move on'.

Discussion

This paper provides a rare and intimate picture of how individuals in highly instituted STEM careers negotiate transitional spaces after burnout and suggests that rather than a clearly chartered journey of return via recovery, fallout experiences are more akin to a transformation involving reorientations, juxtapositions and accommodations taking place somewhat haphazardly, and in some cases, over a period of years. These pathways provide insight into counter-normative routes to a possible recovery space that are contrary to conventional narratives and active health ethic. For our respondents, liminality may be seen by those within STEM cultures as 'doing nothing productive' or 'languishing' but appeared vital in helping to create a liveable set of practices to move on from burnout. Our study demonstrates that the movement towards the threshold of recovery or a life beyond burnout is necessarily marked by a period of liminality that takes form as a series of transition points in the careers and lives of individuals. In particular, our findings make contributions to two key areas of management scholarship – recovery experiences after burnout, and STEM careers – which we outline below.

Implications for Theory

Theorizing 'Fallout' as the missing middle in accounts of burnout-recovery

Our findings introduce a theory of the valuable 'missing middle' that significantly develop current conceptualizations of burnout recovery – a nascent body of research dominated by quantitative assessments of recovery and rare exploratory studies which have given glimpses into the aftermath of burnout, but stop short of theorizing its subjective pathways and trajectories (Ahola et al., 2017; Bernier, 1998; Korhonen et al., 2020; Korhonen & Komulainen, 2019). In contrast, the present study uses a liminal framework to contextually theorize a significant transitional period of burnout recovery (fallout) and its related recovery rituals and practices. Specifically, fallout involved re-articulating a set of coherent practices through different orientations: delving into the past, concentrating on the present, or reaching into the future in ways that are influenced by professional contexts and norms. The model of fallout developed from this research describes this journey, delineating how the experience of liminality separates, suspends and coheres individuals, and the strategies employed in this liminal 'missing middle' of the burnout phenomenon. These findings expand our view of burnout and the experience of subsequent liminal practice in

the context of STEM careers, with theoretical implications for how we consider recovery after significant work-related stress episodes. In particular, the ‘hovering’ between two intact states and the constant labour this involves represent a fundamentally important space where individuals engage with behaviors and decision-making processes that can have profound impacts on their future work choices and career trajectories. Our respondents were poised at a crossroads from which multiple paths to recovery or post-burnout lives were rendered possible through trying to recalibrate their experience of radical self-change within instituted workplace settings and sectors in which their burnout occurred which, as van Genneep (1908/2019) suggests, cannot be disturbed.

Articulating this process of fallout also questions the notion that recovery singularly takes place as a productive and highly engaged process exclusively orientated towards a goal of ‘wellness’. Extant studies of burnout intervention – in which the notion of recovery is reductively measured as a productivity/non-burnout – have prodigiously focused on refining and remediating individual behaviour through, for example, stress inoculation and wellness programs (see: Ahola et al., 2017), and presume: (i) a certain impetus or ability to recover, as per the COR framework in which individuals are inherently motivated to gain and preserve their resources (ii) that an active health ethic largely centred around self-regulation and pro-social behavior is the most efficacious route to recovery, and (iii) a future orientation in which the only way to experience recovery is to ‘move on’. By comparison, almost all of our respondents were able to successfully move beyond burnout through a variety of patterns that were not necessarily oriented towards wellness narratives but, in some cases, were about avoiding another burnout. Some cohered to an active health ethic through rites of displacing, but many also resisted these normative recovery discourses and instead ‘passively’ lingered in the aftermath of one’s work trauma (survivalism) or deliberately dwelled to enact anti-social behavior (vigilantism). In many ways, these accounts may serve to extend an oft overlooked tenet of COR theory in which Hobfoll (1989) describes the costs of coping, that is, the pathway to recovery is itself depleting for those already resource constrained. In short, our study provides a complementary perspective to existing stress theories while extending the nascent scholarship on post-burnout, suggesting that the roads to recovery are numerous and more winding than previously suspected, and that an active health ethic and future-orientation are not the singular modes of successful recovery.

Contributions to Researching STEM Careers

Our theoretical development of burnout also provides a significant contribution to understanding work trajectories – particularly amongst women – within STEM careers. Many studies highlight the ways in which conditions within STEM organizations can produce or exacerbate the likelihood for burnout (Hall et al., 2015; Pedersen & Minnotte, 2017), particularly for women who face specific challenges as marginal organizational members (Wang & Degol, 2017; Wynarczyk & Renner, 2006). The current paper extends these inroads through highlighting how cultural contexts can also have a significant impact on the way that individuals reorientate themselves as they negotiate their way through burnout into a space that may provide possibilities for recovery. Key to this is having to cohere and curate one's professional identity beyond the highly normative 'ideal worker' identity script (Kelly et al., 2010). This is a particularly salient issue for women in STEM, who already contend with other identity threats (e.g. stereotype threat) in these historically male dominated careers (Cadaret et al., 2017; Holleran et al., 2011; Picho et al., 2013).

Specifically, while STEM pipelines are 'leaky', our findings revealed that the decision to leave for our female respondents was fraught with ritualized negotiations and complicated by years of personal, financial and social investment demanded by institutionalized settings typical of STEM (Duberley et al., 2006). Such stakes are heightened by the pressure of role modelling within highly normative settings, where significant burnout experiences are accompanied by statements such as "I don't want [my break] to be perceived as...weakness because I am a woman... all my bosses are men" (Simone). A lack of alternative career paths in certain areas of STEM also means that after significant and transformational health episodes such as burnout, individuals are in danger of either dropping out completely or becoming 'resentfully employed' in a sector that does not provide alternative ways of working or career options. While some were able to transition to 'hybrid' or tangential exiting careers (e.g. Leanne as a doctor within the insurance industry, Lisa to a career in STEM education design), a third of our respondents ultimately left their STEM careers and the overwhelming majority seriously considered it at some point during their fallout experience.

There are major implications of a reluctant workforce of STEM careerists who remain indentured to their roles, whether that be socially (via elite training cohorts and rigid work structures that limit exposure to 'outgroup' individuals and other career horizons), financially (via the accumulation of large debts when training for their qualifications) or

psychologically (via an inculcation of values that conflate prescribed notions of professional achievement with morality and personal success). In other words, institutional barriers in STEM mean that the career pathways are not only narrow, but can also oblige people to stay in careers in modes that are not commensurate to healthy future work trajectories. This notion of 'reluctant stayers' has found purchase in Hom and colleagues' (2012) theory of proximal withdrawal states (e.g. reluctant stayers) but requires further examination to truly understand and support STEM careers. We call for prospective studies to empirically test the relationship between these fallout exiting patterns (Retaliation, Reconciliation and Resolution) with both conventional organizational outcomes (e.g. voluntary turnover), and broader career implications which are critical to the sustainability of STEM workforces, such as retention within role (e.g. as a doctor), profession (e.g. medicine) and organization (e.g. public hospital).

Implications for Practice

The implications of our study are timely and significant considering the broader challenges being faced by 'essential' STEM workers globally due to COVID-19 (Lasalvia et al., 2021); particularly given the disproportionate cost to professional women's health and wellbeing during this time (Aldossari & Chaudhry, 2021). Our findings support and add to the few nascent qualitative studies on burnout recovery, suggesting a complex and temporally inflected process, with three areas of note for practice. First, many individuals in our study returned to work prematurely before a recovery threshold was reached or never left the workplace at all. This suggests that the challenge of fallout and by extension, leaky pipelines in STEM, lies both in its associated stigma and is not accounted for fully in traditional measures of recovery (e.g., absenteeism, return to work). This has important implications for managers and occupational health divisions who want to both support and safeguard their employee populations from further harm but do not have existing ways of assessing when a returning employee is 'job ready', nor the means to support them on a path back to engagement with their work. Second, when burnout occurs in rigidly instituted career settings, such as STEM, individuals are required to engage in liminal practices that demand highly creative and imaginative responses to who they are and where they might be going. In this regard, providing the support to do this within institutional and cultural parameters, rather than focussing on intervention strategies may be a more holistic and beneficial response to burnout in STEM workforces. Third, workers who remain employed while inadequately supported through their burnout and fallout experiences present a vicarious exposure risk to their co-workers, a notion previously tended to by Bakker and

colleagues in their body of work on burnout contagion (Bakker et al., 2005), and suggests the broader effects of organizational inaction on burnout and fallout.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although the findings in this paper represent a novel perspective to understanding the management of stress in the context of STEM careers, further studies are needed to empirically develop the concept of fallout and other stress events as a transformative process within professional lives. First, our study represents a cross-sectional examination of individual experiences that invited respondents to reflect on a relatively short period of their working lives (five years). A longitudinal approach in which respondents are able to provide greater insight into the long-term implications of various liminal rituals and exiting patterns would bear theoretical and empirical fruit and provide avenues for both interpretive study designs and quantitative validation. For instance, exploring the association between fallout rituals and the burnout episode that preceded them (e.g. chronic or acute), or exiting patterns and individual outcomes (e.g. likelihood to experience another burnout) as well as organizational impacts (e.g. organizational citizenship behaviors) would prove immensely valuable in further understanding fallout and its organizational implications.

Second, our study focused on highly qualified STEM professionals across various work and organizational settings (e.g. private sector engineering firms, public hospitals and universities) who uniformly ascribed to a Global North value system. Both national culture and STEM institutions represent strong socializing influences and are likely to affect the opportunities available to individuals and the eventual pathways taken to respond to stress events when operating 'off script'. For example, Duberley et al.'s (2006, p. 1139) study of scientific careers in the United Kingdom and New Zealand already revealed stark differences between how individuals responded to institutional pressure, with the latter commonly noting that 'simply, science sustains a lifestyle'. We believe other single-context studies would provide a necessary insight in developing tailored management approaches to STEM workforce sustainability, as would exploring STEM women who perhaps have fewer qualifications than the professionals in our study.

Conclusion

Ralph Ellis, the protagonist in H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*, claims: "when I discover who I am, I'll be free". Our respondents conform to this sentiment as they navigate a period of dislocation from their professional trajectories and socially sanctioned health, mental and employment positions in a period of suspension and transformation before being able to move on. As van Gennep (1908/2019) suggests, liminal spheres can acquire a certain autonomy in and of themselves, and from our own account, we consider fallout as one way of claiming this as a theoretically valuable and empirically important space that better acknowledges the effects of work-related stress in people's lives. Our findings have practical implications for policymakers, managers and individuals working in STEM and other highly instituted settings in which addressing the 'leaky pipeline' may require not only repairing its fissures, but also ensuring that subsequent 'overflow' stress and burnout episodes are carefully tended to in order to guarantee healthy future work trajectories.

References

- Abell, P. (2004). Narrative explanation: an alternative to variable-centered explanation? *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, *30*, 287–310.
- Ahola, K., Toppinen-Tanner, S., & Seppänen, J. (2017). Interventions to alleviate burnout symptoms and to support return to work among employees with burnout: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Burnout Research*, *4*, 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2017.02.001>
- Alam, A., & Tapia, I. S. (2020). Mapping gender equality in STEM from school to work. *UNICEF Office of Global Insight and Policy*, November, 1–19.
- Aldossari, M., & Chaudhry, S. (2021). Women and burnout in the context of a pandemic. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *28*(2), 826–834.
- Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (2002). Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual. *Journal of Management Studies*, *39*(5), 619–644.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Kreiner, G. E. (1999). “How can you do it?": Dirty work and the challenge of constructing a positive identity. *Academy of Management Review*, *24*(3), 413–434.
- Bakker, A. B., Le Blanc, P. M., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2005). Burnout contagion among intensive care nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *51*(3), 276–287.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03494.x>
- Bamberger, P. A., & Pratt, M. G. (2010). *Moving forward by looking back: Reclaiming unconventional research contexts and samples in organizational scholarship*. Academy of Management Briarcliff Manor, NY.
- Bansal, P., Smith, W. K., & Vaara, E. (2018). *New ways of seeing through qualitative research*. Academy of Management Briarcliff Manor, NY.
- Bernier, D. (1998). A study of coping: Successful recovery from severe burnout and other reactions to severe work-related stress. *Work and Stress*, *12*(1), 50–65.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02678379808256848>
- Cadaret, M. C., Hartung, P. J., Subich, L. M., & Weigold, I. K. (2017). Stereotype threat as a barrier to women entering engineering careers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *99*, 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.12.002>
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage.
- Creed, W. E. D., DeJordy, R., & Lok, J. (2010). Being the change: Resolving institutional contradiction through identity work. *Academy of Management Journal*, *53*(6), 1336–1364.
- Daskalaki, M., & Simosi, M. (2018). Unemployment as a liminoid phenomenon: Identity

trajectories in times of crisis. *Human Relations*, 71(9), 1153–1178.

Demerouti, E., & Bakker, A. (2001). The Job Demands – Resources Model of Burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499–512. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499>

Duberley, J., Cohen, L., & Mallon, M. (2006). Constructing scientific careers: Change, continuity and context. *Organization Studies*, 27(8), 1131–1151. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840606064105>

Erikson, E. H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle: Selected papers*.

Fisher, C. D., & To, M. L. (2012). Using experience sampling methodology in organizational behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(7), 865–877.

Freudenberger, H. J. (1986). The issues of staff burnout in therapeutic communities. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 18(3), 247–251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02791072.1986.10472354>

Glass, J. L., Sassler, S., Levitte, Y., & Michelmore, K. M. (2013). What's so special about stem? A comparison of women's retention in stem and professional occupations. *Social Forces*, 92(2), 723–756. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sot092>

Grey, C. (1994). Career as a project of the self and labour process discipline. *Sociology*, 28(2), 479–497.

Halbesleben, J. R. B. (2006). Sources of social support and burnout: A meta-analytic test of the conservation of resources model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(5), 1134–1145. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.5.1134>

Hall, W. M., Schmader, T., & Croft, E. (2015). Engineering Exchanges: Daily Social Identity Threat Predicts Burnout Among Female Engineers. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 6(5), 528–534. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550615572637>

Hill, A. P., & Curran, T. (2016). Multidimensional Perfectionism and Burnout: A Meta-Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 20(3), 269–288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868315596286>

Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). *Conservation of Resources A New Attempt at Conceptualizing Stress*. 44(3), 513–524.

Hobfoll, S. E. (2001). The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: Advancing conservation of resources theory. *Applied Psychology*, 50(3), 337–421. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00062>

Hobfoll, S. E., Halbesleben, J., Neveu, J.-P., & Westman, M. (2018). Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior Conservation of Resources in the Organizational Context: The Reality of Resources and Their Consequences.

Annu. Rev. Organ. Psychol. Organ. Behav, 5, 103–131.

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych>

- Holleran, S. E., Whitehead, J., Schmader, T., & Mehl, M. R. (2011). Talking shop and shooting the breeze: A study of workplace conversation and job disengagement among STEM faculty. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2(1), 65–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550610379921>
- Hom, P. W., Mitchell, T. R., Lee, T. W., & Griffeth, R. W. (2012). Reviewing employee turnover: Focusing on proximal withdrawal States and an expanded criterion. *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(5), 831–858. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027983>
- Horney, K. (1945). *Our Inner Conflicts. A Constructive Theory of Neurosis*, New York (WW Norton and Company) 1945.
- Hughes, R. M., Nzekwe, B., & Molyneaux, K. J. (2013). The Single Sex Debate for Girls in Science: A Comparison Between Two Informal Science Programs on Middle School Students' STEM Identity Formation. *Research in Science Education*, 43(5), 1979–2007. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-012-9345-7>
- Ibarra, H., & Barbulescu, R. (2010). Identity as narrative: Prevalence, effectiveness, and consequences of narrative identity work in macro work role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(1), 135–154.
- Ibarra, H., & Obodaru, O. (2016). Betwixt and between identities: Liminal experience in contemporary careers. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 36, 47–64.
- Jensen, L. E., & Deemer, E. (2019). Identity, Campus Climate, and Burnout Among Undergraduate Women in STEM Fields. *The Career Development Quarterly*
The Career Development Quarterly, 67(2), 96–109.
- Kiazad, K., Seibert, S. E., & Kraimer, M. L. (2014). Psychological contract breach and employee innovation: A conservation of resources perspective. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 87(3), 535–556. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12062>
- Klitzman, R. (2008). *When doctors become patients*. Oxford University Press.
- Korhonen, M., & Komulainen, K. (2019). The moral orders of work and health: a case of sick leave due to burnout. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 41(2), 219–233. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.12816>
- Korhonen, M., Komulainen, K., & Okkonen, V. (2020). Burnout as an identity rupture in the life course: a longitudinal narrative method. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 42(8), 1918–1933.
- Kossek, E. E., Dumas, T. L., Piszczek, M. M., & Allen, T. D. (2021). Pushing the

- Boundaries: A Qualitative Study of How STEM Women Adapted to Disrupted Work–Nonwork Boundaries During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(11), 1615–1629. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000982>
- Kreiner, G. E., Hollensbe, E. C., & Sheep, M. L. (2006). Where is the “me” among the “we”? Identity work and the search for optimal balance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(5), 1031–1057.
- Kuschel, K., Ettl, K., Díaz-García, C., & Alsos, G. A. (2020a). Stemming the gender gap in STEM entrepreneurship—insights into women’s entrepreneurship in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 16(1), 1–15.
- Kuschel, K., Ettl, K., Díaz-García, C., & Alsos, G. A. (2020b). Stemming the gender gap in STEM entrepreneurship – insights into women’s entrepreneurship in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 16(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-020-00642-5>
- Lasalvia, A., Amaddeo, F., Porru, S., Carta, A., Tardivo, S., Bovo, C., Ruggeri, M., & Bonetto, C. (2021). Levels of burn-out among healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and their associated factors: a cross-sectional study in a tertiary hospital of a highly burdened area of north-east Italy. *BMJ Open*, 11(1), e045127.
- Lavner, J. A., & Clark, M. A. (2017). Workload and marital satisfaction over time: Testing lagged spillover and crossover effects during the newlywed years. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 101, 67–76.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Cohen, J. B. (1977). Environmental stress. In *Human behavior and environment* (pp. 89–127). Springer.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer publishing company.
- Lee, R. L., & Ashforth, B. E. (1996). A meta-analytic examination of the correlates of the three dimensions of job burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(2), 123–133. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.2.123>
- Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (1999). Six areas of worklife: A model of the organizational context of burnout. *Journal of Health and Human Services Administration*, 21(4), 472–489.
- Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2016). Latent burnout profiles: A new approach to understanding the burnout experience. *Burnout Research*, 3(4), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2016.09.001>
- Locke, K. (2001). *Grounded theory in management research*. Sage.

- Luyckx, K., Duriez, B., Klimstra, T. A., & De Witte, H. (2010). Identity statuses in young adult employees: Prospective relations with work engagement and burnout. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 77(3), 339–349.
- Malesic, J. (2022). *The End of Burnout: Why Work Drains Us and How To Build Better Lives*. University of California Press.
- Martinez, A., & Christnacht, C. (2021). *Women Making Gains in STEM Occupations but Still Underrepresented*. America Counts: Stories Behind the Numbers. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/01/women-making-gains-in-stem-occupations-but-still-underrepresented.html>
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World Psychiatry*, 15(2), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311>
- Mathieson, C. M., & Stam, H. J. (1995). Reneotiating identity: cancer narratives. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 17(3), 283–306.
- Muenchberger, H., Kendall, E., & Neal, R. (2008). Identity transition following traumatic brain injury: A dynamic process of contraction, expansion and tentative balance. *Brain Injury*, 22(12), 979–992.
- Navarro, J., Roe, R. A., & Artiles, M. I. (2015). Taking time seriously: Changing practices and perspectives in Work/Organizational Psychology. *Revista de Psicología Del Trabajo y de Las Organizaciones*, 31(3), 135–145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rpto.2015.07.002>
- Obodaru, O. (2017). Forgone, but not forgotten: Toward a theory of forgone professional identities. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60(2), 523–553.
- OECD. (2017). The under-representation of women in STEM fields. In *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle* (pp. 105–112). OECD Publishing.
- Pedersen, D. E., & Minnotte, K. L. (2017). Workplace Climate and STEM Faculty Women's Job Burnout. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy*, 29(1–2), 45–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08952833.2016.1230987>
- Petriglieri, J. L. (2011). Under threat: Responses to and the consequences of threats to individuals' identities. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(4), 641–662.
- Picho, K., Rodriguez, A., & Finnie, L. (2013). Exploring the moderating role of context on the mathematics performance of females under stereotype threat: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 153(3), 299–333. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2012.737380>
- Pratt, M. G. (2000). The good, the bad, and the ambivalent: Managing identification among

- Amway distributors. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 45(3), 456–493.
- Pratt, M. G. (2008). Fitting oval pegs into round holes: Tensions in evaluating and publishing qualitative research in top-tier North American journals. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3), 481–509.
- Pratt, M. G., Lepisto, D. A., & Dane, E. (2018). The Hidden Side of Trust: Supporting and Sustaining Leaps of Faith among Firefighters. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 64(2), 398–434. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839218769252>
- Price, S., Doucet, S., & Hall, L. M. G. (2014). The historical social positioning of nursing and medicine: Implications for career choice, early socialization and interprofessional collaboration. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 28(2), 103–109. <https://doi.org/10.3109/13561820.2013.867839>
- Purvanova, R. K., & Muros, J. P. (2010). Gender differences in burnout: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 77(2), 168–185. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2010.04.006>
- Reed, C., & Thomas, R. (2021). Embracing indeterminacy: on being a liminal professional. *British Journal of Management*, 32(1), 219–234.
- Riach, K., Rumens, N., & Tyler, M. (2014). Un/doing Chrononormativity: Negotiating Ageing, Gender and Sexuality in Organizational Life. *Organization Studies*, 35(11), 1677–1698. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840614550731>
- Rohland, B. M., Kruse, G. R., & Rohrer, J. E. (2004). Validation of a single-item measure of burnout against the Maslach Burnout Inventory among physicians. *Stress and Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*, 20(2), 75–79.
- Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE Publications.
- Salminen, S., Andreou, E., Holma, J., Pekkonen, M., & Mäkikangas, A. (2017). Narratives of burnout and recovery from an agency perspective : A two-year longitudinal study. *Burnout Research*, 7(August), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2017.08.001>
- Sassler, S., Michelmore, K., & Smith, K. (2017). A tale of two majors: Explaining the gender gap in STEM Employment among computer science and engineering degree holders. *Social Sciences*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci6030069>
- Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1996). *Maslach Burnout Inventory -- General Survey (GS)*. January.
- Semeijn, J. (2019). In flight again with wings that were once broken ; effects of post-traumatic growth and personal resources on burnout recovery. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 12(5), 387–403. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWHM-01->

2019-0006

- Shah, A., Lopez, I., Surnar, B., Sarkar, S., Duthely, L. M., Pillai, A., Salguero, T. T., & Dhar, S. (2021). Turning the Tide for Academic Women in STEM: A Postpandemic Vision for Supporting Female Scientists. *ACS Nano*, *15*(12), 18647–18652.
<https://doi.org/10.1021/acsnano.1c09686>
- Sullivan, S. E., & Baruch, Y. (2009). Advances in career theory and research: A critical review and agenda for future exploration. *Journal of Management*, *35*(6), 1542–1571.
- Sveningsson, S., & Alvesson, M. (2003). Managing managerial identities: Organizational fragmentation, discourse and identity struggle. *Human Relations*, *56*(10), 1163–1193.
- Swider, B. W., & Zimmerman, R. D. (2010). Born to burnout: A meta-analytic path model of personality, job burnout, and work outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *76*(3), 487–506. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2010.01.003>
- Tassabehji, R., Harding, N., Lee, H., & Dominguez-Pery, C. (2021). From female computers to male computers: Or why there are so few women writing algorithms and developing software. In *Human Relations* (Vol. 74, Issue 8).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726720914723>
- Tempest, S., & Starkey, K. (2004). The effects of liminality on individual and organizational learning. *Organization Studies*, *25*(4), 507–527.
- Tomlinson, J. (2014). Lessons from “the other side”: teaching and learning from doctors’ illness narratives. *BMJ*, *348*.
- Turner, W. (1969). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure*. Cornell University Press.
- Van Gennep, A. (1908). *Rites de passage - A classical study of cultural celebrations*. University of Chicago Press.
- Van Gennep, A. (2019). *The rites of passage*. University of Chicago Press.
- VanHeuvelen, T., & Quadlin, N. (2021). Gender Inequality in STEM Employment and Earnings at Career Entry: Evidence from Millennial Birth Cohorts. *Socius*, *7*(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/23780231211064392>
- Wang, M.-T., & Degol, J. L. (2017). Gender gap in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM): Current knowledge, implications for practice, policy, and future directions. *Educational Psychology Review*, *29*(1), 119–140.
- Wynarczyk, P., & Renner, C. (2006). The ‘gender gap’ in the scientific labour market. *Equal Opportunities International*, *25*(8), 660–673.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/02610150610719128>
- Xanthopoulou, D., Bakker, A. B., Dollard, M. F., Demerouti, E., Schaufeli, W. B., Taris, T.

W., & Schreurs, P. J. G. (2007). When do job demands particularly predict burnout? The moderating role of job resources. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(8), 766–786. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710837714>

Yanos, P. T., Roe, D., & Lysaker, P. H. (2010). The Impact of Illness Identity on Recovery from Severe Mental Illness. *American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation*, 13(2), 73–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487761003756860>

Yoshida, K. K. (1993). Reshaping of self: a pendular reconstruction of self and identity among adults with traumatic spinal cord injury. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 15(2), 217–245. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.ep11346888>

Zilberman, A., & Ice, L. (2021). Why computer occupations are behind strong STEM employment growth in the 2019–29 decade. *Beyond the Numbers, US Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 10(1).

Tables and Figures

Figure 1

Conceptual framework of post-burnout liminality



Table 1*Respondent profiles*

<i>#</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Job-Industry</i>	<i>Country</i>
1	Lisa	38	Data scientist, Mathematics	Australia
2	Leanne	34	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
3	Amelia	30	Computer programmer, Engineering	Australia
4	Simone	35	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
5	Andrea	35	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
6	Alicia	35	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
7	Shelley	54	Organisational psychologist, Psychology	Australia
8	Ruby	51	Clinician, Health science	Australia
9	Catherine	25	Clinical therapist, Psychology	Australia
10	Nicole	31	Doctor, Medicine	South Africa
11	Jasmine	32	Data scientist, Health science	Australia
12	Vicky	39	Engineer, Engineering	England
13	Kylie	27	Computer programmer, Engineering	Australia
14	Tamara	35	Clinical therapist, Psychology	South Africa
15	Jessica	33	Organisational psychologist, Psychology	America
16	Catriona	33	Data scientist, Science	Australia
17	Imogen	48	Forensics, Psychology	America
18	Ramona	51	Clinician, Health science	Australia

Figure 2

Data structure

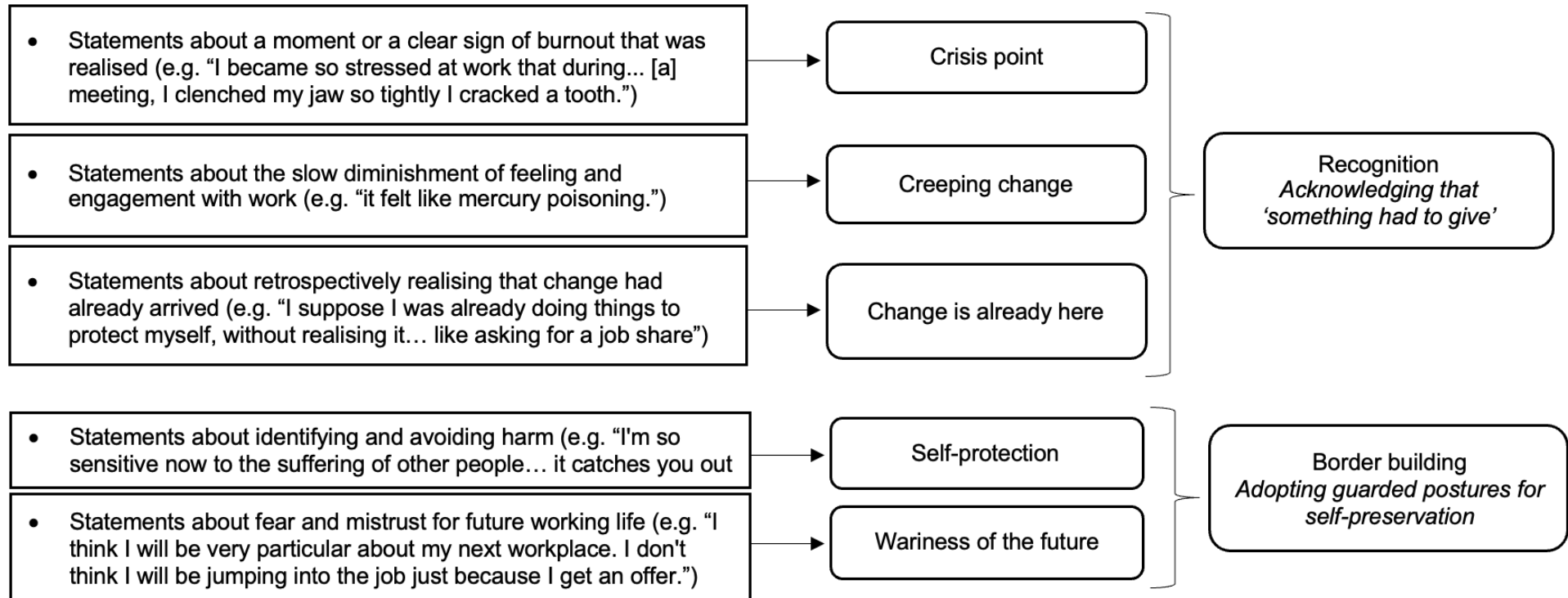
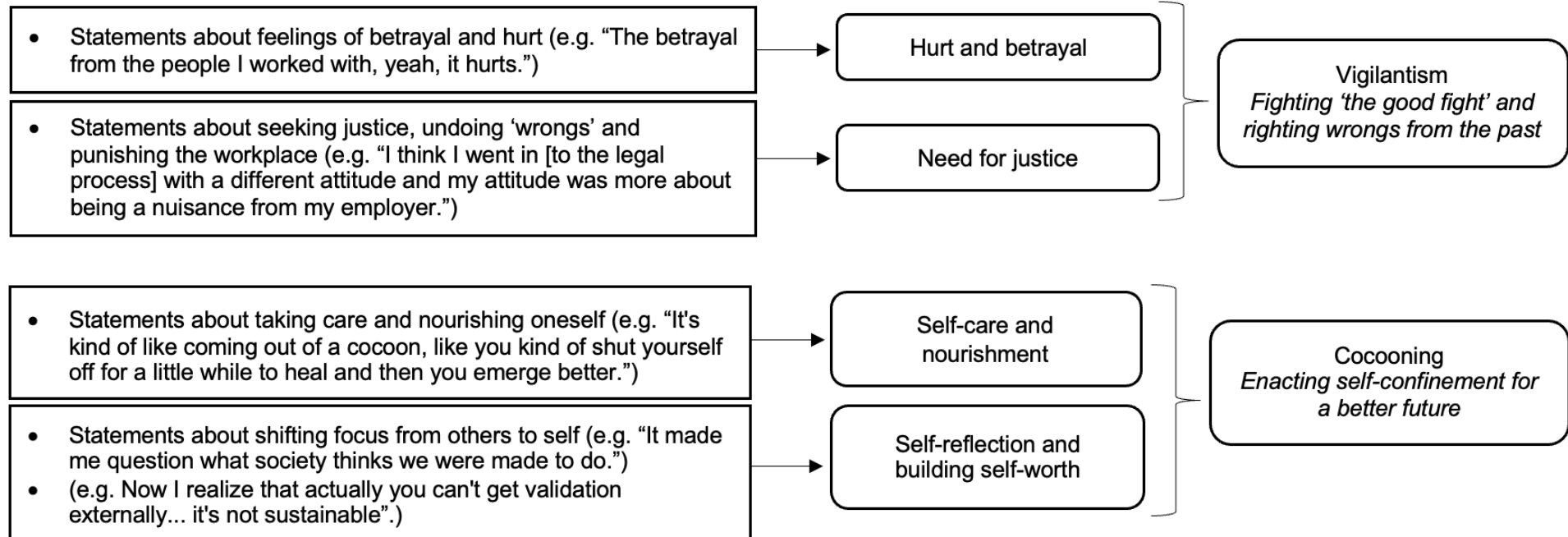


Figure 2

Data structure cont'd



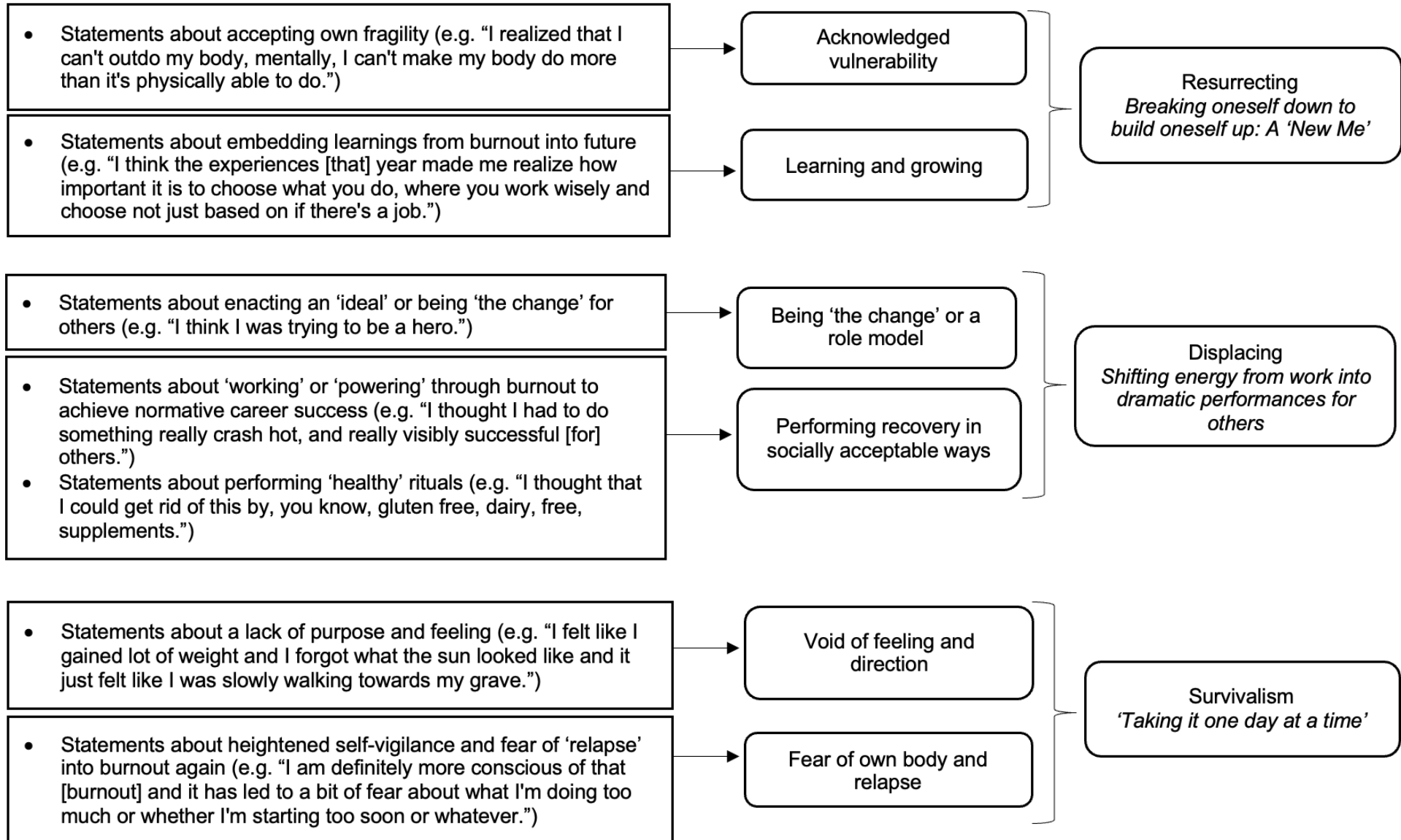
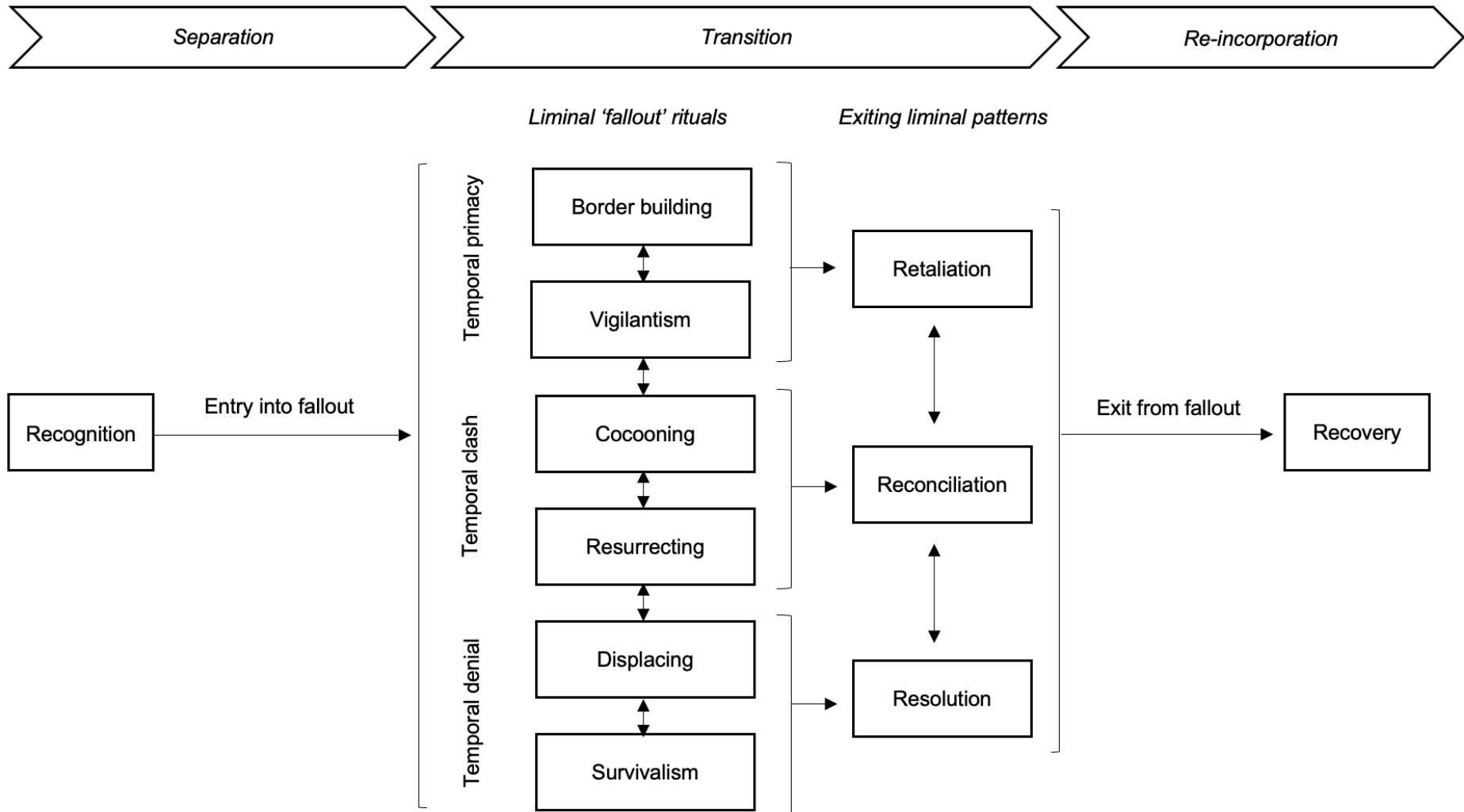


Figure 3

A liminal model of Fallout



4.2 Paper 2: Salted Wounds

Salted Wounds: Exploring Modes of Secondary Victimization in the Organization of Burnt Out Subjects

(Lee, M.Y.W. & Riach, K.)

This paper is targeted at *Human Relations*, an A* ranked journal by the ABDC. In a former iteration, it was presented by the first author as a full paper at the European Group of Organization Studies in July 2022 where it received a round of peer review.

The feedback from this presentation helped provide a sharpened focus – in particular, it encouraged the first author to return to the data and engage in a deeper level of analysis around the specific ways in which violence was enacted through organizations.

This process has resulted in the current manuscript which clearly identifies several modes of organizational secondary victimization.

Abstract

In this paper we explore organizational responses to burnout as a form of organizational violence and ask: how do organizational responses to burnout generate further modes of violence? In particular, we develop the concept of secondary victimization, situating this as a mode of organizational violence through the accounts of 43 individuals who have experienced burnout. In doing so we advance understanding of post-burnout organizational lives through exploring how organizational practices, policies and technologies generate forms of organizational secondary victimization. Our findings suggest three varieties of secondary victimization in organizational settings – organizational gaslighting, passive neglect and violent goodwill – that provide insight into how trajectories and experiences after burnout are shaped, governed and come to matter in individuals' lives. We suggest that attending to the organization of secondary victimization is vital in order to recognize the importance of contextually-situated experiences of burnout and occupationally-induced illness more broadly in ways that reclaim positions of accountability and responsibility beyond the individual.

Introduction

Burnout, a condition emerging from workplaces, can be considered a part of the 'violence woven into an everyday organizational logic, that of maximizing productivity' (Costas & Grey, 2019, p. 1579). While much literature has focused on the managerial benefits that might be reaped from organizational intervention in burnout – such as productivity, retention and engagement (Ahola et al., 2017; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) – the 'dark side' of such organizational responses has been insufficiently explored. In this we paper we situate burnout as part of the 'blood and bruises' of organizational life (Costas & Grey, 2019, p. 1579) and consider the ways in which violence is 'baked in' to organizational responses to burnt out subjects. In particular, we explore the following question: how do organizational responses to burnout generate further modes of violence?

We answer this question through a focus on how organizing structures, processes and technologies constitute a hitherto unexplored form of violence in organizational settings – secondary victimization. Secondary victimization provides the opportunity to understand how consequential actions, practices and organizing processes 'after' a traumatic or discriminatory workplace event are intimately connected to the systematic, cultural and structural production of organizational inequality. Doing so provides one way of recovering the bodies and voices that are often theoretically and physically rendered absent by organizations. It allows us to extend concerns surrounding stress and burnout beyond an immediate focus on individuals and singular episodes of workplace stress. It further opens vistas to conceptually consider the legacies, practices and instituted experiences that those events trigger across times and spaces that sit at the normative thresholds of 'organizational concern'.

The study is derived from 43 accounts of individuals who have experienced burnout and through an iterative analysis explores how organizational responses perpetuate a secondary assault on individuals in which the harms of an initial experience are exacerbated. We begin with an overview of the burnout scholarship and outline how its underpinnings make it ripe for problematization (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011), before resituating it as a mode of organizational violence. In particular, we develop the concept of secondary victimization as a mode of organizational violence to open vistas for understanding organizational responses to burnout. We discuss our methods and present three varieties of victimization that emerged from our analysis – organizational gaslighting, passive neglect and violent goodwill – to analytically illustrate the modes of secondary

victimization enacted upon burnt out subjects. Following this, we propose an emergent understanding of organizational secondary victimization and conclude with a discussion of the implications this has for burnout and other violations of organizational life.

The problem of burnout

Unlike other illnesses, burnout is not a condition of individual bodies but of workplaces (WHO, 2019). That is, burnout does not arise from a pathological fault line within the body, but from the stressors encountered in organizational settings and engendered by organizational conditions (e.g. Aronsson et al., 2017; Leiter & Maslach, 1999; Purba & Demou, 2019). In particular, burnout scholars (Leiter & Maslach, 1999) have identified six areas of worklife that predict the emergence of burnout – workload; control; social support; rewards; values alignment; and the degree of fairness present in organizations. Recognizing the role of organizations in creating, managing and shaping burnout is not new in the management scholarship but remains underexplored from critical perspectives, and has only recently gained a foothold within the medical community. We see this in the recent reforms made by the World Health Organization (WHO), which ‘upgraded’ burnout’s status from ‘a state of vital exhaustion’ to an ‘occupational syndrome’ emerging from unsuccessfully managed work stress (WHO, 2019). Central to this conceptualization, however, is the rendering of burnout as firstly, a clinical episode or discrete ‘stress event’ (Lazarus & Cohen, 1977; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), secondly, as a condition less ‘legitimate’ than other stress-related illnesses such as anxiety, depression and grief⁴, and finally, as a somatic triad of extreme exhaustion, withdrawal, and overwhelming hopelessness (Freudenberger, 1974; Tavella et al., 2021). This preoccupation with symptomatic expression, in particular, has guided a broadly person-centric focus within the burnout scholarship and treated burnt out individuals as clinical subjects (Maslach, 2017). This can be seen in the swathe of studies dedicated to identifying the personal traits that make an individual susceptible to burnout, from personality factors (Alarcon et al., 2009; Hill & Curran, 2016; Swider & Zimmerman, 2010) to the recent renaissance of pathologically-driven studies (Bayes et al., 2021; Parker & Tavella, 2022; Penz et al., 2018) aimed at pinpointing clinical markers for burnout within individual physiology.

⁴ In recent reforms made by the WHO in 2019, the organization stopped short of designating burnout with ‘disease status’. That is, burnout is not considered a legitimate medical diagnosis unlike other listed conditions such as depression, anxiety and grief. Disease status is significant because it paves the way for reimbursed access to medicines, care and other social benefits (e.g. sick leave) for sufferers. As a global medical authority, the WHO designation influences health policy and disease recognition on an international scale and subsequently, the vast majority of countries do not recognize or provide reimbursed care for burnout.

A number of scholars have attempted to balance this tendency toward 'fixing people, rather than the job situation' (Maslach, 2017, p. 143) by calling for a re-orientation within the literature that pays greater attention to the organizational conditions of burnout (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Maslach, 2017; Schaufeli et al., 2009). In particular, prominent burnout scholar Christina Maslach (2017) suggested that this re-orientation begin by redrawing the contours of burnout not as a psychological problem, but as a 'workplace hazard'. Implicit in this statement is the presence or potential of harm in organizational settings, a notion which has largely been absent from existing explorations of the role played by organizations in burnout. While vast, the extant scholarship on the organizational role in burnout largely reflects managerial perspectives, that is, studies have centred on interceding in burnout's progress through managerial interventions – such as voice (e.g. Holland et al., 2013; Sherf et al., 2021), job crafting (e.g. Petrou et al., 2015; Tims et al., 2016), work scheduling (e.g. Dimou et al., 2016; Jamal, 2004) and mindfulness (e.g. Anclair et al., 2018; Fendel et al., 2020; Suleiman-Martos et al., 2020) – in order to improve managerial outcomes, such as productivity, employee engagement, and turnover (Ahola et al., 2017; Ivanovic et al., 2020; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Scanlan & Still, 2019).

Underlying this scholarship is the presumption that burnout can be readily identified, preferably early, and that managerial intercession can successfully neutralise its effects without additional harm. Largely absent from this body of knowledge is the lived experiences of individuals who are the recipients of these interventions, and further to this, an understanding of what happens when burnout fully emerges without organizational cognizance. In other words, what remains poorly understood and is the focus of this paper, is the role played by organizations, their systems, structures and technologies in how individuals negotiate and experience working life *after* burnout has already occurred. A rare example of such a study can be found in Korhonen and Komulainen's (2019) paper which showed how organizational structures shaped not only the self-concept of burnt out individuals (the credibly sick, the ideal recovery, the expert patient) but also how sick leave as an organizational technology was used to embody and extend the stigma associated with burnout as a mental health condition and moral failing.

More broadly, the role of institutional and organizing principles has been well-rehearsed in terms of their impact on 'worker' subjects; the 'ideal worker' for instance has been noted as embodying the principles of unending energy and time with little need for rest and recovery (Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Neoliberal discourses have also been

noted as playing an important function in the individualization and self-responsibility of the body in ways that silence the environmental and structural facilitators of injury through, for example, cultural practices that emphasize resilience and wellness (Dale & Burrell, 2014). However, less is known about the reverberations of these regimes for individuals and how they shape the experience of burnout as a potentially traumatic workplace injury. To explore this further, we move on to reconsider the concern with burnout beyond the individual, instead situating organizational responses to burnout as a mode of violence in organizations.

Violence in organizations

While management scholars have displayed a growing interest in violence in organizational settings (Costas & Grey, 2019), there remains much ambivalence around how violence is conceptualized in organization studies, and 'one may argue that the very way in which violence is defined constitutes a political question, embedded in particular historical, culture and social contexts' (Costas & Grey, 2019, p. 1575). Scholars of management studies have thus focused on a range of 'violences' enacted in organizing regimes and settings that include both physical and symbolic manifestations (Hearn, 1994). For example, Bishop et al.'s (2005) study of violence against frontline workers explored how physical assaults were experienced and then 'disappeared' through managerial responses. Their findings suggested the presence of aftershocks of a physical assault might appear through a socially-sanctioned violence that uses the structures, processes and discourses of the 'formal organisation' to render invisible lived experiences of harm.

Importantly, although a spectrum of organizational violence is both evident and possible, much of the emerging literature has focused on the more spectacular modes of violence that take place systemically in, through and between organizations. Systemic violence examines the ways in which organizations (re)produce violence around existing lines of normativity, such as gender (Hearn, 1994; Linstead, 1997), race (Banerjee, 2008) and politics (Chertkovskaya & Paulsson, 2021; Varman, 2018; Varman & Al-Amoudi, 2016). Examples can be found in studies of genocide (Arendt, 1970; Stokes & Gabriel, 2010) and institutional abuse, such as torture (Chwastiak, 2015; Kenny, 2016; Linstead et al., 2014). In particular, Kenny's (2016) work on child abuse in Ireland explores the ways in which inter-organizational violence was perpetuated and maintained across organizations through the creation of an 'abject other' which denied victims protective rights and pastoral

care. What emerges from these studies is that organizational systems structurally subdue and normalize spectacular acts of violence as a quotidian part of organizational life.

Although studies of such sensational violence – which take place in extreme contexts or on ‘grand’ scales – are valuable, they risk effacing the power and impacts of less stunning modes of violence that take place in ordinary organizational settings, processes and technologies. This notion has found purchase in more radical perspectives of organizational violence, such as Bergin and Westwood (2003) who, using the case of academic publishing, consider all organizing processes inherently embedded with symbolic violence. Significant to these more radical perspectives is the absence of malicious intent, which suggests that violence can occur simply by re-enacting rituals of daily life when supported by an ‘extensive ideological and institutional apparatus’ (Chertkovskaya & Paulsson, 2021, p. 47). These forms of violence are pernicious in nature (Davies, 2018; Gamu & Dauvergne, 2018; Nixon, 2020) and its agents are particularly difficult to identify and connect with subsequent harms, given their seemingly benign or even beneficent qualities, for example, income generation for individuals (Chertkovskaya & Paulsson, 2021). In this paper we suggest that small but precipitous enactments of violence are woven into the logic of everyday neoliberal work structures and values and constitute a symbolic violence. Through this lens, burnout may be connected to a vast capitalist logic in which ‘sickness is defined as the inability to work’ (Berlant, 2007, p. 754) and individuals are expected to enact a – preferably speedy – restitution to productivity (Ahola et al., 2017; Korhonen & Komulainen, 2019). In particular, we suggest that considering the modest and seemingly benign aspects of organizational life – e.g. organizing individuals through human resource management (HR) systems – within this framework are particularly valuable for understanding the broader dynamics that constitute organizational violence. These include quotidian rituals, processes and technologies embedded in the social life of organizations that constitute a ‘continuous, uniform pressure... a pressure totally familiar but hardly perceived’ (Elias, 1978, p. 450). For example, the measurement of performance through invariant ‘key performance indicators’ (KPIs), the passive surveillance of individuals through open plan offices, and productivity management software that erodes the borders between personal and productive time.

Further to conceptualizing burnout itself as a form of symbolic harm, this paper specifically explores how organizational responses to burnout constitute a further mode of violence for already injured subjects. In doing so, it considers a hitherto unexplored

concept within the organizational violence scholarship, secondary victimization. In the context of this article, we understand secondary violence to refer to instances where, or experiences when, the processes designed to help instead perpetuate another mode of harm. This paper continues by outlining the conditions of secondary victimization in relation to burnout suggesting a particular quality of secondary victimisation that provokes the consideration of cycles or layers of violence, in which harm is first enacted through organizing systems, and the re-enacted through the same processes. In particular, we explore how secondary victimization, like other 'modest' acts of violence, might even be perpetuated through 'goodwill' responses that create harm while hoping for healing.

Secondary victimization and burnout

To explore the effects of organizing processes on burnt out subjects, we use the concept of secondary victimization, which is when a survivor or victim of a crime is subject to negating and harmful experiences, usually through the judicial or complaint system or other institutional mechanism, that blames or targets them (Orth, 2002; Strobl, 2010; Wemmers, 2013). The literature on secondary victimization within legal scholarship is significant, and what 'definitions all have in common is the idea that victims are injured once by the crime and then a second time by justice authorities' (Wemmers, 2013, p. 22). This may include methods such as: focusing on the victim's behaviour preceding the event; using personal characteristics to impugn their character; questioning the validity of their immediate and ongoing responses; or simply disbelief (Campbell & Raja, 1999). Further, Paluch (2012) suggests that within accounts of secondary victimization, the personal psychology of complainants is wielded as a means to bind the issue to individuals (e.g. defensive attribution theory (Walster, 1966)). This enduring personalization serves to absolve broader institutional structures and creates a false premise: secondary victimization only poses a threat to those exhibiting a failure of self-regulation. This both exacerbates the trauma of the initial experience and creates a separate traumatic process that Martin and Powell (1994) term 'the second assault'. Developing this, we consider secondary victimization in organizational life as the harm or violence caused through organizational and organizing conditions, practices and responses that surround an initially harmful or violent experience or episode. In doing so, three interrelated considerations are important to note.

The first is what shapes the production of secondary victimization in terms of the organizational and cultural mechanisms or instituted infrastructures through which the

aftermath of burnout operates. In relation to burnout, it is important to consider the voices that are able to shape and influence conceptualizations of burnout, and what modes of knowledge are seen as (more or less) legitimating bases from which to do so. For example, the importance of claims-making through medicalization has been well documented within the sociological literature as infused with power and politics, as has the role of biomedical gatekeepers in setting the parameters of what constitutes a 'real' illness (Conrad & Schneider, 1992; Jutel, 2009). We see this most clearly in historical conceptualizations which minimized burnout as a form of 'dysphoria', and its classification in a nosological manual under a section titled: 'difficulties relating to life management' (WHO, 2019) – an explicit suggestion its underlying cause was personal in nature.

The second aspect is to consider when and how does the production of burnout matter. In other words, at what point do organizational, medical, or social ascriptions play a formative part of an individual's experience of burnout? For burnout, this is particularly important given it is an illness experienced by some bodies and not others in what ostensibly appears to be the same work environs. For example, it may mean 'ill' bodies are required to defend themselves from the suspicion of those that remain 'well' in spite of their similar exposure. Such dynamics inform a moral economy whereby the ability to designate the 'rightfully' ill can have significant material consequences as it enables social and structural recognition for sufferers, that is, access to affordable medical treatment, insurance and sick leave amongst other resources (Conrad & Schneider, 1992; Korhonen & Komulainen, 2019). This is particularly important for burnout given its suspended diagnostic status in which individuals embody symptoms not duly explicable to extant medical knowledge. As a result, their experiences may be subsequently denied endorsement, resulting in a tension of legitimate 'claims making' within and through systems which caused – and have the power to designate – un/wellness (Kroll-Smith & Floyd, 1997).

Finally, it is vital to consider the systems of governance around burnout, that is, the modes or authorities that need to be rendered visible in order to interrogate what effects or differential impacts they might have. For example, Tyler and Slater (2018, p. 724) draw on the commentary of Costa et al. (2012) to suggest that current narratives around mental illness forming a 'normal' part of life may mean that 'sociological questions about the causes of mental distress are frequently airbrushed out of the picture'. Of particular interest to us here is how systems that govern burnout serve the purpose and agendas of

certain stakeholders rather than others. This means there will be differential consequences – with the potential to both harm and protect – that are occluded through the chains of effects and flows of power that inform the aftermath of burnout.

In developing our understanding of burnout within an organizational context from a concept grounded in legal studies, we are not only deliberately inferring that such workplace effects of post-burnout should be protected at a legislative level, but that institutions and organizations play a central role in the experience of post-burnout lives. For example, Campbell and Raja's (1999, p. 98) account of female veterans' experience of justice seeking after sexual assault illustrates how official and military healthcare professionals played a central role in secondary victimization. Contrary to simple mismanagement, they suggest that the unresponsive treatment of victims benefits organizations: if victims can be 'weeded out' or processed more quickly, then more resources (time, energy, manpower) can be freed for 'productive' or valued work. For this reason, there is an important role organizational scholars play in exploring how the 'flow on effect' and legacies of work-related inequalities are rendered visible through attention to institutional, structural, cultural and organizing processes that perpetuate secondary victimization.

Methods

This study forms part of a broader project exploring working lives after burnout. In order to attend to the lived experience of organizational harm, the first author conducted 43 in-depth interviews with individuals who identified as having experienced burnout within the last five years. Respondents were recruited using a purposive snowball sampling method, in which initial seeds were identified based on their occupational and sectoral links and asked to promote the study through their social networks. We specifically sought a range of different occupational sectors and professions and also advertised publicly via various channels – the University Twitter account, newsletters, LinkedIn, and a custom website which was built specifically to promote the study and search engine optimized. This network approach allowed us to capture a group of individuals typically neglected in studies of burnout – those not currently participating in the formal workforce (M. Leiter, personal communication, May 23, 2019) – and resulted in a wide sample from different types of organizational and national settings (see Table 1) though were mainly drawn from the Global North. Individuals were screened in an open-ended conversation ('tell us a little about your burnout experience') which allowed the researchers to retrospectively identify

and code symptoms of burnout through the resulting transcripts. These early conversations, though initially intended for logistical purposes (screening, scheduling interviews), were already providing deep and textured insight into the experience of burnout in organizational settings with some initial 'screening' calls being up to 70 minutes long. Because of this, careful fieldnotes were kept by the first researcher who worked iteratively and in parallel to fieldwork with the second researcher through a process of memoing which would later form the basis of data analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

** INSERT TABLE 1 HERE **

The interviews often took place across multiple interactions. Some respondents, still reeling from the cognitive effects of burnout, described difficulties in concentrating and engaging over a longer period of time; a symptom recently echoed by a number of clinical studies (Bayes et al., 2021; Tavella et al., 2021). Others found recollecting some of their experiences traumatic and wanted to take breaks before continuing another day. In these situations, the researcher sought to be highly responsive to respondents, giving them multiple options to finish the interview, as well as the opportunity to continue the dialogue at another time. Many of them took up this offer, with extended email, text and instant messaging conversations in the months after the initial interview. Overall, the average length of the interactions with each participant was 136 minutes, which resulted in a corpus of over 1300 pages of transcribed text plus copious fieldnotes and supporting artefacts from these extended interactions. The study and all its associated materials received institutional ethics approval after a rigorous process involving more than 20 steps and included attention to issues of pastoral care, consent and assent as a primary and ongoing concern (Lewis & Graham, 2007). Many of our respondents described a sense of ambiguity that shrouded their burnout: 'Was it really burnout?' (Rachel, management consultant); or 'Was it me?' (Raymond, risk consultant) and were also motivated to seek 'answers' or a means to understand what they described as a transformative experience. The researcher in this instance made herself available for any further conversations – not included in the final data set – and ensured they had adequate care systems in place or knew where to seek support.

Analysis was undertaken using a three-stage process that moved iteratively between different data sources and theoretical ideas. We began by undertaking an inductive first order coding that identified the experiences of burnout. This allowed for the

identification of patterns and attributions between different experiences, actors, feelings and events whereby we began to see the emergence of different modes of burnout positioning. Of particular interest was the emergence of a series of analytical relationships that oscillated between respondents' embodied experience of burnout and the broader practices or actions that occurred, emerged or were attributed to their experiences during and after burnout. We then used these analytical relationships as a basis for undertaking a 'deeper dive' into particular empirical moments whereby post-burnout as a phenomenon appeared to have been fixed, shaped or governed in a particular way by organizational responses, from which the three varieties of secondary victimization emerged, as outlined below. Throughout the process, attention was also paid to the specific national, occupational, and sectoral contexts of each respondent which we have highlighted, where relevant, in our findings. See Table 2 for a sample of the data analysis.

** INSERT TABLE 2 HERE **

Findings: Modes of Secondary Victimization

Our analysis suggests that secondary victimization is central to the organizing and subsequent lived experience of organizational burnout that rests on the simultaneous recognition and negation of burnout as a phenomenon, and in turn people's experiences of it as a workplace injury. In particular, we identified three ways in which organizations perpetuated secondary victimization: organizational gaslighting, passive neglect and violent goodwill. We detail our findings in the following sections and in doing so, have sought to capture living through the ambiguity of burnout and the compulsive pull towards trying to 'know' or 'fix' what burnout is – in the words of Sam, an IT professional in the sports industry, 'there wasn't a particular day or moment, you know? Just a feeling that I knew wanted to be gone'.

Organizational gaslighting: 'Is it me or...?'

We found considerable support for structurally enacted 'gaslighting' of our respondents – that is, the purposive manipulation of individuals to promulgate an unsoundness of perception, judgment and mind. Importantly, gaslighting as an organizational response took place not as clearly defined episodes or singular events, but through an atmosphere of ambiguity that served to destabilize individuals and render them dependent on the same organizing processes that initially caused them harm. Our respondents articulated a series of organizational responses which contributed to this miasmatic experience and denied and

invalidated their experiences of burnout and the workplace. These circulated around the negotiations and challenges of attributing what was a significant and intimate experience to external factors beyond individuals and their own body, such as working conditions or organizational culture which normalized extreme responses. We present these as a series of actions, rather than a process, in Figure 1 below and discuss them in more detail.

**** INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE ****

First, our respondents' concerns around burnout and the working conditions surrounding its emergence were repeatedly dismissed as invalid, untrue or simply construed as 'never to have existed'. We see this most clearly in the case of Marcus, a senior executive at a global financial services firm who proactively communicated his concerns around workload to senior management, and even attempted to resign on several occasions but was 'talked around' each time:

In the rare instances where I put forward the challenges I was facing or the workload or the individuals that were causing particular pain points the comment I always got from my boss was, you know, you're so well respected here. The CEO really respects you, you've got everyone's respect here, it's in your head.

This dismissal prompted self-questioning, sowed self-doubt and further undermined their already diminished professional confidence – reduced self-efficacy being a defining feature of burnout (Freudenberger, 1974; Schaufeli et al., 1996). Second, when these concerns grew outsized and could no longer be dismissed, they were imputed to an individual failing, such as an inherent character flaw (indifference, incompetence, a lack of will), or a (corporeal) vulnerability (physical weakness, emotional sensitivity, relationship breakdown). Most were told 'basically it's your fault, you're just not working hard enough or smart enough' (Bernadette, human resources professional) and were subjected to processes aimed at correcting perceived individual failings through a managerialist framework. For example, when brand manager Jennifer suggested that recent high turnover and lack of resourcing in the firm was affecting decision making; delaying projects; impeding the ability to meet financial targets; and personally affecting her through stress and anxiety, her manager suggested she undergo a resilience training program to learn how to 'better cope with ambiguity' and 'learn how to do more with less'. Similarly Tamsin, who was working as a chef at the time of her first burnout experience was cast as

malingering and self-important by her organization: 'I wouldn't dare ask for time off or raise any issues to my Head Chef or my Executive Chef cause they would just say: "get over yourself, what are you talking about?"'.

This continual trace of individualization could also be reinforced by medical professionals, For example, Kelly, a senior human resources executive said: 'I found out later that my doctor in his notes wrote that I had a nervous breakdown which was very hard to hear') and assimilated by respondents, whose post-burnout strategies often became anatomized through a focus on specific symptoms or (physical) consequences – such as hair loss, panic attacks, migraines, weight fluctuations – rather than consider the cumulative effects and underlying causes of its development. For a number of respondents, recovery involved professional help in the pursuit of 'a better self'. The account by Alyssa, a medical specialist, is typical:

That's one of the things that kicked off seeing the psychologist about trying to help restructure my thinking around things like that and the whole growth mindset, as opposed to a fixed mindset. In terms of that need to look at feedback in terms of, it's not saying that I am a bad person or I'm not worthy or I'm not good enough. It's just that the thing that I did could be improved and therefore use it as an opportunity to be like, oh, well I can be better and this is how to do it.

While these self-oriented interventions helped support a degree of control and agency over the burnout experience, at the same time, they decentred a focus on reflecting on broader institutional or occupational features that also contributed towards their burnout.

The third act of organizational gaslighting involved the normalization of extreme responses, that is, the recognition and establishment of burnout as a 'natural outcome' of the working world, and the organizing processes designed to remediate individual bodies as reasonable corrective measures. Sam described how the industry's team sport culture manifested in a 'hero mentality' where individuals were encouraged to 'take one for the team... put it on their back and try and get it all done... and later recharge'. Burnout in the sports industry could be predicted based on the schedule of sporting matches and was felt by Sam who burnt out 'like clockwork' every year for four consecutive years. The routine nature of burnout was visible across many sectors and was in some cases built into industry bottom lines as a 'cost of doing business', in the words of former event planner

Avery: 'the industry itself is set up in a way that [employees] are supposed to, as they call it "last" for 18 months'. For many individuals, the normative nature of burnout rippled not only through professional cultures, but bled across social boundaries, particularly in elite or highly specialized professions, in which highly concentrated and complex social connections – such as peers who were simultaneously managers, friends and senior colleagues – served as self-perpetuating, closed circles of burnout. Medical specialist Stella, for instance, narrated how her highly health literate and entangled social network was unable to recognize burnout and instead rationalized their common experiences as part of a 'garden variety' medical work cycle:

Most people in my personal life are doctors... and we all just think it's the norm... we've had conversations amongst ourselves about feeling burnt out, but not really knowing exactly what that is and what the definition is and... we were never going to just stop and go, "oh, I'm burnt out. I need to stop a little"... So we didn't really take it seriously, we just thought, oh yeah, of course we're burnt out, we're doctors, that's the norm.

Passive neglect: 'where am I?'

A contrasting mode of secondary victimization centred around an organizational 'carelessness' or negligence in which burnt out subjects were kept at an arm's length from the central body of the workplace. Renee, the most senior member of a clinical team marked by burnout aptly described this:

I mean, [the manager] just leaves us. We have needs as well. We need to be managed somehow, we're the ones that everyone comes to when they need something to be managed but now we need help we have been left at sea.

This distal perspective was achieved by outsourcing accountability and pastoral care responsibilities for burnt out individuals to third party organizations (e.g. employee assistance programmes [EAP], state health insurance and workers' compensation schemes) or, amongst larger employers, an anonymous central function away from the 'shop floor', such as human resources or occupational health and safety (OHS). These structural approaches to workplace health broadly operated under a window dressing of 'wellness' and were justified by organizations who were said to describe burnt out employees as 'complex cases' requiring specialized management under legal and

regulatory frameworks. Yet this functionality served to sever ties with the place and people that constituted our respondents' day-to-day habitat and experience of work. In essence, burnt out subjects were disappeared from the social substance of workplaces and displaced into highly bureaucratic and opaque systems of redress at a time of severe vulnerability, as described by George, whose severe burnout stemmed from exposure to criminal violence in his work within the prison rehabilitation system:

I think there's laws in place now, as far as employer-employee relationships go, if your employee's off sick or on workers' compensation, you're not really allowed to contact them... it's all handed off to another department or to workers' compensation which is a terrible, terrible system... it's detrimental to people's health... so I guess you could say they [the employer] was supportive but they didn't do anything to support me.

A number of respondents, like George, were compelled by their employers to file claims with public insurers, a notoriously intrusive and officious process, particularly for mental health-related claims which are clinically and judicially more complicated to prove: 'it was lawyers at ten paces, they [employer] and I each had employed QCs [Queen's Counsel, senior barristers in the Commonwealth legal system]' (River, clinician). For those respondents that remained within organizational borders (i.e. did not make claims to an external body), the experience of seeking support from central functions was no less fractious. Respondents described a prevailing 'hands off' approach to their burnout manifesting in obfuscation and an unwillingness to engage beyond predetermined organizational scripts. For instance, 'link bombing', in which a lengthy correspondence template was filled with irrelevant or outdated links to central policies or self-serve resources, was frequently encountered by respondents as the primary means of managing burnout in their organizations. This was experienced by respondents who were themselves HR professionals, and were shocked to realise they would be managed through the same impersonal and bureaucratic processes despite the close personal relationships they had formed within central teams. For example, Charlotte's reflections that 'I felt like I had been cast out, I really didn't expect them to close ranks and treat me like I was just another employee'. This organizational compulsion to maintain a distal position effectively displaced labour from organizational structures and functions to individuals who were already reeling from the dysphoria of burnout and highlights how the innate ordering processes of organizations (re)produce and compound harm.

Uniquely but importantly, one respondent was able to defy and ‘bite back’ on these systems. Evelyn, an architect, was initially referred to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and encouraged to attend a series of ‘lunch and learn’ sessions on stress management, as well as access an internal repository of health and wellbeing resources (a ‘wellness portal’). During this process, however, Evelyn was able to gain recognition for burnout on her own terms, aided by her EAP counsellor and strategically used the now structurally-sanctioned diagnosis to prompt managerial action for her situation – a reduced workload, flexible working arrangements and extended leave. However, these more affirming modes of burnout management may rely heavily on macro-environmental factors such as public awareness or strained labour market conditions:

I also think it could be in part ... it's a crazy competitive job market at the moment because there's so much work around, like they're not able to fill positions so they don't really want people leaving which is good for us if it means we get more help.

At the same time, while Evelyn’s experience in seeking workplace accommodations was broadly positive – ‘no questions asked’ – she saw her case as ‘more of an exception’ and remained sceptical of broader organizational initiatives which failed to attend to endemic features of organizational life; namely, she was cognizant of how her employer’s ‘first reflex was to make me do more work rather than actually help me’.

Violent goodwill: ‘Are you OK?’

A final mode of secondary victimization articulated by individuals centred around the notion of a violent goodwill, in which harm was perpetuated under the guise of ‘good intention’ and ‘good for you’ organizational responses. Paternalistic interventions were enacted without consultation or consent and respondents reported feeling ‘carried along with the tide’ (Nina, marketing executive) of these ordering processes. For instance, Leslie, a data scientist, worked in a competitive environment which strategically hired ‘A-type’ personalities and high achievers with doctoral qualifications. Rather than acknowledge her burnout, the firm quietly ‘exited [her]’ from the firm through a formal performance management process while engaging in an elaborate charade to help Leslie ‘save face’ in a status-oriented work environment:

I was... told that I wasn't a right fit for the company and they were gonna let me go. And they pretended... I don't know if what they did was illegal, that I decided to

resign and they told all the staff members that I decided that I was going to leave and they gave me a couple of weeks' notice to make it look like I actually resigned.

These elaborate performances in which individuals were expected to 'fall on their sword' were considered by some to be an 'organizational kindness'. Raymond spoke to this experience. He was recruited into an elite consulting environment and despite having no consulting experience was left to 'sink or swim' without training, mentorship or even basic supervision. When it became clear that he was struggling with the lack of support, instead of enacting a formal performance management process, the organization offered Raymond a redundancy during an emotionally charged meeting during which he broke down in tears as his manager apologized for the situation. In his retelling, Raymond was keen to emphasise his overall goodwill to the firm and the manager who failed him, then fired him, stating that he 'was a very nice man, but he knew that this is just business [...] I don't knock this senior manager for what he did and why he brought me in'.

Others recognized that these elaborate shows of 'benevolence' were not all they appeared to be, but felt compelled to perpetuate or 'go along' with them for fear of organizational reprisals and the stigma surrounding mental health. Melissa's experience as an account manager in a logistics firm exemplifies this. Melissa experienced severe burnout and spent three weeks in a psychiatric ward from the excessive demands and surveillance enacted by her manager, who began tracking her keystrokes, mouse activity and 'active' time at work – digital markers that bore little correlation with key tasks and performance outcomes in her role. The surveillance escalated such that Melissa received dozens of calls a day and during our interview, was interrupted three times by her manager despite the research taking place outside of office hours. After returning to work, Melissa's manager 'pretended like nothing happened' and had, in her absence, told her clients she was away on 'holiday'. Melissa felt like she had no choice but to continue the farce; in a small show of resistance, she told trusted clients she had 'medical issues' but left the framing open for interpretation in the instance 'word got back to [her manager]'.

In other instances, organizational goodwill as a mode of secondary victimization benefited respondents' objective career outcomes while simultaneously perpetuating harm. When Jacob, a strategy professional, expressed his feelings of burnout and resignation, his employer at the time – a national bank – organized intensive career coaching which involved planning career trajectories within and external to the firm over

the course of a year. This included introductions to his next employer, a prestigious management consulting firm in which he would burnout again only months into his tenure. The organizational response was described by Jacob as 'unconventional' and 'generous' within a corporate environment, yet it did little to meaningfully address the structural aspects of his current role or identify the facets of work that contributed to his burnout in the first place – in essence, Jacob was set up to burnout again. For instance, the incessantly 'dehumanizing' aspects of his role such as 'counting boxes and coloring them in different colors' resulting in 'hundreds if not thousands of job losses', and the 'grim atmosphere' were the same, if not even more acute in his next role:

The repetitive nature of the work was like Russian dolls, once you finished one project like that it was meant to be a new, fresh project and team but I had been there long enough to experience and know that the pipeline of work was essentially the same, like the dolls. You would finish one project, open a doll only to uncover more of the same.

We see here that organizational goodwill gestures may have been conceived of with 'pure intent' and may disarm or even temporarily mollify their recipients through short term career benefits centred around maintaining or improving status – either through elaborate charades to veil 'shameful' or 'deviant' behavior (i.e. the burnout itself) or to proactively help burnt out subjects onto new and ostensibly more notable career trajectories. Yet these seemingly benevolent responses disregarded the ongoing social and psychological wellbeing of burnt out subjects or simply took a paternalistic view of individuals – our respondents noted that their organizations consistently failed to engage in consultation or meaningfully try to understand the (often structural) problems in their work settings. This resulted in goodwill responses largely serving to protect the structural status of the organization and its jobs, perpetuating the notion that burnout was a problem of individuals, not of workplaces.

Discussion

We have so far explored how the dynamics of secondary victimization play out in the accounts of individuals who experienced workplace burnout, and how these responses were institutionally accomplished through structures that depersonalized a burnt out subject, detached them from their 'natural' habitat of work, and inserted them into processes aligned with productivity imperatives. We have also highlighted how even the

more benevolent exchanges with managers and colleagues are cauterized by the parameters of burnout – specifically how burnout can be acknowledged and discussed within organizational conditions – that had significant impacts on the subsequent experiences of our respondents. Our findings extend existing debates in the burnout literature but also make important contributions to the underexplored area of secondary victimization in the organizational studies scholarship.

First we begin by discussing how these insights open a critical vista to understanding the ‘dark side’ of organizational responses to burnout, an area of burnout scholarship primarily concerned with managerialist imperatives of productivity restitution (Ahola et al., 2017; Awa et al., 2010; Korhonen & Komulainen, 2019). In particular, the findings reveal the inherent double bind created by organizational intervention: on the one hand, individuals must necessarily entrust organizations in order to access support, but in doing so, expose themselves to the brunt of bureaucracy. As Campbell and Raja (2005, p. 98) note, ‘when victims place their trust in social systems for help [...], they risk the possibility of additional harm’. This is the nub of organizational secondary victimization, and our study demonstrates how institutional systems, their technologies and discourses designate, shape and in many cases, aggravate the emotional and embodied experience of workplace burnout. In particular, our respondents highlighted often demeaning or even predatory responses from organizations and their agents who considered burnout, paradoxically, as both the ‘natural outcome’ of labour market competition and a corollary of professional success. In other words, there was an organizational seduction of burnout ontologically marking both personal failure (i.e. not being ‘up to scratch’) and triumph (i.e. a precondition for ‘rising to the top’).

Although this constant organizational ‘batting’ back of burnout onto individuals was unsurprising and mirrored other accounts of health and illness in the workplace (e.g. Mangili et al., 2004; Pinder, 1995; Vickers, 2001), the ways in which this contributed to the ongoing masking of burnout’s effects was notable. Here managers and organizational processes were either complicit in, enabling or normalizing the performative parameters that surrounded burnout as an occupationally-induced phenomenon. In particular, our findings highlighted how the full arsenal of neoliberal discourses were wielded as a managerialist tool to discipline ‘unruly’ or ‘misbehaving’ employees as seen in the acts of organizational gaslighting. In particular, our study demonstrates how modes of organizational secondary victimization drew on our respondents’ identification as ‘high

achievers' and 'good employees' and the socializing cultures and productivity paradigms vital to their career biographies and work trajectories. This echoes previous accounts that highlight the prevalence of burnout in individuals with 'high performing' traits, such as conscientiousness, care and co-operation with others (Alarcon et al., 2009). However, our study further illuminates how the affective experience of burnout, when aligned with the violence of 'performance management' processes, was not only mortifying but heavily stigmatized for this group. As Tyler and Slater (2018) emphasize: 'stigmatization arises in contexts that are shaped by unequal relations of power', and in the case of organizational burnout, our findings suggest that this is experienced in a particular way. That is, it renders visible systems of power and discipline that our participants had not previously encountered in their organizations and were ill equipped to negotiate. In this sense, secondary victimization compounds not only harm but failure – a failure to no longer embody the ideal worker as well as a failure to be an 'acceptable' victim (Strobl, 2010).

These findings reaffirm studies which emphasize the ways in which the 'ideal worker' concept has been used, negotiated and resisted in organizational settings (Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015; Foster & Wass, 2013; Reid, 2015, 2011). Yet they also show how these discourses operate in tandem with practices that require more docile and passive subject positions (such as 'victim') in order to garner recognition by the formal organization, although often with negative accompanying consequences. These ambiguous and disquieting impacts suggest that greater attention needs to be paid to the inherent power dynamics in organizational structures and settings when exploring possible remediations to the problem of burnout. While extant studies reflect a compulsion for clinical evidence (e.g. the focus on 'interventions' vs 'responses'), our findings suggest greater value might be recovered from understanding the lived experience of burnout's aftermath and how organizational remedies might alternately ease, exacerbate and shape these trajectories.

Further, we consider the implications of our findings for an emergent understanding of organizational secondary victimization. As pointed out by Wilson and Hanley (2021), little is known about secondary victimization outside of formal justice systems. Our study represents one of the few empirical studies considering secondary victimization outside of legal studies and extends existing scholarship on organizational violence by considering the role of organizations in not only producing harm, but compounding it. In particular, we introduce three modes of secondary victimization that highlight not only the intentionally

violent responses of organizations but how the everyday systems and processes that sustain organizational life enact a violence on already vulnerable subjects. Notably, our findings point to the suggestion that by resolutely maintaining the status quo of work and not providing healthier alternatives, organizations are able to passively perpetuate secondary victimization while dispersing accountability for violent acts.

The findings from this paper also reflect evidence from other settings that secondary victimization is a relational phenomenon in which the social perception of the initial harm or injury is central to guiding organizational responses. In particular, the medical illegitimacy of burnout – and its perceived ‘routine’ nature – shaped the lack of urgency around organizational responses, for example, many of our respondents were left to languish for months before their complaints were taken seriously or, in many cases, were never treated as legitimate concerns. This echoes another rare exploration of secondary victimization found in Carrera-Fernandez et al.’s (2021, p. 21) experimental study of school bullying, which suggests that ‘when bullying is perceived as less severe, secondary victimization is greater’. This has profound consequences for burnout and other organizational phenomena which are considered ‘inconsequential’, ‘illegitimate’ or have been normalized as part of organizational life.

Importantly, as ‘seriousness’ is constituted and governed by organizations themselves, or delegated to other apodictic institutions such as regulatory and industry bodies, employees have little choice but to track closely to organizational imperatives for fear of trespassing into ‘deviant’ worker subjects. This opens vistas through which to consider not only health and illness experiences at work but interpersonal injustice and discrimination in organizations more broadly. We would suggest that workplace incidents that have clear contours or readily identifiable agents – singular and uncontrollable events, such as an accident resulting in a broken leg, an explicit and unprovoked racial slur – present an easier path to recognition and management and are at less risk of secondary victimization. By contrast, miasmatic experiences at work such as burnout – and other phenomenon and practices such as microaggressions – are too ‘free floating’ to be sanctioned by organizational systems. This is important given that the ability to manifest a recognizable norm is significant when harm has been done for the purposes of redress, reform and restitutive justice. As noted by Strobl (2010, p. 5), one ‘does not need to feel empathy for the victim to be able to act...it is only necessary to perceive a norm violation’ in order to secure the rights and obligations of victimhood.

It is clear that burnout and secondary victimization experiences cast a shadow over our respondents' careers and lives and had compounding effects for their health and ongoing negotiation with work. As such, our findings provide a valuable addition that shows how health and wellbeing are not only experienced through openly hostile acts but are also evident in gestures of goodwill. For our respondents, careers were not only 'derailed' (George, social worker) but some were denied the ability to work at all – a number were long term unemployed by choice or medical recommendation. Part of this is due to secondary victimization being 'often more painful and traumatic than the primary precipitating incident' (Carrera-Fernández et al., 2021, p. 3) as it is exacted by systems, processes and agents expected to recognize, care for, and protect victims (Brown, 1991; Wilson & Hanley, 2021).

Finally, while our findings focused on the coordinates of organizational secondary victimization as ordained through managerial practices and organizational processes, it is important to note that local cultures, colleagues or other organizational stakeholders are likely to play a role in secondary victimization. Elsewhere, Carrera-Fernandez et al. (2021) emphasize the role of bystanders in perpetrating secondary victimization, either immediately in the moment as a direct witness to the incursion, or at a later time having indirectly witnessed the event(s) through other means and parties. Similarly, the role of bystander intervention has been well documented in the vast literature on criminology (Ferguson & Turvey, 2009), although much of it has focused on encouraging prosocial behaviour from direct bystanders (Fischer et al., 2011). We would suggest that future research explores whether and how this rendering of in/direct bystanders to burnout in organizational settings can potentiate – or mitigate – a secondary victimization.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the concept of secondary victimization allows us to move beyond the notion of burnout as focused on a personally-bound stress event and illustrates the role institutions play in responding to and setting the conditions of recognition surrounding burnout. Our findings resonate with existing studies of secondary victimization but more importantly advance understanding of how burnout, and similar norm violations – health-related or otherwise – are 'flattened' and metabolized in organizational settings to a 'vanishing point'. This has serious implications for the sustainability of workforces and to this end, we urge researchers, managers, and policymakers to reconsider organizations not as passive emissaries of productivity but as active social agents with ethical

responsibilities to their employees where their responses to employee experiences can carry as much – if not more – harm. This highlights the need for future research to recognize burnout as a socially constituted and significant experience that exists not as a symptomatic triad but as a relational illness that both arises from and is shaped by institutional responses. While burnout is increasingly embedding itself into the public imagination, particularly as the world continues to work through the labour implications of a pandemic, the consideration of how organizational contexts and dynamics contribute to ongoing harm has yet to be realized. In taking these first steps towards conceptualizing such experiences, we not only seek to open up new ways that scholars consider the ‘slow burning’ effects and consequences of the organizational misrecognition of burnout, but also help to provide new ways of articulating the full experience of burnout for those directly and vicariously affected.

References

- Ahola, K., Toppinen-Tanner, S., & Seppänen, J. (2017). Interventions to alleviate burnout symptoms and to support return to work among employees with burnout: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Burnout Research*, 4, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2017.02.001>
- Alarcon, G., Eschleman, K. J., & Bowling, N. A. (2009). Relationships between personality variables and burnout: A meta-analysis. *Work and Stress*, 23(3), 244–263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370903282600>
- Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2011). Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2), 247–271.
- Anclair, M., Lappalainen, R., Muotka, J., & Hiltunen, A. J. (2018). Cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness for stress and burnout: a waiting list controlled pilot study comparing treatments for parents of children with chronic conditions. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 32(1), 389–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/scs.12473>
- Arendt, H. (1970). *On violence*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Aronsson, G., Theorell, T., Grape, T., Hammarström, A., Hogstedt, C., Marteinsdottir, I., Skoog, I., Träskman-Bendz, L., & Hall, C. (2017). A systematic review including meta-analysis of work environment and burnout symptoms. *BMC Public Health*, 17(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4153-7>
- Awa, W. L., Plaumann, M., & Walter, U. (2010). Burnout prevention: A review of intervention programs. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 78(2), 184–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2009.04.008>
- Bakker, A. B., & Costa, P. L. (2014). Chronic job burnout and daily functioning: A theoretical analysis. *Burnout Research*, 1(3), 112–119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2014.04.003>
- Banerjee, B. S. (2008). Necrocapitalism. *Organization Studies*, 29(12), 1541–1563.
- Bayes, A., Tavella, G., & Parker, G. (2021). The biology of burnout: Causes and consequences. *The World Journal of Biological Psychiatry*, 22(9), 686–698.
- Bergin, J., & Westwood, R. (2003). The necessities of violence. *Culture and Organization*, 9(4), 211–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475955042000195454>
- Berlant, L. (2007). Slow death (sovereignty, obesity, lateral agency). *Critical Inquiry*, 33(4), 754–780. <https://doi.org/10.1086/521568>
- Bishop, V., Korczynski, M., & Cohen, L. (2005). The invisibility of violence: constructing violence out of the job centre workplace in the UK. *Work, Employment and Society*, 19(3), 583–602.

- Brown, S. (1991). *Counseling Victims of Violence*.
- Campbell, R., & Raja, S. (1999). Secondary victimization of rape victims: Insights from mental health professionals who treat survivors of violence. *Violence and Victims, 14*(3), 261–275.
- Carrera-Fernández, M. V., Almeida, A., Cid-Fernández, X. M., González-Fernández, A., & Fernández-Simo, J. D. (2021). Troubling Secondary Victimization of Bullying Victims: The Role of Gender and Ethnicity. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 1*–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211005151>
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage.
- Chertkovskaya, E., & Paulsson, A. (2021). Countering corporate violence: Degrowth, ecosocialism and organising beyond the destructive forces of capitalism. *Organization, 28*(3), 405–425.
- Chwastiak, M. (2015). Torture as normal work: The Bush administration, the Central Intelligence Agency and ‘enhanced interrogation techniques’. *Organization, 22*(4), 493–511.
- Conrad, P., & Schneider, J. W. (1992). *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness*. Temple University Press.
- Costa, L., Voronka, J., Landry, D., Reid, J., Mcfarlane, B., Reville, D., & Church, K. (2012). “Recovering our stories”: A small act of resistance. *Studies in Social Justice, 6*(1), 85–101.
- Costas, J., & Grey, C. (2019). *Violence and Organization Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840618782282>
- Dale, K., & Burrell, G. (2014). Being occupied: An embodied re-reading of organizational ‘wellness’. *Organization, 21*(2), 159–177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508412473865>
- Davies, T. (2018). Toxic Space and Time: Slow Violence, Necropolitics, and Petrochemical Pollution. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 108*(6), 1537–1553. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2018.1470924>
- Dimou, F. M., Eckelbarger, D., & Riall, T. S. (2016). Surgeon burnout: a systematic review. *Journal of the American College of Surgeons, 222*(6), 1230.
- Dumas, T. L., & Sanchez-Burks, J. (2015). The professional, the personal, and the ideal worker: Pressures and objectives shaping the boundary between life domains. *Academy of Management Annals, 9*(1), 803–843.
- Elias, N. (1978). *The civilizing process: The history of manners*.
- Fendel, J. C., Bürkle, J. J., & Göritz, A. S. (2020). Mindfulness-based interventions to

reduce burnout and stress in physicians: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Academic Medicine*, 96(5), 751–764.

- Ferguson, C., & Turvey, B. E. (2009). Victimology: A Brief History with an Introduction to Forensic Victimology. In B. E. Turvey & W. Petherick (Eds.), *Forensic Victimology: Examining Violent Crime Victims in Investigative and Legal Contexts* (1st ed., pp. 1–32).
- Fischer, P., Krueger, J. I., Greitemeyer, T., Vogrincic, C., Kastenmüller, A., Frey, D., Heene, M., Wicher, M., & Kainbacher, M. (2011). The bystander-effect: a meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(4), 517.
- Foster, D., & Wass, V. (2013). Disability in the Labour Market: An Exploration of Concepts of the Ideal Worker and Organisational Fit that Disadvantage Employees with Impairments. *Sociology*, 47(4), 705–721. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038512454245>
- Freudenberger, H. J. (1974). Staff burn-out. *Journal of Social Issues*, 30(1), 159–165.
- Gamu, J. K., & Dauvergne, P. (2018). The slow violence of corporate social responsibility: the case of mining in Peru. *Third World Quarterly*, 39(5), 959–975. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2018.1432349>
- Hearn, J. (1994). The organization (s) of violence: Men, gender relations, organizations, and violences. *Human Relations*, 47(6), 731–754.
- Hill, A. P., & Curran, T. (2016). Multidimensional Perfectionism and Burnout: A Meta-Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 20(3), 269–288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868315596286>
- Holland, P. J., Allen, B. C., & Cooper, B. K. (2013). Reducing burnout in Australian nurses: The role of employee direct voice and managerial responsiveness. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(16), 3146–3162.
- Ivanovic, T., Ivancevic, S., & Maricic, M. (2020). The relationship between recruiter burnout, work engagement and turnover intention: Evidence from Serbia. *Engineering Economics*, 31(2), 197–210.
- Jamal, M. (2004). Burnout, stress and health of employees on non-standard work schedules: a study of Canadian workers. *Stress and Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*, 20(3), 113–119.
- Jutel, A. (2009). Sociology of diagnosis: A preliminary review. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 31(2), 278–299. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.2008.01152.x>
- Kenny, K. (2016). Organizations and Violence: The Child as Abject-Boundary in Ireland's Industrial Schools. *Organization Studies*, 37(7), 939–961.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840615622069>

Korhonen, M., & Komulainen, K. (2019). The moral orders of work and health: a case of sick leave due to burnout. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 41(2), 219–233.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.12816>

Kroll-Smith, S., & Floyd, H. (1997). *Bodies in Protest: Environmental Illness and the Struggle Over Medical Knowledge*. NYU Press.

Lazarus, R. S., & Cohen, J. B. (1977). Environmental stress. In *Human behavior and environment* (pp. 89–127). Springer.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer publishing company.

Lee, R. L., & Ashforth, B. E. (1996). A meta-analytic examination of the correlates of the three dimensions of job burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(2), 123–133.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.2.123>

Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (1999). Six areas of worklife: A model of the organizational context of burnout. *Journal of Health and Human Services Administration*, 21(4), 472–489.

Lewis, J., & Graham, J. (2007). Research Participants' Views on Ethics in Social Research: Issues for Research Ethics Committees. *Research Ethics*, 3(3), 73–79.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/174701610700300303>

Linstead, S. (1997). Abjection and organization: Men, violence, and management. *Human Relations*, 50(9), 1115–1145.

Linstead, S., Maréchal, G., & Griffin, R. W. (2014). Theorizing and researching the dark side of organization. *Organization Studies*, 35(2), 165–188.

Mangili, E., Ponteri, M., Buizza, C., & Rossi, G. (2004). Attitudes toward disabilities and mental illness in work settings: a review. *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*, 13(1), 29–46. <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/S1121189X00003213>

Martin, P. Y., & Powell, R. M. (1994). Accounting for the “second assault”: Legal organizations' framing of rape victims. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 19(4), 853–890.

Maslach, C. (2017). Finding solutions to the problem of burnout. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, 69(2), 143–152. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000090>

Nixon, R. (2020). *Neoliberalism, slow violence and the environmental picaresque* (Vol. 55, Issue 3, pp. 443–467). John Hopkins University Press.

Orth, U. (2002). Secondary victimization of crime victims by criminal proceedings. *Social Justice Research*, 15(4), 313–325. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021210323461>

Paluch, A. (2012). The conditions and consequences of secondary victimisation

experienced by wronged persons in criminal proceedings. *Problems of Forensic Sciences*, 91.

- Parker, G., & Tavella, G. (2022). The Diagnosis of Burnout: Some Challenges. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 210(7), 475–478.
- Penz, M., Miller, R., Pieper, L., Beesdo-Baum, K., Walther, A., Wekenborg, M. K., Stalder, T., & Kirschbaum, C. (2018). The Dresden Burnout Study: Protocol of a prospective cohort study for the bio-psychological investigation of burnout. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 27(2), e1613. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mpr.1613>
- Petrou, P., Demerouti, E., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2015). Job crafting in changing organizations: Antecedents and implications for exhaustion and performance. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 20(4), 470.
- Pinder, R. (1995). Bringing back the body without the blame?: the experience of ill and disabled people at work. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 17(5), 605–631. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.ep10932129>
- Purba, A., & Demou, E. (2019). The relationship between organisational stressors and mental wellbeing within police officers: A systematic review. *BMC Public Health*, 19(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7609-0>
- Reid, E. (2015). Embracing, passing, revealing, and the ideal worker image: How people navigate expected and experienced professional identities. *Organization Science*, 26(4), 997–1017. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2015.0975>
- Reid, E. (2011). Passing as Superman: The Ideal Worker and Men's Professional Identities. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 1–7.
- Scanlan, J. N., & Still, M. (2019). Relationships between burnout, turnover intention, job satisfaction, job demands and job resources for mental health personnel in an Australian mental health service. *BMC Health Services Research*, 19(1), 1–11.
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(3), 293–315. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.248>
- Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1996). *Maslach Burnout Inventory -- General Survey (GS)*. January.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2009). Burnout: 35 years of research and practice. *Career Development International*, 14(3), 204–220. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430910966406>
- Sherf, E. N., Parke, M. R., & Isaakyan, S. (2021). Distinguishing voice and silence at work: Unique relationships with perceived impact, psychological safety, and burnout.

Academy of Management Journal, 64(1), 114–148.

- Stokes, P., & Gabriel, Y. (2010). Engaging with genocide: the challenge for organization and management studies. *Organization*, 17(4), 461–480.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508409353198>
- Strobl, R. (2010). Becoming a Victim. In S. G. Shoham, P. Knepper, & M. Kett (Eds.), *International Handbook of Victimology* (pp. 3–23). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.5840/philtoday202184425>
- Suleiman-Martos, N., Gomez-Urquiza, J. L., Aguayo-Estremera, R., Cañadas-De La Fuente, G. A., De La Fuente-Solana, E. I., & Albendín-García, L. (2020). The effect of mindfulness training on burnout syndrome in nursing: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 76(5), 1124–1140.
- Swider, B. W., & Zimmerman, R. D. (2010). Born to burnout: A meta-analytic path model of personality, job burnout, and work outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 76(3), 487–506. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2010.01.003>
- Tavella, G., Hadzi-Pavlovic, D., & Parker, G. (2021). Burnout: Redefining its key symptoms. *Psychiatry Research*, 302, 114023.
- Tims, M., Derks, D., & Bakker, A. B. (2016). Job crafting and its relationships with person–job fit and meaningfulness: A three-wave study. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 92, 44–53.
- Tyler, I., & Slater, T. (2018). Rethinking the sociology of stigma. In *The Sociological Review* (Vol. 66, Issue 4, pp. 721–743). Sage publications Sage UK: London, England.
- Varman, R. (2018). Violence, markets and marketing. In *Journal of Marketing Management* (Vol. 34, Issues 11–12, pp. 903–912). Taylor & Francis.
- Varman, R., & Al-Amoudi, I. (2016). Accumulation through derealization: How corporate violence remains unchecked. *Human Relations*, 69(10), 1909–1935.
- Vickers, M. H. (2001). Unseen chronic illness and work: authentic stories from “women in-between”. *Women in Management Review*, 16(2), 62–74.
- Walster, E. (1966). Assignment of responsibility for an accident. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3(1), 73.
- Wemmers, J. A. (2013). Victims’ experiences in the criminal justice system and their recovery from crime. *International Review of Victimology*, 19(3), 221–233.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758013492755>
- WHO. (2019). *Mental health evidence and research. Burnout an ‘occupational phenomenon’: International Classification of Diseases.*

Wilson, M., & Hanley, N. (2021). Protecting Victims or Protecting the Brand? Secondary Victimization and Cruise Ship Crime. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1–26.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211035886>

Tables and Figures

Figure 1

Elements of organizational gaslighting

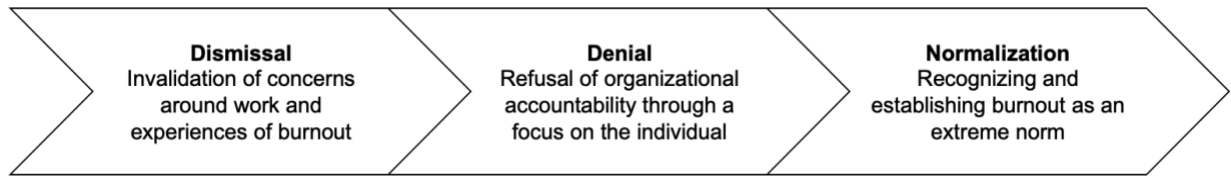


Table 1*Respondent profiles*

ID	Pseudonym⁵	Age	Gender	Occupation, Industry⁶	Country⁷
1	Avery	45	F	Special needs teacher, Education	England
2	Rhys	35	M	Entrepreneur, Technology	US
3	Leslie	38	F	Data scientist, Professional services	Australia
4	Rachel	34	M	Management consultant, Professional services	Australia
5	Jaclyn	32	F	Data scientist, Health science	Australia
6	Bernadette	38	F	Human resources, Finance	Australia
7	Jennifer	34	F	Brand manager, Marketing	Australia
8	Imogen	48	F	Forensics specialist, Research	US, Germany
9	Tobias	38	M	Project manager, Construction	Australia, US
10	Sam	46	M	IT manager, Professional sports	Australia
11	Nerissa	31	F	Doctor, Medicine	South Africa
12	Vicky	39	F	Engineer, Engineering	England
13	Raymond	34	M	Risk consultant, Professional services	Australia
14	Katerina	27	F	Computer programmer, Finance	Australia
15	Jacob	35	M	Strategy professional, Professional services	Australia
16	Leanne	34	F	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
17	Tamsin	35	F	Clinical therapist, Psychology	South Africa
18	James	63	M	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
19	Kelly	61	F	Human resources, Government	Australia
20	Natasha	41	F	Project manager, International development	Australia, Indonesia
21	Catherine	25	F	Clinical therapist, Psychology	Australia
22	Annemarie	30	F	Computer programmer, Engineering	Australia
23	Catriona	33	F	Data scientist, Banking	Australia
24	Stella	35	F	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
25	Alyssa	35	F	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
26	Charlotte	54	F	Org. psychologist, Human resources	Australia
27	River	51	F	Clinician, Health science	Australia
28	Denise	54	F	Social worker, Government	Australia
29	Andrea	35	F	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
30	Jamila	33	F	Org. psychologist, Technology	United States
31	Renee	51	F	Clinician, Health science	Australia
32	Marcus	34	M	Public relations, Finance	Australia
33	Patrick	43	M	IT manager, Technology	Australia, India
34	George	52	M	Social worker, Government	Australia
35	Elise	56	F	Manager, Banking	Australia
36	Daniel	38	M	Engineer, Professional Services	Australia
37	Chanel	44	F	Publicity, Music	Australia
38	Melissa	44	F	Account manager, Shipping and logistics	South Africa
39	Brooke	33	F	Fashion designer, Luxury fashion	S.Korea, Australia
40	Genevieve	35	F	Project Manager, Higher education	Australia
41	Evangeline	39	F	Sustainability consultant, Government	Australia
42	Evelyn	28	F	Architect, Engineering	Australia
43	Dennis	32	M	Architect, Property and construction	Australia

⁵ For de-identification purposes, pseudonyms in this full sample will not match the various respondent tables in presented in this dissertation

⁶ Occupation at time of most recent burnout

⁷ Multiple locations have been listed to correspond with multiple experiences of burnout

Table 2*Data analysis exemplar – violent goodwill*

First order ideas	Second order concept	Theme leading to different modes of secondary victimization
Elaborate charades (e.g. hiding burnout from the workplace and broader social networks)	False benevolence (i.e. protecting the organization by pretending to protect individuals)	Performative kindness
Enforced rest (e.g. forced medical leave, redundancy packages)		
Personal responses (e.g. career coaching, wellbeing 'check-ins')	Paternalistic approaches to helping employees	
Status and esteem building initiatives (e.g. financial rewards, promotion)		
Making the same mistakes (repeating past behaviours, promoting unhealthy habits and cultures, ignoring 'red flags')		
Lack of consultation on personal goals, values and wishes		Undermining agency

4.3 Paper 3: Telling Tales

Telling Tales: Recovering Narratives of Life After Burnout
(Lee, M.Y.W)

This paper is targeted at the journal, *Organization*, an A ranked journal by the ABDC. In contrast to **Papers 1** and **2**, it focuses its attentions on the concept of recovery from the narratives of those who have lived with burnout.

Namely, it provides a pathway for understanding how recovery might be imagined, enacted and recognised in a condition that is medically and organisationally unrecognised but continues to be lived and felt as an affective experience.

Abstract

This article understands organizational burnout as a particular form of contested illness (Dumit, 2006; Kroll-Smith & Floyd, 1997) – a condition of unknown and illegitimate medical origin – arising from organizations. Through accounts of burnout recovery with 43 professionals it explores the question: how do individuals who have suffered from burnout narrate their experiences of recovery? This framework provides a novel conduit to advance our presently nascent understanding of burnout recovery not only as a somatic goal, but as a narrative performance for recognition. Findings suggest that recovery itself formed a fantastical proposition in narratives and was inseparable from stories of burnout. In particular, three articulations of recovery emerged in narratives, as: forgetting, rebirth and vigilance. This paper pays particular attention to the organizational conditions through which these narratives could exist and highlights how the systems, processes and technologies of organizations set the parameters through which burnout could be recognized, fragmented or ‘disappear’ from legitimate and coherent narratives of organizational life.

Introduction

Since the 1970s, burnout has been a central focus for scholars of psychology and psychiatric medicine (Freudenberger, 1974; Schaufeli et al., 2009). Much is known about the way in which burnout emerges in and from organizations (Halbesleben, 2006; Laschinger & Fida, 2014; Leiter et al., 2017; Leiter & Maslach, 1999), though decades of interventional research (Ahola et al., 2017; Awa et al., 2010) have done little to resolve the ambivalence around how individuals recover in the wake of what has been described as a ‘crisis of meaning or values’ (Maslach & Leiter, 2016, p. 108). The slow progress made towards challenging the proliferation of burnout has been tangled in the elusive search for the ‘right’ remedy for the ‘right’ subject, as seen in the vast scholarship on ‘person-job’ fit (Maslach, 2017; Tims et al., 2016).

In this article, I suggest an alternative position whereby its stilted development can be attributed to the ambiguity around post-burnout experiences as mediated through burnout’s quality as a ‘contested illness’ (Dumit, 2006; Kroll-Smith & Floyd, 1997). This can be seen in burnout’s existence as an organizational phenomenon but an unrecognized medical diagnosis with a ‘name but no code’ that is ‘researched, discussed and reported on, but no aspect...is settled medically, legally or popularly’ (Dumit, 2006, p. 578). This contested status has material consequences for sufferers, who are denied access to affordable care, social legitimacy and are compelled to advocate for themselves within and through organizing processes (Lastovkova et al., 2018⁸). By conceptually situating burnout as contested illness – and the existential bind this places on individuals – this article seeks to make inroads into resolving the miasma around burnout’s aftershocks and, in doing so, generate vistas to explore how individuals resolve this ambivalence and gain recognition for their experiences of, and around, burnout in organizational settings.

Emerging studies of post-burnout have already identified the significance of institutional recognition to its intercession (Korhonen & Komulainen, 2021), and the role narratives play in shaping personal recovery trajectories (e.g. Bernier, 1998; Korhonen & Komulainen, 2019). These early glimpses echo the broader literature on health and illness (Leamy et al., 2011), which has well-rehearsed the use of narratives to reconcile illness

⁸ This review of burnout in European Union (EU) nations found only eight of the 27 EU member nations afforded compensation individuals for burnout (describing them as ‘victims’), of which only five were provided through social insurance schemes – Denmark, France, Latvia, Portugal and Sweden. The majority of the working world, including large, populous Western economies of the Global North (The United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia) do not recognize, support or compensate burnout as a ‘legitimate’ medical condition.

experiences (Charmaz, 1999; Frank, 1998; Hydén, 1997; Ware, 1992). Similarly, accounts of contested illness have explored how sufferers engage in communities of advocacy for relational recognition through various ‘claims making’ processes – establishing legitimacy through existing organizational structures and technologies (e.g. medical trials, expert opinion, treatment protocols), or by resisting and subverting biomedical power structures through mutual self-ascription narratives (Alaimo, 2010; Clarke & James, 2003; Conrad & Schneider, 1992; Moore, 2014; Phillips, 2010). What remains less understood, however, is an exploration of the micro-processes of organizational and instituted relations that follow burnout; that is, how its negotiation takes place at the interpersonal level – *between* individuals – while situated in organizational settings.

In particular, this article addresses recent calls for deeper exploratory insight into burnout recovery experiences (Maslach, 2017; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Salminen et al., 2017; Schaufeli et al., 2009) and explores the question: how do individuals who have suffered from burnout narrate their experiences of recovery? Empirically, I draw on in-depth interviews with 43 individuals who have experienced burnout to explore the role narratives play in experiences of recovery. The paper proceeds as follows. First, it begins by outlining how burnout itself can be theoretically ‘recovered’ from decades of important but conceptually limiting clinically-situated scholarship. Next, it reviews the role of narratives in illness experiences and organizations and how connecting the ‘science of stories’ across disciplines can provide insight into the potential recovery practices of burnt out individuals in organizational settings. I then describe the research context and methods, including the ways in which narratives were elicited and organized for analysis. The paper presents findings centred around three narratives of recovery (recovery through forgetting, recovery through rebirth and recovery through vigilance) and an exploration of the organizational conditions which shape their performance. The paper closes with a discussion of its key contributions and implications for how we understand burnout recovery in the context of narrative recognition in organizational settings.

Recovering burnout: recognizing the unrecognizable

Burnout’s origins in psychiatric medicine and management psychology have resulted in a contemporary understanding of the phenomenon as a symptomatic triad – exhaustion, cynicism and diminished self-belief (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Much of the vast body of literature has been dedicated to the measurement of this symptomology, particularly in the context of predicting somatic onset (Alarcon et al., 2009;

Hill & Curran, 2016; Purvanova & Muros, 2010; Rattrie et al., 2020), interventional efficacy and recovery (Ahola et al., 2017; Awa et al., 2010; Siu et al., 2014; Suleiman-Martos et al., 2020), and more recently, attempts to resolve its diagnostic status through the identification of pathology⁹ (Bayes et al., 2021; Penz et al., 2018; Tavella et al., 2021). Yet what has been lost in this ‘underlying model...of clinical deficit’ is the affective, lived experience of burnout that provides inroads into understanding how we might be able to meet the ‘challenging of finding effective solutions’ to burnout (Maslach, 2017, p. 147,151).

As an ‘occupational syndrome’ (WHO, 2019), burnout is inextricably linked to workplaces, and its existence determined by biomedical structures of legitimacy. In other words, burnout emerges from organizations, but remains unrecognized by organizational structures, processes and members. This contradiction is reflected in the ambiguity shrouding our current understanding of the burnout recovery experience. For example, scholars continue to puzzle over the boundaries between burnout and other mental health conditions (Bianchi et al., 2015; Koutsimani et al., 2019; Tavella & Parker, 2020) and lack consensus on how to best consider and manage recovery trajectories beyond the treatment of isolated somatic complaints¹⁰ (e.g. hair loss, fatigue) (APA, 2020). Ultimately, this thrusts burnout and its sufferers into uncertain terrain in which the underlying epistemological and ontological tenets of their experience are not only unrecognized but inherently unstable. This presents a particularly challenging landscape for burnt out subjects to negotiate and gain recognition for their illness in organizational settings.

Situating burnout as a contested illness provides a conduit through which to recover its lived experience and contributes to resolving the aporia surrounding burnt out subjects.

⁹In the last five years, there have been two major clinical studies dedicated to identifying the pathological origins of burnout with a view to establish clear clinical guidelines for both treatment and medical diagnosis. The first, the Dresden Study, is a 12-year longitudinal cohort study that has yet to report outcomes (Penz, 2018). The second is a 2020 Australian cross-sectional study by University of New South Wales (UNSW) researchers in psychiatric medicine. The UNSW research team surveyed and clinically examined more than 1000 individuals who self-reported as being burnt out. The findings from this study proposed a new measure of burnout, the Sydney Burnout Measure (Tavella et al., 2021) but failed to identify any clear clinical or pathological markers to aetiologically locate burnout and secure a meaningful diagnosis.

¹⁰At present, there are no agreed upon clinical guidelines or protocols to treat burnout from the APA or other global medical authority (APA, 2020; WHO, 2019). Resultingly, there remains significant ambiguity not only in the diagnosis of burnout but also its progression and treatment. Specifically, there is little to no consensus on burnout’s trajectory – namely the point at which burnout progresses from ‘acute’ to ‘chronic’, or from ‘mild’ to ‘clinical burnout’ is unresolved (APA, 2020). This is in stark contrast to other mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression and grief (APA, 2013), and other studies of contested illness which have typically considered the studied phenomena to be chronic in nature (e.g. Lyme disease, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, multiple chemical sensitivities, Gulf War syndrome and at one stage, even multiple sclerosis).

In effect, burnt out individuals are expected to recover, in prescribed ways, from a condition whose existence is questionable within organizational knowledge systems. This inherent contradiction provokes a decentring of burnout as an organizational phenomenon through proxies of clinical measurement, such as symptomatic reduction and productivity markers (absenteeism, days worked) wherein resides the expectation of restitution (Ahola et al., 2017; Maricuțoiu et al., 2016; Oerlemans & Bakker, 2014) – a ‘snapback’ to a former state or an organizationally-mandated mode of being centred around productivity.

Currently, the burnout recovery literature includes few studies, of either a qualitative nature (Bernier, 1998; Cherniss, 1990; Salminen et al., 2017; Semeijn, 2019), or set in organizational contexts (Korhonen & Komulainen, 2019). Yet even with the dominance of cognitive psychological modalities to conceptualize burnout, these early studies suggest that trajectories of recovery are highly idiosyncratic and relationally contingent, that is, they depend on and are shaped by social discourses and processes of recognition (Bernier, 1998; Korhonen et al., 2020; Korhonen & Komulainen, 2019; Salminen et al., 2015, 2017). These sentiments have recently been taken up by Korhonen and Komulainen’s (2021) study of health professionals working in burnout rehabilitation institutions. Here the authors illustrate how health professionals construct discourses of burnt out subjects and, in the process, perpetuate organizationally-sanctioned modes of being – for instance, a productive body and self-responsible rehabilitee under an active health ethic. A related study by Korhonen and Komulainen (2019) also shows how an organizational technology, sick leave, is used as a means to both legitimate and stigmatize burnt out employees. These nascent findings echo broader studies of organizational wellness and the discourses that regulate un/well bodies (Costea et al., 2008; Dale & Burrell, 2014; Harvey, 2019; Kenny et al., 2019) and suggest that organizational dynamics present a particular setting through which to explore experiences of burnout recovery.

A contested illness lens allows us recover the ‘insider’s view of illness’ (Bulow, 2003, p.37) and recognizes that ‘bodily distress has social roots’ (Ware, 1999, p. 303). Contested illnesses are defined by their pathological haziness – an absence of clear aetiology, ambiguous treatment regimens and often, shared borders with other co-morbid conditions that muddy the waters of formal recognition through diagnosis (Dumit, 2006; Kroll-Smith & Floyd, 1997; Swoboda, 2006). As such, contested illnesses often occupy controversial spaces – a recent example can be found in long COVID, but others include chronic fatigue, multiple chemical sensitivity and Lyme disease (Bulow, 2003; Dumit, 2006;

Kroll-Smith & Floyd, 1997; Martin, 2022; Morrison et al., 2021; Phillips, 2010; Roth & Gadebusch-Bondio, 2022; Rushforth et al., 2021) – and challenge prevailing social, organizational and institutional norms. In other words, the central experience of contested illness can be described as a *dispute around knowing* (Kroll-Smith & Floyd, 1997). Inherent to this is the compulsion to resolve the central tension between a significant and affective lived experience and the intransigence of institutional and social denial – as described by Rosenberg (1989, p. 1): ‘a disease does not exist as a social phenomenon until we agree that it does’. Existing studies of medically unexplained illness have explored how sufferers weather these disputes and are shaped by institutional parameters (Armentor, 2017; Bülow, 2004; Fair, 2010; Kokkinidis & Checchi, 2021; Moore, 2014; Roth & Gadebusch-Bondio, 2022), and in some cases defy them by creating alternatives to institutional recognition. For example, Moore’s (2014) study of gluten-free dieters denied a celiac diagnosis illustrates how these individuals create communities of legitimacy to subvert medical authorities, accumulate cultural resources to discredit medical experts, self-ascribe diagnostic certainty and crowdsource care alternatives.

As contested illnesses lack a clear medical definition and are often without a ‘tidy’ resolution¹¹, sociological explorations have largely treated these conditions as ongoing if not chronic in nature (Bülow, 2003; Charmaz, 1991; Frank, 2013), and further suggest that the experience of living with a medically unrecognized condition is disruptive, destabilizing and creates a continuous struggle for sufferers to affirm the authenticity of their experience (Bury, 1982; Clarke & James, 2003; Horton-Salway, 2001; McCormick, 2009; Roth & Gadebusch-Bondio, 2022). In particular, as serious illness ‘creates phases of breakdown and disintegration’ (Swoboda, 2006, p. 235), sufferers are prompted to reconstruct such trajectories through stories of illness/wellness. This can be seen in existing explorations of narratives and the role they play in reconciling illness experiences and establishing certainty in the face of equivocation (Bülow, 2008; Groenevelt, 2022; Mathieson & Stam, 1995; Swoboda, 2006). In particular, ‘narratives provide a way for social actors to convey

¹¹ Even when diagnosis is possible for contested illnesses, this often takes place as a lengthy process of differential diagnosis and treatment options may remain scarce (Arter & Jenkins, 1979; Swoboda, 2006). Differential diagnosis is when a medical professional diagnoses through deduction, rather than working towards a single outcome (Arter & Jenkins, 1979). The practice is most commonly undertaken when the presenting symptoms are broad and could have several potential causes.

For example, nerve pain could result from vitamin deficiencies, neurological disorders or immune inflammation and a doctor is thus required to explore these various pathways to arrive at a diagnostic outcome. Similarly, the symptoms of burnout – exhaustion, withdrawal and diminished self-confidence – could have several pathological and psychological causes.

where they have been and where they are going in illness from their own perspective' (Swoboda, 2006, p. 237) and enable sufferers to chart a recognizable social course or trajectory after the biographical disruption of illness. Studies of illness narratives thus provide fertile ground through which to understand how individuals make sense of their burnout recovery through narration. However, I also consider it necessary to excavate the organizational dynamics in this narrative process, particularly given the organizationally-emergent nature of burnout. This paper therefore connects illness narratives with the existing literature on organizational stories in an interdisciplinary 'science of stories' to understand the organizational parameters of burnout recovery narratives.

Narrating illness and recovery in organizational settings

The narrative turn in social studies of illness and organizations is ripe for resolving the miasma around burnout recovery. Acknowledging the unresolved debates across scholarly disciplines on the definition of narratives and stories (Gabriel, 2004), this paper draws on foundational studies of illness narratives (Frank, 2013; Hydén, 1997; Williams, 1984) and organizational storytelling (Czarniawska, 1998; Gabriel, 2000, 2004) to approach narratives as particular types of stories with a necessary sequence: a beginning, middle and end (Czarniawska, 1998; Gabriel, 2004; Riessman, 1993). The use of narratives and storytelling has long been understood as a key dynamic in organizational life (Boje, 2008; Czarniawska, 1998; Gabriel, 2000; Rhodes & Brown, 2005) and in studies of illness, have been a conduit to 'reveal the meanings that the ill have constructed around their illness' (Frank, 1998, p. 1999). In exploring the lived experience of burnout recovery, this paper forefronts a sociological approach to understanding narratives of illness in organizational settings but draws on the valuable contribution of the study of organizational stories in understanding the particular dynamics of organizational life.

The growing study of illness narratives holds particular value for how we explore and understand the lived experience of burnout as a medically unexplained condition and the subsequent recovery trajectories that must be negotiated by individuals. Early work in this area has done much to delineate the various genres of illness stories (Frank, 1991, 1995), and the ways in which these form a 'comprehensive imaginative enterprise' to make sense of complex experiences of unwellness (Williams, 1984, p. 175). Existing accounts have also highlighted how ill subjects use narratives to maintain and reconcile their position in a social world organized under a neoliberal ethic of 'healthism', in which health and wellbeing are understood to be a personal accomplishment and thus entail a moral

accountability (Crawford, 1980). Groenevelt's (2022) study of women suffering medically unexplained illness (chronic pain, Lyme disease and fibromyalgia), for example, describes how the narration of a 'right' mindset was performed on social media not only as a means of claiming recognition but as a strategy to avoid moral culpability. This involved a tenuous balance of perspective (broadly positive, selectively vulnerable), presence (engaged online with justified absences) and appearances (looking 'healthful' while still being recognizably ill). This moral aporia is echoed in other studies of illness, but particularly contested illnesses where the genesis of 'unwellness' is unclear; see for instance, studies of chronic fatigue (Bulow, 2003; Bülow, 2004; Clarke & James, 2003; Hughes, 2002; Ware, 1999). Such studies highlight the importance of the narratives themselves in (re)constructing meaning but also how the *performance* of narrative is significant to contested illness by offering the opportunity to dynamically 'knit together the split ends' of a life before and after illness, a notion particularly relevant to illnesses of unknown trajectory or conclusion, such as burnout (Hyden 1997, p.53).

Much of this literature on illness narratives has concentrated its attentions on three social contexts. The first, medical institutions and the doctor-patient relationship within the dynamics of 'the clinic', second, communities of sufferers ('the patient group'), and thirdly, elicited contexts between the researcher and respondent ('the researcher-witness') (Bülow, 2008; Foster, 2016; Rushforth et al., 2021; Shapiro, 2011). I suggest that organizational contexts and their particular qualities and dynamics which construct and sanction modes of un/wellness represent a significant and underexplored context for understanding narratives of contested illness, and are particularly germane to burnout as an organizational phenomenon. Specifically, the labor of contested illness is both demanded and heightened by organizational systems, processes and members as reflected in existing accounts of mental health and stress in organizations (Driver, 2014; Elraz, 2018; Scholz & Ingold, 2021; Thanem & Elraz, 2022). For instance, Elraz's (2018) study of mental health discourses in organizations recounts pejorative constructions in workplace settings and explores how organizational subjectivities compel sufferers of mental illness to recast and reconstruct mental health through discursive acts – such as public disclosure – to retain a coherent (employment) identity. This suggests that understanding the distinct dynamics of organizational life has particular value for scholars seeking to explore how illness is recognized, experienced and shaped through narratives, and provides new avenues for understanding recovery from burnout as an organizational experience unfolding through, within and because of these settings.

More broadly, I connect this to existing explorations of narratives and storytelling in organizational life, which provide an important springboard into understanding how narratives travel through organizations. This 'science of stories' (Boje, 1991; Gabriel, 2000; Rhodes & Brown, 2005) has highlighted the central role of stories and storytelling in knowledge production (Ainsworth, 2012; Kalid & Mahmood, 2010; Sole & Wilson, 2002), shaping change (Brown et al., 2009, 2012; Driver, 2009; Peirano-Vejo & Stablein, 2009; Rhodes et al., 2010), creating a sense of belonging (Driscoll & McKee, 2007; Fleming, 2001; Gabriel, 1991) and the assemblage of leaders and leadership (Foroughi, 2020; Gabriel, 1997; Sinclair, 2009; Zheng et al., 2021). While some scholars have framed organizational storytelling as a 'democratic resource...available to anyone with a story to tell' (Beigi et al., 2019, p. 458), I suggest that narratives of burnout and burnt out subjects themselves are troubling to the subjectivities of organizations in such a way that demands particular attention.

I explain this by focusing on the dialogic and interdependent nature of the relationship between story and storyteller; that is, the unstable and contested nature of the story (burnout) and the subject (burnt out individuals) renders both 'un-credible' in organizational settings. Sufferers of burnout represent an ontological deviance to the routine functioning of organizational life by disrupting 'ideal worker' norms and therefore become discredited organizational members (Acker, 1990; Reid, 2015). The uncertain epistemic conditions of burnt out storytellers means that their narratives are also un-credible (and vice versa), illuminating a particular quality to the labour of burnout recovery narratives in organizations. I suggest that this demands certain constructions of self in relation to work that represents an exercise in imagination – an imaginative labor described by Gabriel (1995, p. 483) as 'story work', or a 'process whereby a symbolically charged fantasy is constructed out of the engagement of unconscious desires with organizational life'. In other words, this article pays attention to the situation of storytelling a contested phenomenon – burnout and its subsequent recovery – and the imaginative labor of story work used to narratively reconstruct a disrupted organizational life. In doing so, it not only extends our understanding of illness narratives beyond the confines of the 'clinic' and 'patient group', but provides insight into the dynamic and evolving nature of burnout recovery as an ambiguous and uncertain organizational phenomenon. I now turn to introducing the empirical context in which this exploration takes place.

Research context and methods

This study forms part of a larger research project exploring post-burnout working lives that is concerned with the political, medical and organizational dynamics surrounding burnout. The analysis is based on a series of 43 in-depth interviews undertaken between 2020 and 2021 with individuals who self-identified as having experienced workplace burnout in the last five years. Our respondents were recruited by snowball method via social media and were purposively sampled for their experiences of burnout. This was confirmed by a screening call in which individuals would describe their symptoms and severity ('tell us a little about your burnout experience') and later coded against the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Schaufeli et al., 1996). Given the significance of the psychological aspects of burnout (e.g. cynicism, withdrawal, self-belief) and the importance of self-recognition to recovery (Frank, 2000, 2002; Hydén, 1997), we considered respondents recovery experiences not by their functional status (e.g. their ability to work) but through self-identification during the research interview.

Contextual information was collected during screening calls relating to culture, age, profession and gender and detailed fieldnotes were kept through all interactions (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012; Sanjek, 2019). Importantly, none of our respondents experienced their burnout in countries where burnout was officially recognized or compensated for as a medical condition. These initial conversations could last over an hour, revealing the rich emic experiences of respondents that allowed the researcher to be highly responsive in the subsequent interview interaction. For instance, it became clear during these early conversations that a number of respondents had suffered cognitive impairment from their burnout experience and were unable to focus for protracted periods of time. As such, the interviewer was able to structure the interview in a manner that enabled respondents to participate in a more flexible and considerate manner and manage cognitive load. For instance, in some cases, this included a preference towards voice-only conversations which allowed affected individuals to focus on the substance of the question rather than reading social cues and afforded them an additional sense of privacy.

All interviews were conducted by telephone or online conferencing platform (Zoom, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp) as per respondent preference and in total, lasted between one to three hours. For respondents who found a single protracted interaction difficult, the researcher gave them the option to continue at a later time or to withdraw completely without repercussions. All respondents opted to continue the research

interaction, either through a series of phone conversations or via multiple channels, such as a combination of email, social media messaging and text messaging. In many instances the research interaction was the first time in which they had explicitly discussed the details of their burnout experience outside of a clinical setting – almost all respondents had or were currently engaged in therapy or counselling. In particular, several were legally constrained from speaking about their experiences openly in other forums due to non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) or other obligations embedded in their employment contracts.

The interview data, fieldnotes and the subsequent multi-channel interactions were all treated as narrative or ‘an evolving series of stories that are framed in and through interaction’ (Riessman, 2008, p. 5). Data analysis took place as an iterative process weaving in and out of three key stages. First, the dataset was read in its entirety and systematically analysed for key themes that captured how individuals described their experiences of burnout and their relation to work and organizations, which led to the following themes represented in Table 1 (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Even in this early stage of analysis, what emerged was that even in these research interactions there existed a shadow of ‘bad faith’ or self-doubt around the veracity of their burnout experiences. For example, Regan, a consultant said ‘I sometimes wonder if that really did happen to me, if I really did burn out. This fluctuating questioning - ‘did I or didn’t I?’ (Regan, management consultant) and ‘I am sure I am better... I don’t know what the signs are’ (Corinne, data scientist) was a particular point of interest. Next I drew inspiration from narrative analysis techniques from studies of illness trajectories (Hydén, 1997; Mattingly, 2008; Williams, 1984) to narratively reconstruct recovery through phases and key story elements – plot, characterisation, tension (Frank, 2010, 2013), paying particular attention to shifting stories and key tensions or paradoxes. Namely, I identified patterns across experiences, actors, events and the emergent themes of morality, acceptance and disruption. Of particular interest was the unfolding series of relationships relating to the fantasy of recovery and networks of narratives in organizations, which led us to analytically excavate specific empirical moments, paying attention particularly to the situation and performance of storytelling. From this emerged three narratives of recovery and the organizational parameters which governed them.

** INSERT TABLES 1 & 2 HERE **

Findings

Even in the early stages of interviewing, it became clear that it was impossible to separate narratives of recovery from stories of burnout. Perhaps unsurprisingly, narratives of recovery consistently began with stories of burnout before departing on variegated trajectories of storytelling. Therefore, this paper begins its presentation of findings with three stories of burnout: burnout as coming of age, burnout as addiction and burnout as injury. While stories of burnout consistently marked the beginning of recovery narratives, they did not always form a central tension or conflict. In other words, other characters or events often played more significant roles in narratives of recovery. Next, we highlight the fantastical role of recovery as an imagined place or space, and three recovery narratives which emerged from the analysis: recovery through forgetting, recovery through rebirth, and recovery through vigilance. Finally, we consider the act of storytelling itself and how its performance played a central function in recovery. Further to this, we consider the organizational conditions placed on narrations of recovery, particularly through technologies and organizing processes such as legal contracts, systems of human resource management and workplace wellbeing.

Storytelling burnout

Respondents' narrative constructions coalesced around three stories of burnout. What became evident through these tellings was the need to create a clear trajectory of their illness from a highly ambiguous and contested experience. This manifested in a number of story elements through which respondents created: a purpose to their illness (a necessary coming of age, a warning); a character of accountability (self, others, luck); a learning about oneself (a maturing self, a new dimension of self, or a reminder of self).

Burnout as coming of age

Burnout in this story was plotted as a bildungsroman, that is, a coming of age story or a natural social ritual. As part of this, burnout was considered a 'necessary part of growing up' (Regan) by many respondents and in many cases, normalized as part of the violence of organizational life (see Paper 2): 'you know corporate life is just like that' (Richard, real estate). That is, the significant and often traumatic effects of burnout (e.g. post-traumatic stress disorders, work phobias, ongoing inflammatory responses, unexplained seizures) were conflated with 'just getting older' (Sandra, doctor) and described in terms similar to a coming of age story – a necessary trial all individuals must pass through in order to emerge into 'adulthood'. At the same time, however, it also mourned the lost naivete of

symbolic youth and one's role as a workplace 'ingenué'. This most clearly reflected in the descriptions of Alana (doctor): 'I miss my old self, so bright-eyed and energetic', Cleo (human resources professional): 'I had so much energy and enthusiasm, I miss that person', and others like them.

Burnout as addiction

In these particular stories, respondents would situate their burnout within a theme of addiction, or even a chronic condition, in which there would be periods of relapse and remission but never completely 'burnout free'. Central to this was the notion that burnout had always been lying in wait, lurking in individual bodies like an unknown disease, suggesting that perhaps there was an underlying pre-disposition in their body that made them more pathologically susceptible to work-related burnout: 'I just probably have a weaker constitution... it's hard to want to be this high-powered career doctor, but then realize other people actually have a better constitution for that and their bodies won't fail them, but mine might' (Samantha, doctor). Or alternatively, that burnout was inherent to one's psyche, like how one could have an 'addictive personality'. We see this in Tristan's (construction project manager) analogy:

It's kind of like being an alcoholic, even if you've stopped drinking and even if you hadn't had a drink for 10 years, you still have that need, that predisposition to it. Some people are just like that you know? I did a lot of hard partying when I was younger and I think I have that personality.

Burnout as injury

The final story of burnout was as a physically-situated injury, likened to a sprained ankle, a jammed finger, a broken leg. Implicit to this was that the injury could be accidental, stemming from an unintentional organizational hazard, for example, long hours during a busy period of work: 'it's just the nature of the industry you know?' (Sean, sports industry professional). Alternatively, in some cases, from one's own carelessness, such as in former chef Tina's admission, which echoes the sentiments of others who assumed personal responsibility: 'you know I wasn't paying attention to how much I was taking on, I was just saying "yes" to everything and overcommitting myself'. Implicit to this was a dispersed accountability in the face of situational 'lucklessness' ('sometimes that's just how things work out you know? People get hurt all the time' – George, social worker) and, notably, a rhetoric of gratitude for a difficult but surmountable challenge. Joey's

(management learning professional) rendering of her burnout as a situational learning opportunity most clearly exemplifies this sentiment from respondents: 'I am just glad I have the tools to be able to overcome this, and I can take these learnings into my next job'.

Fantasizing recovery

Against the backdrop of these three stories, the prospect of recovery was central to the story work of burnout. Recovery took the form of a fantastical prospect, articulated either as an impossible promise (e.g. 'I don't think I will ever get there but I still have hope' – Dahlia, social worker) or as an aspirational space or place, for example, a 'resting place' or a 'healing space'. Jean's (health economist) experience is indicative of those who emphasized the importance of a dedicated recovery space or place: 'I took time off specifically to recover and rest, I couldn't imagine going straight to another job'. These fantasies of recovery involved romanticizing its possibilities as a place of healing, renewal and reinvention, which were knowingly illusory yet comforting. This is most clearly exemplified by architect Dylan's descriptions that reflected the sentiments of many others: 'it's quite fairy tale optimistic of me to think that if you find the right situation, then you're not going to have a problem with it'. Paradoxically, these fantasies also involved a compulsion to 'move on' from recovery as a healing space to a space of socially recognizable progress, for example, in Krystal's (music executive) account: 'I can't live in this fantasy land like forever, you know? But for right now I'm lapping it up.' For many, this involved not only a return to a previous state or particular job, but an impetus to improve and surpass their former circumstances as a form of redemptive achievement:

'I would use the word 'redeem' [to describe recovery], I know it doesn't have good connotations like I had failed and done something bad or wrong, like it's a sin, but it is a good way of describing it, cause it did feel like as though I had failed myself and now is my chance for redemption' (Lana, doctor)

However, 'recovery' as a life free from burnout was not always considered possible, particularly amongst those who narrated their burnout as addiction, but was still considered the 'gold standard' of possibility and had a consoling effect when recognition seemed impossible. This is most clearly illustrated by Brianna, a fashion designer who embodies the push-pull of hope/hopelessness experienced by many others: 'I think recovery is getting out of that bad place, that breakdown, I don't think I will ever be the sort of person who doesn't have these problems but I think you have to hope'.

I now untangle and present three narratives of recovery which I introduce as statements of personal change to highlight the biographical disruption that was evidently experienced by our respondents. These narratives take variegated trajectories towards the possibility of recovery as an aspirational objective and/or illusory promise through: burying painful memories (forgetting); the creation of new beginnings (rebirth); and the continuous labor of cultivating self-awareness (vigilance).

Recovering through forgetting: 'back to myself'

Central to this narrative of recovery was the shedding of, in both body and mind, the memory of burnout. Notably, in burying the events and experiences of burnout, these narratives sought affirmation from a recognizable past (before-burnout). This manifested in an eagerness to 'close the door to this chapter of hurt' (Diego, engineer) and a focus on one's locus of control ('I look after what I can' – Joey). These narratives typically began with an acknowledgement of the workplace factors which precipitated their burnout – long hours, unreasonable demands – but respondents were also keen to emphasise that these were not unusual or special conditions. In other words, these narratives normalized stories of workplace dysfunction as part of organizational life. We see this most clearly in Joey's articulation, where she was working for months at a time from 7am to 1am, yet considered this something she had to 'wear' as a senior member of an e-commerce organization: 'I was functioning on two hours of sleep a night... but you know, that's leadership?'

Narrative suspense was built by emphasizing the pernicious nature of workplace demands – rising expectations, rising tempers – and a slow personal decline ('I started taking more and more drugs just to get through a shift, cocaine to give me energy and pills to sleep' – Tina). These narratives did not climax in bodily breakdown, but in a moment of illumination ('nothing happened but I just knew I couldn't do this anymore' – Sean) and culminated in neat resolutions achieved through simple, self-administered remedies (e.g. exercise, holiday): 'I just really needed a break and then I was fine after' (Nisha, marketing professional). In particular, these narratives shied away from discourses of self-reckoning or personal development. Take, for instance, Sean's rendering of his recovery experience:

I don't feel like it's changed my personality or anything like that, I am still the same person, but it's like an injury... a bit like rolling an ankle, you need to do rehab and you can recover function but you need to be careful if you're playing sport or running on that ankle again.

This was an essential paradox that existed in these narratives of forgetting. They simultaneously emphasized the gravity of burnout ('my chest felt like a vice... they had to call an ambulance' – Diego), but worked hard to efface both its effects and the labor of recovery from their stories: 'Nope, I am absolutely back to the way I was before... So I just take a day to work out, [dietary] cleanse, do the things I like to do' – Joey.

Recovering through rebirth: 'a better version of myself'

Rebirth narratives centred around the possibility of growth, learning and the shoots of a new life. In particular, they emphasized a compulsion for movement or a 'moving on'. Significant to this was a necessary dismantling or in some cases, a 'razing' of their selfhood in order to construct a new mode of being. We see this in Krystal's narrative after 20 years in the popular music industry:

I loved my career. I loved my job, loved it. But I also just wanted to be me. I wanted to strip away how I felt at the beginning of my burnout, just wanted to strip away everything that I was associated with and not caring about any of that. And I think that shedding the ego and letting go of all of that [industry glamour]... You can only improve yourself that way.

The 'journey' or process of rebuilding functioned as the climax of this narrative; a transformative process with key themes of self-knowledge ('I overcame blindspots' – Regan), learning and the acceptance of new limitations – physical, emotional and mental ('I can't focus very well anymore and I am getting someone to teach me how to [deep] read again' – Cleo). Part of this acceptance was a focus on 'illness gains' (Ware & Kleinman, 1992) rather than the diminishment of personal capacity as part of a return to bodily wellness and self-defined betterment ('I'm finding new ways to live my life' – Krystal). A central conflict to this narrative was an unresolved yearning. This centred around a desire for a familiar aspect of a former life, but a parallel fear of 'moving backwards' and what this circling back might entail. Emeline, a sustainability consultant, relays the push-pull of her social nature and the community-facing aspects of her government job:

I think it's important to reflect on your learnings and to help you understand like how far you've come and how you can help other people... I am quite social and I like a social team environment where I feel a sense of belonging and I have always loved community work... but I feel a bit wary of people now and reluctant to leave my

sanctuary so I take six month contracts so I can press 'eject' and leave whenever I need to and not lose too much face.

The compulsion towards movement or change was especially significant for those who were unable to make material changes to their working life and provided a means for reconciling their perceived inertia. For instance Brianna, constrained by the conditions of her work visa, was unable to leave her difficult employment circumstances characterized by job insecurity, flailing leadership, and a bickering work environment. A narrative of growth without movement helped her come to terms with the inability to progress from her difficult work situation: 'I have been through burnout a few times now and I think of it as Winter, when everything dies, and then as the seasons change and I change even though I can't really make any [job] changes now, then I can grow into my Spring'. We see here how the fantasy of recovery – achieved in this case through the necessarily symbolism of movement or momentum – was both soothing and seductive to respondents who reconciled the unyielding constraints and contradictions of their situation through a rhetoric of rebuilding, renewal and rejuvenation.

Recovering through vigilance: 'a shadow of my former self'

At the heart of this narrative lay stories of burnout as addiction. Narratives of recovery through vigilance were told as embodying a period of temporary freedom from burnout but never a space completely unshackled from its spectral effects. Iris, a forensic psychologist describes its illusory qualities:

It's an illusion because recovery for me implies that you reach a state of health that is relatively constant. I see mental and physical health like the ocean. It comes in waves, sometimes there are storms and sometimes there's drought, but in those changes and in that vicissitude is the constancy.

The central tension to this narrative was the watchful waiting endured by respondents, the passive dread of being constantly aware for triggers of 'relapse' and the perpetual labor this entailed: 'you're free of the obvious manifestations of the problem, but you have to be ever vigilant not to slip back into it' (Katherine, former human resources professional). The narrative turning point took place after a significant event of biographical disruption – an 'implosion', a 'crash', a 'nervous breakdown' – that could only be understood through another character: 'my husband had to point out just how bad things had gotten, he said: "it's not normal to be working until midnight every day", and then I looked at myself and I

had gained so much weight and realized I was crying every day' (Aubrey, software engineer).

Importantly, the need for continuous self-monitoring was provoked by this tension point – the un/knowning or inability to recognize one's own experience of burnout. This was followed by an acceptance of personal responsibility:

I learned you have to admit that you have a problem, like Alcoholics Anonymous, and then once you have, you can work on coping strategies for dealing with the problem. And that's the recovery phase. I think it's just working out what those strategies are and then implementing them. (Aubrey)

This tale of recovery in perpetuity lacked the aspirational qualities of rebirth narratives, rather it was imbued with themes of wariness and self-resentment. Noelle, a former activist and program manager at a global NGO, recalls how the realization of her new limitations were troubling and jarred with her former capabilities working on large scale humanitarian projects:

You're not really recovering anything because you're actually having to create a whole new life. Does that make sense? I don't feel like I'm recovering because I'll never recover that 30 year old in that way again, I will never have that energy or ever recover it, that's not possible. I am just being accepting and I've had to change everything and expectations about what I can do... but I have a lot of resentment about it and the way my life has changed.

Yet even with this deep sense of dysphoria and the temporary nature of remission, recovery persisted as an ember of imaginative 'betterment' and presented the possibility of self-ordained recognition when organizational or institutional alternatives were impossible: 'I think it holds the promise of achieving your potential, you know?' (Noelle).

The organizational limits of recovery

Recovery for respondents existed not only in the talk and text of narratives but also in the performance of storytelling. In particular, recovery for many individuals was an enacted narrative told to oneself and both retold from and to others as part of an enduring need for recognition – a vital yet absent part of the contested illness experience. In other words,

narratives needed to be kept alive, through dynamic performances to self and others, as part of recovery; I depict this in Figure 1 as a virtuous circle of telling and retelling. This performed recovery largely stemmed from dismissive organizational responses (**Paper 2**) or from internalized broader discourses around work – morality and failure – that were evident when narrating their burnout.

**** INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE ****

In many cases, the research interview itself was positioned by respondents as a form of enacted recovery, particularly for individuals who were legally ‘muted’ by their employers or were wary of professional repercussions. For these individuals, the research interaction was often approached with an aspiration of ‘closure’. An illustrative example can be found in Giselle, a project operations manager. Like others, Giselle’s treating mental health professional suggested the interview as a means for reconciling their affective and ambiguous experiences: ‘I told my psychologist [about this interview] and he said it was a good idea to help with therapy... we have been working on protectionism and not feeling responsible for things’. A small number of respondents even requested their interview transcripts to be used as part of their mental health treatment program. Patrick, an IT professional, for example, was engaging in a program of narrative therapy which included ‘self-authoring’ exercises and requested his transcripts to support this process. In these cases, narrative practice was used as a way to self-cohere and remain ‘intact’, particularly for those ever vigilant about the prospect of ‘relapse’ or another burnout.

Significantly, in these (re)tellings, narratives were dynamic – they could intertwine, overlap and become entangled as respondents reacted to the specific needs of the situation. The analysis revealed that the parameters of the organizational context only allowed for particular articulations of burnout and by extension, recovery. First, through the use of organizational technologies that actively suppressed narrative practice. Second, through the informal structures and systems of gossip that sustain and circulate stories of organizational life. Third, through the appropriation of troubling mental health discourses at work. I elaborate on these as follows.

The most tangible organizational limits were the legal technologies used to render burnt out subjects ‘mute’, such as non-disparagement clauses in employment contracts or non-disclosure agreements as a condition of severance. More than a third of our

respondents were constrained by such conditions though some sought to navigate their way around these conditions. Giselle, for example, was bullied into signing a NDA as part of her severance package. In a show of resistance, she posted a LinkedIn testimonial about her experience of burnout at work. While she did not name her employer, she left clear ‘breadcrumbs’ on her online profile to incriminate her former organization, such as time stamps and a detailed employment history.

Less tangibly, the dependence of organizations on the ‘grapevine’ or a network of whispers for human resource related decisions had significant implications for respondents’ employment outcomes – advancement and promotion, job security, and even the possibility of finding work in the same industry after organizational exit. This disproportionately affected individuals working in highly specialized industries or those who represented minority or marginalized members of their organizations as they became readily identifiable within networks of gossip, resulting in respondents’ self-censorship in organizational settings. For example, in relation to stories of burnout, respondents were keen to emphasise that they ‘remained professional’ (Laila, doctor), which manifested as absencing burnout completely from organizational narratives – only one individual in our sample used the word ‘burnout’ while communicating with their employer and co-workers. Instead, veiled references to stress management and the balance of commitments were preferred, usually through metaphors of juggling, loaded plates, drained batteries and toppling in-tray capacities. In their retellings, respondents noted that they focused on simple managerial solutions, rather than burnout itself, and were instrumental and strategic in gaining ‘quick wins’ (Malcom, communications professional) for themselves, such as paid time off or a reduced workload. Some ended up communicating entirely through their legal representatives or through doctors’ notes to avoid the stress of storytelling and to bolster narrative credibility.

Recovery, stemming from absent burnout narratives, was never discussed by respondents on organizational terrain or with other organizational members. Instead, recovery existed only in the imaginative labor of story work outside of the workplace, for example, with trusted personal confidantes and therapists. That is, although burnout emerges from the public domain of the organization, narratives of burnout and subsequent recovery were consigned to the private sphere, away from beating heart of organizational life. In particular, many respondents ‘papered’ over their fallout and associated career absences using narratives they knew to be socially recognizable or readily acceptable,

such as illness, caring responsibilities or the organizationally-sanctioned 'career break'. This is most clearly illustrated by Angela, a doctor, who confessed that she felt her burnout was related to her subsequent cancer diagnosis – an opinion that would be discredited in medical circles due to the lack of recognizable evidence¹²; yet as Angela noted, the generation of such evidence would be impossible¹³. As her theory could never be proven, she became acutely aware of the existential bind she was placed in and remained silent on the matter.

In some cases, the organizational parameters of recognition even led to a deferral of burnout as standing in for a 'popular' or 'fashionable' organizational project. For example, many respondents spoke about how narratives of their illness experiences became fetishized and appropriated – as parable, as an organizational initiative, as public antidote – as part of organizing processes around discourses of wellness: 'you know mental health is huge right now' (Roger, consultant). This not only decentred burnout as a phenomenon but also set up systems of misrecognition and recognition, namely the means to maintain a recognizable subject through organizationally sanctioned modes of being. This is most clearly illustrated in the case of Tristan, whose burnout was a product of an abusive work environment – alcohol use on construction sites, constant verbal aggression and high stakes work with frequently changing timelines and goals. Yet his experience of burnout and recovery as a troubling illness of organizational origin was misplaced as an issue of men's health. In fact, Tristan became the 'champion' and face of a corporate men's health program funded by his workplace. As part of this, his narrative became appropriated into an organizational initiative about combatting toxic masculinity and a parable for other male workers around 'gender blindness', self-awareness and mental health breakdown.

¹² In biomedicine, this refers to a specific hierarchy of clinical research (Higgins et al., 2022). Health and medical specialists are trained to evaluate evidence through this explicitly hierarchical prism that provides a heuristic for clinical decision making. The most compelling form of evidence under this framework is the randomized, controlled trial – an expensive and difficult undertaking in medicine (Hariton & Locascio, 2018; Kendall, 2003).

¹³ Bioethical standards and the regulation of clinical research prohibit intervention-based experiments in which a severe and incurable condition, such as cancer, is the possible outcome (UNESCO, 2005). Therefore, in order to maintain ethical standards, many public health studies are intentionally designed to generate 'weaker' evidence, for example, through retrospective case designs.

When considering the ways in which clinical decision making are made and the hierarchical organization of evidence (see note 12), it becomes clear that sufferers of burnout who subsequently develop severe health disorders, such as Angela, are further entangled in an(other) existential bind in which they are unable to provide institutionally recognizable evidence for their bodily experiences.

Discussion

Thus far, the findings have explored how burnout as a contested illness is organizationally constituted and governed in the narratives of 43 participants with lived experience of burnout. They provide a vital provocation to the theoretical aporia of burnout as a clinical condition without clinical legitimacy and open new avenues through which to understand recovery from burnout and other illnesses with ambiguous origin. Specifically, they point to the importance of dynamic narrative performances in the enactment of recovery. The particular focus on the organizationally-situated nature of these narratives reveals how these structures, systems and technologies established conditions and forms of possible storytelling amongst burnt out subjects. It especially highlights how narratives of burnout are marked by the same organizational compulsion to construct linear sequences of recovery and disperse accountability for a troubling organizational condition. I discuss the paper's contributions to the substantive literature on burnout recovery and the intersecting disciplines of (contested) illness narratives and organizational stories.

The present study makes important contributions to the fledging area of scholarship on post-burnout experiences and answers the call for more exploratory insight into this relatively unknown period of illness. Specifically, it uses a novel conceptual lens – contested illness – to theoretically advance understanding of burnout beyond the realm of clinical measurement, demonstrating how the ambiguity surrounding disputed conditions compels storytelling and narrative practices around illness/wellness at work. In particular, the findings illustrate how the language and construction of these narratives provides an alternative space and vocabulary for considering how we might approach the management of recovery for burnt out subjects. Specifically, it prompts us to consider how we might theoretically conceptualize the recovery 'state' in relation to burnout. Existing literature has thus far implied that recovery has clear boundaries through asymptomatic expression in a clinical body, and has largely absented the role of organizational settings from its delineations. Our findings suggest that recovery for burnout as a contested illness *at least* includes narration to self and other(s) as part of a dynamic recovery process that provokes vigilance, necessitates acceptance and requires imaginative story work to construct a fantastical self or space in relation to work and organizational life. That is, recovery exists not only in narratives but through narrative *performance*; a repeated telling and re-telling that coheres to the changing needs of the story teller and their situation. In particular, the recovery narratives this study uncovered necessarily fused the prospect of 'healing' to the genesis of rupture in burnout, yet absented burnout from critical tensions and conflicts.

Rather, narratives climaxed at moments of illumination – either through self or a conduit – and the personal labor of ‘moving on’ to the aspirational and (knowingly) illusory space of healing, renewal and reinvention. In other words, the significance of recovery to narratives of burnout emerged even when – or perhaps especially because – the contours of illness/wellness are unclear.

This paper’s focus on recovery narratives also develops existing scholarship on contested illness, which have primarily tended to institutional recognition gains (Alaimo, 2012; Dumit, 2006; Kroll-Smith & Floyd, 1997; Phillips, 2010) and the strategies used in this legitimizing process (Bulow, 2004; Groenevelt, 2022; Shriver & Waskul, 2006; Swoboda, 2006). Implicit to this literature is the assumption that contested illnesses manifest as chronic in nature (Bulow, 2003; Charmaz, 1991; Frank, 2013), and that recovery is contingent upon biomedical recognition as a necessary first step (Dumit, 2006; Phillips, 2010; Shriver & Waskul, 2006). This study of burnout represents a distinct case through which to understand how recovery can be imagined in an illness of uncertain origin, progression and outline without the legitimating forces of diagnosis. That is, as a condition without clear medical origin, trajectory or treatment protocols, burnout inherently needs a structural force to give it a substantive and recognizable form. In this particular study we have identified this force not as medical authorities but as narrative reconciliation. This manifested in the underlying desire of our respondents to break down illness trajectories into ‘phases which give it shape’ (Corbin & Strauss, 1988, p.45) and re-centre the lived experience of burnout/recovery.

This compulsion to organize burnout narratives was also evident in the organizational parameters of our respondents’ articulations. In particular, our findings illustrate how burnout is ‘disappeared’ from organizations through legal technologies which actively silence burnt out subjects, or through discursive (self-)management by individuals who are impelled to absent troubling narratives from the workplace for fear of disbelief or even reprisal. When burnout could no longer be hidden, organizing processes and systems identified and appropriated these narratives before they punctured the surface of organizational life – an insight echoed in critical examinations of storytelling (Murgia & Poggio, 2009; Näslund & Perner, 2012). These findings provide a valuable pathway into understanding how organizations and organizing practices simultaneously heighten and suppress the drama around narratives of illness at work, in which burnt out individuals remain unrecognizably ill. Significantly, the troubling nature of mental health discourses in

organizations constrained articulations of burnout and by extension, recovery, even outside of organizational settings. The persistent localization of accountability to individuals in recovery narratives suggest that by nature of being an organizational condition, stories of burnout and recovery are necessarily limited in the ways they can be told. In fact, the individualistic narrations of self – which continue to locate the problem of burnout within people, not processes – echo existing studies of healthism and wellness in organizational settings (Costea et al., 2008; Dale & Burrell, 2014; Kenny, 2016; McGillivray, 2005).

Ultimately, the findings demonstrate how acts of story work for burnout and mental illness more broadly remain situated within neoliberal structures and are not an emancipatory process as suggested by some scholars (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Driver, 2014; Gabriel, 2008). This provides a valuable addition to the extant organizational storytelling scholarship through a focus on a phenomenon that is inherently uncertain and unstable, yet is said to emerge directly from organizations. In particular, it has implications for how we consider the ‘half-life’ of narratives in organizational settings. That is, how narratives are kept alive or ‘whole’ as they travel through organizational systems and processes designed to vanish them from peripheries, or fragment and decay their essential flavour and texture. This has important implications for how we study narratives as organizational researchers and suggests a more holistic approach may need to be taken through an examination of polyphonic stories (e.g. Foroughi, 2020; Smith & Russell, 2016), embedded research collection (e.g. Hydén & Brockmeier, 2008; Mattingly, 2008) or through the consideration of accounts themselves and the elicited research context as a whole narrative – practices familiar to researchers of illness narratives (Charmaz, 1999; Frank, 2001, 2010; Riessman, 2008).

Conclusion

This paper provides a novel perspective through which to understand recovery from burnout as a contested illness. I suggest that such a lens is particularly valuable when seeking to understand the lived experience of those who have tried to recover from burnout. First, it helps support and articulate the ambiguity of (post-) burnout experiences, suggesting a way to recover from the organizational effects and harm imbued on the body through re-articulating a coherent narrative and biographical trajectory. Second, it provides a valuable conduit through which to consider organizational structures, processes and

members not as passive subjects but as active agents in responding to burnout as a feature of organizational life. Finally, narrative storytelling as a theoretical framework opens vistas for considering post-burnout experiences beyond a static moment or period of recovery bound by either temporal or clinical conditions – parameters which have been baked into the management structures of pathologically ‘hazy’ conditions of mental illness.

References

- Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, Jobs Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations. *Gender & Society*, 4(2), 139–158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124390004002002>
- Ahola, K., Toppinen-Tanner, S., & Seppänen, J. (2017). Interventions to alleviate burnout symptoms and to support return to work among employees with burnout: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Burnout Research*, 4, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2017.02.001>
- Ainsworth, S. (2012). *Subjects of Inquiry : Statistics , Stories , and the Production of Knowledge*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840612457616>
- Alaimo, S. (2010). *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*. Indiana University Press.
- Alaimo, S. (2012). Bodily Natures. In *Environmental Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.5840/enviroethics20123418>
- Alarcon, G., Eschleman, K. J., & Bowling, N. A. (2009). Relationships between personality variables and burnout: A meta-analysis. *Work and Stress*, 23(3), 244–263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370903282600>
- APA. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>
- APA. (2020). *Stress in America 2020: A National Mental Health Crisis*. <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2020/sia-mental-health-crisis.pdf>
- Armentor, J. L. (2017). Living with a contested, stigmatized illness: experiences of managing relationships among women with fibromyalgia. *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(4), 462–473.
- Arter, J. A., & Jenkins, J. R. (1979). Differential diagnosis—prescriptive teaching: A critical appraisal. *Review of Educational Research*, 49(4), 517–555.
- Awa, W. L., Plaumann, M., & Walter, U. (2010). Burnout prevention: A review of intervention programs. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 78(2), 184–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2009.04.008>
- Bayes, A., Tavella, G., & Parker, G. (2021). The biology of burnout: Causes and consequences. *The World Journal of Biological Psychiatry*, 22(9), 686–698.
- Beigi, M., Callahan, J., & Michaelson, C. (2019). A Critical Plot Twist: Changing Characters and Foreshadowing the Future of Organizational Storytelling. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 21(4), 447–465. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12203>
- Bernier, D. (1998). A study of coping: Successful recovery from severe burnout and other reactions to severe work-related stress. *Work and Stress*, 12(1), 50–65.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02678379808256848>

Bianchi, R., Schonfeld, I. S., & Laurent, E. (2015). Is it Time to Consider the 'Burnout Syndrome' A Distinct Illness? *Frontiers in Public Health*, 3, 158.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2015.00158>

Boje, D. M. (1991). The storytelling organization: A study of story performance in an office-supply firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 106–126.

Boje, D. M. (2008). *Storytelling organizations*. Sage.

Brown, A. D., Ainsworth, S., & Grant, D. (2012). The rhetoric of institutional change. *Organization Studies*, 33(3), 297–321.

Brown, A. D., Gabriel, Y., & Gherardi, S. (2009). Storytelling and change: An unfolding story. *Organization*, 16(3), 323–333.

Brown, A. D., & Humphreys, M. (2006). Organizational identity and place: A discursive exploration of hegemony and resistance. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(2), 231–257.

Bülow, P. H. (2003). *Making Sense of Contested Illness: Talk and Narratives About Chronic Fatigue*. Linköping University.

Bülow, P. H. (2004). Sharing experiences of contested illness by storytelling. *Discourse and Society*, 15(1), 33–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926504038943>

Bülow, P. H. (2008). "You have to ask a little": troublesome storytelling about contested illness. In *Health, Illness and Culture* (pp. 137–159). Routledge.

Bury, M. (1982). Chronic illness as biographical disruption. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 4(2), 167–182. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.ep11339939>

Charmaz, K. (1991). *Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time*. Rutgers University Press.

Charmaz, K. (1999). Stories of suffering: Subjective tales and research narratives. *Qualitative Health Research*, 9(3), 362–382.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/104973299129121910>

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage.

Charmaz, K., & Belgrave, L. (2012). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft*, 2, 347–365.

Cherniss, C. (1990). Natural recovery from burnout: Results from a 10-year follow-up study. *Journal of Health and Human Resources Administration*, 13(2), 132–154.

Clarke, J. N., & James, S. (2003). The radicalized self: The impact on the self of the contested nature of the diagnosis of chronic fatigue syndrome. *Social Science and*

- Medicine*, 57(8), 1387–1395. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(02\)00515-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(02)00515-4)
- Conrad, P., & Schneider, J. W. (1992). *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness*. Temple University Press.
- Costea, B., Crump, N., & Amiridis, K. (2008). Managerialism, the therapeutic habitus and the self in contemporary organizing. *Human Relations*, 61(5), 661–685. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726708091763>
- Crawford, R. (1980). Healthism and the medicalization of everyday life. *International Journal of Health Services*, 10(3), 365–388.
- Czarniawska, B. (1998). *A Narrative Approach to Organization Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412983235>
- Dale, K., & Burrell, G. (2014). Being occupied: An embodied re-reading of organizational 'wellness'. *Organization*, 21(2), 159–177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508412473865>
- Driscoll, C., & McKee, M. (2007). Restorying a culture of ethical and spiritual values: A role for leader storytelling. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 73(2), 205–217. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9191-5>
- Driver, M. (2009). From loss to lack: Stories of organizational change as encounters with failed fantasies of self, work and organization. *Organization*, 16(3), 353–369.
- Driver, M. (2014). The stressed subject: Lack, empowerment and liberation. *Organization*, 21(1), 90–105. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508412464897>
- Dumit, J. (2006). Illnesses you have to fight to get: Facts as forces in uncertain, emergent illnesses. *Social Science and Medicine*, 62(3), 577–590. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.06.018>
- Elraz, H. (2018). Identity, mental health and work: How employees with mental health conditions recount stigma and the pejorative discourse of mental illness. *Human Relations*, 71(5), 722–741. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726717716752>
- Fair, B. (2010). *Morgellons : contested illness , diagnostic compromise and medicalisation*. 32(4), 597–612. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.2009.01227.x>
- Fleming, D. (2001). Narrative leadership: Using the power of stories. *Strategy & Leadership*.
- Foroughi, H. (2020). Collective Memories as a Vehicle of Fantasy and Identification: Founding stories retold. *Organization Studies*, 41(10), 1347–1367. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840619844286>
- Foster, D. (2016). 'Keep complaining til someone listens': Exchanges of tacit healthcare knowledge in online illness communities. *Social Science & Medicine*, 166, 25–32.
- Frank, A. W. (1998). Just listening: Narrative and deep illness. *Families, Systems and*

- Health*, 16(3), 197–212. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0089849>
- Frank, A. W. (2000). The standpoint of storyteller. *Qualitative Health Research*, 10(3), 354–365.
- Frank, A. W. (2001). Can we research suffering? *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(3), 353–362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973201129119154>
- Frank, A. W. (2002). *At the will of the body: Reflections on illness*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Frank, A. W. (2010). *Letting stories breathe: A socio-narratology*. University of Chicago Press.
- Frank, A. W. (2013). *The wounded storyteller: Body, illness, and ethics*. University of Chicago Press.
- Freudenberger, H. J. (1974). Staff burn-out. *Journal of Social Issues*, 30(1), 159–165.
- Gabriel, Y. (1991). Turning Facts into Stories and Stories into Facts: A Hermeneutic Exploration of Organizational Folklore. *Human Relations*, 44(8), 857–875. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679104400806>
- Gabriel, Y. (1995). The unmanaged organization: Stories, fantasies and subjectivity. *Organization Studies*, 16(3), 477–501.
- Gabriel, Y. (1997). Meeting God: When Organizational Members Come Face to Face with the Supreme Leader. *Human Relations*, 50(4), 315–342. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1016938410023>
- Gabriel, Y. (2000). *Storytelling in organizations: Facts, fictions, and fantasies: Facts, fictions, and fantasies*. OUP Oxford.
- Gabriel, Y. (2004). Narratives, stories and texts. *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse*, 61–78. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848608122.n3>
- Gabriel, Y. (2008). Spectacles of resistance and resistance of spectacles. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 21(3), 310–326.
- Groenevelt, I. (2022). “It’s not all nice and fun”: Narrating contested illness on YouTube and Instagram. *Health (United Kingdom)*, 26(5), 589–604. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634593211017187>
- Halbesleben, J. R. B. (2006). Sources of social support and burnout: A meta-analytic test of the conservation of resources model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(5), 1134–1145. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.5.1134>
- Hariton, E., & Locascio, J. J. (2018). Randomised controlled trials—the gold standard for effectiveness. *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, 125(13), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0528.15199>.Randomised

- Harvey, G. (2019). Corporate wellness : what , why not and whither? *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 41(4), 638–648. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-06-2018-0151>
- Higgins, J., Thomas, J., Chandler, J., Cumpston, M., Li, T., Page, M., & Welch, V. (2022). *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions*.
- Hill, A. P., & Curran, T. (2016). Multidimensional Perfectionism and Burnout: A Meta-Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 20(3), 269–288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868315596286>
- Horton-Salway, M. (2001). Narrative identities and the management of personal accountability in talk about ME: A discursive psychology approach to illness narrative. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 6(2), 247–259.
- Hughes, J. L. (2002). Illness narrative and chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis: A review. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 65(1), 9–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030802260206500103>
- Hydén, L. C. (1997). Illness and narrative. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 19(1), 48–69. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.1997.tb00015.x>
- Hydén, L. C., & Brockmeier, J. (2008). *Health, illness and culture: Broken narratives*. Routledge.
- Kalid, K. S., & Mahmood, A. K. (2010). Using stories to share knowledge: a Malaysian organization case study. *Journal of Knowledge Management Practice*, 11(1), 1–10.
- Kendall, M. J. (2003). Designing a research project: randomised controlled trials and their principles. *Emergency Medicine Journal*, 20, 164–168.
- Kenny, K. (2016). Organizations and Violence: The Child as Abject-Boundary in Ireland's Industrial Schools. *Organization Studies*, 37(7), 939–961. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840615622069>
- Kenny, K., Fotaki, M., & Scriver, S. (2019). Mental Health as a Weapon: Whistleblower Retaliation and Normative Violence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 160(3), 801–815. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3868-4>
- Kokkinidis, G., & Checchi, M. (2021). Power matters: Posthuman entanglements in a social solidarity clinic. *Organization*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508420973304>
- Korhonen, M., & Komulainen, K. (2019). The moral orders of work and health: a case of sick leave due to burnout. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 41(2), 219–233. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.12816>
- Korhonen, M., & Komulainen, K. (2021). Individualizing the burnout problem: Health professionals' discourses of burnout and recovery in the context of rehabilitation. *Health (United Kingdom)*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634593211063053>

- Korhonen, M., Komulainen, K., & Okkonen, V. (2020). Burnout as an identity rupture in the life course: a longitudinal narrative method. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 42(8), 1918–1933.
- Koutsimani, P., Montgomery, A., & Georganta, K. (2019). The relationship between burnout, depression, and anxiety: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(MAR), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00284>
- Kroll-Smith, S., & Floyd, H. (1997). *Bodies in Protest: Environmental Illness and the Struggle Over Medical Knowledge*. NYU Press.
- Laschinger, H. K. S., & Fida, R. (2014). New nurses burnout and workplace wellbeing: The influence of authentic leadership and psychological capital. *Burnout Research*, 1(1), 19–28.
- Lastovkova, A., Carder, M., Rasmussen, H. M., Sjoberg, L., De Groene, G. J., Sauni, R., Vevoda, J., Vevodova, S., Lasfargues, G., & Svartengren, M. (2018). Burnout syndrome as an occupational disease in the European Union: an exploratory study. *Industrial Health*, 56(2), 160–165.
- Leamy, M., Bird, V., Le Boutillier, C., Williams, J., & Slade, M. (2011). Conceptual framework for personal recovery in mental health: Systematic review and narrative synthesis. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 199(6), 445–452. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.110.083733>
- Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (1999). Six areas of worklife: A model of the organizational context of burnout. *Journal of Health and Human Services Administration*, 21(4), 472–489.
- Leiter, M. P., Maslach, C., Journal, S., & Oct, N. (2017). *The Impact of Interpersonal Environment on Burnout and Organizational Commitment* Stable URL : <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2488088> REFERENCES Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article : *The impact of interpersonal environment on burnout and*. 9(4), 297–308.
- Maricuțoiu, L. P., Sava, F. A., & Butta, O. (2016). The effectiveness of controlled interventions on employees' burnout: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 89(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12099>
- Martin, P. (2022). Divided Bodies: Lyme Disease, Contested Illness, and Evidence-Based Medicine. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*, 46(1), 156–158.
- Maslach, C. (2017). Finding solutions to the problem of burnout. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, 69(2), 143–152. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000090>
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The Measurement of Experienced Burnout. *Journal*

of Occupational Behaviour, 2(2), 99–113.

- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World Psychiatry*, 15(2), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311>
- Mathieson, C. M., & Stam, H. J. (1995). Reneotiating identity: cancer narratives. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 17(3), 283–306.
- Mattingly, C. F. (2008). Stories that are ready to break. *Health Illness and Culture: Broken Narratives, 2008*, 73–98. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203894309>
- McCormick, G. (2009). *Living with multiple chemical sensitivity: Narratives of coping*. McFarland.
- McGillivray, D. (2005). Fitter, happier, more productive: Governing working bodies through wellness. *Culture and Organization*, 11(2), 125–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14759550500091036>
- Moore, L. R. (2014). “But we’re not hypochondriacs”: The changing shape of gluten-free dieting and the contested illness experience. *Social Science & Medicine*, 105, 76–83.
- Morrison, T., Madaras, S., Larson, C., & Harrison, R. (2021). Personal agency and community resilience: narratives of women navigating health care with chronic Lyme disease. *Qualitative Health Research*, 31(14), 2706–2714.
- Murgia, A., & Poggio, B. (2009). Challenging hegemonic masculinities: Men’s stories on gender culture in organizations. *Organization*, 16(3), 407–423. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508409102303>
- Näslund, L., & Pemer, F. (2012). The appropriated language: Dominant stories as a source of organizational inertia. *Human Relations*, 65(1), 89–110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726711424322>
- Oerlemans, W. G. M., & Bakker, A. B. (2014). Burnout and Daily Recovery: A Day Reconstruction Study. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 19(3), 303–314. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036904>
- Peirano-Vejo, M. E., & Stablein, R. E. (2009). Constituting change and stability: Sense-making stories in a farming organization. *Organization*, 16(3), 443–462.
- Penz, M., Miller, R., Pieper, L., Beesdo-Baum, K., Walther, A., Wekenborg, M. K., Stalder, T., & Kirschbaum, C. (2018). The Dresden Burnout Study: Protocol of a prospective cohort study for the bio-psychological investigation of burnout. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 27(2), e1613. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mpr.1613>
- Phillips, T. (2010). Debating the legitimacy of a contested environmental illness: A case study of multiple chemical sensitivities (MCS). *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 32(7),

1026–1040. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.2010.01255.x>

Purvanova, R. K., & Muros, J. P. (2010). Gender differences in burnout: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 77(2), 168–185.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2010.04.006>

Rattrie, L. T. B., Kittler, M. G., & Paul, K. I. (2020). Culture, Burnout, and Engagement: A Meta-Analysis on National Cultural Values as Moderators in JD-R Theory. *Applied Psychology*, 69(1), 176–220. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12209>

Reid, E. (2015). Embracing, passing, revealing, and the ideal worker image: How people navigate expected and experienced professional identities. *Organization Science*, 26(4), 997–1017. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2015.0975>

Rhodes, C., & Brown, A. D. (2005). Narrative, organizations and research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 7(3), 167–188. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2005.00112.x>

Rhodes, C., Pullen, A., & Clegg, S. R. (2010). ‘If I should fall from grace...’: Stories of change and organizational ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 91(4), 535–551.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis* (Vol. 30). Sage.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage.

Rosenberg, C. E. (1989). Disease in history: frames and framers. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 1–15.

Roth, P. H., & Gadebusch-Bondio, M. (2022). The contested meaning of “long COVID” – Patients, doctors, and the politics of subjective evidence. *Social Science and Medicine*, 292(June 2021), 114619. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114619>

Rushforth, A., Ladds, E., Wieringa, S., Taylor, S., Husain, L., & Greenhalgh, T. (2021). Long Covid – The illness narratives. *Social Science and Medicine*, 286(August), 114326. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114326>

Salminen, S., Andreou, E., Holma, J., Pekkonen, M., & Mäkikangas, A. (2017). Narratives of burnout and recovery from an agency perspective : A two-year longitudinal study. *Burnout Research*, 7(August), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2017.08.001>

Salminen, S., Mäkikangas, A., Häätinen, M., Kinnunen, U., & Pekkonen, M. (2015). My Well-Being in My Own Hands: Experiences of Beneficial Recovery During Burnout Rehabilitation. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 25(4), 733–741. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-015-9581-6>

Sanjek, R. (2019). *Fieldnotes: The makings of anthropology*. Cornell University Press.

Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1996). *Maslach Burnout Inventory -- General Survey (GS). January.*

- Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2009). Burnout: 35 years of research and practice. *Career Development International*, 14(3), 204–220.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430910966406>
- Scholz, F., & Ingold, J. (2021). Activating the ‘ideal jobseeker’: Experiences of individuals with mental health conditions on the UK Work Programme. *Human Relations*, 74(10), 1604–1627. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726720934848>
- Semeijn, J. (2019). In flight again with wings that were once broken ; effects of post-traumatic growth and personal resources on burnout recovery. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 12(5), 387–403. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWHM-01-2019-0006>
- Shapiro, J. (2011). Illness narratives: reliability, authenticity and the empathic witness. In *Medical humanities* (Vol. 37, Issue 2, pp. 68–72). Institute of Medical Ethics.
- Shriver, T. E., & Waskul, D. D. (2006). Managing the uncertainties of Gulf War illness: The challenges of living with contested illness. *Symbolic Interaction*, 29(4), 465–486.
- Sinclair, A. (2009). Seducing leadership: Stories of leadership development. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(2), 266–284.
- Siu, O. L., Cooper, C. L., & Phillips, D. R. (2014). Intervention studies on enhancing work well-being, reducing burnout, and improving recovery experiences among Hong Kong health care workers and teachers. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 21(1), 69.
- Smith, A., & Russell, J. (2016). Toward polyphonic constitutive historicism: a new research agenda for management historians. *Management & Organizational History*, 11(2), 236–251.
- Sole, D., & Wilson, D. G. (2002). Storytelling in organizations: The power and traps of using stories to share knowledge in organizations. *LILA, Harvard, Graduate School of Education*, 9(1), 1–12.
- Suleiman-Martos, N., Gomez-Urquiza, J. L., Aguayo-Estremera, R., Cañadas-De La Fuente, G. A., De La Fuente-Solana, E. I., & Albendín-García, L. (2020). The effect of mindfulness training on burnout syndrome in nursing: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 76(5), 1124–1140.
- Swoboda, D. A. (2006). The social construction of contested illness legitimacy: a grounded theory analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 223–251.
- Tavella, G., Hadzi-Pavlovic, D., & Parker, G. (2021). Burnout: Redefining its key symptoms. *Psychiatry Research*, 302, 114023.
- Tavella, G., & Parker, G. (2020). Distinguishing burnout from depression: An exploratory

- qualitative study. *Psychiatry Research*, 291, 113212.
- Thanem, T., & Elraz, H. (2022). From stress to resistance: Challenging the capitalist underpinnings of mental unhealth in work and organizations. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12293>
- Tims, M., Derks, D., & Bakker, A. B. (2016). Job crafting and its relationships with person–job fit and meaningfulness: A three-wave study. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 92, 44–53.
- UNESCO. (2005). Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. In *Records of the General Conference, 33rd session, Paris, 3-21 October 2005, v. 1: Resolutions*. UNESCO.
- Ware, N. C., & Kleinman, A. (1992). Culture and somatic experience: The social course of illness in neurasthenia and chronic fatigue syndrome. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 54(5), 546–560. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00006842-199209000-00003>
- Ware, Norma C. (1992). Suffering and the Social Construction of Illness: The Delegitimation of Illness Experience in Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 6(4), 347–361.
- Ware, Norma C. (1999). Toward a model of social course in chronic illness: The example of chronic fatigue syndrome. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 23(3), 303–331.
- WHO. (2019). *Mental health evidence and research. Burnout an ‘occupational phenomenon’*: *International Classification of Diseases*.
- Williams, G. (1984). The genesis of chronic illness: narrative re-construction. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 6(2), 175–200. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.ep10778250>
- Zheng, W., Meister, A., & Caza, B. B. (2021). The stories that make us: Leaders’ origin stories and temporal identity work. In *Human Relations* (Vol. 74, Issue 8). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726720909864>

Tables and Figures

Table 1

Data analysis exemplar

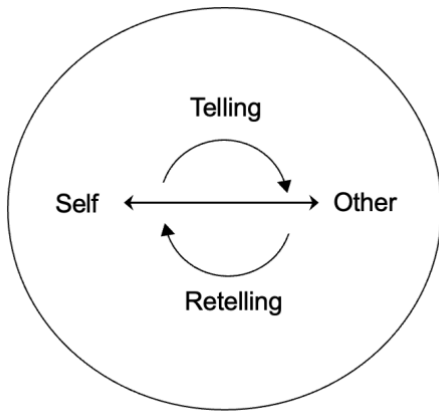
Metaphors used to describe burnout
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weather – fog, clouds, storms, intense sunshine• Water (bodies of) – being out at sea (in a boat, clinging to debris, swimming), drowning, sinking to a bottom of a pool• Transport (cars and trains) – running out of fuel / gas / coal, burnt out engines and tyres, abandoned cars, cars in motion (spinning out of control, rolling downhill with no brakes)• Energy – blown fuses, water bursting through pipes, drained batteries, dripping taps• Light (absence of) – in an enclosed space (e.g. a room, a box), in nature (e.g. fog, eclipse)• Celestial bodies – eclipse, sun burning inside the body• Vessels (empty) – cups, buckets, wells• Candles – burnt down, being burned at both ends• Bodily restraints (impaired, disabled) – missing limbs, an absent soul (often ripped out violently), in a wheelchair at the bottom of a flight of stairs (see also obstacles and restraints)• Bodily restraints (natural environment) – dulled senses (fog, being underwater)• Obstacles and restraints (spatial) – walls, enclosures, being weighed down• Sport – race running, injuries, collapsing at the finish line, defeat• Isolation – picturing oneself being alone (e.g. alone in a boat at sea) or any of the figurative subjects alone (it was never, for example, a number of cups or candles, a race never involved other people)• Pointless tasks (Sisyphean) – rolling boulders uphill, running on wheels (hamster, road runners), juggling (more and more objects, for no one), putting out little fires that keep catching• Nature (landscapes, flora and fauna) – wilting flowers, scorched earth, desert• Animals (as victims) – frog boiling to death, battery farm chicken that can't lay eggs anymore• Objects (decayed, abandoned, mistreated, unwanted) – rusted cars, crumpled up paper, sinking ship• Predators (human, animal) – assaulted by someone (always anonymous, e.g. boot stomping on a human face, being hit in the face with a shovel), animals waiting to attack (e.g. sharks, crocodiles), animals constantly attacking (small insects)• Explosions – brain exploding, stick of dynamite with a very long fuse

Table 2*Analysis of narrative reconstructions*

Narrative elements	Recovery narrative		
	<i>Recovery as forgetting</i>	<i>Recovery as rebirth</i>	<i>Recovery as redemption</i>
<i>Burnout story</i>	Burnout as injury	Burnout as bildungsroman	Burnout as addiction
<i>Plot</i>	Moving on by moving backwards, circling back to a known self again	Overcoming adversity to grow, learn and become a better self	Constant labor of watchful waiting until the next 'crash'
<i>Conflict or tension</i>	Paradox between severity of burnout and the ease of remediation	Compulsion to move forward, but a yearning for a particular moment or aspect of the past	Resenting new limitations, recognizing one's role in diminishing oneself, hoping for a return to 'potential'
<i>Resolution</i>	Effacing the effects of burnout	Constant betterment	Accepting a new, diminished normal

Figure 1

The Virtuous Circle: Telling and Retelling



CHAPTER FIVE | CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The thesis has thus far explored the elementals of post-burnout working lives through three papers that together, provide a mutually supportive program of inquiry into a complex phenomenon. In doing so, it has recovered the lived experience of individuals who have, over the course of five decades, been relegated as clinical subjects through the historic and ongoing dominance of psycho-centric frameworks (Hobfoll, 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and their preoccupation with symptomology (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). From this has emerged the foundational tenets of an organisational theory of fallout and novel insight into the phenomenon of ‘burnout recovery’ not only as a clinical state of symptomatic absence, but as an organisationally-sanctioned position and experience.

In doing so, it has addressed calls for deeper explorations of this relatively unknown period and advanced the substantive literature of burnout with several theoretical and practical implications. In the remainder of this discussion I knit together the threads of each paper to consider the original research questions posed in **Chapter 1.4**. I do so by first by expounding on the dissertation’s primary theoretical contribution, an organisational theory of fallout. Second, I draw attention to how exploring this phenomenon might help to re-orient how we consider burnout and other ambiguous (illness) experiences at work. Finally, I discuss the dissertation’s methodological learnings, implications for practice, and future vistas for the scholarship of fallout and burnout recovery.

5.1 Theorising the ‘missing middle’

The key contribution of this thesis lies in its in-depth exploration of a ‘missing middle’ between the spheres of burnout and recovery. In doing so, it has opened new vistas into understanding hazy and destabilising experiences of life after burnout. Each of the articles ‘speak to’ the shades, flavours and dimensions of this position that provide novel insight into a miasmic experience of biographical disruption in our participants’ (working) lives. In other words, fallout does not simply represent a ‘passageway’ from burnout to recovery but a significant period of dwelling, lingering and an associated labour to maintain a coherent sense of self – all situated within, and constituted in tandem with the organizational context. Specifically, the thesis findings provide a valuable foil to existing notions of recovery as a singularly engaged and linear process that presumes: (i) a future-orientation or a ‘moving’ on as a precondition of success (Salminen et al., 2015; Semeijn, 2019) (ii) a

necessarily active health ethic centred on prosocial behaviour and self-regulation, as seen in discourses of healthism and organisational wellness (Crawford, 1980) and (iii) that organisational acts of interventions are efficacious or 'cost neutral' to burnt out subjects, as measured by somatic reduction and productivity gains. I suggest that each paper contributes to our understanding of fallout as a significant lived experience and how these cumulative insights provide vital provocations to how we understand burnout, recovery and the importance of the liminal space between these two spheres.

First, **Paper 1** articulated a 'process view' of fallout as a missing middle. It traced the variegated pathways through which individuals negotiate and navigate a liminal and uncertain space and highlight the temporally-inflected rituals used by organisational members in confining institutional settings to propel themselves towards the possibility of recovery through patterns of Retaliation, Reconciliation and Resolution. In particular, the findings identified rituals of fallout that collapsed, elided or prioritised a particular temporal state and illuminated how respondents were able to (re)construct a coherent working life through counter-normative means. For example, a passive dwelling or lingering in fallout (e.g. cocooning and comforting themselves) or through anti-social behaviours that were intended to resist, deviate from or even punish organisational in/action. These findings provide important insight into understanding lived experiences of fallout in unforgiving institutional parameters, where organisational members must reconcile notions of the past, present and future in order to reach a coherent and recognisable self.

Next, **Paper 2** explored the ontological experience of fallout as experienced through a lens of secondary victimisation, that is, as a mode of organisational violence that consigned burnt out subjects and their lived experience to the peripheries of organisational concern. Findings from this paper provide insight into the organisational dynamics and compulsions that perpetuate further harm while attempting to cauterise the wounds of burnout. These insights enliven and recover organisational accountability for burnout as a structurally-induced phenomenon. In particular, they highlight how organisations – intentionally or otherwise – capitalise on the ambiguity of fallout as a space of harm by dismissing concerns, denying accountability and normalising extreme and harmful work contexts, behaviours and experiences. This in turn suggests that the 'dark side' of organisational responses during fallout demands consideration and further exploration, especially in light of the vast burnout scholarship on interventional research.

Finally, findings from **Paper 3** explore fallout and the possibility of a mode of recovery through the epistemic dynamics of organisationally-performed narratives. In understanding the existential bind placed on individuals via a lens of contested illness, the findings presented narrative reconstructions that were used to chart a course from illness (burnout) to the often false promise of wellness (recovery) via a period of labour (fallout) that could be: effaced through forgetting; championed as a rebirth; or endured through perpetual vigilance. Underlying these narratives, however, was the lingering presence of the un-credible nature of both the subject (burnout) and the storyteller (sufferers of burnout), prompting a limiting consideration of the conditions of possibility that emerge through the predominant canon of normative recovery. Specifically, these insights have implications for knowing and the parameters set around knowing, that is: how we know what we know in organisational settings? And relatedly, how do organisation dis/credit what we know? Findings from **Paper 3** provide a vivid case of how stories of a troubling phenomenon are constructed and emerge from this tension between a lived experience and the compulsions and constraints of organisations that limit the half-life of these narratives.

Collectively, these insights provide us with a theoretical and conceptual vocabulary through which to explore and understand what fallout is and how it takes place in, through and because of organisations.

5.2 The impossibility of individualization

In proposing an inherently relational and organisationally situated theory of fallout, this thesis has resisted legacies of psychology and biomedicine and located fallout as a phenomenon that is not only integral, but constituted by organisational structures, processes and technologies. From historical roots in psychiatric medicine, extant frameworks of burnout have perhaps unintentionally provided avenues to locate burnout within neoliberalist-inspired frameworks and markets of 'healthism', which centres un/health as a personal responsibility, morality and achievement – a suggestion echoed more broadly by other studies of organisational wellness (Dale & Burrell, 2014; Kenny et al., 2019).

In particular, **Paper 1** draws on a social theory of liminality that centres fallout as an explicitly culturally and organisationally-situated phenomenon which necessarily takes

place within the ebb and flow of organisational life and experience. This was demonstrated through a case of STEM female workers, a sector known for its highly instituted norms, rigid processes and particular cultural behaviours (e.g. the reification of technical brilliance and the emulation of machine as aspiration (Tassabehji et al., 2021). Meanwhile **Paper 2** identified an experience surrounding fallout, organisational secondary victimisation, that is existentially dependent on organisational frameworks. Specifically, it identified three varieties of organisational secondary victimisation – structurally enacted gaslighting, passive neglect and violent goodwill – and illustrated how vital and almost quotidian organising processes (such as centralised human resources systems, occupational health and safety policies and employee assistance programs) formed an apparatus of harm. Finally, **Paper 3** draws connections between the imaginative labour of self-recognised recovery and the epistemic parameters and canons surrounding burnout. In particular, it demonstrated how organisational discourses seeped into stories of burnout and by extension, recovery narratives – most clearly seen in narratives of recovery through forgetting, which sought to minimise organisational culpability and efface the labour of ‘returning to norm’.

Taken as a whole, these articles have sought to weave a tapestry of fallout that theoretically locates it as part of the structures, systems and technologies of organisations. This vital provocation ‘theoretically frees’ burnout from being confined to an individual problem and firmly locates it within the lifeblood of institutions and processes of organising. In acknowledging the scope of organisational harm on sufferers of burnout, I next discuss the methodological implications of this study which elaborates considerations for under-researched populations or, in this case, experiences of severe burnout.

5.3 Rethinking research in the context of organisational illness

In addition to its primary contribution of a theory of fallout, this thesis also makes an important empirical contribution through its insights of an under-researched population of severe burnout. That is, individuals who had such significant experiences of burnout that they were required to take protracted breaks from the workforce and could be considered under a framework of productivity as ‘long term unemployed’. In fact, a number of these individuals were advised by medical professionals that they were unlikely to be able to engage in formal or paid work again. Prominent burnout researcher Michael Leiter (M. Leiter, personal communication, May 23, 2019) has highlighted that the vast burnout

literature lacks insight into this important and little known population, suggesting this is due to the focus by researchers on single organisation studies and those currently employed in organisations. In other words, the research design and approach of these studies, by their very nature, exclude the participation of those severely burnt out.

This thesis makes no claims of grand methodological invention (the details of its methods have been carefully delineated in **Chapter 3**), rather it suggests that the relative ease with which this previously under-researched population was accessed during a time of significant constraint (i.e. pandemic lockdowns) prompts a consideration of an ethos of inclusive methodology in future studies. In other words, contrary to the expected difficulties of reaching these individuals, it appeared that careful consideration and integration of burnout experiences and trajectories into the methodology provided safe avenues for these severely burnt out subjects to share their experiences. Through the experience of undertaking this empirical work, I recommend a sensitivity to the nature of fallout which has, to date, been unrecognised and misplaced as an idiosyncrasy of individuals rather than as part of a significant illness experience. For example, the serious cognitive impairment experienced by respondents that limited capacities for deep reading and stimulus processing suggest that the lengthy and densely worded surveys favoured in the extant literature may be less useful in these populations and discourage meaningful engagement amongst individuals who have already experienced significant misunderstanding and misrecognition in their working lives.

In summary, research with fallout subjects demands a flexibility, responsiveness and due consideration of the nature of their experience. Thus setting up parameters of care that extend beyond standardised or general institutional ethics procedures and encompass a sensitivity for respondents is vital – take, for example, the flexible nature of data collection described in **Chapter 3**. I suggest that this has implications not only for how researchers study burnout and its effects, but by extension, other workplace phenomena concerned with or surrounding un/wellness, such as mental illness, harassment and discrimination.

5.4 Implications for practice and policy

In the three and half years since undertaking this research, public interest in burnout and its aftermath has only grown (Abramson, 2022) and points to the relevance of

understanding lived experiences of illness and un/wellness. I highlight below what I consider the most salient implications and considerations that arise from this dissertation that speak to stakeholders and those able to influence, shape and enact organisational practice, which include but are not limited to policymakers, managers and organisational leaders.

In particular, findings from this thesis have emphasised the enduring and ongoing stigma and misrecognition of burnout, which was clearly reflected in the reticence of our respondents to even discuss burnout on organisational terrain. This suggests that burnout may be simmering within organisational contexts unnoticed and current estimates likely minimise the scope of the problem. The findings also suggest that this misrecognition was further perpetuated by the need for respondents to continue working. In some cases this related to financial difficulties and the lack of a social safety net, though more often, this related to the whisper networks of organisations and what a period of unemployment might 'suggest' to future employers. This was particularly germane to individuals in highly specialised or networked organisations and sectors, and was played out to great effect within our study. For instance, individuals who were unable to find work in the same industry after a 'reading between the lines' of their resumes or alternatively, many who learnt from peers, colleagues and managers that the best solution was simply remaining silent in the face of potential organisational reprisal.

In light of my findings, I make a number of recommendations that explicitly suggest governing institutions and organisations take greater responsibility in identifying, understanding and providing meaningful solutions to employees who experience burnout at, and because of, work. The first recommendation surrounds the need for more legislative protections for those suffering from burnout. While there have been attempts to pathologically legitimise burnout as a medical diagnosis (Bianchi et al., 2015b; Parker & Tavella, 2021, 2022; Penz et al., 2018) – and by extension gain greater legitimacy and some protections –, I pointedly suggest that these protections need to be clearly and explicitly separate from psycho-medical characterisations of burnout which have been shown in this thesis to locate and misrecognise the problem as one of individuals. In many cases, achieving medical diagnosis does little to address the broader concerns underlying burnout which are environments that perpetuate un/wellness and the enduring moral discourses surrounding individuals, their responsibilities and their capacity to be productive. I further connect this to broader debates about social welfare and in particular,

universal basic income which provides a social safety net for those unable to work due to burnout without the moral criticisms of a clinical diagnosis. I also propose greater legislative protections for employees more broadly that remain elusive for many workers even in the Global North – see for instance, the history and ongoing practice of union busting in the United States (Bernstein, 1980; Hurd & Uehlein, 1994). In particular, updated regulations that speak to and keep pace with, the aspects of workplaces that have been shown to potentiate burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 1999). For example, the emerging practice of employee surveillance – as experienced by a number of individuals in this thesis – a practice that is presently legal in many labour markets (Balica, 2019; Blumenfeld et al., 2020; Warning & Buchanan, 2010) but severely limits autonomy, diminishes trust and, in this study, contributed to significant experiences of strain and burnout.

The second recommendation this thesis makes is the promotion of burnout literacy in organisational settings that situates an understanding of burnout as an organisational problem that requires structural change rather than personal remediation. I suggest practitioners reconsider and review existing organisational policies and structures which have been shown in **Paper 2** to potentiate and enact modes of secondary victimisation, even when conceived of with goodwill. This represents a radical shift in the way in which burnout is managed, even in societies which recognise and compensate sufferers. For example, in the Netherlands, studies on burnout intervention and recovery continue to centre their focus on the measurement of burnout's productivity costs (e.g. Wolvetang et al., 2022) neglecting other significant social outcomes, and perpetuate psycho-medical frameworks through attempts to improve resilience, psychological capital and self-compassion (e.g. Solms et al., 2021).

Third and finally, I suggest that organisations, particularly those characterised by rigid and highly instituted norms, need to provide alternatives to traditional career possibilities and a means to safeguard and retain their employees. As findings from **Paper 1** revealed, STEM professionals – many of whom represented 'essential workers' – either left, considered leaving or were resentfully employed in their positions. This is an insight echoed across occupational sectors (e.g. Ivanovic et al., 2020; Lappin, 2020; Lingard, 2003) with existing studies of burnout connecting this to implications for the provision of public services, particularly after pandemic-related pressures (Falatah, 2021; Limb, 2017; Sklar et al., 2021). This scholarship, however, has stopped short of making organisational recommendations to remedy the situation at a structural-level. Instead I invite

organisational leaders to conceive of new career possibilities within existing employment systems that prioritise the sustainability of workforces and support experiences of fallout and similar experiences of illness and unwellness. For example, possibilities of hybrid careering that were evidenced amongst our respondents, and the integration of new modes of working, such as job sharing and career sabbaticals that provide a plurality of work trajectories within an organisation.

5.5 Future vistas

This thesis is, at the time of writing, represents one of the few in-depth qualitative explorations of post-burnout working lives and recovery (for other examples, see: Bernier, 1998; Korhonen et al., 2020; Korhonen & Komulainen, 2019, 2021). Further studies, particularly those that are methodologically sensitive to burnout and fallout as a lived experience, are needed to help develop the concept of fallout. Given that in recent years, this phenomenon has (re)captured the interest of the public (Malesic, 2022), studies of this nature will provide valuable evidence that speaks to a more holistic experience of burnout. In the following sections, I identify six key areas of scholarship for researchers to advance studies of fallout, recovery and post-burnout (working) lives as socially and occupationally-led phenomena.

Given its entwinement with organisations and (work) environments, future studies grounded in particular sectors or cultural contexts can contribute empirical depth, texture and further insight into how we understand the nuanced experience of life after burnout. This study has largely focused on 'Western' individuals in Global North work settings and cultures, a well-rehearsed context within management and organisation studies (Hamann et al., 2020; Murphy & Zhu, 2012). An extreme case might be found, for example, in the context of Japan, a context which has long struggled with extreme work cultures – see for instance, the phenomenon of *karōshi* (過勞死), referring to the alarming crisis of death from overwork (Asgari et al., 2016; Kanai, 2009; Kondo & Oh, 2010). Further, occupational contexts outside of the well-researched STEM industry (explored in **Paper 1**) offer prospective avenues to flesh out the contours of the fallout phenomenon relevant to contemporary working life. For instance, contemporary career contexts in which employees are not bound to physical locales, (e.g. remote or hybrid work), or alternative careers that have emerged with technological advances and changing work structures (e.g. digital nomads).

In addition, embedded and longitudinal study designs present an important conduit through which to understand the biographical disruption of burnout and its subsequent and often protracted fallout period. Embedded designs, or the ‘neglected classics’ in management literature, present an opportunity to extend the re-orientation towards burnout and fallout as connected and induced by organisational contexts (Zickar & Carter, 2010, p. 304). In particular, they ground researchers ‘with a sense of reality of the workplace, instead of treating workers as abstract entities’ (Zickar, 2010, p. 304) as seen in important but confining studies of psycho-medicine. Connected with this, longitudinal designs allows us to fully consider a life course perspective in a phenomenon that is destabilising, transformative and has long-term implications for both health and work.

I would also suggest that vicarious experiences of fallout offer possibilities for tracing the effects of fallout across porous social boundaries and contexts. An early seam of burnout research, for example, has examined its ‘contagious’ aspects in organisational settings (e.g. Bakker et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2017). This vernacular, however, hints at the personal nature of contagion and I therefore suggest that a re-orientation of this research towards a lived-experience might allow us to, firstly, shed the moral discourses around burnout, and secondly, capture the experience of fallout across life contexts and more accurately describe the scope of burnout’s effects beyond hermetically-confined subjects. The exploration of vicarious experience has found purchase in the vast literature of secondary traumatic stress (e.g. Branson, 2019; Brosseau et al., 2011; Goff et al., 2009) and provides avenues to understand how burnout, fallout and prospective recovery unfolds through organising processes yet bleeds across social collectives and spheres.

This thesis has developed a theory of fallout informed by approaches such as critical ecologies that emphasise the relationality between a porous interdependent body and the situated sociomaterial work in which fallout is constituted and experienced. This provided a valuable backdrop against which the three papers highlighted the reciprocal and often contested relationship between individual bodies and their surrounding organisational ecologies. I suggest a fruitful avenue for future research could more explicitly engage with an embodied lens to forefront the corporeal and intercorporeal nature of the dynamics that constitute fallout. This is significant given the often severe and enduring bodily effects of burnout, which have emerged from recent clinical explorations (Bayes et al., 2021; Parker & Tavella, 2022; Tavella et al., 2021) that have revealed, in particular, the ongoing neurological effects of burnout that impair memory, concentration

and focus – symptoms that were previously only considered as an idiosyncratic ‘adjunct’ to the primary feeling of exhaustion. These experiences of cognitive harm were also experienced by our respondents (see **Chapter 3**) and suggest that greater attention is needed to understand how these effects are experienced outside of ‘the clinic’.

Finally, I suggest that the theoretical rendering of fallout demands an explicitly ethical lens – a suggestion connected with our exploration of organisational secondary victimisation in **Paper 2**. Advancing scholarship through an ethical lens allows us to recover the explicit responsibilities and accountabilities of institutions and their organising structures, processes and technologies which have been lost in discourses or theoretical ideas surrounding healthism, wellness and pathology. One possible route, which I seek to explore during my postdoctoral year, is through the work of Derrida (2000, 2005) whose writings on witnessing and testifying provide a theoretical lens through which explore the imprint of organisational harm via concepts of recognition, transmission and an ‘ethics of impossible responsibilities’ (Oliver, 2015, p. 473). That is, a canon of ethics opens up opportunities to impel progress on addressing structural and environmental harms in workplaces.

CHAPTER SIX | CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the experience of post-burnout working lives and the possibility and practices of recovery through three papers. In doing so it has developed a theory of fallout that captures the ambiguous and organisationally-constituted nature of burnout as an unstable and uncertain phenomenon. Having presented these findings and unravelled their implications I would like to close with a short personal reflection on my journey through fallout over the past three years. In particular, I draw inspiration from Susan Sontag's (1978) reflection on illness as:

The night side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and the kingdom of the sick. Although we prefer to use the good passport, sooner or later each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of that other place.

To me, this speaks to the democratic nature of illness or un/wellness and highlights the fragility of our current and imaginary state of 'healthfulness' in uneven and uncertain landscapes of relations. In particular, the experience of living with fallout, literally and symbolically, over the course of this research has provoked me to consider my own citizenship in a burnout society. My previous career as a health economist, a generous genetic lottery and relative youth allowed me to maintain a distal perspective from serious illness, an illusion that was summarily dismissed during the course of this research (see **Appendix D**).

To extend Sontag's metaphor, citizenship entails responsibilities and natural rights and to this end I am convinced that we cannot recuse ourselves from current debates on mental health and the shape and future of workplaces. Conversations that have surfaced from recent health events, but with long roots in political and economic systems, threaten to choke us if we do not enact our rights of citizenship – to vote and participate in a civil society that actively imagines an alternative to decaying ourselves through work.

I close with a starting point and suggest that we re-orient ourselves to begin from a position of *unwellness* which acknowledges our inherent vulnerabilities and the structural hazards built into our environment, providing a more compelling perspective on what we imagine health to be and who truly is at risk. I further hope this prompts us to take first

steps towards reconsidering burnout beyond long-held discussions of pathology and productivity – discussions which have ultimately proved unprofitable in making meaningful progress on undoing structural harm.

REFERENCES

- Abell, P. (2004). Narrative explanation: an alternative to variable-centered explanation? *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 30, 287–310.
- Abramson, A. (2022). *Burnout and stress are everywhere*. Monitor on Psychology.
<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/01/special-burnout-stress>
- Ahola, K., Toppinen-Tanner, S., & Seppänen, J. (2017). Interventions to alleviate burnout symptoms and to support return to work among employees with burnout: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Burnout Research*, 4, 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2017.02.001>
- Alaimo, S. (2010). *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*. Indiana University Press.
- Alaimo, S. (2012a). Bodily Natures. In *Environmental Ethics*.
<https://doi.org/10.5840/enviroethics20123418>
- Alaimo, S. (2012b). States of suspension: Trans-corporeality at sea. *ISLE Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 19(3), 476–493.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/iss068>
- Alaimo, S. (2014). 6 Genetics , Material Agency , and the Evolution of Posthuman Environmental Ethics in Science Fiction. *Bodily Natures*, May.
- Alaimo, S. (2016a). *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times* (Vol. 4, Issue 1). University of Minnesota Press.
- Alaimo, S. (2016b). Your Shell on Acid: Material Immersion, Anthropocene Dissolves. In *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times* (pp. 143–168). University of Minnesota Press.
- Alarcon, G. (2011). A meta-analysis of burnout with job demands, resources, and attitudes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79(2), 549–562.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2011.03.007>
- Alarcon, G., Eschleman, K. J., & Bowling, N. A. (2009). Relationships between personality variables and burnout: A meta-analysis. *Work and Stress*, 23(3), 244–263.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370903282600>
- Aldossari, M., & Chaudhry, S. (2021). Women and burnout in the context of a pandemic. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 28(2), 826–834.
- Alkær sig, L., Kensbock, J., & Lomberg, C. (2018). The burnout epidemic—how burnout spreads across organizations. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 2018(1),

14180.

- Amanullah, S., & Ramesh Shankar, R. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on physician burnout globally: a review. *Healthcare*, 8(4), 421.
- Anclair, M., Lappalainen, R., Muotka, J., & Hiltunen, A. J. (2018). Cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness for stress and burnout: a waiting list controlled pilot study comparing treatments for parents of children with chronic conditions. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 32(1), 389–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/scs.12473>
- Andrews, D. (2021). *Lockdown across regional Victoria to keep us safe*. Office of the Premier of Victoria. <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/lockdown-across-regional-victoria-keep-us-safe>
- Asgari, B., Pickar, P., & Garay, V. (2016). Karoshi and Karou-jisatsu in Japan: causes, statistics and prevention mechanisms. *Asia Pacific Business & Economics Perspectives*, 4(2), 49–72.
- Awa, W. L., Plaumann, M., & Walter, U. (2010). Burnout prevention: A review of intervention programs. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 78(2), 184–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2009.04.008>
- Back, A. L., Steinhauser, K. E., Kamal, A. H., & Jackson, V. A. (2016). Building Resilience for Palliative Care Clinicians: An Approach to Burnout Prevention Based on Individual Skills and Workplace Factors. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, 52(2), 284–291. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2016.02.002>
- Bakker, A. B., Le Blanc, P. M., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2005). Burnout contagion among intensive care nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 51(3), 276–287. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03494.x>
- Balica, R. (2019). Automated Data Analysis in Organizations: Sensory Algorithmic Devices, Intrusive Workplace Monitoring, and Employee Surveillance. *Psychosociological Issues in Human Resource Management*, 7(2), 61–67.
- Barker, G. G., & Barker, E. E. (2022). Online therapy: lessons learned from the COVID-19 health crisis. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 50(1), 66–81.
- Bayes, A., Tavella, G., & Parker, G. (2021). The biology of burnout: Causes and consequences. *The World Journal of Biological Psychiatry*, 22(9), 686–698.
- Bernier, D. (1998). A study of coping: Successful recovery from severe burnout and other reactions to severe work-related stress. *Work and Stress*, 12(1), 50–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678379808256848>
- Bernstein, J. (1980). Union-Busting: From Benign Neglect to Malignant Growth. *UC Davis L. Rev.*, 14, 1.

- Bianchi, R. (2017). Is the 'burnout epidemic' an academic fiction? *BMJ (Online)*, 358(September), 4389. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.j4389>
- Bianchi, R., Schonfeld, I., & Laurent, E. (2015a). Is burnout separable from depression in cluster analysis? A longitudinal study. *The International Journal for Research in Social and Genetic Epidemiology and Mental Health Services*, 50(6), 1005–1011. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-014-0996-8>
- Bianchi, R., Schonfeld, I. S., & Laurent, E. (2015b). Is it Time to Consider the 'Burnout Syndrome' A Distinct Illness? *Frontiers in Public Health*, 3, 158. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2015.00158>
- Blumenfeld, S., Anderson, G., & Hooper, V. (2020). Covid-19 and employee surveillance. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations*, 45(2), 42–56.
- Bookchin, M. (1980). *Toward an Ecological Society*. Black Rose Books.
- Bookchin, M. (1982). *The Ecology of Freedom*. Cheshire Books.
- Bookchin, M. (1987). *The Rise of Urbanisation and the Decline Citizenship*. Sierra Club Books.
- Branson, D. C. (2019). Vicarious trauma, themes in research, and terminology: A review of literature. *Traumatology*, 25(1), 2.
- Bretland, R. J., & Thorsteinsson, E. B. (2015). *Reducing workplace burnout: the relative benefits of cardiovascular and resistance exercise. 1998*. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.891>
- Brosseau, D. C., McDonald, M. J., & Stephen, J. E. (2011). The moderating effect of relationship quality on partner secondary traumatic stress among couples coping with cancer. *Families, Systems, & Health*, 29(2), 114.
- Brotheridge, C. M., & Grandey, A. A. (2002). Emotional labor and burnout: Comparing two perspectives of "people work". *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 60(1), 17–39.
- Buchanan, D., & Bryman, A. (2007). Contextualizing Methods Choice in Organizational Research. *Sage Publications*, 10, 483–502.
- Burke, R. J., & Greenglass, E. R. (1995). A longitudinal examination of the cherniss model of psychological burnout. *Social Science & Medicine*, 40(10), 1357–1363. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(94\)00267-W](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(94)00267-W)
- Callaghan, S., Lösch, M., Pione, A., & Teichner, W. (2021). Feeling good: The future of the \$1.5 trillion wellness market. In *Mckinsey & Company* (Issue April).
- Campbell, N. S., Perry, S. J., Maertz, C. P., Allen, D. G., & Griffeth, R. W. (2013). All you need is .. resources: The effects of justice and support on burnout and turnover. *Human Relations*, 66(6), 759–782. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726712462614>

- Cantor, H. (2000). *Clifford Odets: Playwright-Poet*. Romwna and Littlefield.
- Chabot, P. (2013a). Sous le signe du feu. *Perspectives Critiques*, 125–132.
- Chabot, P. (2013b). Women’s burn-out. *Perspectives Critiques*, 95–110.
- Chabot, P. (2022). Incursion dans l’hypertemps. *Annales Médico-Psychologiques, Revue Psychiatrique*, 180(1), 66–69.
- Charmaz, K. (1991). *Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time*. Rutgers University Press.
- Charmaz, K. (1995). The Body, Identity, and Self: Adapting to Impairment. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 36(4), 657–680.
- Charmaz, K. (1999). Stories of suffering: Subjective tales and research narratives. *Qualitative Health Research*, 9(3), 362–382.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/104973299129121910>
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Sage.
- Charmaz, K., & Belgrave, L. (2012). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft*, 2, 347–365.
- Clarke, J. N., & James, S. (2003). The radicalized self: The impact on the self of the contested nature of the diagnosis of chronic fatigue syndrome. *Social Science and Medicine*, 57(8), 1387–1395. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(02\)00515-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(02)00515-4)
- Conrad, P., & Schneider, J. W. (1992). *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness*. Temple University Press.
- Cook, C. (2012). Email interviewing: generating data with a vulnerable population. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 68(6), 1330–1339.
- Crawford, E. R., LePine, J. A., & Rich, B. L. (2010). Linking job demands and resources to employee engagement and burnout: A theoretical extension and meta-analytic test. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(5), 834–848. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019364>
- Crawford, R. (1980). Healthism and the medicalization of everyday life. *International Journal of Health Services*, 10(3), 365–388.
- Dale, K., & Burrell, G. (2014). Being occupied: An embodied re-reading of organizational ‘wellness’. *Organization*, 21(2), 159–177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508412473865>
- Demerouti, E., & Bakker, A. (2001). The Job Demands – Resources Model of Burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499–512. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499>
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., & Leiter, M. (2014). Burnout and job performance: the moderating role of selection, optimization, and compensation strategies. *Journal of*

Occupational Health Psychology, 19(1), 96.

Devall, B., & Sessions, G. (1985). *Deep Ecology*. Gibbs Smith.

Dharmawardene, M., Givens, J., Wachholtz, A., Makowski, S., & Tjia, J. (2016). A systematic review and meta-analysis of meditative interventions for informal caregivers and health professionals. *BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care*, 6(2), 160–169.

Dumit, J. (2006). Illnesses you have to fight to get: Facts as forces in uncertain, emergent illnesses. *Social Science and Medicine*, 62(3), 577–590.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.06.018>

Dyrbye, L. N., Power, D. V., Stanford Massie, F., Eacker, A., Harper, W., Thomas, M. R., Szydlo, D. W., Sloan, J. A., & Shanafelt, T. D. (2010). Factors associated with resilience to and recovery from burnout: A prospective, multi-institutional study of US medical students. *Medical Education*, 44(10), 1016–1026.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2010.03754.x>

Emirbayer, M. (1997). Manifesto for a relational sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(2), 281–317. <https://doi.org/10.1086/231209>

Falatah, R. (2021). The impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on nurses' turnover intention: an integrative review. *Nursing Reports*, 11(4), 787–810.

Fang, C., Yang, Y., & Li, P. (2013). To Prevent Burnout and To Promote Spiritual Well-Being in Physicians Among Cancer Care. *Psycho-Oncol.*, 22, 241.

Fitzgerald, F. S. (2004). *The Great Gatsby* (Collins Cl). Harper Collins.

Frank, A. W. (2013). *The wounded storyteller: Body, illness, and ethics*. University of Chicago Press.

Freudenberger, H. J. (1974). Staff burn-out. *Journal of Social Issues*, 30(1), 159–165.

Gadow, S. (1982). Body and Self: A Dialectic. In V. Kestenbaum (Ed.), *The Humanity of the Ill: Phenomenological Perspectives* (pp. 86–100). University of Tennessee.

Gerber, M., Brand, S., Elliot, C., Holsboer-trachsler, E., Pühse, U., & Beck, J. (2013). *Aerobic exercise training and burnout : a pilot study with male participants suffering from burnout*.

Gewin, V. (2021). Pandemic burnout is rampant in academia. *Nature*, 591(7850), 489–492.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1979). *Awareness of dying*. Transaction Publishers.

Goff, B. S. N., Crow, J. R., Reisbig, A. M. J., & Hamilton, S. (2009). The impact of soldiers' deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan: Secondary traumatic stress in female partners. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 8(4), 291–305.

Goodman, N. (1984). *Of mind and other matters*. Harvard University Press.

- Hakanen, J. J., & Bakker, A. B. (2017). Born and Bred to Burn out: A Life-Course View and Reflections on Job Burnout. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 22*(3), 354–364.
- Hakanen, J. J., Peeters, M. C. W., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2018). Different types of employee well-being across time and their relationships with job crafting. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 23*(2), 289.
- Halbesleben, J. R. B. (2006). Sources of social support and burnout: A meta-analytic test of the conservation of resources model. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 91*(5), 1134–1145. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.5.1134>
- Hallberg, U. E., Johansson, G., & Schaufelt, W. B. (2007). Type A behavior and work situation: Associations with burnout and work engagement. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology, 48*(2), 135–142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9450.2007.00584.x>
- Hamann, R., Luiz, J., Ramaboa, K., Khan, F., Dhlamini, X., & Nilsson, W. (2020). Neither colony nor enclave: Calling for dialogical contextualism in management and organization studies. *Organization Theory, 1*(1), 2631787719879705.
- Han, B.-C. (2015). *The burnout society*. Stanford University Press.
- Han, B.-C. (2017). *The scent of time: A philosophical essay on the art of lingering*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hill, A. P., & Curran, T. (2016). Multidimensional Perfectionism and Burnout: A Meta-Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 20*(3), 269–288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868315596286>
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). *Conservation of Resources A New Attempt at Conceptualizing Stress. 44*(3), 513–524.
- Hobfoll, S. E., Halbesleben, J., Neveu, J.-P., & Westman, M. (2018). Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior Conservation of Resources in the Organizational Context: The Reality of Resources and Their Consequences. *Annu. Rev. Organ. Psychol. Organ. Behav, 5*, 103–131. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych>
- Howarth, J. M. (1995). The Crisis of Ecology: A Phenomenological Perspective. *Environmental Values, 4*(1), 17–30.
- Hurd, R. W., & Uehlein, J. B. (1994). *Patterned responses to organizing: Case studies of the union-busting convention*.
- Hydén, L. C. (1997). Illness and narrative. *Sociology of Health and Illness, 19*(1), 48–69. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.1997.tb00015.x>
- Ilanbey, S. (2021). *Two-year jail terms loom for health order breaches under pandemic*

laws. The Australian Financial Review.

<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/two-year-jail-terms-loom-for-health-order-breaches-under-pandemic-laws-20211026-p59349.html>

- Illich, I. (2000). *Limits to Medicine. Medicinal Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health*. Marion Boyars Publishers.
- Ingold, T. (2000). *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. Psychology Press.
- Ivanovic, T., Ivancevic, S., & Maricic, M. (2020). The relationship between recruiter burnout, work engagement and turnover intention: Evidence from Serbia. *Engineering Economics*, 31(2), 197–210.
- Jackson, J. E. (2005). Stigma, liminality, and chronic pain: Mind–body borderlands. *American Ethnologist*, 32(3), 332–353. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.2005.32.3.332>
- Jaworska-Burzyńska, L., Kanaffa-Kilijańska, U., Przystańska, E., & Szczepańska-Gieracha, J. (2016). The role of therapy in reducing the risk of job burnout - A systematic review of literature. *Archives of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*, 18(4), 43–52. <https://doi.org/10.12740/APP/65815>
- Johnston, E., Barnett, A., Bhaskaran, M., Broadfoot, L., Burrows, G., Evans, K., Foley, C., Gooding, J., Hannah, K., Harvey-Smith, L., Huntington, E., Kingsley, I., Latimer, J., Morgan, A., Mortlock, M., Paterson, A., Purcell, J. S., Sullivan, L., Sun, M., ... Toner, M. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on women in the STEM workforce | Australian Academy of Science. *Rapid Research Information Forum*, May, 1–12.
- Kanai, A. (2009). “Karoshi (work to death)” in Japan. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 84(2), 209–216.
- Kenny, K., Fotaki, M., & Scriver, S. (2019). Mental Health as a Weapon: Whistleblower Retaliation and Normative Violence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 160(3), 801–815. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3868-4>
- Kestenbaum, V. (1982). Introduction: The Experience of Illness. In V. Kestenbaum (Ed.), *The Humanity of the Ill: Phenomenological Perspectives* (pp. 3–38). University of Tennessee.
- Khazan, O. (2014, July 3). Burnout: The Enemy of Sleep. *The Atlantic*.
- Kim, J., Youngs, P., & Frank, K. (2017). Burnout contagion: Is it due to early career teachers’ social networks or organizational exposure? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 66, 250–260. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.04.017>
- Kondo, N., & Oh, J. (2010). Suicide and karoshi (death from overwork) during the recent economic crises in Japan: the impacts, mechanisms and political responses. In

Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health (Vol. 64, Issue 8, pp. 649–650). BMJ Publishing Group Ltd.

- Korhonen, M., & Komulainen, K. (2019). The moral orders of work and health: a case of sick leave due to burnout. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 41(2), 219–233. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.12816>
- Korhonen, M., & Komulainen, K. (2021). Individualizing the burnout problem: Health professionals' discourses of burnout and recovery in the context of rehabilitation. *Health (United Kingdom)*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634593211063053>
- Korhonen, M., Komulainen, K., & Okkonen, V. (2020). Burnout as an identity rupture in the life course: a longitudinal narrative method. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 42(8), 1918–1933.
- Koutsimani, P., Montgomery, A., & Georganta, K. (2019). The relationship between burnout, depression, and anxiety: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(MAR), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00284>
- Kroll-Smith, S., & Floyd, H. (1997). *Bodies in Protest: Environmental Illness and the Struggle Over Medical Knowledge*. NYU Press.
- Lappin, M. (2020). *Fast-Food Industry Exploration of Burnout and Turnover Intention, Management Practices, and Leadership Style*. Capella University.
- Lastovkova, A., Carder, M., Rasmussen, H. M., Sjoberg, L., De Groene, G. J., Sauni, R., Vevoda, J., Vevodova, S., Lasfargues, G., & Svartengren, M. (2018). Burnout syndrome as an occupational disease in the European Union: an exploratory study. *Industrial Health*, 56(2), 160–165.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer publishing company.
- Lee, R. L., & Ashforth, B. E. (1996). A meta-analytic examination of the correlates of the three dimensions of job burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(2), 123–133. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.2.123>
- Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (1999). Six areas of worklife: A model of the organizational context of burnout. *Journal of Health and Human Services Administration*, 21(4), 472–489.
- Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2016). Latent burnout profiles: A new approach to understanding the burnout experience. *Burnout Research*, 3(4), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2016.09.001>
- Leiter, M. P., & Shaughnessy, K. (2006). *The Areas of Worklife Model of burnout : tests of mediation relationships*. 28(4), 327–341.

- Lichtenthaler, P. W., & Fischbach, A. (2019). A meta-analysis on promotion-and prevention-focused job crafting. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 28*(1), 30–50.
- Limb, M. (2017). *Falling NHS staff numbers and high turnover threaten patient care, says report*. British Medical Journal Publishing Group.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. sage.
- Lingard, H. (2003). The impact of individual and job characteristics on 'burnout' among civil engineers in Australia and the implications for employee turnover. *Construction Management & Economics, 21*(1), 69–80.
- Locke, K. (2001). *Grounded theory in management research*. Sage.
- Locke, K., Feldman, M., & Golden-Biddle, K. (2020). Coding Practices and Iterativity: Beyond Templates for Analyzing Qualitative Data. *Organizational Research Methods, 1*–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428120948600>
- Mackey, J. D., McAllister, C. P., Ellen, B. P., & Carson, J. E. (2021). A Meta-Analysis of Interpersonal and Organizational Workplace Deviance Research. *Journal of Management, 47*(3), 597–622. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206319862612>
- Malesic, J. (2022). *The End of Burnout: Why Work Drains Us and How To Build Better Lives*. University of California Press.
- Maricuțoiu, L. P., Sava, F. A., & Butta, O. (2016). The effectiveness of controlled interventions on employees' burnout: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 89*(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12099>
- Maslach, C. (2017). Finding solutions to the problem of burnout. *Consulting Psychology Journal, 69*(2), 143–152. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000090>
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The Measurement of Experienced Burnout. *Journal of Occupational Behaviour, 2*(2), 99–113.
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World Psychiatry, 15*(2), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311>
- Maté, G. (2019). *When the Body Says 'No': The cost of hidden stress*. Scribe Publications.
- Mathieson, C. M., & Stam, H. J. (1995). Reneotiating identity: cancer narratives. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 17*(3), 283–306.
- Matthews, D. (1990). A Comparison of Burnout in Selected Occupational Fields. *The Career Development Quarterly, 38*(3), 230. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.1990.tb00385.x>
- Mazzola, J. J., & Disselhorst, R. (2019). Should we be “challenging” employees?: A critical

- review and meta-analysis of the challenge-hindrance model of stress. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(8), 949–961. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2412>
- Michie, F. (2020). 'Ring of steel' set to lift, reuniting Melbourne and regional Victoria as coronavirus restrictions ease. ABC News. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-08/how-melbournes-coronavirus-travel-rules-are-expected-to-change/12858310>
- Moore, L. R. (2014). Social Science & Medicine “ But we ’ re not hypochondriacs ” : The changing shape of gluten-free dieting and the contested illness experience. *Social Science & Medicine*, 105, 76–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.01.009>
- Moser, I. (2005). On Becoming Disabled and Articulating Alternatives: The multiple modes of ordering disability and their interferences. *Cultural Studies*, 19(6), 667–700. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380500365648>
- Muenchberger, H., Kendall, E., & Neal, R. (2008). Identity transition following traumatic brain injury: A dynamic process of contraction, expansion and tentative balance. *Brain Injury*, 22(12), 979–992.
- Murphy, J., & Zhu, J. (2012). Neo-colonialism in the academy? Anglo-American domination in management journals. *Organization*, 19(6), 915–927.
- Neckel, S., Schaffner, A. K., & Wagner, G. (2017). *Burnout, fatigue, exhaustion: An interdisciplinary perspective on a modern affliction*. Springer.
- OECD. (2022). *The Impact of COVID-19 on Employment & Jobs*. Employment. <https://www.oecd.org/employment/covid-19.htm>
- Oishi, S., & Graham, J. (2010). Social ecology: Lost and found in psychological science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(4), 356–377. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610374588>
- Oliver, K. (2015). Witnessing, Recognition, and Response Ethics. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 48(4), 473–493. <https://doi.org/10.5325/philtrhet.48.4.0473>
- Panagioti, M., Panagopoulou, E., Bower, P., Lewith, G., Kontopantelis, E., Chew-Graham, C., Dawson, S., Van Marwijk, H., Geraghty, K., & Esmail, A. (2017). Controlled interventions to reduce burnout in physicians a systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 177(2), 195–205. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2016.7674>
- Parker, G., & Tavella, G. (2021). Distinguishing burnout from clinical depression: a theoretical differentiation template. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 281, 168–173.
- Parker, G., & Tavella, G. (2022). The Diagnosis of Burnout: Some Challenges. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 210(7), 475–478.
- Peimani, N., & Kamalipour, H. (2021). Online education and the COVID-19 outbreak: A

- case study of online teaching during lockdown. *Education Sciences*, 11(2), 72.
- Peinado, M., & Anderson, K. N. (2020). Reducing social worker burnout during COVID-19. *International Social Work*, 63(6), 757–760.
- Penz, M., Miller, R., Pieper, L., Beesdo-Baum, K., Walther, A., Wekenborg, M. K., Stalder, T., & Kirschbaum, C. (2018). The Dresden Burnout Study: Protocol of a prospective cohort study for the bio-psychological investigation of burnout. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 27(2), e1613. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mpr.1613>
- Perregriani, M. (2019). Combating compassion fatigue. *Nursing*, 49(2), 50–54. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NURSE.0000552704.58125.fa>
- Perski, O., Grossi, G., Perski, A., & Niemi, M. (2017). A systematic review and meta-analysis of tertiary interventions in clinical burnout. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 58(6), 551–561. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjop.12398>
- Phillips, T. (2010). Debating the legitimacy of a contested environmental illness: A case study of multiple chemical sensitivities (MCS). *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 32(7), 1026–1040. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.2010.01255.x>
- Pressley, T. (2021). Factors contributing to teacher burnout during COVID-19. *Educational Researcher*, 50(5), 325–327.
- Queen, D., & Harding, K. (2020). Societal pandemic burnout: A COVID legacy. *International Wound Journal*, 17(4), 873.
- Reichl, C., Leiter, M. P., & Spinath, F. M. (2014). Work–nonwork conflict and burnout: A meta-analysis. *Human Relations*, 67(8), 979–1005. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726713509857>
- Rogers, A., & Pilgrim, D. (2014). *A Sociology Of Mental Health And Illness*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Rohland, B. M., Kruse, G. R., & Rohrer, J. E. (2004). Validation of a single-item measure of burnout against the Maslach Burnout Inventory among physicians. *Stress and Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*, 20(2), 75–79.
- Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE Publications.
- Salminen, S., Andreou, E., Holma, J., Pekkonen, M., & Mäkikangas, A. (2017). Narratives of burnout and recovery from an agency perspective : A two-year longitudinal study. *Burnout Research*, 7(August), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2017.08.001>
- Salminen, S., Mäkikangas, A., Häätinen, M., Kinnunen, U., & Pekkonen, M. (2015). My Well-Being in My Own Hands: Experiences of Beneficial Recovery During Burnout Rehabilitation. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 25(4), 733–741.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-015-9581-6>

- Sanjek, R. (2019). *Fieldnotes: The makings of anthropology*. Cornell University Press.
- Schabram, K., & Heng, Y. T. (2022). How other-and self-compassion reduce burnout through resource replenishment. *Academy of Management Journal*, *65*(2), 453–478.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2009). Burnout: 35 years of research and practice. *Career Development International*, *14*(3), 204–220.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430910966406>
- Semeijn, J. (2019). In flight again with wings that were once broken ; effects of post-traumatic growth and personal resources on burnout recovery. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, *12*(5), 387–403. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWHM-01-2019-0006>
- Sheather, J., & Slattery, D. (2021). The great resignation—how do we support and retain staff already stretched to their limit? *Bmj*, *375*.
- Shin, H., Park, Y. M., Ying, J. Y., Kim, B., Noh, H., & Lee, S. M. (2014). Relationships between coping strategies and burnout symptoms: A meta-analytic approach. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *45*(1), 44–56.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035220>
- Shoji, K., Cieslak, R., Smoktunowicz, E., Rogala, A., Benight, C. C., & Luszczynska, A. (2016). Associations between job burnout and self-efficacy: A meta-analysis. *Anxiety, Stress and Coping*, *29*(4), 367–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2015.1058369>
- Shoji, K., Lesniewska, M., Smoktunowicz, E., Bock, J., Luszczynska, A., Benight, C. C., & Cieslak, R. (2015). What comes first, job burnout or secondary traumatic stress? Findings from two longitudinal studies from the U.S. and Poland. *PLoS ONE*, *10*(8), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0136730>
- Sklar, M., Ehrhart, M. G., & Aarons, G. A. (2021). COVID-related work changes, burnout, and turnover intentions in mental health providers: A moderated mediation analysis. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, *44*(3), 219.
- Smith, P. (2020). Hard lockdown and a “health dictatorship”: Australia’s lucky escape from covid-19. *Bmj*, *371*.
- Solms, L., Van Vianen, A., Koen, J., Theeboom, T., De Pagter, A. P. J., & De Hoog, M. (2021). Turning the tide: A quasi-experimental study on a coaching intervention to reduce burn-out symptoms and foster personal resources among medical residents and specialists in the Netherlands. *BMJ Open*, *11*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-041708>
- Sonnentag, S., & Fritz, C. (2007). The Recovery Experience Questionnaire: Development

and Validation of a Measure for Assessing Recuperation and Unwinding From Work. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12(3), 204–221.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.12.3.204>

- Sontag, S. (1978, January). Illness as Metaphor. *New York Review*.
- Stewart, J., McCorry, N., Reid, H., Hart, N., & Kee, F. (2022). Implementation of remote asthma consulting in general practice in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: an evaluation using extended Normalisation Process Theory. *BJGP Open*, 6(1).
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. M. (1997). *Grounded theory in practice*. Sage.
- Suleiman-Martos, N., Gomez-Urquiza, J. L., Aguayo-Estremera, R., Cañadas-De La Fuente, G. A., De La Fuente-Solana, E. I., & Albendín-García, L. (2020). The effect of mindfulness training on burnout syndrome in nursing: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 76(5), 1124–1140.
- Sull, D., Sull, C., & Zweig, B. (2022). Toxic culture is driving the great resignation. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 63(2), 1–9.
- Swider, B. W., & Zimmerman, R. D. (2010). Born to burnout: A meta-analytic path model of personality, job burnout, and work outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 76(3), 487–506. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2010.01.003>
- Swoboda, D. A. (2006). The social construction of contested illness legitimacy: a grounded theory analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 223–251.
- Tassabehji, R., Harding, N., Lee, H., & Dominguez-Pery, C. (2021). From female computers to male computers: Or why there are so few women writing algorithms and developing software. In *Human Relations* (Vol. 74, Issue 8).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726720914723>
- Tavella, G., Hadzi-Pavlovic, D., & Parker, G. (2021). Burnout: Redefining its key symptoms. *Psychiatry Research*, 302, 114023.
- Tavella, G., & Parker, G. (2020). Distinguishing burnout from depression: An exploratory qualitative study. *Psychiatry Research*, 291, 113212.
- Wang, Y., Liu, L., Wang, J., & Wang, L. (2012). Work-family conflict and burnout among Chinese doctors: the mediating role of psychological capital. *Journal of Occupational Health*, 54(3), 232–240.
- Ware, N. C., & Kleinman, A. (1992). Culture and somatic experience: The social course of illness in neurasthenia and chronic fatigue syndrome. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 54(5), 546–560. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00006842-199209000-00003>
- Warning, R. L., & Buchanan, F. R. (2010). Social networking web sites: The legal and ethical aspects of pre-employment screening and employee surveillance. *Journal of*

Human Resources Education, 4(2).

- West, C. P., Dyrbye, L. N., Erwin, P. J., & Shanafelt, T. D. (2016). Interventions to prevent and reduce physician burnout: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet*, 388(10057), 2272–2281. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31279-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31279-X)
- WHO. (2019). *Mental health evidence and research. Burnout an 'occupational phenomenon': International Classification of Diseases*.
- Wolvetang, S., van Dongen, J. M., Speklé, E., Coenen, P., & Schaafsma, F. (2022). Sick Leave Due to Stress, What are the Costs for Dutch Employers? *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, April. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-022-10042-x>
- Wright, T. a, & Hobfoll, S. E. (2004). Commitment, psychological well-being and job performance: An examination of conservation of resources (COR) theory and job burnout. In *Journal of Business & Management* (Vol. 9, Issue 4, pp. 389–406).
- Yanos, P. T., Roe, D., & Lysaker, P. H. (2010). The Impact of Illness Identity on Recovery from Severe Mental Illness. *American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation*, 13(2), 73–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487761003756860>
- Yoshida, K. K. (1993). Reshaping of self: a pendular reconstruction of self and identity among adults with traumatic spinal cord injury. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 15(2), 217–245. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.ep11346888>
- Young, A. (2021). The limits of the city: Atmospheres of lockdown. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 61(4), 985–1004.
- Zhang, X., Song, Y., Jiang, T., Ding, N., & Shi, T. (2020). Interventions to reduce burnout of physicians and nurses: An overview of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. *Medicine*, 99(26).
- Zickar, M. J., & Carter, N. T. (2010). Reconnecting with the spirit of workplace ethnography: A historical review. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(2), 304–319.
- Abell, P. (2004). Narrative explanation: an alternative to variable-centered explanation? *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 30, 287–310.
- Abramson, A. (2022). *Burnout and stress are everywhere*. Monitor on Psychology. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/01/special-burnout-stress>
- Ahola, K., Toppinen-Tanner, S., & Seppänen, J. (2017). Interventions to alleviate burnout symptoms and to support return to work among employees with burnout: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Burnout Research*, 4, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2017.02.001>
- Alaimo, S. (2010). *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*. Indiana University Press.

- Alaimo, S. (2012a). Bodily Natures. In *Environmental Ethics*.
<https://doi.org/10.5840/enviroethics20123418>
- Alaimo, S. (2012b). States of suspension: Trans-corporeality at sea. *ISLE Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 19(3), 476–493.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/iss068>
- Alaimo, S. (2014). 6 Genetics , Material Agency , and the Evolution of Posthuman Environmental Ethics in Science Fiction. *Bodily Natures*, May.
- Alaimo, S. (2016a). *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times* (Vol. 4, Issue 1). University of Minnesota Press.
- Alaimo, S. (2016b). Your Shell on Acid: Material Immersion, Anthropocene Dissolves. In *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times* (pp. 143–168). University of Minnesota Press.
- Alarcon, G. (2011). A meta-analysis of burnout with job demands, resources, and attitudes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79(2), 549–562.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2011.03.007>
- Alarcon, G., Eschleman, K. J., & Bowling, N. A. (2009). Relationships between personality variables and burnout: A meta-analysis. *Work and Stress*, 23(3), 244–263.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370903282600>
- Aldossari, M., & Chaudhry, S. (2021). Women and burnout in the context of a pandemic. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 28(2), 826–834.
- Alkærsg, L., Kensbock, J., & Lomberg, C. (2018). The burnout epidemic—how burnout spreads across organizations. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 2018(1), 14180.
- Amanullah, S., & Ramesh Shankar, R. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on physician burnout globally: a review. *Healthcare*, 8(4), 421.
- Anclair, M., Lappalainen, R., Muotka, J., & Hiltunen, A. J. (2018). Cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness for stress and burnout: a waiting list controlled pilot study comparing treatments for parents of children with chronic conditions. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 32(1), 389–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/scs.12473>
- Andrews, D. (2021). *Lockdown across regional Victoria to keep us safe*. Office of the Premier of Victoria. <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/lockdown-across-regional-victoria-keep-us-safe>
- Asgari, B., Pickar, P., & Garay, V. (2016). Karoshi and Karou-jisatsu in Japan: causes, statistics and prevention mechanisms. *Asia Pacific Business & Economics Perspectives*, 4(2), 49–72.

- Awa, W. L., Plaumann, M., & Walter, U. (2010). Burnout prevention: A review of intervention programs. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 78(2), 184–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2009.04.008>
- Back, A. L., Steinhäuser, K. E., Kamal, A. H., & Jackson, V. A. (2016). Building Resilience for Palliative Care Clinicians: An Approach to Burnout Prevention Based on Individual Skills and Workplace Factors. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, 52(2), 284–291. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2016.02.002>
- Bakker, A. B., Le Blanc, P. M., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2005). Burnout contagion among intensive care nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 51(3), 276–287. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03494.x>
- Balica, R. (2019). Automated Data Analysis in Organizations: Sensory Algorithmic Devices, Intrusive Workplace Monitoring, and Employee Surveillance. *Psychosociological Issues in Human Resource Management*, 7(2), 61–67.
- Barker, G. G., & Barker, E. E. (2022). Online therapy: lessons learned from the COVID-19 health crisis. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 50(1), 66–81.
- Bayes, A., Tavella, G., & Parker, G. (2021). The biology of burnout: Causes and consequences. *The World Journal of Biological Psychiatry*, 22(9), 686–698.
- Bernier, D. (1998). A study of coping: Successful recovery from severe burnout and other reactions to severe work-related stress. *Work and Stress*, 12(1), 50–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02678379808256848>
- Bernstein, J. (1980). Union-Busting: From Benign Neglect to Malignant Growth. *UC Davis L. Rev.*, 14, 1.
- Bianchi, R. (2017). Is the ‘burnout epidemic’ an academic fiction? *BMJ (Online)*, 358(September), 4389. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.j4389>
- Bianchi, R., Schonfeld, I., & Laurent, E. (2015a). Is burnout separable from depression in cluster analysis? A longitudinal study. *The International Journal for Research in Social and Genetic Epidemiology and Mental Health Services*, 50(6), 1005–1011. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-014-0996-8>
- Bianchi, R., Schonfeld, I. S., & Laurent, E. (2015b). Is it Time to Consider the ‘Burnout Syndrome’ A Distinct Illness? *Frontiers in Public Health*, 3, 158. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2015.00158>
- Blumenfeld, S., Anderson, G., & Hooper, V. (2020). Covid-19 and employee surveillance. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations*, 45(2), 42–56.
- Bookchin, M. (1980). *Toward an Ecological Society*. Black Rose Books.
- Bookchin, M. (1982). *The Ecology of Freedom*. Cheshire Books.

- Bookchin, M. (1987). *The Rise of Urbanisation and the Decline Citizenship*. Sierra Club Books.
- Branson, D. C. (2019). Vicarious trauma, themes in research, and terminology: A review of literature. *Traumatology*, 25(1), 2.
- Bretland, R. J., & Thorsteinsson, E. B. (2015). *Reducing workplace burnout : the relative benefits of cardiovascular and resistance exercise*. 1998.
<https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.891>
- Brosseau, D. C., McDonald, M. J., & Stephen, J. E. (2011). The moderating effect of relationship quality on partner secondary traumatic stress among couples coping with cancer. *Families, Systems, & Health*, 29(2), 114.
- Brotheridge, C. M., & Grandey, A. A. (2002). Emotional labor and burnout: Comparing two perspectives of “people work”. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 60(1), 17–39.
- Buchanan, D., & Bryman, A. (2007). Contextualizing Methods Choice in Organizational Research. *Sage Publications*, 10, 483–502.
- Burke, R. J., & Greenglass, E. R. (1995). A longitudinal examination of the cherniss model of psychological burnout. *Social Science & Medicine*, 40(10), 1357–1363.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(94\)00267-W](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(94)00267-W)
- Callaghan, S., Lösch, M., Pione, A., & Teichner, W. (2021). Feeling good: The future of the \$1.5 trillion wellness market. In *Mckinsey & Company* (Issue April).
- Campbell, N. S., Perry, S. J., Maertz, C. P., Allen, D. G., & Griffeth, R. W. (2013). All you need is .. resources: The effects of justice and support on burnout and turnover. *Human Relations*, 66(6), 759–782. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726712462614>
- Cantor, H. (2000). *Clifford Odets: Playwright-Poet*. Romwna and Littlefield.
- Chabot, P. (2013a). Sous le signe du feu. *Perspectives Critiques*, 125–132.
- Chabot, P. (2013b). Women’s burn-out. *Perspectives Critiques*, 95–110.
- Chabot, P. (2022). Incursion dans l’hypertemps. *Annales Médico-Psychologiques, Revue Psychiatrique*, 180(1), 66–69.
- Charmaz, K. (1991). *Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time*. Rutgers University Press.
- Charmaz, K. (1995). The Body, Identity, and Self: Adapting to Impairment. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 36(4), 657–680.
- Charmaz, K. (1999). Stories of suffering: Subjective tales and research narratives. *Qualitative Health Research*, 9(3), 362–382.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/104973299129121910>
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative*

analysis. Sage.

- Charmaz, K., & Belgrave, L. (2012). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft*, 2, 347–365.
- Clarke, J. N., & James, S. (2003). The radicalized self: The impact on the self of the contested nature of the diagnosis of chronic fatigue syndrome. *Social Science and Medicine*, 57(8), 1387–1395. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(02\)00515-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(02)00515-4)
- Conrad, P., & Schneider, J. W. (1992). *Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness*. Temple University Press.
- Cook, C. (2012). Email interviewing: generating data with a vulnerable population. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 68(6), 1330–1339.
- Crawford, E. R., LePine, J. A., & Rich, B. L. (2010). Linking job demands and resources to employee engagement and burnout: A theoretical extension and meta-analytic test. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(5), 834–848. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019364>
- Crawford, R. (1980). Healthism and the medicalization of everyday life. *International Journal of Health Services*, 10(3), 365–388.
- Dale, K., & Burrell, G. (2014). Being occupied: An embodied re-reading of organizational 'wellness'. *Organization*, 21(2), 159–177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508412473865>
- Demerouti, E., & Bakker, A. (2001). The Job Demands – Resources Model of Burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499–512. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499>
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., & Leiter, M. (2014). Burnout and job performance: the moderating role of selection, optimization, and compensation strategies. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 19(1), 96.
- Devall, B., & Sessions, G. (1985). *Deep Ecology*. Gibbs Smith.
- Dharmawardene, M., Givens, J., Wachholtz, A., Makowski, S., & Tjia, J. (2016). A systematic review and meta-analysis of meditative interventions for informal caregivers and health professionals. *BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care*, 6(2), 160–169.
- Dumit, J. (2006). Illnesses you have to fight to get: Facts as forces in uncertain, emergent illnesses. *Social Science and Medicine*, 62(3), 577–590. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.06.018>
- Dyrbye, L. N., Power, D. V., Stanford Massie, F., Eacker, A., Harper, W., Thomas, M. R., Szydlo, D. W., Sloan, J. A., & Shanafelt, T. D. (2010). Factors associated with resilience to and recovery from burnout: A prospective, multi-institutional study of US medical students. *Medical Education*, 44(10), 1016–1026. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2010.03754.x>

- Emirbayer, M. (1997). Manifesto for a relational sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(2), 281–317. <https://doi.org/10.1086/231209>
- Falatah, R. (2021). The impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on nurses' turnover intention: an integrative review. *Nursing Reports*, 11(4), 787–810.
- Fang, C., Yang, Y., & Li, P. (2013). To Prevent Burnout and To Promote Spiritual Well-Being in Physicians Among Cancer Care. *Psycho-Oncol.*, 22, 241.
- Fitzgerald, F. S. (2004). *The Great Gatsby* (Collins Cl). Harper Collins.
- Frank, A. W. (2013). *The wounded storyteller: Body, illness, and ethics*. University of Chicago Press.
- Freudenberger, H. J. (1974). Staff burn-out. *Journal of Social Issues*, 30(1), 159–165.
- Gadow, S. (1982). Body and Self: A Dialectic. In V. Kestenbaum (Ed.), *The Humanity of the Ill: Phenomenological Perspectives* (pp. 86–100). University of Tennessee.
- Gerber, M., Brand, S., Elliot, C., Holsboer-trachsler, E., Pühse, U., & Beck, J. (2013). *Aerobic exercise training and burnout : a pilot study with male participants suffering from burnout*.
- Gewin, V. (2021). Pandemic burnout is rampant in academia. *Nature*, 591(7850), 489–492.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1979). *Awareness of dying*. Transaction Publishers.
- Goff, B. S. N., Crow, J. R., Reisbig, A. M. J., & Hamilton, S. (2009). The impact of soldiers' deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan: Secondary traumatic stress in female partners. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 8(4), 291–305.
- Goodman, N. (1984). *Of mind and other matters*. Harvard University Press.
- Hakanen, J. J., & Bakker, A. B. (2017). Born and Bred to Burn out: A Life-Course View and Reflections on Job Burnout. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 354–364.
- Hakanen, J. J., Peeters, M. C. W., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2018). Different types of employee well-being across time and their relationships with job crafting. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 23(2), 289.
- Halbesleben, J. R. B. (2006). Sources of social support and burnout: A meta-analytic test of the conservation of resources model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(5), 1134–1145. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.5.1134>
- Hallberg, U. E., Johansson, G., & Schaufelt, W. B. (2007). Type A behavior and work situation: Associations with burnout and work engagement. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 48(2), 135–142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9450.2007.00584.x>
- Hamann, R., Luiz, J., Ramaboa, K., Khan, F., Dhlamini, X., & Nilsson, W. (2020). Neither

- colony nor enclave: Calling for dialogical contextualism in management and organization studies. *Organization Theory*, 1(1), 2631787719879705.
- Han, B.-C. (2015). *The burnout society*. Stanford University Press.
- Han, B.-C. (2017). *The scent of time: A philosophical essay on the art of lingering*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hill, A. P., & Curran, T. (2016). Multidimensional Perfectionism and Burnout: A Meta-Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 20(3), 269–288.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868315596286>
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). *Conservation of Resources A New Attempt at Conceptualizing Stress*. 44(3), 513–524.
- Hobfoll, S. E., Halbesleben, J., Neveu, J.-P., & Westman, M. (2018). Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior Conservation of Resources in the Organizational Context: The Reality of Resources and Their Consequences. *Annu. Rev. Organ. Psychol. Organ. Behav*, 5, 103–131.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych>
- Howarth, J. M. (1995). The Crisis of Ecology: A Phenomenological Perspective. *Environmental Values*, 4(1), 17–30.
- Hurd, R. W., & Uehlein, J. B. (1994). *Patterned responses to organizing: Case studies of the union-busting convention*.
- Hydén, L. C. (1997). Illness and narrative. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 19(1), 48–69.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.1997.tb00015.x>
- Ilanbey, S. (2021). *Two-year jail terms loom for health order breaches under pandemic laws*. The Australian Financial Review.
<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/victoria/two-year-jail-terms-loom-for-health-order-breaches-under-pandemic-laws-20211026-p59349.html>
- Illich, I. (2000). *Limits to Medicine. Medicinal Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health*. Marion Boyars Publishers.
- Ingold, T. (2000). *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. Psychology Press.
- Ivanovic, T., Ivancevic, S., & Maricic, M. (2020). The relationship between recruiter burnout, work engagement and turnover intention: Evidence from Serbia. *Engineering Economics*, 31(2), 197–210.
- Jackson, J. E. (2005). Stigma, liminality, and chronic pain: Mind–body borderlands. *American Ethnologist*, 32(3), 332–353. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.2005.32.3.332>
- Jaworska-Burzyńska, L., Kanaffa-Kilijańska, U., Przysiężna, E., & Szczepańska-Gieracha,

- J. (2016). The role of therapy in reducing the risk of job burnout - A systematic review of literature. *Archives of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*, 18(4), 43–52.
<https://doi.org/10.12740/APP/65815>
- Johnston, E., Barnett, A., Bhaskaran, M., Broadfoot, L., Burrows, G., Evans, K., Foley, C., Gooding, J., Hannah, K., Harvey-Smith, L., Huntington, E., Kingsley, I., Latimer, J., Morgan, A., Mortlock, M., Paterson, A., Purcell, J. S., Sullivan, L., Sun, M., ... Toner, M. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on women in the STEM workforce | Australian Academy of Science. *Rapid Research Information Forum*, May, 1–12.
- Kanai, A. (2009). “Karoshi (work to death)” in Japan. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 84(2), 209–216.
- Kenny, K., Fotaki, M., & Scriver, S. (2019). Mental Health as a Weapon: Whistleblower Retaliation and Normative Violence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 160(3), 801–815.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3868-4>
- Kestenbaum, V. (1982). Introduction: The Experience of Illness. In V. Kestenbaum (Ed.), *The Humanity of the Ill: Phenomenological Perspectives* (pp. 3–38). University of Tennessee.
- Khazan, O. (2014, July 3). Burnout: The Enemy of Sleep. *The Atlantic*.
- Kim, J., Youngs, P., & Frank, K. (2017). Burnout contagion: Is it due to early career teachers’ social networks or organizational exposure? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 66, 250–260. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.04.017>
- Kondo, N., & Oh, J. (2010). Suicide and karoshi (death from overwork) during the recent economic crises in Japan: the impacts, mechanisms and political responses. In *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* (Vol. 64, Issue 8, pp. 649–650). BMJ Publishing Group Ltd.
- Korhonen, M., & Komulainen, K. (2019). The moral orders of work and health: a case of sick leave due to burnout. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 41(2), 219–233.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.12816>
- Korhonen, M., & Komulainen, K. (2021). Individualizing the burnout problem: Health professionals’ discourses of burnout and recovery in the context of rehabilitation. *Health (United Kingdom)*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634593211063053>
- Korhonen, M., Komulainen, K., & Okkonen, V. (2020). Burnout as an identity rupture in the life course: a longitudinal narrative method. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 42(8), 1918–1933.
- Koutsimani, P., Montgomery, A., & Georganta, K. (2019). The relationship between burnout, depression, and anxiety: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in*

- Psychology*, 10(MAR), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00284>
- Kroll-Smith, S., & Floyd, H. (1997). *Bodies in Protest: Environmental Illness and the Struggle Over Medical Knowledge*. NYU Press.
- Lappin, M. (2020). *Fast-Food Industry Exploration of Burnout and Turnover Intention, Management Practices, and Leadership Style*. Capella University.
- Lastovkova, A., Carder, M., Rasmussen, H. M., Sjoberg, L., De Groene, G. J., Sauni, R., Vevoda, J., Vevodova, S., Lasfargues, G., & Svartengren, M. (2018). Burnout syndrome as an occupational disease in the European Union: an exploratory study. *Industrial Health*, 56(2), 160–165.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer publishing company.
- Lee, R. L., & Ashforth, B. E. (1996). A meta-analytic examination of the correlates of the three dimensions of job burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(2), 123–133. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.2.123>
- Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (1999). Six areas of worklife: A model of the organizational context of burnout. *Journal of Health and Human Services Administration*, 21(4), 472–489.
- Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2016). Latent burnout profiles: A new approach to understanding the burnout experience. *Burnout Research*, 3(4), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2016.09.001>
- Leiter, M. P., & Shaughnessy, K. (2006). *The Areas of Worklife Model of burnout : tests of mediation relationships*. 28(4), 327–341.
- Lichtenthaler, P. W., & Fischbach, A. (2019). A meta-analysis on promotion-and prevention-focused job crafting. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 28(1), 30–50.
- Limb, M. (2017). *Falling NHS staff numbers and high turnover threaten patient care, says report*. British Medical Journal Publishing Group.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. sage.
- Lingard, H. (2003). The impact of individual and job characteristics on 'burnout' among civil engineers in Australia and the implications for employee turnover. *Construction Management & Economics*, 21(1), 69–80.
- Locke, K. (2001). *Grounded theory in management research*. Sage.
- Locke, K., Feldman, M., & Golden-Biddle, K. (2020). Coding Practices and Iterativity: Beyond Templates for Analyzing Qualitative Data. *Organizational Research Methods*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428120948600>

- Mackey, J. D., McAllister, C. P., Ellen, B. P., & Carson, J. E. (2021). A Meta-Analysis of Interpersonal and Organizational Workplace Deviance Research. *Journal of Management*, 47(3), 597–622. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206319862612>
- Malesic, J. (2022). *The End of Burnout: Why Work Drains Us and How To Build Better Lives*. University of California Press.
- Maricuțoiu, L. P., Sava, F. A., & Butta, O. (2016). The effectiveness of controlled interventions on employees' burnout: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 89(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12099>
- Maslach, C. (2017). Finding solutions to the problem of burnout. *Consulting Psychology Journal*, 69(2), 143–152. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000090>
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The Measurement of Experienced Burnout. *Journal of Occupational Behaviour*, 2(2), 99–113.
- Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World Psychiatry*, 15(2), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311>
- Maté, G. (2019). *When the Body Says 'No': The cost of hidden stress*. Scribe Publications.
- Mathieson, C. M., & Stam, H. J. (1995). Reneotiating identity: cancer narratives. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 17(3), 283–306.
- Matthews, D. (1990). A Comparison of Burnout in Selected Occupational Fields. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 38(3), 230. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.1990.tb00385.x>
- Mazzola, J. J., & Disselhorst, R. (2019). Should we be “challenging” employees?: A critical review and meta-analysis of the challenge-hindrance model of stress. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(8), 949–961. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2412>
- Michie, F. (2020). 'Ring of steel' set to lift, reuniting Melbourne and regional Victoria as coronavirus restrictions ease. ABC News. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-08/how-melbournes-coronavirus-travel-rules-are-expected-to-change/12858310>
- Moore, L. R. (2014). Social Science & Medicine “ But we ’ re not hypochondriacs ” : The changing shape of gluten-free dieting and the contested illness experience. *Social Science & Medicine*, 105, 76–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.01.009>
- Moser, I. (2005). On Becoming Disabled and Articulating Alternatives: The multiple modes of ordering disability and their interferences. *Cultural Studies*, 19(6), 667–700. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380500365648>
- Muenchberger, H., Kendall, E., & Neal, R. (2008). Identity transition following traumatic brain injury: A dynamic process of contraction, expansion and tentative balance. *Brain*

Injury, 22(12), 979–992.

- Murphy, J., & Zhu, J. (2012). Neo-colonialism in the academy? Anglo-American domination in management journals. *Organization*, 19(6), 915–927.
- Neckel, S., Schaffner, A. K., & Wagner, G. (2017). *Burnout, fatigue, exhaustion: An interdisciplinary perspective on a modern affliction*. Springer.
- OECD. (2022). *The Impact of COVID-19 on Employment & Jobs*. Employment. <https://www.oecd.org/employment/covid-19.htm>
- Oishi, S., & Graham, J. (2010). Social ecology: Lost and found in psychological science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(4), 356–377. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610374588>
- Oliver, K. (2015). Witnessing, Recognition, and Response Ethics. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 48(4), 473–493. <https://doi.org/10.5325/philrhet.48.4.0473>
- Panagioti, M., Panagopoulou, E., Bower, P., Lewith, G., Kontopantelis, E., Chew-Graham, C., Dawson, S., Van Marwijk, H., Geraghty, K., & Esmail, A. (2017). Controlled interventions to reduce burnout in physicians a systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 177(2), 195–205. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2016.7674>
- Parker, G., & Tavella, G. (2021). Distinguishing burnout from clinical depression: a theoretical differentiation template. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 281, 168–173.
- Parker, G., & Tavella, G. (2022). The Diagnosis of Burnout: Some Challenges. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 210(7), 475–478.
- Peimani, N., & Kamalipour, H. (2021). Online education and the COVID-19 outbreak: A case study of online teaching during lockdown. *Education Sciences*, 11(2), 72.
- Peinado, M., & Anderson, K. N. (2020). Reducing social worker burnout during COVID-19. *International Social Work*, 63(6), 757–760.
- Penz, M., Miller, R., Pieper, L., Beesdo-Baum, K., Walther, A., Wekenborg, M. K., Stalder, T., & Kirschbaum, C. (2018). The Dresden Burnout Study: Protocol of a prospective cohort study for the bio-psychological investigation of burnout. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*, 27(2), e1613. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mpr.1613>
- Perregrini, M. (2019). Combating compassion fatigue. *Nursing*, 49(2), 50–54. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NURSE.0000552704.58125.fa>
- Perski, O., Grossi, G., Perski, A., & Niemi, M. (2017). A systematic review and meta-analysis of tertiary interventions in clinical burnout. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 58(6), 551–561. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjop.12398>
- Phillips, T. (2010). Debating the legitimacy of a contested environmental illness: A case

- study of multiple chemical sensitivities (MCS). *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 32(7), 1026–1040. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.2010.01255.x>
- Pressley, T. (2021). Factors contributing to teacher burnout during COVID-19. *Educational Researcher*, 50(5), 325–327.
- Queen, D., & Harding, K. (2020). Societal pandemic burnout: A COVID legacy. *International Wound Journal*, 17(4), 873.
- Reichl, C., Leiter, M. P., & Spinath, F. M. (2014). Work–nonwork conflict and burnout: A meta-analysis. *Human Relations*, 67(8), 979–1005. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726713509857>
- Rogers, A., & Pilgrim, D. (2014). *A Sociology Of Mental Health And Illness*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Rohland, B. M., Kruse, G. R., & Rohrer, J. E. (2004). Validation of a single-item measure of burnout against the Maslach Burnout Inventory among physicians. *Stress and Health: Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*, 20(2), 75–79.
- Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE Publications.
- Salminen, S., Andreou, E., Holma, J., Pekkonen, M., & Mäkikangas, A. (2017). Narratives of burnout and recovery from an agency perspective : A two-year longitudinal study. *Burnout Research*, 7(August), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2017.08.001>
- Salminen, S., Mäkikangas, A., Hättinen, M., Kinnunen, U., & Pekkonen, M. (2015). My Well-Being in My Own Hands: Experiences of Beneficial Recovery During Burnout Rehabilitation. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 25(4), 733–741. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-015-9581-6>
- Sanjek, R. (2019). *Fieldnotes: The makings of anthropology*. Cornell University Press.
- Schabram, K., & Heng, Y. T. (2022). How other-and self-compassion reduce burnout through resource replenishment. *Academy of Management Journal*, 65(2), 453–478.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2009). Burnout: 35 years of research and practice. *Career Development International*, 14(3), 204–220. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430910966406>
- Semeijn, J. (2019). In flight again with wings that were once broken ; effects of post-traumatic growth and personal resources on burnout recovery. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 12(5), 387–403. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWHM-01-2019-0006>
- Sheather, J., & Slattery, D. (2021). The great resignation—how do we support and retain staff already stretched to their limit? *Bmj*, 375.

- Shin, H., Park, Y. M., Ying, J. Y., Kim, B., Noh, H., & Lee, S. M. (2014). Relationships between coping strategies and burnout symptoms: A meta-analytic approach. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 45*(1), 44–56. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035220>
- Shoji, K., Cieslak, R., Smoktunowicz, E., Rogala, A., Benight, C. C., & Luszczynska, A. (2016). Associations between job burnout and self-efficacy: A meta-analysis. *Anxiety, Stress and Coping, 29*(4), 367–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2015.1058369>
- Shoji, K., Lesniewska, M., Smoktunowicz, E., Bock, J., Luszczynska, A., Benight, C. C., & Cieslak, R. (2015). What comes first, job burnout or secondary traumatic stress? Findings from two longitudinal studies from the U.S. and Poland. *PLoS ONE, 10*(8), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0136730>
- Sklar, M., Ehrhart, M. G., & Aarons, G. A. (2021). COVID-related work changes, burnout, and turnover intentions in mental health providers: A moderated mediation analysis. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, 44*(3), 219.
- Smith, P. (2020). Hard lockdown and a “health dictatorship”: Australia’s lucky escape from covid-19. *Bmj, 371*.
- Solms, L., Van Vianen, A., Koen, J., Theeboom, T., De Pagter, A. P. J., & De Hoog, M. (2021). Turning the tide: A quasi-experimental study on a coaching intervention to reduce burn-out symptoms and foster personal resources among medical residents and specialists in the Netherlands. *BMJ Open, 11*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-041708>
- Sonnentag, S., & Fritz, C. (2007). The Recovery Experience Questionnaire: Development and Validation of a Measure for Assessing Recuperation and Unwinding From Work. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 12*(3), 204–221. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.12.3.204>
- Sontag, S. (1978, January). Illness as Metaphor. *New York Review*.
- Stewart, J., McCorry, N., Reid, H., Hart, N., & Kee, F. (2022). Implementation of remote asthma consulting in general practice in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: an evaluation using extended Normalisation Process Theory. *BJGP Open, 6*(1).
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. M. (1997). *Grounded theory in practice*. Sage.
- Suleiman-Martos, N., Gomez-Urquiza, J. L., Aguayo-Estremera, R., Cañadas-De La Fuente, G. A., De La Fuente-Solana, E. I., & Albendín-García, L. (2020). The effect of mindfulness training on burnout syndrome in nursing: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 76*(5), 1124–1140.
- Sull, D., Sull, C., & Zweig, B. (2022). Toxic culture is driving the great resignation. *MIT*

Sloan Management Review, 63(2), 1–9.

- Swider, B. W., & Zimmerman, R. D. (2010). Born to burnout: A meta-analytic path model of personality, job burnout, and work outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 76(3), 487–506. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2010.01.003>
- Swoboda, D. A. (2006). The social construction of contested illness legitimacy: a grounded theory analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 223–251.
- Tassabehji, R., Harding, N., Lee, H., & Dominguez-Pery, C. (2021). From female computers to male computers: Or why there are so few women writing algorithms and developing software. In *Human Relations* (Vol. 74, Issue 8). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726720914723>
- Tavella, G., Hadzi-Pavlovic, D., & Parker, G. (2021). Burnout: Redefining its key symptoms. *Psychiatry Research*, 302, 114023.
- Tavella, G., & Parker, G. (2020). Distinguishing burnout from depression: An exploratory qualitative study. *Psychiatry Research*, 291, 113212.
- Wang, Y., Liu, L., Wang, J., & Wang, L. (2012). Work-family conflict and burnout among Chinese doctors: the mediating role of psychological capital. *Journal of Occupational Health*, 54(3), 232–240.
- Ware, N. C., & Kleinman, A. (1992). Culture and somatic experience: The social course of illness in neurasthenia and chronic fatigue syndrome. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 54(5), 546–560. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00006842-199209000-00003>
- Warning, R. L., & Buchanan, F. R. (2010). Social networking web sites: The legal and ethical aspects of pre-employment screening and employee surveillance. *Journal of Human Resources Education*, 4(2).
- West, C. P., Dyrbye, L. N., Erwin, P. J., & Shanafelt, T. D. (2016). Interventions to prevent and reduce physician burnout: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet*, 388(10057), 2272–2281. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31279-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31279-X)
- WHO. (2019). *Mental health evidence and research. Burnout an 'occupational phenomenon': International Classification of Diseases.*
- Wolvetang, S., van Dongen, J. M., Speklé, E., Coenen, P., & Schaafsma, F. (2022). Sick Leave Due to Stress, What are the Costs for Dutch Employers? *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, April. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-022-10042-x>
- Wright, T. a, & Hobfoll, S. E. (2004). Commitment, psychological well-being and job performance: An examination of conservation of resources (COR) theory and job burnout. In *Journal of Business & Management* (Vol. 9, Issue 4, pp. 389–406).
- Yanos, P. T., Roe, D., & Lysaker, P. H. (2010). The Impact of Illness Identity on Recovery

from Severe Mental Illness. *American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation*, 13(2), 73–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487761003756860>

Yoshida, K. K. (1993). Reshaping of self: a pendular reconstruction of self and identity among adults with traumatic spinal cord injury. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 15(2), 217–245. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.ep11346888>

Young, A. (2021). The limits of the city: Atmospheres of lockdown. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 61(4), 985–1004.

Zhang, X., Song, Y., Jiang, T., Ding, N., & Shi, T. (2020). Interventions to reduce burnout of physicians and nurses: An overview of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. *Medicine*, 99(26).

Zickar, M. J., & Carter, N. T. (2010). Reconnecting with the spirit of workplace ethnography: A historical review. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(2), 304–319.

Appendix A. Overview of thesis papers

Exploring elementals of fallout through three papers

Paper # / Title	#1 Beyond the Brink: Towards a Liminal Theory of Burnout in STEM Careers	#2 Salted Wounds: Exploring Modes of Secondary Victimization in the Organization of Burnt Out Subjects	#3 Telling Tales: Recovering Narratives of Life After Burnout
<i>Purpose</i>	To gain deep understanding of working lives and trajectories in the period post-burnout	To explore the 'dark side' of organisational responses to burnout	To understand how recovery is performed in organisational settings
<i>Research question</i>	<i>Question 1: What are the variegated ways in which individuals negotiate and navigate fallout within and around the organisational dynamics of work?</i>	<i>Question 2: In what ways do institutions, and their organising structures, agents and processes shape possibilities and experiences of fallout within the parameters of recovery?</i>	<i>Question 3: How is 'recovery' from burnout, as a contested illness, experienced by organisational members?</i>
<i>Research context</i>	Women in STEM as a minority group	Individuals who self-identified as being burnt out in organisational settings	Individuals who self-identified as being 'recovered' or 'recovering' from burnout
<i>Theoretical framework</i>	Liminality (Turner, 1969; Van Gennep, 1908, 2019)	Secondary victimisation (Martin & Paluch, 1994)	Contested illness (Kroll-Smith & Floyd, 1997)
<i>How this relates to social ecologies</i>	Examines how the contextual occupational experiences of a marginalized group influence and shape post-burnout trajectories	Recasts and explores the 'dark side' organisations in the management and organising of burnout	Explores how recovery takes place as narrative practice(s) shaped and constituted by organisational settings
<i>Key contributions</i>	Introduces the concept of fallout as a distinct, transitional domain between burnout and the possibility of recovery	Introduces the concept of organisational secondary victimisation and empirically identifies its three modes of enactment	Introduces a recovery as a dynamic performance rather than a static moment or phase
<i>Targeted publication</i>	Journal of Organizational Behavior	Human Relations	Organization

Appendix B. 'Thought leadership' article

'Thought leadership' article published in *Impact*, 24 July 2019

Burnout: the advent of the modern brain drain?

(Lee, M.Y.W.)

This 'thought leadership' piece was written in the first few months of my doctoral candidature and was published in *Impact*, a Monash Business School online newsletter aimed at promoting university research to practitioner audiences.

Screenshot and article text provided as follows; accessible online from:

<https://impact.monash.edu/management/burnout-the-advent-of-the-modern-brain-drain/>

The article was written shortly after the World Health Organisation announced its decision to amend and effectively 'upgrade' the status of burnout to an 'occupational syndrome' in May 2019. This was erroneously reported in several mainstream news outlets in Australia and internationally as burnout achieving a 'legitimate' medical diagnosis.

My article sought to respond to the ensuing conversation around burnout and prompted a series of live radio interviews in Australia (ABC News).

The experience of writing for the mainstream press was not new to me, having spent my early working years in the newsroom as a healthcare reporter. Yet being on the 'newsmaker' side of the operation where I was 'creating' news and having my words and intentions 'storied' and shaped by other individuals was disconcerting.

The totality of this experience – observing the misreporting of the WHO announcement, the writing of the article while being 'overseen' by the University communications team, the 'snappy' soundbites I felt pressured to produce during live interviews – was a clear example of how burnout (and research more generally) is organised through systems, processes and technologies that corral the phenomenon into a particular shape.

Burnout: the advent of the modern brain drain?




Understanding how people can recover following a career burnout


Republish

SHARE: [f](#) [t](#) [in](#)

FEATURED:

 **Margaret Lee**
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Management

DEPARTMENT:

 Department of Management

TOPICS:

Management

Burnout: the advent of the modern brain drain?

It's said that human beings require three things to be truly happy in life – someone to love, something to do and something to hope for. And that if you do something you love, you will never work a day in your life.

Yet, passionate and dedicated individuals like small business owners, teachers and nurses are burning out at alarming rates. In fact, burnout even affects individuals who work part-time, complete mundane tasks for a living or work for little to no paid reward.

We currently have minimal insight into how people experience the 'recovery' phase of burnout, how organisations help to facilitate this, if at all, and what implications this has for individual career trajectories and outcomes.

My doctoral research focuses on this neglected area of burnout and its fallout for individuals and organisations.

Burnout does not discriminate based on how long you work, how passionate you are or how interesting and valuable your work may be. It's commonly equated with its most obvious symptom, exhaustion.

More than just stress

However, three decades of research have proven that burnout is more than just a singular dimension of exhaustion, it is incapacitation at every level of your being, including your personal affect and professional self-belief.

People who are burnt out are not only physically exhausted – they become withdrawn, cynical and no longer believe in their ability to set and achieve goals.

Despite what is commonly believed, burnout does not arise solely from an excessive workload or work hours. Research on burnout has revealed five additional stressors that push individuals to this state of exhaustion, withdrawal and hopelessness:

- The amount of control you have in your job.
- The fairness with which decisions are made in your workplace.
- The level of social support you have at work.
- How you are rewarded.
- Whether or not you believe in your organisation's values.

Workplace stress is inevitable and, in some instances, can be healthy and motivating. Burnout, however, represents a state of persistent stress that slowly degrades an individual's personal resources – their resilience, identity and self-belief – to the point of harm. Burnout is also linked to increased cardiovascular events, depression, anxiety and alcohol abuse.

Beyond anecdotal evidence, there is little insight into this recovery phase, which is the focus of my research.

It's not me it's you

Even with this knowledge, much of the attention on burnout management has framed the issue as a problem with individuals rather than work environments.

Most people turn to person-centric interventions for assistance, such as exercise and mindfulness programs despite their negligible impact on the overall prevention and trajectory of burnout.

While there are countless suggestions on how individuals can find ways to combat burnout, the evidence is out as to whether or not these approaches work. They also concentrate on the individual and don't approach the problem organisationally.

Environmental changes – like designing jobs where individuals have more control over their output – are shown to be more effective but because they often require complex re-organisations, researchers have difficulty studying them and workplaces are unmotivated to enact them.

For example, despite the rise of digital nomads and increasingly flexible work practices, many organisations still remain wedded to the idea that a present worker is a productive worker – multinationals like IBM, Bank of America and Yahoo are a case in point, slashing their work-from-home policies citing a lack of productivity and collaboration.

One group of individuals resisting traditional expectations of work are FIRES – Financial Independence, Retire Early – who dedicate themselves to the early withdrawal from paid work, ideally within their thirties.

Of course, this involves acquiring sufficient cash and assets through hyper-frugality, investments and lifestyle changes in order to withdraw from the voluntary labour market.

New vistas into burnout management

So how can we expect to achieve healthy workplaces when we see burnout as a personal failing, rather than one of environmental misfit?

If we want to stem the flow of burnout we need to turn our attention towards environmental changes – a burden that falls to both individuals and organisations who collectively perpetuate a work culture that normalises burnout.

Ironically, recovery measures for individuals with burnout have been developed without individual perspectives.

For example, the burden of repair is currently placed on individuals to manage their own stress through small lifestyle changes like well-timed holidays, exercise and mindfulness interventions with little regard for the social and practical impediments to these suggestions.

There isn't enough quality evidence to suggest the true utility or efficacy of any of these measures. While individual tips have been well documented in the media despite a lack of evidence, I am adopting a critical position of this person-centric view – my research is about integrating individual perspectives into environmental measures.

A key question for us as workers and knowledge producers is: how do we want the future of work to look beyond the 'rise and grind'?

Appendix C. Respondent profiles

ID	Pseudonym ¹⁴	Age	Gender	Occupation, Industry ¹⁵	Country ¹⁶
1	Avery	45	F	Special needs teacher, Education	England
2	Rhys	35	M	Entrepreneur, Technology	US
3	Leslie	38	F	Data scientist, Professional services	Australia
4	Rachel	34	M	Management consultant, Professional services	Australia
5	Jaclyn	32	F	Data scientist, Health science	Australia
6	Bernadette	38	F	Human resources, Finance	Australia
7	Jennifer	34	F	Brand manager, Marketing	Australia
8	Imogen	48	F	Forensics specialist, Research	US, Germany
9	Tobias	38	M	Project manager, Construction	Australia, US
10	Sam	46	M	IT manager, Professional sports	Australia
11	Nerissa	31	F	Doctor, Medicine	South Africa
12	Vicky	39	F	Engineer, Engineering	England
13	Raymond	34	M	Risk consultant, Professional services	Australia
14	Katerina	27	F	Computer programmer, Finance	Australia
15	Jacob	35	M	Strategy professional, Professional services	Australia
16	Leanne	34	F	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
17	Tamsin	35	F	Clinical therapist, Psychology	South Africa
18	James	63	M	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
19	Kelly	61	F	Human resources, Government	Australia
20	Natasha	41	F	Project manager, International development	Australia, Indonesia
21	Catherine	25	F	Clinical therapist, Psychology	Australia
22	Annemarie	30	F	Computer programmer, Engineering	Australia
23	Catriona	33	F	Data scientist, Banking	Australia
24	Stella	35	F	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
25	Alyssa	35	F	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
26	Charlotte	54	F	Org. psychologist, Human resources	Australia
27	River	51	F	Clinician, Health science	Australia
28	Denise	54	F	Social worker, Government	Australia
29	Andrea	35	F	Doctor, Medicine	Australia
30	Jamila	33	F	Org. psychologist, Technology	United States
31	Renee	51	F	Clinician, Health science	Australia
32	Marcus	34	M	Public relations, Finance	Australia
33	Patrick	43	M	IT manager, Technology	Australia, India
34	George	52	M	Social worker, Government	Australia
35	Elise	56	F	Manager, Banking	Australia
36	Daniel	38	M	Engineer, Professional Services	Australia
37	Chanel	44	F	Publicity, Music	Australia
38	Melissa	44	F	Account manager, Shipping and logistics	South Africa
39	Brooke	33	F	Fashion designer, Luxury fashion	S.Korea, Australia
40	Genevieve	35	F	Project Manager, Higher education	Australia
41	Evangeline	39	F	Sustainability consultant, Government	Australia
42	Evelyn	28	F	Architect, Engineering	Australia
43	Dennis	32	M	Architect, Property and construction	Australia

¹⁴ For de-identification purposes, pseudonyms in this full sample will not match the various respondent tables in presented in this dissertation

¹⁵ Occupation at time of most recent burnout

¹⁶ Multiple locations have been listed to correspond with multiple experiences of burnout

Appendix D. Forthcoming book chapter

Forthcoming Book Chapter: Disturbing Bodies?

Disturbing bodies? Prospective and retrospective second-careering within the doctoral candidature

(Lee, M.Y.W., Davies, O. & Riach, K.)

This chapter is forthcoming in (e.d. Bristow, A., Ratle, O. & Robinson, S.) *Doing Academic Careers Differently: Portraits of Academic Life*. London: Routledge

The following book chapter was first written as I commenced my doctoral candidature and highlights my reflexive journey through doctoral candidature as a 'second career' academic.

Abstract

In this chapter we draw on the encounters of the authors and their contemporaries during doctoral candidature to explore the experience second-careering – understood here as the situated project of ‘doing’ a career that traverses two or more sectors or professional identities. Specifically, we focus on the ambivalent spaces of disturbance in which institutions seek to simultaneously benefit from and undermine second careering within normative academic systems surrounding valuation, power and positioning. In reflecting on two apocryphal accounts of second-careering and doctoral study, we identify three modes of disturbance that characterise the experience of thinking about second-careers in doctoral study: relating; appropriating; and betraying or biting back. These episodes and the resulting practices reflect how doctoral education in the Business School holds particular implications for pluriversal career trajectories.

Introduction

In this chapter we seek to tease out some of the tensions, contradictions and possibilities involved when the normativity of academic trajectories is disrupted, and the consequences for the bodies, practices and institutions involved. Specifically, we focus on the movement in and out of academia by doctoral researchers rendering visible ambivalent spaces of disturbance in which institutions seek to simultaneously benefit and undermine second careering. On the one hand, these seek to demonstrate plurality, relevance and professional credibility through their faculty and their practices. On the other hand, they demand a compliance and reproduction of rankings and assessment systems that prioritise traditional siloed scholarly pursuits such as publishing in 'elite' peer reviewed journals that forefront new theoretical vistas as opposed to direct practical application.

Second-careering refers to the material practices and negotiated identities of those whose careers traverse two different professions or sectors over their working lives. These may be retrospective, whereby an academic position is undertaken after a period of time outside the Academy; or prospective, whereby individuals embark on advanced study or faculty positions with the expectation or growing awareness that they will not remain exclusively within academia afterwards. Common (but by no means exclusive) second-careers in the Business School include those who move from chartered occupations (such as accountants) into lectureships where they simultaneously work on a doctoral qualification, PhD graduates who return to become academic staff after a period of consultancy or working, or financially solvent business owners and executives that return to full-time 'professor of practice' positions.

These groups, amongst others, are seen as providing valuable ways of integrating and encouraging academic thought with workplace practice, a critique long being charged at more traditional modes of dissemination (e.g. Rynes et al., 2007; Hughes et al., 2011). And while 'connections to the coalface' have historically been an ongoing discussion since the emergence of Business Schools taking over from departments or centres of management, finance, accounting and economics, we now find second-careerers being positioned as central to the particular economies of 'credibility' and 'relevance' that have accompanied recent rhetoric surrounding academic capitalism and the neoliberal university more broadly.

It is important to note that other disciplines have navigated academic/praxis relationship in a variety of ways. Here we see that second-careering includes Engineering faculty who are expected to have an association with a professional chartered body requiring a number of years of professional practice or Arts faculty with 'works of practice' as central to their academic standing (Lam, 2020). In medicine, parallel careering is often the norm where faculty will also have an affiliation and position within a hospital or other healthcare setting and maintain a connection with clinical practice (Smesny et al., 2007), while other scholars may move back and forth in a pattern that Green (2016) calls 'turnstile careers'. What locates Business Schools in a particularly curious position is that high numbers of students (and associated institutional revenue) mean they are often under pressure to maintain aggressive growth and satisfy a consumer-orientated demand for 'relevant' programme content, while ensuring positions in rankings that can be determined in relation to often narrowly defined research metrics.

Second-careering reveals the contradictions in variegated messages surrounding what constitutes 'academic excellence' within universities and broader systems of academic valuation in the Business School. This has particular consequences for the experiences and subsequent interactions with institutions for individuals coming from and thinking of careers beyond academia. First, it shapes how the opportunities and initiatives associated with securing success are organised, distributed or prioritised. This may be overtly through the way resources (e.g., time, buy-out) for particular activities, or more subtly through what achievements are headlined, communicated, publicly congratulated or otherwise recognised. As a result, such practices often reproduce ideal subject positions that shape conditions of possibility and legitimacy given that 'forms and practices of organizing academic work not only affect the quality of the products but also constitute the subjectivity of the producers' (Muller-Camen & Salzberger, 2005, p. 271-272). Significantly, those within doctoral programmes who are either retrospective or prospective second-careerers are likely to be the most vulnerable to any institutional misrecognition surrounding second-careering, as well as have the potential to disturb and render visible these forms of misrecognition.

To explore this further, we write from our own positions as a current doctoral student who came to the PhD after significant professional experience (Margaret); a former PhD graduate now undertaking a career in filmmaking (Olivia), and a supervisor from a rather normative career trajectory going straight from study into an academic job

(Kathleen). We used two analytical vignettes as a point of entry to our reflections, framing these as pastiche: imitations of encounters that both seek to 'give flesh' to the idea of prospective and retrospective second-careering. While written in the first person as Margaret and Olivia, they are composed through reflecting on both our own and our contemporaries' experiences then 'corrupted' through rewritings that echoed broader discussions and debates that circulate Business School careers and academic second-careers, as well as serving to protect the identities of those who shared their experiences and thoughts with us. After the pastiche we reflect on three modes of disturbance they reveal, allowing us to further contemplate how second-careering in the business school is experienced and what consequences or possibilities they might hold for thinking about the possibilities and parameters for how academic careers might be done differently.

Pastiche 1: Prospective second-careering: Preparing for non-academic chapters

I took the direct train into doctoral study. Progressing from my undergraduate, into Honours, then immediately into a PhD programme may have seemed to those around me, and certainly in my own mind, that I was on my way to applying for postdoc or tenure track positions. However, with the prospect of graduating looming, I had the growing awareness that I was coming up to a now-or-never moment. Through the PhD programme, I already had a taste of what could be if I continued into a tenure-track academic position. However, I had not yet put any significant energy into pursuing another long-held interest to be involved in factual film, and there hadn't been much space to think beyond how to try and secure anything but an academic position. Within myself I could already recognise a sense of restlessness and impending regret should my professional involvement in film not go beyond its use as a multimodal methodological tool or as a supplement to traditional academic publications.

As excited as I was, accepting a professional traineeship in social documentary filmmaking brought with it some sadness and doubt, exacerbated by well-meaning but misguided questions such as, "So why did you do a PhD if you're not going to be an academic?" and, "What are you going to do now you've spent your whole life at school and have no real-world experience?" What made explaining this transition, both to myself and others, significantly easier was my view that moving into film is a continuation of, rather than a break in, my scholarly career. I have maintained ties to the Academy via reviewing

and co-authoring a small number of academic publications, and I continue seeking to buy into the currency of academic capital in other ways. For instance, I have my sights set on working collaboratively with academics to produce and translate research into film for various purposes and audiences.

Yet even in the absence of these activities, I would still understand my professional identity as one connected to academia. And I know from friends and colleagues that my own path is often given as a 'success story' at the university, even though at the time it felt a lonely decision. The process of completing my PhD animated my academic spirit, the continuation of which is not dependent on a formal Business School affiliation. It may appear as though I have deviated from pursuing an academic career, however, I understand myself as tracking along a parallel path which allows me to engage in research and theoretical thinking with a similar rigour, but that just happens to take place less in an office and more in the field and editing suite.

Pastiche 2: Retrospective second-careering: Being and knowing your place as a doctoral student

I embarked on an academic career after several years of working in the private sector in Australia and Asia. While individuals like myself can be considered 'second-career' professionals, academia is in fact my fourth career. My first was as a journalist, writing longform news stories on the healthcare beat at a national broadsheet; this was followed by some years in professional services where I consulted for medical and biotechnology companies; my third career was as a health economist in 'Big Pharma' where I worked with teams in Europe, the U.S. and Asia to lobby national governments for funding for new medicines while completing my Master of Public Health.

My experience is certainly not unique, yet there remains a poverty of language to describe the mosaic of work experiences individuals have prior to their academic lives – for example, I have been variously and vaguely described as 'coming from industry' and a 'mature-aged' student' (despite being in my early thirties). We seem to occupy a liminal space between 'professional' and 'student'. More specifically, we serve as 'convenient capital' in which our work experiences are alternately leveraged in select institutional settings, and then dismissed in others. This selective valuation also manifests in ways I am

explicitly celebrated yet also 'put in my place', often at the same time. No credence was given to my previous professional work experience during the PhD application process, even though this same experience has made me a favoured research associate within the Faculty, specifically my 'client-facing' consulting experience and knowledge of public health settings. For instance, being able to communicate health research in a topical manner for 'lay' audiences led to me conducting a series of live radio interviews within my first six months of commencing study. My work experience, being technically varied yet also industry specialised, is considered by my supervisory team and other parts of the University to be a unique skillset. This has secured me positions on various projects which benefit me financially and through the connections made with senior faculty members. On the other, my experience is flattened and confined in an hourly pay structure determined by a binary measure of doctoral qualification – 'have' or 'have not'. In other public spaces such as seminars, I witnessed other students with similar work experience disparaged for their more 'prosaic' observations that related academic theory to the practicalities of industry. By comparison I have been explicitly praised for being more 'academically-minded' compared with other second-career doctoral students.

Ultimately, while my work experience is regarded for its production value, it was immediately discarded by the institution under a framework of work, health and safety. While employed as a sessional staff member, a recent workplace injury served to affirm the shifting nature of my position within an academic system. My attempts to access support for my injury as a professional were rebuffed and I was framed as a 'high maintenance' and 'unaware' student. University administrators took great pains to highlight 'complicated workplace procedures' which I 'may not understand' – despite having worked for a Fortune 500 company and with the highest levels of Federal bureaucracy, such as the Office of the Minister for Health. In the academic system, however, I was 'processed' as a student, meaning I became the *subject* of work safety discussions, rather than an equal party with whom to negotiate workable solutions, and denied the rights of a 'real professional' within the institutional system.

Exploring Second-Careers through Doctoral Disturbances

The above accounts highlight the ambivalent positions that second-careering individuals are beholden to during the doctoral candidature, both pro- and retrospectively. To us, they emphasise how the doctorate is not simply a programme of study which one comes through either before or after another site of work but is felt and experienced in and through our bodies (Stanley, 2015; Burford, 2015). Barnacle et al (2014) suggest that doctoral candidature, like academic practice more broadly, is as much an embodied process as a skill-based one. Given part of doctoral candidature is relinquishing one's own perceptions to be 'open' to new knowledge, systems and ways of knowing, it represents a space where individuals may be seen as more susceptible or porous to embodied effects. This is particularly the case for those coming from a markedly different context or be more profound for those planning to venture into different terrain in the future. In other words, the emphasis on transformation is likely to carry particular resonance for second-careerers.

From our analytical pastiches, we see three embodied 'disturbances' playing out that help us conceptualise prospective and retrospective second-careering in doctoral lives: relating, appropriating and biting back. As Tavuchis (1991, p. 12) suggests, disturbances help us see 'disparities, asymmetries, contrasts, oppositions, ambiguities and compensatory reactions that lay bare, if only fleeting, organizing principles'. Yet these are not simply processes or practice, they are people: embodied beings that are corporeally situated within particular contexts while required to navigate culturally mediated expectations of the body.

Relating

Immediately, we found that in curating each pastiche, positioning retrospective and prospective trajectories signalled various parameters of relating the troubled distinctions between academic and non-academic 'changes'. Here the disturbance lies in how to negotiate our personal ways of connecting our careers with instituted expectations of how we *should* relate as doctoral candidates.

In both cases, no definitive lines are drawn between being 'in' or 'out' of different occupational or sectoral spaces. Both prospective and retrospective pastiches refer to an intention to 'dabble between', which is often possible due to the constant need for collegial

and flexible labour in academia (in the form of reviewing or short-term teaching contracts, for instance). This ability for second-careerers to continue to traverse two occupational spaces provides an opportunity to experience different temporalities. For example, non-academic spaces can provide immediate feedback and provide a visible connection to practical impact, while life within the Academy affords moments to reflect and contribute to broader ideas or trajectories.

It is in this relating that second-careerers can find real pleasure. In lieu of institutional scaffolding to help articulate these connections, individual experiences in finding connections (deliberately or unexpectedly) are a creative and sometimes delightful process. For retrospective second-careerers, an interest in doing something 'different' was often marked out in discussion with supervisors and colleagues. This afforded particular skills that helped when undertaking reading and fieldwork, rather than feeling solely socialised into a lack of reflexive awareness within one institutional setting. For prospective second-careerers, this relating can bring a constant sensitivity around the writing of the thesis that is likely to extend beyond the eye of the supervisor or examiner.

At the same time, our accounts suggest that within the doctoral programme, 'right' and 'wrong' ways of relating are demarcated along institutional lines. One aspect is the care required in publicly declaring a 'critical eye', including when situating their past or possible experiences. This requires self-moderating contributions in public settings and 'reading' the room for receptivity about 'outside' experiences. Would these be greeted well or met with assumptions of naivety (about not 'really knowing academia') or slight irritation (being positioned as arrogant about our own knowledge of other sectors or workplace contexts)? This was often coupled with a feeling that doctoral students did not yet have the authority to voice an 'academically informed' opinion.

This reveals the expected embodied subject position of a doctoral candidate and the tensions in connecting to the past. The corporeal experience of undertaking the doctorate often reflects broader challenges that academics face, highlighted by Barcan (2013, p. 6) who asks if faculty 'as flesh-and-blood people can actually sustain the role of holding onto the past while embodying the future'. This past, of course, is the past of academic knowledge and one that often displaces one's own personal experiential learnings. As such, the undisturbing doctoral subject is situated as a neutral and muted body, a deferent sponge ready to soak up the knowledge and environment they study in,

or to pad out seminar rooms for guest speakers and absorb their ideas: rightly and wrongly, public relating in the Academy often advocates for passive relating, especially in the early years. By comparison, the experience of coming into a programme and immediately engaging in active relating broke the silence expected of a doctoral body.

Appropriating

The second mode of disturbance relates to the recalibration of an individual into circuits of value, allowing such trajectories to be institutionally utilised, and how this comes to be experienced by second-careerers. The prospective trajectory, while openly questioned by colleagues and peers, is latterly celebrated, while the retrospective careers become evidence of the doctoral programme attracting high calibre students. Important to these narratives, however, is that the institution (rather than their previous careers per se) frames this valuation in its own terms.

This appropriation happens in ways that may be seen as exploitative. On the one hand, such accounts can be read through a lens of how institutions identify surplus labour, highlighting the malleability of the current system to extract from experiences that they have not paid for, contributed towards, or even supported. In some ways this may be structurally embedded. For example, in some institutions, industry work experience is awarded zero points in a points-based system that evaluates doctoral candidates for scholarships and funding decisions. At the same time, however, business schools are keen to emphasise and seize upon the 'real world' experience and industry connections of their doctoral cohort in increasingly important discussions of research impact and to build networks for income generation opportunities. Second-careerers also help promote employability agendas that can be used to attract by current and future applicants to a doctoral programme or the face of branding about impactful research agendas.

Yet there is also a strong affective dimension that underpins the ways such bodies are also negated. Here we suggest an economy of feeling appears to be deliberately employed to create a precarious subject position of 'second-careerer' who is more an interloper rather than legitimate community member. This may also draw on broader technologies that academics experience, such as performance metrics or the other forms of unpaid labour that Gregg (2009) refers to as 'production cultures'. They amalgamate to situate second-careerers as 'lucky' to be (semi-) welcomed into the Academy.

Central to this appropriation is *simultaneously* claiming and dismissing past experience. The dynamic produced here is one that denies place and fixity; an ability to claim one's space as either valuable or not valuable. Our reflection is that being positioned between valuable and invaluable (as referred to in the pastiche above as liminality) produces the most significant disturbance: in some ways, a constant dismissal might be easier to tolerate since it does not cause the disorientation of not knowing how to act as a doctoral candidate. A cynical reading would be that such simultaneity produces a feeling of being 'out of place' that then lubricates the way for appropriation to take place unhindered by inconvenient assertions by individuals.

Betrayal and Biting Back

The final element considers the way that second-careering as an embodied process has the potential to disturb normative practices and expectations. This is through drawing on resources that help to question the lines of hierarchy, power and authority in doctoral-institutional relations. In other words, by virtue of not being fully inculcated into existing systems in the ways discussed above, they can provoke and disrupt the norms that are usually sedimented into organizing practices.

This manifests in slightly different ways for retrospective and prospective second-careering. For those projecting possibilities of moving away from academia, they find themselves in conversation about what elements of doctoral education have a value beyond the narrow silo of the Academy. From our reflections and woven into the pastiche, this appears to be more an affront for others, rather than the individual themselves, reminiscent of what Akerstrom (1991, p. 4) sees as 'betrayal as not honoring the we'. Here the projected move from academia is experienced as rejecting the collective socialization towards an academic post, exposing the assumed trajectory as not the only path, nor even the best one. In choosing to think otherwise and 'desert' this path, the value of that trajectory itself is brought into question by those around us.

By comparison, retrospective second-careering presents the opportunity to call on resources that question current practices in a wholly different way. The past lives of these individuals disturb conventional hierarchies and notions of doctoral candidates as a tabula rasa upon which to imprint institutional knowledge. For example, in the second pastiche, the author was able to mobilise skills developed from years of diplomatic but highly competent political e-mail exchange to simultaneously challenge and leverage the

'student' position to gain material support for her injury. Specifically, recognising that the student positionality also entails pastoral care responsibilities for University administrators, the author used this and her knowledge of workplace health and safety to compel administrators over a period of months to provide a meaningful solution to her workplace injury.

In both cases, the responses suggest a desire – perhaps even an anxiety – to regulate doctoral bodies and render them compliant and nondisruptive. In the second pastiche, the injurious effects of this are not simply discursive, but etched on the body whereby the differentiation of bodies results in physical harm. While the harm of academic work is explored elsewhere (e.g. Gill, 2009), there is also the potency of 'calling out' negligent university behaviour based on experiences from other sectors. As our pastiche shows, just as the body may 'bite back' on being treated marginally by the institution, so too does the institution bite back through individualising and attributing disturbance to the body in question through situating *them* as the problem. While possible to resist, the efforts to do this are exhausting. For example, in the second pastiche, we hear of mobilising both knowledge and previous experience from previous workplace to consistently resist being 'put in her place' as a different/lesser organisational body compared to paid full-time faculty.

Conclusion

In this short chapter we have sought to reflect on some of the challenges that second-career doctoral students face. We view these reflections as only a partial insight into second-careers and doctoral candidature made through our own situated positionality in terms of our geographical position, as well as our relative privileged position of being English-speaking in English speaking institutions. We also note talking of 'second-careers' may itself be problematic, perhaps reproducing the lines drawn between academic and non-academic careers that are either out of touch with the ways current business scholars should think about their working lives, or not fully appreciating that crossovers have always been an important part of Business School trajectories.

That said, second-careerers, wherever they are situated in the Business School, present a particular kind of disturbing phenomenon. Here we consider 'disturbance' not as an individual problem, but more in its etymological sense as disrupting or interrupting

normative patterns of authority, power and hierarchy. Through this lens we suggest there are three takeaways that might help potential disturbances become less disturbing for all involved.

First, it is clear to us the embodied presence of prospective and retrospective second-careering exposes some of the normative mechanisms at play within doctoral education and socialisation within the Academy. We note that much of this may be inadvertent, the culmination of a number of voices or careless comments. However, we also recognise the need to be more reflective of the ways that keep individuals 'in their place' by rendering them always in danger of falling 'out of place' of immediate lines of power and authority. Just as this occurs in terms of gender, ethnicity or class, so should we be mindful of assuming a chrononormative and singular career trajectory whereby detractors are made to feel 'not quite right' in ways that are negating, anxiety provoking, or physically painful. We consider this particularly urgent against the backdrop of portfolio-based modern careers in which a job or singular vocation for life might be considered an anachronism – particularly for women who are more likely to experience a constellation of (unrecognised) career experiences. To move away from the problematisation of 'disturbing' second-careerers is needs explicit consideration from the Academy is needed in order to be far clearer about how these individuals might play an important strategic role in the present and future of scholarship.

Second, there needs to be clearer institutional lines surrounding who, when and under what conditions second-careerers are recognised. Repeatedly we heard about second-career PhD students constantly negotiating their positionality in a normative system that treats them as a buffet from which to 'pick and choose' their various selves for institutional benefit. Candidates are, in these instances, expected to resurrect or project these 'dead', possible or alternate selves (the 'competent professional'; 'industry codeswitcher'; 'academic ingenue') with varying benefits. Supervisors may also feel caught between institutional protocol and advocacy for their student or feel inadequately skilled to supervise in a way that utilises their past experiences or supports their future ambitions. Other supervisors may be less scrupulous and view second-careerers as a way of increasing their own reputation through networks or 'trophy' candidates alongside devaluing and dismissing the student's own trajectories and associated positions as fanciful or irrelevant to their current candidature.

Finally, and perhaps more optimistically, in meaningfully recognising prospective or retrospective second careers, there is an opportunity – to use business school parlance – to broaden the ‘value proposition’ of the Academy. This is particularly salient when considering mounting institutional imperatives surrounding research ‘impact’ and broader contemporary challenges in combatting misinformation and declining trust in institutions and expert opinion. Second-careerers sit at the intersection of the Academy and their chosen Other Career/s and represent a unique ‘diplomatic channel’ for hybrid careerists in Business Schools. We posit that formally and systematically recognising and honouring second career experiences requires a seismic shift in institutional strategy and material commitment to cultivate a legitimate (hybrid or second) career community and pathway; in the words of then U.S. Senator Biden: “don’t tell me what you value, show me your budget and I’ll tell you what you value”. Note that on a broader level, this may also carry consequences for how we view sources of knowledge and authority differently (including the quotations we use for inspiration in academic work for example).

In conclusion, it is not surprising that doctoral students have such experiences: disturbances often come from the margins, or those that are not fully inculcated into particular spaces but still have ‘skin in the game’ in terms of a lot to lose. Doctoral researchers not only invest years of their life for study, but often rely on the institution to provide financial support, are subject to systems of regulation that are highly subjective and often open to bias, such as candidature reviewers, and in many countries are situated in a grey area between fully recognised employees and fully recognised students, thus gaining the protective characteristics of neither group. Yet doctoral research can also be a fulfilling, validating, transformational and joyous experience: wouldn’t it be great if part of this positive experience was helping to shape the Academy of the future and finding an institution receptive to this? As Ahmed (2010, p. 32) suggests, ‘while you can cause disturbance, you can also turn disturbance into cause’. We would like to think that in being present in the Business School, second-careerers not only provide a valuable conduit for relating beyond the Academy, but also a foil through which internal and systemic flaws can be productively questioned.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2010) 'Creating Disturbance: Feminism, Happiness and Affective Differences'. In: Marianne Liljeström and Susanna Paasonen, eds. *Working with Affect in Feminist Readings: Disturbing Differences*. London: Routledge, pp. 31-44
- Akerstrom, M. (1991). *Betrayal and betrayers: The Sociology of Treachery*. Transaction Publishers.
- Barcan, R. (2013). *Academic life and labour in the new university: Hope and other choices*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Barnacle, R., & Dall'Alba, G. (2014). Beyond skills: Embodying writerly practices through the doctorate. *Studies in Higher Education*, 39(7), 1139-1149.
- Burford, J. (2015). "Dear Obese PhD Applicants": Twitter, Tumblr and the Contested Affective Politics of Fat Doctoral Embodiment. *M/C Journal*, 18(3): <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.969>.
- Gill, R. 2009. "Breaking the Silence: The Hidden Injuries of Neo-liberal Academia'. In Flood, R. & Gill, R. (Eds.) *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections*. London: Routledge
- Green, L. W. (2016). Turnstile careers between academia and practice. *Pedagogy in Health Promotion*, 2(4), 221-238
- Gregg, M. (2009). Learning to (love) labour: Production cultures and the affective turn. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 6(2), 209-214.
- Hughes, T., Bence, D., Grisoni, L., O'regan, N., & Wornham, D. (2011). Scholarship that matters: Academic–practitioner engagement in business and management. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 10(1), 40-57.
- Lam, A. (2020). Hybrids, identity and knowledge boundaries: Creative artists between academic and practitioner communities. *Human Relations*, 73(6), 837-863.
- Rynes, S. L., Giluk, T. L., & Brown, K. G. (2007). The very separate worlds of academic and practitioner periodicals in human resource management: Implications for evidence-based management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(5), 987-1008.
- Stanley, P. (2015). Writing the PhD Journey (s) An Autoethnography of Zine-Writing, Angst, Embodiment, and Backpacker Travels. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 44(2), 143-168.
- Smesny, A. L., Williams, J. S., Brazeau, G. A., Weber, R. J., Matthews, H. W., & Das, S. K. (2007). Barriers to scholarship in dentistry, medicine, nursing, and pharmacy practice faculty. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 71(5), doi: 10.5688/aj710591

Tavuchis, N. (1991). *Mea culpa: A sociology of apology and reconciliation*. Stanford University Press.

Muller-Camen, M., & Salzgeber, S. (2005). Changes in academic work and the chair regime: The case of German business administration academics. *Organization Studies*, 26(2), 271-290.

We agree with other commentators (e.g. Hughes et al., 2011) that 'relevance' should not be conflated with years of experience in the private, public or third sector beyond academic, but acknowledge it is often recognised as such.