Psychological contracts: back to the future

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SPOTLIGHT ON TIME

Chronological Time

Work lives are marked by meetings, schedules, and deadlines, all influenced by the objective passing of 'clock' time (Bluedorn & Den- hardt, 1988). The dynamic aspects of time (e.g., duration, pattern, sequences) and timing of events shape employee attitudes and behaviors toward the organization (Núñez & Cooperrider, 2013; Shipp & Cole, 2015). Despite its ubiquitous nature, issues of time in the workplace, and the temporal nature of employment relationships specifically, remain sorely under-researched, creating a strong need for impactful research on psychological contracts as they are related to time. By acknowledging and incorporating the role of time in theory, we are able to explore the emergence of, or change in, the psychological contract and its antecedents/consequences, the stability (or lack thereof) of psychological contract breach reactions, the rate of change in psychological contract breach reactions over short- and long-term time-lags (e.g., minutes, hours, days, or weeks), and the duration of these effects (e.g., immediate, delayed, or lingering), in both design and analytic approach. Several chapters argued that the psychological contract is a dynamic construct which is formed, maintained, disrupted, and repaired over time (most often with reference to the phase-based model of psychological contracts by Rousseau, Hansen, & Tomprou, 2018 and the post-violation model by

Tomprou, Rousseau, & Hansen, 2015). Moreover, some earlier psychological contract work (e.g., Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993; Sels, Janssens, & Van den Brande, 2004) recognizes that 'time' can be conceptualized as an underlying property of the psychological contract as a whole. Nonetheless, we have limited empirical understanding of the psychological contract as a time-based process (for a few examples, see Conway & Briner, 2002; Griep & Vantilborgh, 2018a, 2018b; Ng, Feldman, & Lam, 2010; Solinger, Hofmans, Bal, & Jansen, 2016; for a general critique see Hansen & Griep, 2016). Most empirical work on the psychological contract and its underlying mechanisms has been cross- sectional, and traditional longitudinal studies often failed to consider time-related mechanisms in psychological contract processes (see Roe, 2008 for a critique of traditional longitudinal studies for studying temporal processes). Thus our understanding is based on a snippet of the time frame characterizing the employee–employer relationship, one that most often only focuses on the employee's perspective (for a critique and review of mutuality and reciprocity see Chapter 2 by Schalk and De Ruiter). Concomitantly research designs and analytical methods typically used in contemporary psychological contract research presume linearity (for a few exceptions see Solinger et al., 2016 and several chapters in this book), as represented in associations between psychological contract breach and negative emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral reactions (for meta-analyses see Bal, De Lange, Jansen, & van der Velde, 2008; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007).

The historically narrow and simplistic approach to studying the relationships between psychological contract breach, violation feelings, and employee reactions is problematic for multiple reasons. First, emotions, attitudes, and behaviors are interrelated and potentially intensify each other over time (e.g., Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005; Mitchell & James, 2001). Thus, capturing only current associations impedes our understanding of how interpretations and responses to the psychological contract are formed, maintained, disrupted, and repaired over time. Second, by ignoring the temporal context of psychological contract breach, violation feelings, and employee reactions, we fail to account for how psychological contract phases (initial formation, ongoing mainten- ance, post-violation adjustment) influence how employees experience organizational events and perceived psychological contract breaches and the resulting emotions, attitudes, and behaviors (for a general critique, see Kozlowski, 2009). Failure to account for phases and related temporal context is grounded in the false assumption that employees react in exactly the same way and with the same intensity to events and cues that give rise to psychological contract breach regardless of context. This

simplistic depiction of reality ignores how perceptions of psychological contract breach are situated in time and in relation to past perceptions (e.g., the history of the employee–employer relationship or previous employment relationships; Griep & Vantilborgh, 2018b; Sherman & Morley, 2015) and future expectations of breach (Rousseau et al., 2018). Finally, it is widely assumed that relationships among relevant variables are static, meaning that a given variable holds the same relationship with the psychological contract over time (for an elaborate critique see Hansen & Griep, 2016). We note that an important predictor at one point in time may, in fact, be an important consequence at another. This static 'antecedent–consequence' way of thinking ignores the conceptualization of psychological contract as a dynamic construct where the role and relevance of variables may change depending on the phase the relation-ship is in (see the phase-based model of psychological contracts by Rousseau et al., 2018). For instance, promises may not matter to an employee who has settled into a comfortable and predictable period of exchange with the employer, whereas they might matter a great deal to an employee who has just experienced a significant psychological contract breach and is working to repair the employment relationship (see Montes & Zweig, 2009), underscoring the importance of salience of promises and obligations in the psychological contracting process. Moreover, as employees move through their careers (e.g., receiving more responsibil-ities) and family situation (e.g., having children), other promises or obligations may become more salient in line with new career or life roles. These criticisms indicate that time plays a critical role in shaping individuals' experiences in organizations. Several chapters (see Chapter 10 by Tomprou and Bankins; Chapter 12 by Achnak and Hansen; Chapter 13 by Rigotti and de Jong; Chapter 14 by Wiechers, Coyle-Shapiro, Lub, and ten Have) have already referred to the recent theoretical advance- ments in psychological contract theory (the phase-based model of psychological contracts by Rousseau et al., 2018 and/or the post-violation model by Tomprou et al., 2015) and have proposed new and exciting methodological advancements (see Chapter 15 by Weinhardt, Griep, and Sosnowska; Chapter 16 by Vantilborgh; Chapter 17 by Hofmans and Vantilborgh; Chapter 18 by de Jong and Rigotti; Chapter 19 by Bankins) to recognize that different psychological contract processes operate at distinct times and unfold at various speeds over the duration of the employment relationship. These recent theoretical developments (Rous- seau et al., 2018; Tomprou et al., 2015) and the numerous chapters in this book have paved the way for exciting new research opportunities. In what follows, we formulate what we believe to be three 'streams of research questions and propositions' that can promote a more dynamic perspective

of psychological contracts to better approximate real employment relationships as experienced on a day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month basis, ultimately strengthening the impact of psychological contract research on organizational practice, and providing managers with hands-on knowledge on how to build stronger employment relationships with their employees.

The first question is 'What variables and processes operate during distinct periods of time or different psychological contract phases?', as outlined in the novel phase-based model of psychological contracts (Rousseau et al., 2018). For example, it would be interesting to explore whether changes in employee reactions co-vary with significant shifts in psychological contract phases, and whether these co-varying changes can be predicted based on characteristics of, for example, employees' breach perceptions. Minor breaches or breaches with low-intensity negative emotions are less likely to stimulate long-lasting change in employee reactions. That is, although there might be a minor increase in negative attitudinal or behavioral reactions following the breach, individuals will quickly settle back into their pre-breach attitudes or behaviors. In contrast, significant breaches associated with strong-intensity negative emotions are more likely to shift employees from the maintenance phase into the repair phase. Thus, we expect that employee reactions will co-vary with this shift from having a steady and reliable psychological contract into one that is characterized by low trust, distrust (see Coyle- Shapiro and Diehl, 2018), cynicism (see Griep & Vantilborgh, 2018a), and intense negative emotions. Such reactions serve as the catalyst of long-lasting change in employee reactions. For example, there might be a sudden sharp increase in negative employee attitudes and behaviors, lasting for several weeks or months, making these employees more sensitive to future breaches and likely to increase their baseline levels of negative attitudes and behaviors. For instance, the negative effects of psychological contract breach on trust appear to be long-lasting, lending support to Ballinger and Rockmann's (2010) idea that negative anchoring events provide a frame of reference through which future events are interpreted. Empirical evidence suggests that breach in the previous employment generates mistrust that is carried over to the subsequent employer (e.g., Pugh, Skarlicki, & Passell, 2003). Going a step further, in the case of dissolution of the psychological contract, employees fail to return to the maintenance phase and have a functional psychological contract to rely on. Instead they are likely to sustain their negative attitudes (e.g., distrust) or behaviors (e.g., counterproductive work behav- ior), ultimately eroding their relationship with their employer.

The second research question is 'How does time influence the emergence of perceptions of psychological contract fulfillment, breach, and violation, and does the nature of the obligation play a role?' Although we have enough research evidence indicating that psychological contract breach occurs when an employee perceives a discrepancy between what the employer was obligated to provide and what was delivered (for meta-analyses see Bal et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2007; see also Morrison & Robinson, 1997), we have a poor understanding of factors that elicit perceptions of discrepancies. For example, the phase-based model of psychological contracts (Rousseau et al., 2018) suggests that the length of time it takes to fulfill particular obligations can impact the extent to which one may notice a discrepancy in one's psychological contract, and the length of time it takes to fulfill particular obligations may also impact the intensity of reactions following a perceived breach. We note that some obligations (e.g., receiving a promotion) take longer to fulfill than other obligations (e.g., receiving respectful treatment). Based on the work of Blount and Janicik (2001) people are known to establish 'reference points' for when particular outcomes should be realized based on societal norms and mutual agreements, and, when time delays exist in meeting temporal expectations, such as when obligations will be fulfilled, a variety of negative reactions ensue (e.g., anger, Blount & Janicik, 2001; frustration, Amsel, 1992). Additionally, calls in the literature highlight the need for more research around the impact of unmet expectations in employee relationships (e.g., Nienaber, Romeike, Searle, & Schewe, 2015). Further, if we consider the inherent temporal nature of proto- typical psychological contract types (relational and transactional; Rous- seau & McLean Parks, 1993), we can try to identify timing expectations for the fulfillment of diverse relational and transactional obligations and test timing hypotheses concerning the onset of breach perceptions and the accompanying employee reactions. Specifically, relational psychological contracts are relationship-oriented, highly subjective, flexible, and *long- lasting*, whereas transactional psychological contracts are described as being economically focused, tangible, specific, static, and *short-term* in nature. Thus the onset of breach perceptions is potentially more likely and more frequent for transactional, as opposed to relational, psycho- logical contracts (although a cross-sectional study, Raja, Johns, & Ntalianis, 2004, hints toward this argument). Given the long-term nature and subjectivity inherent in relational contracts, people are more likely to believe that relational obligations will be fulfilled at some point in the future and therefore be less likely to adjust their emotions, attitudes, or behaviors immediately following a deviation from such obligations (Rousseau, 1990). In contrast, the short-term focus and explicit nature of

transactional obligations implies that deviations are more salient, leading to adjustments in emotions, attitudes, and behaviors in the immediate aftermath of a deviation from these obligations (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994).

Our last research question is 'What is the role of time in predicting recovery from psychological contract breach and does the nature of the obligation matter in overcoming violation?' In line with the theoretical tenets of the post-violation model (Tomprou et al., 2015), recovery from a severe instance of psychological contract breach (i.e., violation) occurs when the perceived discrepancy between the organization's obligation to provide a certain inducement and the extent to which the organization actually delivers that inducement is addressed and the organization takes steps to mitigate the employee's negative feelings that are associated with the violation. The post-violation model stipulates that the speed of violation resolution has implications for the type of psychological contract outcome (i.e., thriving, reactivation, impairment, succumbing) attained—swifter organizational responsiveness predicting shorter recov- ery times and more favorable employee outcomes. However, the exact length of this recovery process may depend on a number of different factors such as the type of obligation (i.e., relational versus transactional) breached and the importance individuals attach to the breached obligation (see Montes & Irving, 2008). Recovery may be much slower and negative employee reactions could be more likely to linger for relational violations. Alternatively, and in direct contrast to the above, a trans- actional violation—owing to the fact that it is a core part of the psychological contract and a tangible obligation—could have a much more profound effect on the level of trust and/or trustworthiness employ- ees bestow upon their employer. As a consequence, employee reactions are likely to be more severe, and it might take multiple iterations to restore the damaged trust. Developing a better understanding of potential differences in recovery duration and lingering employee reactions across types of obligations can enable practitioners to better target, focus, and time the interventions they can implement to help restore the employee– employer relationship.

Individual Differences in Perceptions of Time

Subjective time experiences (labeled "temporal variables" by Sonnentag, 2012) are also associated with various time-related individual differences such as time perceptions and temporal depth (Shipp, Edwards, & Lambert, 2009; Shipp & Jansen, 2011). These subjective time percep- tions may influence different aspects of the psychological contract

process, such as when breach is experienced, intensity of employee post-breach reactions, speed of recovery, and so on. Individuals may have different time perceptions which may affect their responses to psychological contract breach. Time is, as explained, not just the ticking of the clock, but also the product of human imagination, and therefore individual or collective imagination of time may form psychological contract perceptions and interpretations. For instance, a *static* time perspective may indicate that individuals refer to a specific episode (e.g., a breach event) to which they cling on, and refer any subsequent interaction with their organization. A *repetitive* time perspective may indicate cycles, and individuals may go through breach cycles over and over again, in line with the psychological contract phase model (Rousseau et al., 2018). An *accumulative* time perception may indicate that individuals believe that they build on past experiences of breach and fulfillment, which over time may lead to a breakdown of the psychological contract. Time perceptions related to *incremental* or *evolutionary* changes may indicate that individuals believe in either progress or dissolution of the psychological contract over time, and may act accordingly to fulfill their own beliefs concerning the impact of time on their relationships with the organization. Finally, individuals may also have more radical time perceptions, such as *teleological*, *renewable*, or *projected* time perceptions. *Teleological* time perceptions indicate that individuals believe that, over time, a certain end state will be reached, and that some act of revolution may be needed to achieve this. *Renewable* time perceptions refer to a belief where individuals renew relationships over time by taking a new start to their relationship with their employer. Finally, *projected* time perceptions are more utopian, and concern the belief of individuals that there is some mythical end point, a fantasized end state where the psychological contract over time reaches its optimum. All of these different time perceptions may be individual or shared across teams or organizations, and may determine the extent to which psychological contract percep- tions are formed and how people individually and collectively respond to psychological contract dynamics.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Psychological contract breach is a relatively common event in the workplace. The majority of employees have experienced a psychological contract breach in their career (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994), and psychological contract breaches can occur at weekly (Conway & Briner, 2002) or even daily (Griep & Vantilborgh, 2018a) intervals. Thus it is

important to understand when, why, and where psychological contract breaches emerge and shape interactions between the different parties involved (i.e., whether this is in the traditional 'vertical' employer–employee relationships or the more 'distributed' employee–other actor relationships), and how to mitigate or prevent their detrimental consequences. As it stands, we have a plethora of research on the antecedents and/or consequences of psychological contract breach (for meta-analyses see Bal et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2007). In contrast, far less is known about how the social context influences the emergence of breach percep- tions and associated employee reactions (for two exceptions in this book see Chapter 8 by Akkermans, de Jong, de Jong, and Bal; Chapter 11 by Solinger; see also Ho, 2005; Morrison & Robinson, 1997). This lack of contextualization is surprising because: 1) the experience of breach may depend on factors such as social norms, organizational/team/unit climate, organizational politics, and the nature of the relationship between the employee and the other actors involved in the contracting process; and 2) Rousseau and Fried (2001) have already argued that one important goal for psychological contract research to pursue is to broaden our contextual understanding of contracting by accounting for the roles of micro-, meso-, and macro-level contexts. Despite the demonstrated importance of taking context seriously (O'Leary-Kelly, Henderson, Anand, & Ashforth, 2014; Rousseau & Fried, 2001) it remains understudied in the psycho- logical contract literature.

To better understand how (social) context influences the process of contracting, and when, why, and where perceptions of psychological contract breach or fulfillment emerge and shape interactions among employers, employees, and other actors, we need to consider how social context determines workplace interactions. The social context of the work environment, created through the frequent interactions we have with others at work, has the potential to satisfy our innate desire to belong and affiliate with others (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and to form a social network of individuals we can rely on for social and emotional support. However, that context is not always supportive, and under certain circumstances, may actually hamper one's fundamental need to belong and affiliate with others (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the field of workplace bullying, Salin (2003) outlined how three key factors of social context—enabling structures, motivating structures, and precipitating processes—might enable negative events, such as perceptions of breach or violation, and might explain why they persist over time. We now describe how these three factors of social context connect to psychological contracts:

- *Enabling structures*—such as the perceived power or status imbalance between employees and organizational agents, the high work demands placed upon both parties, or the lack of well-defined employment conditions—create a breeding ground, and the necessary conditions, for perceptions of psychological contract breach or violation to occur in the first place. Although a few studies have explored the role of such enabling structures in relation to the psychological contract (e.g., Vantilborgh, Bidee, Pepermans, Griep, & Hofmans, 2016, who studied the role of work demands in relation to the emergence of psychological contract breach percep- tions; Sherman and Morley, 2016 also studied the effect of super- visors' ability to 'let go' of their personal psychological contract breach perceptions when managing their relationship with a sub- ordinate), there is still ground to be covered here. Interesting research avenues center around an array of questions such as: 'Do certain types of organizational, team, unit, professional, sectoral, regional, or national climate (e.g., characterized by self-interest, hostility, competitiveness, or collective silence) facilitate breach perceptions and cause employee reactions to linger, whereas other types of organizational, team, or unit climates (e.g., characterized by collectivism, shared responsibility, or problem-solving orien- tation) impede such perceptions and, if such perceptions do arise, do they foster quick recovery?' 'Are certain reward systems, such as bonus payments, more prone to the development of distributive injustice perceptions and thus to the emergence of perceptions of breach?' 'Are some supervisors or other organizational agents more inclined to break their obligations toward certain employees and, if so, which factors contribute to this inclination?'
- *Motivating structures*—such as competitive work environments, policies that reward goal achievement, or a neo-liberal vision of how work should be done and how employees fit within that vision— create the 'reward' that is being associated with breaking one's obligations toward the other party in the mutual exchange relationship. Very few studies looked at the role of such motivating structures in relation to the psychological contract (for some exceptions see Chapter 7 by Bal and Hornung; Chapter 11 by Solinger; McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, & Flood, 2013). Build- ing further on this raises a variety of interesting questions: 'What role does inequality, such as pay disparity, or competitive and neo-liberal organizational policies play in the experience of psycho- logical contract breach and violation and to what extent do these

structures and policies influence employee reactions in the after-math of breach or violation?' 'What role do these structures and policies play in the resolution process, and are employers, employees, and other parties involved in the psychological contract process more or less likely to attempt to restore the mutual exchange relationship in the face of, for example, reward structures and compensation systems that foster competition?'

- *Precipitating processes*—such as the implementation of austerity measures, lack of justice surrounding the implementation of new organizational policies or changes to existing policies, or any event that may threaten the status quo and shake the psychological contract from its maintenance phase into the repair phase—act as triggers of psychological contract breach or violation. This is probably the most well-researched key factor of social context in the psychological contract research, with examples ranging from understanding how organizational change implementation increases perceptions of psychological contract breach (Baillien, Griep, Vander Elst, & De Witte, 2018; Pate, Martin, & Staines, 2000) to understanding the influence of austerity and recession on perceptions of psychological contract breach (Conway, Kiefer, Hartley, & Briner, 2014). Nevertheless, there are plenty of exciting avenues for future research: 'What actions on behalf of the organization, employee, or other agents in the mutual exchange relationship have the potential to mitigate the influence of these precipitating processes?' 'What is the role of society as a whole, if any, in the coming about and dealing with these precipitating processes?'

SPOTLIGHT ON THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK

At the very core of psychological contract research lies the attempt to understand how individuals experience their employment relationship. However, the world of work changes constantly, including *where*, *how*, *when*, and *why* work is conducted. Several chapters speak to this changing nature of work when addressing topics such as voluntary work (see Chapter 6 by Kappelides and Jones), idiosyncratic deals (see Chapter 7 by Bal and Hornung), team or unit climate (see Chapter 8 by Akkermans, de Jong, de Jong, and Bal), and vulnerable workers and precarious employment conditions (see Chapter 10 by Tomprou and Bankins). However, management and organizational studies—including psychological contract studies—largely ignore these changes and their

impact on the psychological contract in today's working environment (Barley, Bechky, & Milliken, 2017).

Looking at *where* and *when* work is done, we note the uptake of more flexible work arrangements such as remote, virtual, and tele-work, distributed or virtual teams, and the advent and use of off-site communal share- or co-work spaces, all of which create a physical (and potential psychological) distance between an employee and his/her employer (Bjørn, Esbensen, Jensen, & Matthiesen, 2014; Spinuzzi, 2012). Further-more, unlike with traditional work conditions, employees now have greater interaction with a diverse range of other parties (e.g., clients, suppliers, consultants, temporary workers, interns, etc.) who are not part of the standard employee–employer relationship (Johns & Gratton, 2013; Romeike, Nienaber, & Schewe, 2016). As a consequence of more 'distributed' and horizontal forms of psychological contracts (Alcover, Rico, Turnley, & Bolino, 2017; Ho, 2005) we, as researchers, need to pay more attention to the role of various agents in the contracting process within organizations, as well as to the importance of external and lateral relationships in the formation, maintenance, disruption, and repair of psychological contracts. Distributed psychological contracts not only can involve different kinds of obligations among the parties but also can alter notions of reciprocity given the diverse roles and ties the parties can have to each other (Alcover et al., 2017). Interesting avenues for research center around an array of questions: 'Which actor is most salient in the psychological contract process: the traditional "vertical" employer–employee relationship or the more "distributed" employee–other actor relationship?' 'How do these multiple actors and distributed psycho-logical contracts interact through processes of psychological contract breach and fulfillment over time?' 'How, if at all, can perceptions of psychological contract fulfillment in one of these distributed psycho-logical contracts overcome the negative consequences commonly associ-ated with perceptions of breach in the traditional "vertical" employer–employee relationship?' 'What are the implications of the implied precariousness of contemporary work for the psychological contracting process and how are such precarious employment conditions affecting vulnerable workers' ability to recover from perceptions of psychological contract breach?'

In addition to changes in *where* and *when* work gets done, *how* work gets done is changing, as we are witnessing the rise of the shared economy and 'gig' workers (e.g., Uber, Deliveroo, MTurk, etc.), wherein individuals 'contract out' their knowledge and skills for short periods of time to individual clients or businesses. Yet again, this implies a physical (and potentially emotional) gap between these 'gig' workers and their

employers and place of work. While it may seem that the attraction of 'gig' working is the opportunity to earn an income quickly, emerging evidence suggests it may be wrong to assume that every psychological contract in this domain is transactional. Graham, Hjorth, and Lehdonvirta (2017) found that most 'gig' workers are looking for greater bargaining power when negotiating with clients, while also seeking to develop new skills. Seeking greater voice in the working relationship and opportunities for professional growth are typical content dimensions of a relational psychological contract. Relatedly, Petriglieri, Ashford, and Wrzesniewski (2018), in their study of work identities in the 'gig economy', found that many missed the social interaction and connections with colleagues typically evident in traditional employment. Moreover, technological advancements, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence (Bryn- jolfsson & Mitchell, 2017), robots, teleconferencing, and wearable com- puting devices (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016) are on the rise and have started to render the presence of human employees obsolete for certain aspects of jobs or jobs altogether. Overall, as Perrons (2003, p. 65) notes, these new technologies and emerging forms of work have allowed "the temporal and spatial boundaries of paid work to be extended" beyond our traditional understanding of an 'employer–employee' relationship. The increasing implementation of sophisticated technological advancement in the workplace also raises interesting questions regarding the conse- quences for the way employees experience their psychological contract: 'Does technological advancement alter the way employees perceive their interactions with other human agents of the organization and, if so, to what extent does a technological device become an active agent of the contracting process?' 'How does failure of technological advancements (e.g., malfunctioning, errors) influence the development of breach per- ceptions among employees, and do these breach perceptions trickle over onto human agents of the organization?' 'Does the implementation of technological advancements have the potential to better monitor obliga- tions and respond to employee perceptions of breach or are these digital devices at the source of increased organizational control over employee behavior (e.g., geo-locating their employees at any point in time or sending "push" messages to their employees at any given moment of the day) and as a consequence at the source of increased perceptions of breach and pushing the boundaries of what is considered legal and ethical?'

Finally, the reasons *why* work is being done and *why* people go to work is also changing. In the past, Hendry and Jenkins (1997) observed a trend in the psychological contract literature in which organizations and employees were shifting the content of their obligations from more

relational and loyalty-based to more transactional and performance-contingent obligations and promises. However, in the last decade, some scholars have seen this pendulum swing back toward more relational-based, long-term, and loyalty-based arrangements. Probably the most obvious driver of this 'pendulum swing back' can be seen when looking at how organizations increasingly take their societal responsibilities more seriously through initiatives premised upon corporate social responsibil- ity (Preuss, Haunschild, & Matten, 2009) in an attempt to contribute more meaningfully and broadly to society (van Berkel, Ingold, McGurk, Boselie, & Bredgaard, 2017). In addition, we see an increase in the importance employees attach to work arrangements in which their organization is committed to, and can legitimately support, activities that benefit a third party such as a client, patient, or special interest group beyond the employee–organization dyad (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). These 'philosophical' shifts with respect to where organizations position themselves in society and the expectations that employees have toward their organization's commitment to this broader contribution to society have significant implications for psychological contract processes between an employee and an employer. Some interesting avenues for future research with respect to the *why* of work pertain to: 'Does this changing nature of work and increased focus on meaningful work cause organizations to develop, and employees to seek out, more socially and community-oriented, ideologically infused psychological contracts?' 'Does this focus on more socially and community-oriented, ideologically infused psychological contracts render perceptions of breach more severe and its accompanying negative employee reactions more long-lasting owing to the fact that an ideology is often related to different aspects of life and not solely focused on one's work identity?' 'How does the formation of more deeply engaging psychological contracts between an employer and its employees interact with the more traditional relational and transactional psychological contract types throughout the different phases of psychological contracting?' 'To what extent is the organization "riding the wave" of corporate social responsibility and using it as a window-dressing technique to attract employees looking for meaningful work, while not fulfilling its ideological mission?'

CONCLUSION

In sum, in this concluding chapter, a team of international psychological contract scholars has taken the time to pause the psychological contract field to look at its progress and identify new research streams to maintain

and expand the impact psychological contract scholars can have upon scholarship and practice. We call attention to three key areas where we can mark a strong push for psychological contract scholars to answer questions related to: 1) the role of chronological and subjective time (dynamic approach toward psychological contracts); 2) the importance of social context; and 3) the changing nature of work and the numerous implications for the psychological contracting process. We look forward to seeing how the psychological contract field tackles these novel streams of research questions and its push to expand the field's theoretical, empirical, and methodological developments.

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