


Morgan Richard Tsvangirai's career development from a psychobiographical approach



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This study uses the four-stage career model and social cognitive career theory to explore the career development of Morgan Richard Tsvangirai, a Zimbabwean trade unionist and political figure. Publicly available data were analysed, emphasising the impact of psychobiographies on career theories and the role of purpose in shaping careers.

Contribution: The study contributes to understanding significant individuals from non-Western-, Educated-, Industrialised-, Rich- and Democratic (non-WEIRD) contexts and how careerographies can enhance career theories and provide role models for underrepresented youths.

Keywords: Morgan Tsvangirai; careerography; psychobiography; Zimbabwe; non-WEIRD; career development.

Introduction

For years, Zimbabwe was a one-party nation as people considered going up against Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) suicidal (Magaisa, 2018; Smith, 2018). Tsvangirai, however, stood courageously against the rule of the ZANU-PF (Marongwe et al., 2022). Consequently, many considered him a symbol of resistance, hope, and the face of the struggle against the brutality of the ZANU-PF (Magaisa, 2018; Marongwe, 2022). In so many ways, his name from the 1990s became synonymous with Zimbabwe's opposition politics. As such, it is impossible not to mention Tsvangirai in any socio-political narrative in post-colonial Zimbabwe (Marongwe et al., 2022). His leadership inspired many Zimbabweans and opposition political parties in other African countries (Phiri, 2022). Given this, career counsellors can learn a lot from Tsvangirai's career development trajectory.

Studies have demonstrated that youth from disadvantaged backgrounds face career barriers and challenges, for example limited access to career education services, intrapersonal issues (e.g. lack of interest), poverty, internal conflicts (self-concept, self-efficacy), insufficient self-awareness, multiple experiences of discrimination based on socio-economic status, ethnicity, and gender discrimination (Albien & Naidoo, 2018; McMahon et al., 2008; Naidoo & Van Schalkwyk, 2021; Park-Taylor, et al. 2021). It is, therefore, important to study the lives of extraordinary individuals who have faced similar circumstances and understand how they navigated their career development. Tsvangirai was thus deemed appropriate for this study, given his background.

To understand Tsvangirai's career development, the researchers adopted a careerography approach, a subspeciality of psychobiography (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2021a, 2021b). Careerography uses a career development theoretical lens to examine a significant individual's work experiences and career life course (Mayer, 2019; Park-Taylor et al., 2021; Van Niekerk et al., 2019). Careerographies involve anchoring a study in a psychological theory and play an important role in developing and refining theories (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2021a, 2021b; Van Niekerk et al., 2019). The main aim of this study was thus to describe and interpret Tsvangirai's career development through the lens of the career development frameworks by Greenhaus et al. (2019) and the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent & Brown, 2006, 2008, 2012; Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002).

Careers and psychobiographical studies

Of late, several psychobiographical studies have been written. However, psychobiographies anchored in career development theories are limited (Mayer, 2019; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2021a, 2021b; Van Niekerk et al., 2019). Park-Taylor et al. (2021) argued that careers shape how we view ourselves and the world. Career development is profoundly complex (Cohen, 2003), and

career development theories simplify career behaviours to make them easier to understand (Albien & Naidoo, 2018; Lent et al., 2002). Career development theories thus give us a solid interpretive framework to understand better individuals' career behaviour, interests, satisfaction, motivations, and choices, as well as the contextual factors that directly or indirectly affect career outcomes or development (Mayer, 2019; Park-Taylor et al., 2021). Studying the career development of extraordinary individuals through career development theories allows us to validate or reframe current theories (Kovary, 2018; Park-Taylor et al., 2021; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2021a, 2021b; Van Niekerk et al., 2019).

Many youths from marginalised backgrounds still have limited access to occupational role models (Albien & Naidoo, 2018; McMahan et al., 2008) and are not well represented in the workplace (Maree, 2020, 2021; McMahan et al., 2008; Park-Taylor et al., 2021). Consequently, the career-related interests of youth are somewhat stereotypical, fluid, and narrow (Lent, 2013; Maree, 2020). Studying the career development of historically significant subjects from non-Western-, Educated-, Industrialised-, Rich- and Democratic (non-WEIRD) contexts allows us to understand better how we can use career development theories in career counselling sessions with people from disadvantaged backgrounds (Mayer et al., 2023; McMahan et al., 2008). Furthermore, Park-Taylor et al. (2021) state that the other benefits of a careerography include:

Learning diverse career theories in an applied case study format, enhancing career counselling skill development through training in in-depth interviewing, learning the importance of socio-cultural-historical context in understanding career and work patterns across time, promoting interdisciplinary scholarship with historians and sociologists, advancing methodological pluralism, and promoting multicultural and multilingual skill development. (p. 36)

Careerography can thus be a valuable tool in career education as it improves access to diverse career role models for underrepresented and marginalised youths (Park-Taylor et al., 2021; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2021a, 2021b). This study thus addressed the following questions: (1) How can we understand Tsvangirai's career development through the different stages of the career development frameworks by Greenhaus et al.? (2) What role did early and ongoing contextual influences play in Tsvangirai's career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career goals and behaviours?

Aims of the study

The aims of this study were fourfold: (1) to reconstruct and interpret Tsvangirai's career development through the lens of established theories of career development, that is, Greenhaus et al. (2019) and Lent et al. (1994, 2000, 2002); (2) to contribute towards studies focussing on career development of extraordinary individuals from a psychobiographical perspective (e.g. Bigony et al., 2021; Mayer, 2019; Park-Taylor et al., 2021; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2021a, 2021b; Van Niekerk et al., 2019); (3) to contribute to further developing and refining the career development theories (Park-Taylor et al., 2021; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2021a, 2021b); and (4)

to assess the applicability of the two theoretical models to Tsvangirai's career development.

Theoretical lens

While we need to understand the different career phases that Tsvangirai went through, it is also crucial to understand how early and contextual influences shaped his career development. The primary purpose of this study was to apply the career development theoretical models of Greenhaus et al. (2019) and Lent et al. (1994, 2000, 2002) as interpretive lenses to understand Tsvangirai's career development.

Greenhaus et al. (2019) career development model

Career development perspectives typically present a series of predictable stages linked to chronological age (Greenhaus et al., 2010). Greenhaus et al. (2019) career development model is based on the integration of work, family, and self-development dynamics. The authors also acknowledge that other factors, such as sociocultural background, gender, business dynamics, and globalisation, influence career development (Greenhaus et al., 2010, 2019). They identified the following four stages of career development: occupational and organisational choice (0–25 years), early career stage (25–40 years), middle career stage (40–55 years), and late-career stage (55-onwards) (Greenhaus et al., 2019). Unique developmental tasks, issues, and themes an individual goes through in their career development characterise these career stages (Greenhaus et al., 2010, 2019).

Social cognitive career theory

Lent et al. (1994, 2000, 2002), building upon the work of Bandura's (1986, 1999) social learning theory and Hackett and Betz's (1996) career self-efficacy theory, proposed the SCCT. Lent et al. postulated that the model comprises two primary components: early influences that act as a precursor of socio-cognitive variables and ongoing contextual influences that serve as deterrents, moderators, and direct career development facilitators. Researchers have emphasised the importance of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, personal goals, and socio-structural variables in career development (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019; Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002). Self-efficacy refers to people's evaluations of their ability to execute courses of action to achieve personal goals successfully. Outcome expectations refer to personal beliefs about the expected consequences of implementing particular behaviours (Bandura, 1986, 1999). Social Cognitive Career Theory postulates that self-efficacy and outcome expectations are important mediators between personal factors or inputs (e.g. ethnicity, race), background contextual factors (e.g. family influences, anticipated social support, expectations), and academic and career choice behaviours (Bandura, 1999; Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019; Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002). Bandura (1986, 1999) claimed that self-efficacy beliefs are primarily constructed and modified through four experiential sources: (1) personal performance accomplishments, (2) socially persuasive communication, (3) vicarious learning, and (4) physiological and affective states.

Greenhaus et al.'s and Lent et al.'s theories view career development as a life-long personal process. Both approaches address how the sense of self influences career decision-making. Both the theories place emphasis on developmental stages and how various factors impact career decisions. These theories, however, pose two different questions: Greenhaus et al. (2019) – what developmental tasks, themes, and issues do individuals go through in different career development phases? Lent et al. (1994, 2000, 2002) – what factors shape people's social cognitions throughout their lives? Greenhaus et al. (2019) view career development as a progression through different stages influenced by various factors. Lent et al. (1994, 2000, 2002) elaborate on individual developmental stages and how early and ongoing learning experiences influence career self-efficacy, behaviours, and outcome beliefs. The two theories offer a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between individual development and career decision-making across an individual's lifespan.

Brief history of Zimbabwe (1930–2000)

Zimbabwe, formerly known as Southern Rhodesia, is a former British colony and a landlocked Southern African country. In order to gain its independence, the country went through different violent struggles, for example Anglo-Ndebele War (Ndebele uprising) I and II (1893–96), Ndebele-Shona uprising, commonly referred to as the First Chimurenga (War) (1896–97), Second Chimurenga nationalist liberation struggle (the 1960s and 1970s), and the Third Chimurenga land reform programme initiated by the ZANU-PF in the early 2000s (Chung, 2005; Tekere, 2007).

The 1930s to 1960s saw the growth of black opposition, resulting in the formation of two nationalist parties (i.e. ZANU and Zimbabwe African People's Union [ZAPU]) towards colonial rule (Sachikonye, 1997, 2004). In the mid-1960s, the liberation struggle claimed thousands of lives and traumatised and displaced many others. The colonial regime utilised violence and other forms of coercion, for example detention, torture, and killings, to block independence (Sachikonye, 2004). In 1980, Robert Mugabe and ZANU won the election, and Mugabe became the first prime minister of independent Zimbabwe (Tekere, 2007). Post-independence, however, nationalists also utilised violence and intimidation to mobilise supporters and hinder democratic processes (Ellert, 1989; Sithole, 1999). Consequently, Zimbabwean political culture has been ingrained with violence post-independence (Alexander, 2000; Sachikonye, 1997, 2004).

In 1982, Mugabe and ZANU accused the ZAPU leader, Joshua Nkomo, of wanting to overthrow the government (Kriger, 2005; Sachikonye, 2004). Subsequently, one of the bloodiest atrocities (commonly referred to as Gukurahundi) perpetrated by the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade occurred between 1982 and 1987, claiming thousands of lives (Alexander, 2000; Chan & Gallagher, 2017; Kriger, 2005; Sachikonye, 2004). It ended with signing of a unity agreement

between Mugabe and Nkomo to form ZANU-PF. This is a typical example of the extent to which the nationalist party could go to consolidate power. Other political parties were formed but failed to oppose ZANU-PF because of intimidation of voters pre- and post-elections, violence against opposition leaders and supporters, and vote-rigging (Dorman, 2003; Muzondidya, 2009; Phiri, 2022; Sachikonye, 1997, 2004). Consequently, Mugabe never lost an election until 2000.

On the other hand, Zimbabwe did not have strong trade unions post-independence (Alexander, 2000; Yeros, 2013). The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) was formulated after the merger of federations into one body (Raftopoulos & Sachikonye, 2001). The ZCTU and ZANU-PF had a close relationship as a relative of Mugabe, Albert Mugabe, was the organisation's secretary general (Sachikonye, 1997). In 1987, ZCTU stressed its independence from ZANU-PF. However, the country was already facing high unemployment, inflation, and maldistribution of wealth (Phiri, 2022; Sithole, 1999). The University of Zimbabwe students led the first mass movement against the government. They protested against corruption, Mugabe's plan for a one-party state, and his proposed shift to a neo-liberal programme (Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, ESAP) in 1988 (Sachikonye, 2004). As the Secretary-General (SG) of the ZCTU, Tsvangirai supported the mass movement and was detained for 6 weeks. In the 1990 general elections, the ZCTU did not endorse any party favouring multiparty democracy. In 1997, ZCTU organised stay-aways or protests and poor governance by the ruling party as the country's currency, stock market, and economy all crashed (Marongwe, 2022). Notably, the ZCTU was now at the centre of the political movement, resulting in the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. In February 2000, the MDC and the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) defeated the government in a referendum for a proposed constitutional reform bill (Magaisa, 2018). It was the first time that Mugabe lost a referendum, and such an achievement showed that Mugabe and ZANU-PF could be defeated (Magaisa, 2018).

Brief personal and career sketch of Tsvangirai (1952–2018)

Unless otherwise specified, this section relies mainly on Tsvangirai's autobiography, *Morgan Tsvangirai: At the Deep End* (Tsvangirai & Bango, 2011).

School years

Tsvangirai was born in 1952 in a rural Zimbabwean area. From age 12, he grew up in a country going through a civil conflict called the Rhodesian Bush War or Second Chimurenga or Zimbabwe War of Independence, which ended in 1979. Tsvangirai was the firstborn of nine siblings. He was born to Lydia and Dzingirai-Chibwe Tsvangirai. Although he was born in a low socio-economic class, he grew up in a consistently caring and loving family. His

mother was the primary caregiver, while his father travelled within Zimbabwe and to South Africa, searching for work opportunities. His parents struggled with the pressures of poverty because of limited formal education.

In 1959, he started his schooling journey. Tsvangirai attended catholic public schools throughout his education (Hudlestone, 2008; Mashakada, 2019). His education was marked by travelling and staying with relatives to get an education in the initial stages of his schooling career. Between 1964 and 1965, he had to move between families, schools, religious settings, and districts. In 1964, Tsvangirai witnessed one of his teachers being assaulted by the police. In the following year, 1965, another teacher taught the class about the disadvantages of colonialism and raged against the Ian Smith regime.

In 1968, Tsvangirai enrolled at a same-sex boarding school, where he met people from other areas other than his hometown. He was at this school for 2 years, actively participating in extra-curricular activities such as debating, science experiments, and other school competitions. Being the firstborn and having several younger siblings, Tsvangirai had to plead with his poverty-stricken father to continue with his schooling. In 1970, he enrolled for another 2 years of high school and successfully passed ordinary-level examinations after four high school years. In high school, he was exposed to various sources which further informed him about history, politics, information, and current affairs.

Consequently, more exposure enhanced his knowledge of political issues, the emergence of independent, black-ruled African states, and the intricacies of racial discrimination against black advancement. As his understanding improved, he became more interested in politics and societal issues. However, he could not pursue this interest as he wanted to help his parents provide for his siblings. His father also pressured him to search for employment soon after schooling.

Trade unionist career

In 1972, Tsvangirai's career began as a sweeper and trainee in a small family textile company. His career as a trade union activist commenced in 1973 when he listened to a veteran trade unionist addressing a union meeting and decided to join a trade union as a budding trade unionist. In 1973, he became the family's sole breadwinner as his father retired. Consequently, he had to put professional and personal growth on hold as he helped his family. His involvement in trade union activities increased when he started working as a mine operator in 1975. He became the secretary of the ZANU-PF's local structure and led the local branch of the mineworker's union. Like many other black men of his era, Tsvangirai was prepared to die for Mugabe, a hero who helped the country achieve black majority rule in 1980 (Smith, 2018). He was later elected to be the second vice-president of the Associated Mine Workers Union of Zimbabwe (AMWUZ) in 1983, and in 1985, he was elected to be the first vice-president

of AMWUZ. As his trade union activities increased, he terminated his employment in 1986 as a general foreman to focus on his trade union activities.

Tsvangirai progressed through the ranks within the trade union, which saw him becoming the Secretary General (SG) of the largest and most influential trade union in the country, ZCTU, in 1988. He also became the SG of a regional trade union, the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC), representing all the major trade union federations in the The Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1993. As Zimbabwe's living and working conditions deteriorated, the ZCTU unceasingly confronted and challenged Mugabe and ZANU-PF's economic policies. To this end, Tsvangirai was imprisoned, humiliated, and beaten up by security forces as the government now regarded him and the ZCTU as enemies.

Political career

In 1998, Tsvangirai was appointed chairman of the NCA, a civil society formed to challenge perceived arbitrary changes to the Lancaster House Constitution by Mugabe and ZANU-PF (Mashakada, 2019; Sachikonye, 2004). The formation of the NCA was another turning point in Tsvangirai's career, as he had moved from shop floor politics to political opposition politics (Marongwe, 2022). It became apparent that there was a need for a political party to address the socio-political and economic fundamentals not only for the workers but for all Zimbabweans. An opposition political party, the MDC, was formed in 1999, with Tsvangirai being the inaugural leader. Under his leadership, the MDC performed commendably well in the local government and the parliamentary and presidential elections it participated in between 2000 and 2018 (Marongwe & Mawere, 2016; Marongwe et al., 2022). However, his leadership was put under scrutiny by his members. He has been accused of undemocratic tendencies, including his long-serving party presidency, unilateral appointments, abuse of office, autocracy, and womanising (Marongwe et al., 2022). Consequently, in 2005, a group of intellectuals, with Tsvangirai being regarded as uneducated, led by Arthur Mutambara (a professor), formed another MDC to protest Tsvangirai's leadership.

From 2009 to 2013, Tsvangirai and his party formed a Government of National Unity (GNU) with ZANU-PF and the other MDC, which saw Tsvangirai becoming prime minister. Although an uncomfortable and uncertain time, the GNU is credited with bringing economic and social stability to the country, providing much-desired relief (Chan & Gallagher, 2017; Marongwe, 2022). Unfortunately, despite those achievements between the two parties, Tsvangirai lost the 2013 presidential elections. Compared to the previous elections, the 2013 elections were not marked with overt disruption and violence (Chan & Gallagher, 2017). Tsvangirai was arguably outsmarted by Mugabe, leading to the MDC losing the elections (Chan & Gallagher, 2017; Smith, 2018).

It is reported that after the 2013 election defeat, the MDC wanted a new president. However, that did not transpire. In 2016, Tsvangirai revealed that he had been diagnosed with colon cancer. Despite this revelation, he remained the President of the MDC until his death. Even with a terminal illness, he was re-elected as the presidential candidate for the MDC Alliance (an alliance of opposition political parties, especially the breakaway MDCs) in 2017 (AP Archive, 2017; SABC News, 2017). Tsvangirai died in February 2018, aged 66 years, before the 2018 presidential elections.

Notwithstanding his shortcomings, in so many ways, from the mid-1990s until his death, Tsvangirai's name became embalmed in Zimbabwe's opposition politics to ZANU-PF. Over time, he, too, became a controversial personality, politician, senior government official and leader of probably the country's largest post-independence opposition party (Marongwe et al., 2022). As such, it is hard not to mention Morgan Richard Tsvangirai's name in any socio-political narrative in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Much information has been written about Tsvangirai's life, from his trade union and political activism to the scandals of his marriages and sexual escapades after the death of his first wife. However, no studies explore his career development using a psychobiographical approach (Harry & Van Niekerk, 2023).

Methodology

Research design

Erikson's (1959/1980) suggestion that adults seek meaning through work and love or through 'successfully mastering intimacy versus isolation and generativity versus stagnation' remains true even today (Park-Taylor et al., 2021, p. 34). A careerography, as outlined by Park-Taylor et al. (2021), would thus 'focus on generating a deep understanding of an individual's striving for generativity throughout an individual's life, taking into account the role of familial, educational, cultural, psychosocial, and other considerations' (p. 36). A psychobiography was thus chosen to interpret and explain how the complex interaction of life experiences, specific life events, and historical and cultural contexts shaped Tsvangirai's career development (Bigony et al., 2021;

Elms, 1994; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2021; Schultz, 2005; Van Niekerk et al., 2019).

Sampling

Given his significant contributions to the Zimbabwean political landscape, Tsvangirai was purposively chosen as a subject for this study (Magaisa, 2018; Marongwe, 2022). He was influential in the workers' causes, opposition politics, gender discourses, and concepts of justice and social harmony (Magaisa, 2018; Marongwe, 2022). Notably, it is impossible not to mention Tsvangirai in any socio-political narrative in post-colonial Zimbabwe (Marongwe et al., 2022).

Data collection, processing, and analysis

Data for this study were gathered from a variety of publicly available primary sources (autobiography, i.e. Tsvangirai & Bango, 2011, as well as thoughts and reflected interviews he conducted, e.g. AP Archive, 2017; France 24 2017; SABC News, 2017) and secondary (i.e. Hudlestone, 2008; Magaisa, 2018; Marongwe et al., 2022; Oneko, 2018; Phiri, 2022; Smith, 2018) sources. Guidelines proposed by various psychobiographical researchers and methodologists were employed during the data processing (e.g. Mayer et al., 2023; Park-Taylor et al., 2021; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2021a, 2021b). Greenhaus et al. (2019) theoretical framework was used as a template for data collection (see Table 1). In the remainder of the section, the data are extracted and analysed through the theoretical lenses of Greenhaus et al. (2019) and Lent et al. (1994). While Lent et al. (1994) theory does not have different stages as the Greenhaus et al. (2019) theory, the two theories apply to Tsvangirai's career development as they show the chronological progression as well as the precursors, moderators, and facilitators or deterrents of his career development.

Chronologically tracing Tsvangirai's life allowed the author to explore the critical events and analyse them through the lenses of the two theoretical frameworks. Greenhaus et al. (2019) and Lent et al. (1994) are complementary as Greenhaus et al. focus on different stages of career

TABLE 1: Data processing and analysis matrix.

Variable	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Stage	Occupational and organisational choice	Early career: Establishment and achievement	Middle career	Late career
Age (Years)	18–30	25–45	40–60	55 onwards
Developmental tasks	Develop occupational self-image Assess alternative occupations Develop initial occupational choice Pursue necessary education Obtain job offer(s) from desired organisation(s)	Learn job Learn organisational rules and norms Fit into chosen occupation and organisation Increase competence Pursue career goals	Reappraise early career and early adulthood Reaffirm or modify career goals Make choices appropriate to middle adult years Remain productive at work	Remain productive in work Maintain self-esteem Prepare for effective retirement, both financially and mentally
Biographical and autobiographical data*	-	-	-	-

Source: Van Niekerk, R., Prenter, T., & Fouché, J.P. (2019). Doing psychobiography: The case of Christiaan Barnard. In S. Laher, S. Kramer, & A. Fynn (Eds.), *Transforming research methods in the social sciences case-studies from South Africa* (pp. 168–185). Wits University Press

* This row is reserved for the life history data related to the four stages.

development, and Lent et al. focus on self-efficacy and outcome expectations that influence career behaviours. A joint analysis enabled the author to understand Tsvangirai's career as a trade unionist and a political activist, illustrating how it emerged as a product of his socio-political-economic environment.

Ethical and quality criteria considerations

The researcher applied Ponterotto and Reynolds' (2017) ethical guidelines and Ponterotto's (2014) best practices for psychobiographical research. The considerations to safeguard ethical standards included exclusive reliance on publicly available data and handling the life history data with respect, objectivity, and empathy. Trustworthiness was used to enhance the consistency and reliability of the study (Creswell, 2013), and data triangulation, that is reliance on different data sources, was applied to enhance the study's rigour (Du Plessis, 2017). The author understood Tsvangirai's social and historical context to have an adequate frame of reference. Furthermore, as an African black male who grew up in the same environment as the subject, the author acknowledges that his identity and worldview may have impacted the data analysis and interpretations. This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Theory application

In this section, Tsvangirai's career development is described and interpreted through the theoretical lenses of Greenhaus et al. (2019) and Lent et al. (1994, 2000, 2002). Greenhaus et al. (2019) theory applies to Tsvangirai's career life chronologically. Lent et al. theory highlights the key events and experiences that may have impacted his trade union and political activist career. The author aimed to develop a narrative of his career development as he attempted to understand how career lives are constructed.

Occupational and organisational choice (1970–1977) – The mineworker

Tsvangirai was born in a poverty-stricken family in the Zimbabwean rural areas as the firstborn of nine siblings. His parents wanted Tsvangirai to get an education. Although the family lived in poverty, his father understood the importance of education and encouraged Tsvangirai to continue schooling. His father told him stories about black people he admired in other countries, such as teachers, clerks, and black persons in leadership positions. In 1970, Tsvangirai was still in high school, where he better understood history, politics, information, and current affairs. As a result, he developed an interest in political activism. He continued witnessing violence between the nationalist parties and the torturing of young black political activists, for example between ZAPU and ZANU, reading about young activists in neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Zambia, and Botswana, removal of black people from their ancestral lands by the colonisers. Unsurprisingly, despite all the chaos surrounding him, his family background substantially

affected his career development (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019; Lent, 2013).

Tsvangirai entered the organisational context soon after he completed high school in 1972. Several factors affected his career exploration, such as growing up in a rural area, living in poverty, limited opportunities for black people, and parental expectations of him as a firstborn (Lent & Brown, 2008, 2012). He did not get to explore different careers as he had to settle for work to assist his family financially. Tsvangirai could not choose career goals and personal values independent of his family (Erikson, 1959/1980). Tsvangirai's career choice arguably happened in 1973 when he joined a trade union as a budding trade unionist. The chosen career was consistent with his interests and values (Cohen, 2003; Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002). He, however, had to remain in the peripherals as he was more focussed on being the sole breadwinner of his family. Tsvangirai, as a budding trade unionist, had to learn how to converse with his employers, who were openly racist. During this period, he learned to persevere, be tolerant, and deal with people from diverse backgrounds.

In 1973, Tsvangirai remarked that he felt a 'whiff of independence' when his father retired and left him alone in another town (Tsvangirai & Bango, 2011, p. 77). This may suggest that he did not have a sense of independence from his father or family or could not view himself as a unique being (Erikson, 1959/1980). In 1975, after his siblings had completed high school and his promotion to general foreman, he became actively involved in trade unions and political activities. Tsvangirai became the secretary of ZANU-PF's local structures and was elected to lead the local branch of the mineworkers' union. Whereas it is expected that at this stage, most people explore a variety of vocational pursuits (Erikson, 1959/1980; Greenhaus et al., 2010, 2019), Tsvangirai, with a sense of independence, became absorbed in trade union activism.

Compared to the typical age range suggested by Greenhaus et al. (2019), Tsvangirai completed this stage earlier (aged 20 years) when he entered the organisational context. There was limited exploratory behaviour during this stage. Following the SCCT, this is the first evidence of the noticeable effects of early influences and ongoing contextual factors, for example gender role socialisation, family background, and gender role stereotyping, on career choices and implementation of actions (Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002). The contextual factors acted as moderators for the career behaviour shown by Tsvangirai at this stage (Lent & Brown, 2013). Tsvangirai's early interests in activism were bypassed by personal goals (providing for the family), self-efficacy (individual capabilities), and outcome expectations (i.e. monetary) (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019; Lent, 2013).

Early career stage: Establishment and achievement (1977–1997) – The trade unionist

His career as a trade union activist continued gaining momentum in his early career stages (Greenhaus et al., 2010,

2019). Tsvangirai was elected to lead the local branch of AMWUZ. At the same time, he was also the secretary of the ZANU-PF local structures. Tsvangirai recognised that he could contribute more through his involvement in trade union activities early in life. He embraced this by leaving the ZANU-PF structures and his employment as a mine worker, giving himself to trade union activities and learning more about trade unions. He established himself as a trade union activist in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa after he was elected the SG of the ZCTU and SATUCC (Greenhaus et al., 2010, 2019). During this period, he was exposed to the plight of workers and ordinary citizens. One could also argue that it was time he discovered his calling as an activist (Oneko, 2018).

In terms of his career development, it seems like his socialisation into the ZANU-PF structures and culture was limited as he left the political party (De Cooman et al., 2009; Saks & Gruman, 2011). On the other hand, he absorbed the values, internalised the culture and learnt the processes of trade unions, as shown by his commitment to their activities (Greenhaus et al., 2010, 2019). His early career stage was made up of acceptance by his colleagues, demonstrated by the elections he won in the trade union ranks (Greenhaus et al., 2010, 2019). He honed his empathy skills in the trade unions, mobilising people, conciliation, and bipartisanship. This stage was characterised by events such as being arrested for partaking in protests, unlawful detentions, death threats, ZCTU and government arguments, and rejection of the ZCTU by the ruling party (Magaisa, 2018; Marongwe, 2022; Tsvangirai & Bango, 2011). Nonetheless, Tsvangirai remained committed to sustaining his career as a trade union leader despite the challenges and several calls for the trade union to contest elections (Greenhaus et al., 2010, 2019).

Interestingly, of note was that other populist post-colonial African leaders, for example Presidents Kaunda (Zambia), Banda (Malawi), and Doe (Liberia), were voted out as people demanded greater respect for fundamental human rights and open societies. At the same time, trade unions and their leaders became more involved in political issues, for example Poland's Solidarity movement, Fredrick Chiluba (Zambia) and Chakufwa Chihana (Malawi) (Raftopoulos & Sachikonye, 2001). However, the ZCTU remained apolitical and established as a strong labour movement (Tsvangirai & Bango, 2011).

Tsvangirai's experiences in this stage partially align with the description proposed by Greenhaus et al. (2019). This stage had limited career exploration as he moved from political to trade union structures (an earlier stage activity). Findings indicate that Tsvangirai recognised his role as an activist in his early career stage. Subsequently, Tsvangirai and the trade unions had a sense of mutual acceptance as he sustained his involvement and commitment. In contrast, the trade union accepted him as a trusted and valued member (Greenhaus et al., 2019). He embraced this role by addressing employees' grievances as a trade union leader. Such self-transcendence gave him a sense of meaning and purpose (Frankl, 2014).

In accordance with the SCCT, early influences such as observing the use of violence and coercive tactics against opposition political leaders by ZANU-PF and the failure of trade union leaders who turned into politics (e.g. Chakufwa Chihana) may have influenced Tsvangirai's career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career behaviour, for example his choice to continue in the trade union ranks rather than join the political arena (Lent, 2013). His self-efficacy could have been high, given his role in trade unions. Yet, outcome expectations were low as he might have expected adverse reactions from the ruling party. Thus, Tsvangirai won several elections in the trade unions, which anchored his advancement and stimulated a sense of self-efficacy (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019; Lent, 2013; Lent & Brown, 2012).

Midcareer stage (1997–2007) – The politician

Tsvangirai's profile as a trade union activist continued gaining momentum in the mid-career stage. In 1998, Tsvangirai was the face of large-scale protests against the government. As the country's economy plunged and the ruling party refused to engage with ZCTU, Tsvangirai and the ZCTU leadership continued developing a serious interest in politics (Marongwe et al., 2022). In the same year, he was chairman of a civil society coalition that sought constitutional reforms in Zimbabwe, that is the NCA. The civic organisation defeated the government's proposed constitutional reforms (Dorman, 2003). In 1999, Tsvangirai played a significant role in forming the MDC and was subsequently elected as the party's President (Magaisa, 2018; Mashakada, 2019). Tsvangirai remarked, 'I went into politics not as a career choice but in response to the burning desire for change from a nation already in a crisis of governance and as a patriotic necessity' (Oneko, 2018). The success of NCA in 2000 was significant as it showed that Mugabe and ZANU-PF could be defeated as it was the ruling party's first time losing an election (Dorman, 2003; Magaisa, 2018). In 2000, the MDC contested their first parliamentary (general) elections and won 45.6% of the vote compared to 47.2% of the ZANU-PF.

Consequently, this became the first substantial opposition to the ZANU-PF regime. Although the party did well in the elections, Tsvangirai failed to win a seat in parliament as he lost the elections. However, the results were overturned by Judge James DeVitte as the victor was accused of using violence and intimidation to win the election against Tsvangirai (Meldrum, 2001). The presidential campaign of 2002 was characterised by violent land occupation strategies, widespread deployment of terror through ZANU-PF's youth militia, restructuring of the judiciary, persistent threats from the ruling party leaders and war veterans against the citizenry, restrictions on independent media, ZANU-PF's control of the media (Marongwe, 2022; Sachikonye, 2004; Smith, 2018). Tsvangirai and the MDC faced a herculean task in the face of the challenges and obstacles the ruling party created. An army chief, General Zvinvashe, is quoted stating that the military will 'not accept, let alone support or salute anyone with a different agenda that threatened the very

existence of our sovereignty, our country and our people', and General Chiwenga also stated 'we will not support anyone other than President (Robert) Mugabe, who has sacrificed a lot for this country' (Musavengana, 2009). Such statements were meant to instil fear in Tsvangirai and the electorate. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Tsvangirai, as the leader of the MDC, endured several unlawful detentions, beatings, torture, and ridicule at the hands of Mugabe and ZANU PF.

Thus, the pleas of the workers and the ordinary citizens and the successes of the ZCTU, NCA, and MDC stimulated him to reaffirm and modify his career goals and choices despite the threats (Greenhaus et al., 2019). Tsvangirai maintained productivity during this career stage and showed no signs of checking out (Greenhaus et al., 2019). It is possible that his self-concept precipitated a change in career path from trade union activism to political activism (Barclay et al., 2011; Donohue, 2007).

As SCCT predicts, Tsvangirai's career self-efficacy was enhanced by encouragement from others, for example becoming the SG of ZCTU. Interestingly, in the early 1990s, he was verbally encouraged to enter the political discourse officially. Although there was excitement for change, there was also anxiety about the potential outcomes given the history of opposition political parties. Consequently, he initially did not engage in politically related career activities (Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002).

Interestingly, despite the certain negative outcome expectations, in 1999, Tsvangirai chose to lead an opposition political party instead of avoiding that career choice. Through personal belief and perseverance, he could embrace this role as a political leader. As SCCT predicts, this could suggest that Tsvangirai's career self-efficacy was enhanced by his previous accomplishments in the trade unions, the success stories of trade unions in other countries, encouragement from others who believed he had the ability, and the excitement of the possibility of a democratic country (Lent, 2013, Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent et al., 2002). Although he faced adverse conditions as an opposition leader, he found a purpose that motivated him to persevere in his leadership role (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019).

Late career stage (2007–2018) – Staying committed

As in the previous career stage, Tsvangirai remained committed and a productive contributor (Greenhaus et al., 2019) to fighting for democracy by campaigning and contesting in elections despite the obstacles. Arguably, his productivity gained momentum as he had more responsibilities, including leading the opposition party and culminating with being the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe in 2009. However, his love life may have threatened to overshadow his achievements in his political career (i.e. the maintenance of dignity; Greenhaus et al., 2019). In 2017, although there were controversies around

his love life, uncertainties about his health, and his leadership abilities, Tsvangirai was elected to lead the MDC Alliance (an opposition coalition). His colleagues continued viewing him as a productive contributor to the cause of democracy.

In January 2018, a month before his demise, he stated that younger generations had to take up the leadership (France 24, 2017; SABC News, 2017). However, no evidence suggests that Tsvangirai was planning on retiring or handing over power to another person. He described himself as a 'symbol of resistance, of democratisation in this country' and said that 'sustaining that brand is very, very difficult' (AP Archive, 2017). Tsvangirai said that Mugabe used to be his role model, and like any other political leader, he had grand ambitions. Considering that he died while still the opposition party president, did he somehow also have ambitions to remain the party's President for an extended period like his 'role model' Mugabe? If he did not have a terminal illness, did he have plans to hand over power to other party members? Would he act as a mentor to other people if he did not have a terminal illness? Considering that Tsvangirai had been an activist for an extended period, it is possible that he felt that leaving his position would have been akin to leaving his self-concept or identity behind (Mollica, 2006).

Tsvangirai was confident in his sense of purpose and meaning even in the face of death (Erikson, 1959/1980; Frankl, 2014). Conversely, this may suggest that Tsvangirai lacked a sense of fulfilment with his successes as an opposition leader (Erikson, 1959/1980). Tsvangirai likely experienced despair over the missed opportunities and failures he experienced in his career. In 2017, Tsvangirai remarked that it was impossible to oust Mugabe democratically after a successful coup by Emmerson Mnangagwa and the military (SABC News, 2017). This may suggest that he reflected on the failures and missed opportunities of removing Mugabe. Hence, the disinclination to disengage from his role. Thus, Tsvangirai's experiences and the Greenhaus et al. (2019) model are misaligned.

Nonetheless, Tsvangirai's contributions towards the cause of the workers, opposition politics, governance, gender discourses and concepts of peace, justice, democracy, and social harmony are unquestionable. Tsvangirai's self-efficacy was developed and strengthened by his activism achievements as a trade union and political activist where other people had failed. Tsvangirai had developed a strong career self-efficacy, which promoted persistence despite setbacks and obstacles.

Discussion

In this careerography, the researcher attempted to frame, understand, and interpret Tsvangirai's career development through established career development theories. Examining Tsvangirai's career development from multiple theoretical lenses promoted a more holistic understanding of his trajectory (Ponterotto & Reynolds, 2013, 2017). By conceptualising

Tsvangirai's career development through the career development theory and the SCCT model, the important and key events that unlocked his career as a trade union and political activist were noted. From Greenhaus et al. (2019) career development framework, it is evident that Tsvangirai's career development significantly matches the proposed model. From the SCCT lens, career self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations and personal goals played a significant role in personal agency, career behaviour and career development (Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002; McMahan et al., 2008). Tsvangirai's career development was encompassed by barriers from childhood until late adulthood. Despite the likelihood of experiencing adverse outcomes, he had a higher interest in the area and wilfully acted to enact his choices (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019; Cohen, 2003; Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2002). Arguably, will to meaning or a sense of purpose and hope motivated him to engage in these activities despite the adverse outcomes (Frankl, 1988, 2014; Maree, 2021).

His career was imbued with passion and a sense of meaning and purpose. Unquestionably, his values, career self-efficacy, self-transcendence, and attitude in the face of adversity energised his career development (Frankl, 1988, 2014). Career counselling practices should thus integrate meaning and purpose in their models, given the current socio-economic context characterised by uncertainty and rapid changes (Maree, 2020). Baumeister (1991) described meaning as a 'mental representation of possible relationships among things, events, and relationships' (p. 15). Meaning thus helps people to make sense of their experiences. Research has shown that a sense of meaning is important, especially when faced with adverse life events (Frankl, 1988, 2014; Maree, 2020). In a world of work filled with complexity, chaos, and constant uncertainty, career interventions and practices should explore the search for meaning and existential themes to help clients 'until they find personal meaning and authentic existence with their vocation choice' (Cohen, 2003, p. 207).

It is difficult to state what he would have done next if he had not been diagnosed with a terminal illness, given that he was reluctant to disengage from his leadership role. As highlighted by other authors, this study calls for more studies on the career development of extraordinary individuals, especially from non-WEIRD contexts, to reframe, modify and formulate suitable career development models. Further studies are also needed to understand how purpose and meaning impact career development in the face of adversity. Future studies can also use multiple research methods (e.g. idiographic and nomothetic) and apply multiple theoretical lenses to have a holistic understanding of extraordinary individuals and their career development.

Conclusion

Given Tsvangirai's parents and childhood experiences, one could assume he was destined to be an ordinary worker. His career trajectory shows success takes more than family background, early exposure, and ongoing contextual influences. It was the sense of purpose and meaning that had

a profound impact on his career development. Arguably, the findings further indicate that his own needs did not overly absorb Tsvangirai; if he had been, he would not have risked his life by accepting to be the opposition leader. Many Zimbabweans became hopeful because of Tsvangirai's courage, compassion, determination, empathy, resilience, and unwavering dedication. To this end, Tsvangirai was a social reformer throughout his career. He took up his role with great conviction and relentlessly pursued his ideals and values. Tsvangirai was a driving force behind the introduction of opposition political parties in Zimbabwe, the fight for freedom of expression, the rule of law, constitutionalism, and the incipient culture of corruption. His work as an activist should inspire many others to remain steadfast despite overwhelming oppression and tragedies.

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Data availability

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