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Towards a habitus based concept of managerial careers.

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1 Introduction

Careers are a central phenomenon of individual, organisational and societal reality in the practical as well as theoretical sense. Usually related with work, the concept of careers touches on a number of practical ‚real-life‘ issues like, e.g., personal success, status, organisational career paths or the relationship between the availability of different career paths and political goals, e.g. female employment. At the theoretical level the concept of career is most significant, too. Located at the „intersection of societal history and individual biography“ (Grandjean 1981: 1057) it links micro- and macro-frames of references. In analysing careers, both approaches have traditionally been regarded as indissoluble (Hughes 1937; Gunz 1989a). Furthermore, a thorough analysis of careers requires contributions from a great range of disciplinary perspectives like, e.g., developmental psychology, management theory, economics, or sociology of careers (Arthur et al. 1987).

The importance is not limited to careers in general, but also includes managerial careers. Given that organisations are a major characteristic of modern societies and that managers contribute significantly to the development of organisations (Steyrer 1999), it is important to gain insight into the formation and stabilisation of managers‘ careers. Because of the significance of managerial careers and the great range of disciplinary perspectives the relevant literature is large as well as highly fragmented. Nevertheless, it is clear that various levels of analysis are chosen.

Changes at the macroeconomic and organisational level have introduced new aspects into the discussion about careers. Since about a decade the academic and practitioner literature on organisations widely assumes that pressures such as globalisation, technological change and shortening of product cycles lead to radical organisational innovations. These are discussed under terms such as cellular (Miles et al. 1997), empowering (Chakravarthy and Gargiulo 1998), fractal (Warnecke 1993), heterarchical (Hedlund 1986), learning (Cohen and Sproul 1996) organisation or business process reengineering (Hammer and Champy 1994) and differentiated network (Nohria and Ghoshal 1997, Sydow 1992). It is widely assumed that these innovations are leading to more decentralised organisations consisting of small units and small firms (Zenger and Hesterly 1997). In addition, there are signs that we enter a post industrial age where the traditional emphasis on the production of material goods is replaced by concentrating on more intangible goods like service or knowledge. The proportion of people working in the production of information and knowledge is steadily increasing since the beginning of this century (Barley 1994; Drucker 1986).

Both developments, likely to be intertwined, have a number of effects on the management of organisations. Take as an example the degree to which front-line managers are provided with greater autonomy. It seems likely that they are allowed "to design their own jobs, fix their own processes, and do whatever it takes to satisfy a customer" (Hamel and Prahalad 1994: 290). Hence, these new developments question the degree to which responsibility between line and staff functions is shared (Mayrhofer 1999). Likewise, more flexible, project-based forms of organisation are advocated (Whittington et al. 1998). In a similar way it is suggested that formal and informal information networks bind autonomous units together (Chakravarthy and Gargiulo 1998: 438). These changes increase demands on members of these new organisations who have to exhibit higher degrees of co-operation, co-ordination, organisation and self control (Drumm 1996: 11) as well as personal skills such as "strong interpersonal, communication and listening skills; ... an ability to construct long-term relationships; ...

tolerance of high level of ambiguity and uncertainty; ... a good strategic sense, vision and ideas; ... a capacity to learn quickly and to adapt in new situations" (Ferlie and Pettigrew 1998: 219-220).

Careers are affected by the developments mentioned above, too. The changes in the macroeconomic context and the organisational design do affect the context for careers as well as their shape and crucial issues that emerge. Therefore, a number of practical as well as theoretical issues emerge.

An example for practical issues is the idea that new knowledge based occupational fields will replace more traditional occupations. The changing focus of industry in a post industrial context will require new skills of the human resources. Specifically for people with a background in business administration, there will be growing opportunities to work as 'symbol analysts'. These specialists look for specific data and transfer this data into information and, further on, into knowledge (e.g., Güldenbergh et al. 1999). Furthermore, continuous upward mobility will be rather the exception than the rule. Through flatter hierarchies, new organisational forms and increasing economic pressures it will be more likely that there are gaps in the career advancement of persons, that organisations and occupational fields have to be changed more frequently and/or involuntarily, that alternatives to hierarchical advancement have to be developed (e.g., Domsch/Siemers 1994). Likewise, traditional ties to an organisation are substituted by more fragile forms of employment. Full time employment with a spatially well defined working place is likely to be replaced by new forms of employment like fixed term contracts, part time employment, teleworking, or contracts for work leading to 'patchwork careers'. Thus, new self employed people will constitute an increasing proportion of the work force. Especially within the group of highly qualified specialists new forms of work will develop. The number of new self employed people that no longer work for one single employer but are involved in a number of projects for various employers at the same time will grow (e.g., Flecker/Schienstock 1991).

At the theoretical level, too, interesting aspects emerge. Take as an example the question whether subjective careers are a typical project of modern self-discipline. 'Subjective' careers can be regarded as the way an agent perceives and constructs his personal career, his course of positions within a social field. This was already defined by Everett Hughes as "the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions and the things which happen to him" (Hughes 1958: 63). Subjective career success has become a common research topic (Peluchette 1993, Gattiker/Larwood 1989, 1988, 1986) and matches well with concepts of attribution theory and self-efficacy.

In addition, there is a different, more sociological focus upon the construction of career. Bourdieu (1986a) reveals personal biography as "an illusion" because the only stable characteristic of an individual is his personal name. Rose shows how in contemporary times the self is construed as a self-governing entity where each actor, in work as much as outside, is engaged in a project to shape his or her life as an autonomous individual driven by motives of self-fulfilment (Rose 1989: 115). Giddens (1991: 75) is also concerned to demonstrate that the condition of 'high modernity' is associated with new modes of self-identity in which the self is construed as a reflexive project, for which the individual is responsible. Grey (1994) combines Rose's assumption of self-fulfilment and Foucault's notion of self-discipline. Thus the concept of career can be regarded as an organising and regulative principle in modern society. "Career links present, past and future through a series of stages, steps or progressions. Careers offer a vehicle for the self to 'become'. ... Career can offer one of the most obvious

sites for realising the project of self.” (Grey 1994: 481f.) Sennett’s (1990: 108ff) argumentation looks very similar: Self-discipline means to organise our various intrinsic capitals and abilities in a way that it functions as an integral whole. Therefore more and more areas of life are submitted to formal education. “The objective is to become a person who attracts attention” (Sennett 1990: 111). Whether the concept of career loses its function as a centre of attraction for self-discipline in a post-modern society where careers are constructed as patchwork or not, this question remains undecided.

To be sure, this is not to say that the traditional landscape of careers will completely disappear. However, it seems to be quite clear that despite of the uncertainties linked with such a prognosis one can clearly detect signs of significant change relevant for managerial careers (von Rosenstiel et al. 1997). New concepts like the ‘boundaryless career’ (Arthur et al. 1996) or the ‘protean career’ (Hall et al. 1994) are the obvious signs of a new wave of research trying to tackle these issues.

2 Goals of the paper

Given the new developments at the macroeconomic and organisational level it seems essential to develop theoretical frameworks that allow good descriptions of ‘traditional’ as well as ‘new’ careers, analyses of the influencing factors that shape these careers, and, finally, scientific hypothesising.

Currently numerous contributions identify a great variety of influencing factors at the individual, organisational, and macroeconomic or societal level of careers. However, only few approaches tie (most of) these findings together coherently. Based on the writings of Bourdieu (e.g., Bourdieu 1992; 1993a) this paper proposes a theoretical framework that allows the integration of the existing ‘singular’ explanations of the formation, stabilisation, and modification of career patterns. This framework consists of three major elements.

- *Career habitus* can be understood as the incorporation of the social structure that is relevant for specific fields of career, i.e. a re-translation of the specific logic of a social field. Thus, it links the individual and the structural level. The concept of career habitus builds on four basic assumptions: unconsciousness, stability, incorporation, strategy. Through the dimensions linked with these assumptions, i.e. psyche, time, social, and strategy, we can integrate much of the current thinking and results in career research like, e.g., the importance of personality traits, career phases, career strategies, organisational career logics and its mutual relationships.
- *Fields of career* constitute the arenas in which careers take place. They constitute themselves in different societal sub-systems like economics, science, law, politics and can be regarded as spaces of positions and relations between persons in the sense of a social topology. Within fields of career, rules concerning the valuation of economic, cultural, and social capital and its transformation into other fields of career exist. At the same time, there are transition rules and rites for horizontal as well as vertical movements between various positions in the field of career. This conceptual tool is used to structure the description of emerging managerial career patterns. Careers can be regarded as the (struggle for a) sequence of positions in one or several social fields that is determined by the structure of these fields, the habitually incorporated capitals and the strategies and action of a person.
- *Career patterns* in the sense of a specific form of advancement or transition between positions are a result of the interplay between career habitus and fields of career and, in

turn, influence both. In this way, various single factors influencing individual and collective career patterns are integrated and emergent phenomena linked to the interplay between the influencing factors like micropolitical strategies are addressed.

To achieve the goals of the paper, in a first step the current literature on factors influencing careers and career advancement is reviewed, using two of the core elements of the theoretical framework – career habitus and career fields – as a structuring device (chapter 3). In a next step we will develop the theoretical framework of habitus based careers, develop a typology of career fields (chapter 4) and discuss some possibilities of empirically measuring the core elements of the framework. Finally, some hypotheses for future research are generated. The focus on differences between ‘old’ managerial careers as symbolised in careers that started in the early 70’s and ‘new’ careers as expressed in many managerial careers starting in the late 90’s (chapter 5). Concluding remarks can be found at the end of the paper (chapter 6).

3 Career research: state of the art

In this chapter current research on career advancement is summarised, using the conceptual framework proposed by Bourdieu (1992) - explained in more detail in chapter 4 – as a basic structuring device. Two core elements of this concept are “*career habitus*” and “*fields of career*”. To the best of our knowledge this will be the first attempt to systematise the empirical results and theoretical concepts of current career research into Bourdieu’s conceptual framework.

3.1 Career habitus

According to Kraiss (1985) and Müller (1986), Bourdieu’s *concept of habitus* can be characterised by four assumptions (stability, unconsciousness, incorporation, strategy) which refer to the dimensions of psyche, the social dimension, objects at stake (strategy) and time. In this section we try to link most of the constructs analysed by career research to one of these dimensions although they usually relate to all of them.

3.1.1 Dimension of psyche

This section will summarise the unconscious and stable personal predispositions that, when combined with other factors like political tactics and strategies, are proposed to predict organisationally relevant behaviour, including career advancement. Most studies have used standardised validated measures of personality and work-related motivation as well as company records of managerial success. The dimensions of psyche that primarily were combined with career advancement are the “*Big Five*”, “*leadership motive pattern*”, “*ambition and achievement motives*” and “*general cognitive ability*”.

The “*big five dimensions of personality*” (conscientiousness, extraversion-introversion, agreeability, emotional stability, openness to experience) are basic dimensions of normal personality (Mount and Barrick 1995). In a large-scale study, Barrick and Mount (1991) examined the results of over 200 separate studies in which at least one of these dimensions was related to job performance. Guthrie et al. (1998) presented empirical results suggesting that these five dimensions are related to different career management strategies like seeking a mentor, building networks and self-presentation.

The “*leadership motive pattern*” (McClelland and Boyatzis 1982) occurs if persons have a great need for power, i.e. a great desire to exercise control over others, little need for affiliation, i.e. close friendship with others, and a high degree of self-control, i.e. the ability to exert firm control over one’s own behaviour. This pattern plays an important role in a person’s desire to take on leadership positions (e. g., House et al. 1991). Steyrer (1995; 1998) showed that these traits fit perceivers’ implicit theories of leadership. Research shows that people who show these characteristics tend to be promoted more often than those who do not (Howard and Bray 1990; Jacobs and McClelland 1994).

A set of other motives linked to seeking managerial advancement include “*ambition*” as the desire to get ahead in work and career and “*achievement motives*”, i.e. the desire to successfully complete challenging assignments” (Locke 1991). Both factors play a major role in attaining higher managerial positions later in professional life (Howard and Bray 1990; Jacobs and McClelland 1994).

“*General cognitive ability*”, i.e. how much and how quickly a person learns, influences managerial advancement because it enables persons to learn the things needed for highly complex jobs such as management. In a review about this topic, Tharenou (1997a, 1997b) showed that general cognitive ability is a contributing factor to the managerial level attained, promotions, and pay.

3.1.2 Social dimension

This section summarises personality dimensions which are most strongly influenced by socialisation experiences in career contexts. The following personality dimensions are affected by the process in which social structures are incorporated into the individual: “*Self-Efficacy*”, “*Self-Monitoring*”, “*Machiavellianism*” and “*Vocational Orientation*”.

The perceptive and subjective dimension of “*Self-Efficacy*” was defined in Bandura’s (1977) theory. It denotes an individual’s belief about his/her ability to perform a given task successfully. Speier (1994) showed that people who expect to be able to perform difficult tasks (high self-efficacy) choose professions with more difficult tasks to accomplish. Lang-von-Wins (1997) emphasises that this plays an important role in choosing professions. The stronger this trait is in a person the more likely it is that this person will seek out positions with greater career potential and consequently with better chances for professional advancement. Other investigations have related vocational self-efficacy to constructs such as perceived career options, career indecision, and grades (Brown et al. 1989; Taylor and Popma 1990)

“*Self-Monitoring*” refers to the extent to which individuals adapt their behaviour to the demands of specific situations, primarily to make the best possible impression on others (Snyder and Gangestad 1982). People with a highly developed ability to monitor themselves tend to obtain more promotions than those with a less developed ability, especially when these promotions involve movement from one company to another (Kilduff and Day 1994). Findings reported by Turban and Dougherty (1994) also indicate that people with highly developed self-monitoring are more likely to initiate mentoring relationships than people in which this trait is less developed. Specifically, they are more likely to seek out contact to higher-level managers, to make personal effort to attract the attention of higher-level managers to their work, and to seek counselling and advice from such people.

“*Machiavellianism*” is a personality trait involving the willingness to manipulate others for one’s own purposes (Christie and Geis 1970). Gemmil and Heisler (1972) found no

significant relation between upward mobility and “Machiavellianism”. Corzine (1988) showed that “High Machs” were not promoted more often nor did they expect to be promoted more often than “Low Machs”. However, Schultz (1993) showed in a more recent study that “Machs” succeed primarily in loosely structured situations where there are only few established rules.

In an empirical longitudinal testing study, Rosenstiel, Nerdinger and Spieß (1998) investigated the "Selection and Socialisation of Junior Managers", their values and "*Vocational Orientation*" as well as the cognitive representation of enterprises with graduate candidates from different disciplines in Germany. Among other findings, they showed that a high degree of "career orientation" (professional career as the central vital interest) as well as of "alternative engagement" (high degree of commitment to the realisation of someone's own objectives) make it easier to find a job. They also proved that there is a connection between professional independence and a less pronounced "leisure time orientation" (profession as a means to ends from the leisure time domain) (Lang-von Wins 1998). Furthermore, it turns out that the old and the new countries of Germany are characterised by differences in attitudes towards "materialism", "job security" and "loyalty towards colleagues", and that these dimensions also affect the professional objectives (Rappensperger and Maier 1998). Finally they also found differences between the career expectations of graduates from the old and from the new countries in Germany (Zwarg and Nerdinger 1998). Stengel (1997) reports that the "career orientation" dimension remains stable over time to a very large extent, whereas "leisure time orientation" shifts to "career orientation" in the course of the phase when the graduates integrate into their jobs. In the group of the "alternatively engagement", Stengel notices a certain amount of resignation after their entry into professional life.

3.1.3 Dimension of strategy

The dimension of strategy includes the activities an individual adopts in pursuit of his or her chosen career in an interpersonal relationships. This refers to habitual acting and perceiving in the sense of social influence processes “in which behaviour is strategically designed to maximise short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with, or at the expense of, others’ interests” (Ferris et al. 1989: 145).

“*Managerial Networking*” refers to the process of building up and maintaining a set of informal, co-operative relationships in the social structure of an organisation (Burt 1992). Networks provide opportunities. They give information which make it possible to be more effective in negotiations, and they increase the number of options and choices available. Empirical results in Brass (1985) support the notion that an employee is perceived to have more influence when he/she is involved in networks and is consequently promoted more often to supervisory positions. More recent results show that informal social networks inside or outside the organisation increase the likelihood of promotion, further managerial advancement and lead to higher salaries, at least from middle management onto and including executive levels (Burt 1992; Orpen 1996).

“*Mentoring*” is a particular kind of interpersonal relationship in which protégés receive a broad range of career and psycho-social help from a senior manager (Kram 1985). In cross-sectional studies where human capital, job, and organisation variables were controlled, mentor presence and career support were related positively to managers’ pay and frequency of promotions in the early stages of the career (Whitely and Coetsier 1993). Career mentoring at

the beginning of a career had more impact on the frequency of promotion than individual or other organisational variables (Whitely et al. 1991).

“*Political Tactics*” like direct attempts to gain status, dominance and power or image building have an impact on career advancement. Judge and Bretz showed that “ingratiation” was related to higher overall career advancement, whereas job-focused tactics based on self-promotion were negatively related (Judge and Bretz 1994). In another study the so called “organisational strategy” was the major influence on promotion to middle management. This strategy included influencing who the selectors were, how the selection was made, what criteria for selection was utilised, and who was selected for promotion. All of this is of course a political process (Ferris et al. 1992).

3.1.4 Dimension of time

As far as the dimension of time is concerned, we focus on the *process* of the generation of habitus, i.e. both “*primary*” and “*adult socialisation*”; in the terms of a different research tradition, we focus on biography. We therefore assume that the habitus is also effected by various “*career stage*” factors.

Although Bourdieu (1986a) reveals personal biography as 'an illusion' because the only stable characteristic of an individual is his personal name, both the objective course and the subjective reconstruction of managerial biography are issues of significant interest within career research. Childs and Klimoski (1986) tried to develop a biographical inventory to predict further career success. Tucker (1985) examined occupational biographies of male and female MBAs which started their careers in the fifties, sixties and seventies by means of qualitative, biographical interviews, detecting significant differences especially in the career setting. Jost (1997) detected very similar pattern of self-discipline and flexibility within managerial biographies (for managerial biographies see also Detmers 1992).

Hartmann (1995, 1996, 1998) examined the recruiting mechanisms for top positions in enterprises in Germany, as compared to those in France and Great Britain (regarding origin and education). He proves that in all three countries more than three quarters of top managers are of upper middle class origin. Furthermore he shows that in France and Britain selection also works via exclusive education and titles, whereas in Germany personal characteristics associated with the upper middle class are primarily important. Those who grow up in "upper middle class" families therefore know the unwritten habits and rules for elite positions better than those from a different social background.

Referring to the idea of “*career stages*” that are related to another dimension of time research shows that individuals move through distinct occupational stages in their careers and that each stage is characterised by different work attitudes and behaviours, types of relationships needed in given situations and the aspects of work which are valued (e. g., Morrow and McElroy 1987). There are numerous published models, and it is not within the scope of this project description to go into all of these (e. g. Hall 1976; Levinson 1978).

The model examined empirically most often goes back to Super (1957, 1984, 1990) . Super’s theory proposes that an individual’s career develops in four (“*trial*”, “*stabilisation*”, “*maintenance*” and “*decline*”) stages. Several studies have shown the career stages’ effect on individuals’ job attitudes, performance and career behaviour (e. g. Slocum and Cron 1985, Isabella 1988; Ornstein et al. 1989; Aryee et al. 1994).

3.2 Fields of careers

There are two aspects of fields of career discussed here: phenomena “*within*” and “*beyond*” *organisations*. Again there are many interrelationships between these phenomena, so this differentiation has been primarily created in order to systematise the research field.

3.2.1 Within organisation

This section focuses on intra-organisational careers and addresses “*opportunity structure*” for careers in organisations, “*career paths*”, “*career plateaus*” and “*human capital theory*”. Stressing the political character of career advancement in organisations, “*tournament models*” will be described, too.

Upon entering the organisation, individuals are faced with “*opportunity structures*” (Markham et al. 1987). They enter organisations in which higher level jobs may be more or less accessible. Some start on the bottom rung of the ladder in a closed internal labour market, or on higher rungs in a more open internal labour market. For example, the size of the organisation has been found to have little if any impact (Judge et al. 1995) on managerial promotion (Whitely and Coetsier 1993). Long promotion ladders showed an inconsistent relation to managerial advancement, whereas organisational growth showed a positive relationship (Tharenou 1997a, 1997b).

The potential importance of “*career paths*” to career success is suggested by internal labour market research (Brüderl 1991; Freimuth 1991; Weber 1989; Pfeffer and Cohen 1984). Six career path characteristics have been suggested by previous research to be particularly important to career development and success: 1) line versus staff job assignments (Whitely and Coetsier 1993), 2) organisational mobility (Martin et al. 1983), 3) the degree of functional specialisation and job mobility (Whitely and Coetsier 1993), 5) employment gaps (Dreher and Ash 1990) and 6) work experience/tenure (Naff 1994). Tharenou’s review (1997a) of empirical evidence showed that managerial promotions were either unrelated or weakly and inconsistently (sometimes/even negatively) related to line versus staff jobs, the type and number of functional areas and job mobility. Employment gaps are negatively related to promotion, are not related to managerial levels, and are either negatively or not at all related to managers’ pay. The number of years of work for an organisation is positively related to managerial promotions.

“*Career plateaus*” are understood to be the point in one’s career at which the probability of a vertical assignment or of a promotion in the near future is not very likely (Appelbaum and Santiago 1997; Tremblay et al. 1995; Nicholson 1993; Trembley and Roger 1993; Chao 1990; Gerpott and Domsch 1987). Conditions for the development of career plateaus like demographic developments or organisational structure characteristics (Slocum et al. 1987; Dawson 1983) as well as consequences at the individual and the organisational level like dissatisfaction or ‘waste’ of human potential (Stout et al. 1988; Carnazza et al. 1981; Ference et al. 1977) are discussed in order to be able to manage careers more effectively (Slocum et al. 1985).

“*Human capital theory*” proposes that investments in education, on-the-job training and work experience result in increased productivity, which leads to increased pay and improved job status and consequently causes upward mobility. Tharenou (1997a) concluded that human capital, especially education and years of work in an organisation (chiefly organisation/company tenure), has the most consistent relative impact on individual,

interpersonal, and organisational factors leading to managerial career advancement. This review also showed that work experience and education influenced career choices and resources (social networks, training and development), which, in turn, increased the likelihood and frequency of managerial promotions, level of management, and pay. Tharenou also indicated that early in a managerial career work experience, education, and employment gaps had more influence on managerial advancement than other chiefly individual factors.

The snowball effects of past career success on future career success is part of the “*tournament theory of careers*”. Rosenbaum (1979a; 1979b; 1984) showed that the shorter the time individuals spend in their first jobs in an organisation the higher up the hierarchical ladder they end. The theory suggests that when individuals start work at an organisation, they join in on a tournament in which players must win rounds at each stage of the career to advance to the next (Rosenbaum 1990). If individuals fail to earn a promotion at an early stage of the competition, they are less likely to progress to further stages. This rapidly becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: Winners receive ability signals that affect their prospects of participating in the next round of the competition. Promotion leads to more promotion, new jobs create more development and networking opportunities and signal ability, creating “career velocity” (Rosenbaum 1990). Several other variants of tournament models and selection criteria exist (Brüderl et al. 1991; Sheridan 1990; Forbes 1987). Related research focuses on effects of the “influence” of the department in which the new employee started his or her career (Sheridan et al. 1990), the importance of higher level entry position for further promotion (Cox and Harquail 1991) or the self reinforcing effects of promotions (Hurley and Sonnenfeld 1994). This kind of research stresses the importance of organisational career tournaments. Likewise, the role of micropolitics in the promotion process is emphasised.

There are a number of other research streams linked more indirectly with the proposed research project. One can mention the relationship between promotion patterns and contextual variables such as corporate strategy (e. g. Ferris and Judge 1992), career systems (Sonnenfeld and Peiperl 1988) or organisational centrality (Orpen 1998; O’Hara et al. 1994). Likewise, international aspects of intra-organisational careers are a prominent topic in career research (Mayrhofer 1996; Brewster 1991).

3.2.2 Beyond organisations

In this section results on “gender and minority” issues and the conceptualisation of careers as “reading maps” based on the “Chicago School of Sociology” are discussed.

Current research studying societal influence on career advancement shows the existence of a tendency toward a “*homophile reproduction*”. Homophily is the degree of demographic and identity similarity of interaction individuals (Ibarra 1993). One effect of these homophile reproduction processes results, for instance, in a gender based (e. g., Tharenou and Conroy 1994) and minority based (e. g. Pfeffer et al. 1995) hierarchy. In addition to these reproduction tendencies a lot of studies can be found which show tendencies of “*gender*” (e. g. Landau 1995; Habersfeld 1992) and “*minority*” discrimination (Landau 1995).

An important theoretical sociological view of careers goes back to the Chicago School (Hughes 1958, 1971). In this concept careers provide the link between individuals and social structures. Careers are like scripts or “*reading maps*” which offer people interpretative schemes to make sense of the social world. Careers are expressions of the relationships between power, norms, and vocabularies of motives used in particular institutional settings (organisation, profession, occupational group). Hence, as people construe their careers, they

also read the norms, relationships, and accounts prevalent in the institution. Career transitions (Glaser and Strauss 1971) are said to be accompanied by shifts in perspectives as people internalise the vocabularies of motives associated with their new position. Recent studies using this background have been conducted by Detmers (1992) and Jost (1997).

3.3 Conclusions

Up to now research has provided only few comprehensive and integrative studies. The focus is mostly placed on individual or organisational factors and less on interactive effects. Beyond the deficits in research contents and methods (Arnold 1997, Borgen 1991, Meier 1991, Wheeler 1990) reviewers constantly criticise a lack of theoretical foundation in career research (Tharenou 1997b: 26, Hackett et al. 1991: 27f.). For example, Tharenou's (1997a) comprehensive meta-analysis convincingly shows that there is an evident deficiency of theory, especially concerning approaches which integrate individual, organisational, and societal factors. There are just a few comprehensive studies which try to estimate the relative importance of a variety of dimensions simultaneously (e. g., Bretz and Judge 1994; Tharenou and Conroy 1994). In addition, only few longitudinal studies about the development of managerial careers exist (e.g., Bray et al. 1974; Kotter 1995; Rosenstiel, Nerdinger and Spieß 1998).

Therefore, the core research questions at the descriptive and explanatory level as well as the chosen research design can help to increase the knowledge in this area. The development of an integrative theoretical framework allows the description of managerial careers along theoretically based categories. At the same time, such a concept allows explanatory statements about relevant variables responsible for the development of managerial careers and interactions between these variables.

4 Conceptual and empirical framework

As careers represent actors' movements through a social structure over time (Becker and Strauss 1956: 253), they form the link between person, organisation, and society. At the individual level, careers are expressed as a sequence of work role transitions, representing choices between opportunities offered by organisations. At the organisational level, careers can be viewed as a part of a process of social reproduction, which points the way to linking organisational form and behaviour with comparatively stable career patterns characteristic of particular firms or types of firms (Evetts 1992, Gunz 1989a). Any theory of career must consider these dimensions and integrate sociological, socio-psychological, and psychological components.

Furthermore, any theoretical frame has to model the interface between structure and action in a way which does not excessively prefer one of both sides. Most modern social theories try to illustrate this interface in a reflexive, circular way (e.g. Coleman 1994: 21ff., Giddens 1986: 77ff., Luhmann 1984, Bourdieu 1972): Structure both enables and restricts action, and action both follows and reproduces structure. The medium and the process of mediation between structure and strategy makes the difference between different theoretical angles. In terms of career: Societal and organisational structure functions as an enabling frame for individual careers, and at the same time each single career decision reproduces social structure: either it confirms or it modifies structural frames.

According to these assumptions, a theoretical frame has to make the following contributions to answer our research questions (see chapter 2):

1. Theory has to supply notions to differentiate between the 'objective' and the 'subjective' career, and it must link both perspectives; it needs some constructionist reflexivity to meet this demand.
2. Theory has to contribute ideas about the main factors influencing the formation, stabilisation, and modification of career patterns. In other words: It must support the decision, which factors should be selected as relevant for explanation within the opaque complexity of causal factors imaginable.
3. Theory has to link micro- and macro-perspectives, individual, organisation and society, action and structure. It must mediate between rigid structuralist approaches, which regard careers as constituted by social (or personal) structure, and individualist approaches, which overemphasise individual actions and strategy. Careers are neither fully determined by social rules and regulations nor are they only based on free individual choice.
4. Theory has to be flexible enough to cope with recent developments as pointed out in chapter 1 (new knowledge based occupational fields, flat hierarchies in organisations, more fragile forms of employment, new self employment). Although neither organisational boundaries nor national borders strictly confine careers anymore, careers will never get "boundaryless". However, the quality and form of borders will change: boundaries will rise elsewhere, perhaps in a more fluid and virtual way (Sennett 1998). Therefore a theory must be flexible enough to go beyond the individual-organisation dichotomy.
5. Last, but not least theory has to be flexible enough to integrate most well-established socio-psychological constructs and the corresponding results of a long and successful tradition of career research. Because of this requirement a rather dogmatic approach would be of no use.

The social theory worked out and presented by Pierre Bourdieu appears as one of the very few theoretical approaches which meets all these demands. Beyond that, it fits almost perfectly with career research for the individual's (upward-) movement in social space is one of Bourdieu's major themes (e.g. Bourdieu 1997, Boltanski 1990, Bourdieu 1985, Bourdieu et al. 1981). Our use of Bourdieu's theoretical framework should never get dogmatic. This means that we believe that the psychological tools we added may be useful to avoid the critique which considers habitus to be no more than a black box (Boudon 1996), because of its lacking explications about how the incorporated past is activated and made be able to generate dispositions (Lahire 1998). Furthermore, because the habitus is a product of history and because of the importance of the primary socialisation, dispositions can act in a wrong way and practices can be unadapted to present situations since they are accorded to past conditions. Although Bourdieu describes the possibility of this so-called *hysteresis* effect (e.g. Bourdieu 1984; 204), some critics argue that the link between habitus and field is too close. According to Martuccelli, most of Bourdieu's work (e.g. Bourdieu 1997) shows that this 'ontological complicity' corresponds actually more to traditional societies than to modern ones where things are constantly changing and evolving (Martuccelli 1999), which in a way is recognised by Bourdieu in his late work (Bourdieu 1997b). Once again, our undogmatic use of Bourdieu's theories allows us to respond to these critics in a way that enriches the chosen theoretical framework. Finally, Bourdieu's theory is flexible enough to accommodate to both previous results and various theoretical concepts.

4.1 Short outline of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus

The three concepts crucial to Bourdieu's social theory are '*habitus*', '*field*' and '*capital*'. Social fields identify the 'space' within which actors struggle for various potential gains, i.e. capital, according to clearly-defined rules. These rules may be internalised, i.e. habitualised, by way of socialisation.

The notion of *habitus* is central to Bourdieu's theory of practice, which seeks to transcend the opposition between theories that grasp practices solely as *constituting*, as expressed in methodological and ontological individualism, and those that view practice solely as *constituted*, i.e. structuralism. Bourdieu characterises the habitus as a system of general generative schemes that are both durable (inscribed in the social construction of the self) and transposable (from one field to another), function on an unconscious plane, and take place within a structured space of possibilities. Habitus is the dynamic intersection of structure and action, society and the individual (Postone et al. 1993: 4). The notion of habitus means both a structured ('opus operatum') and a structuring phenomenon ('modus operandi'), thus theoretically mediating structure and agency (Bourdieu 1993: 113).

Bourdieu's notion of *capital*, which is neither Marxist nor formal economic (Postone et al. 1993: 4), entails the capacity to exercise control and is a base of power. Social systems are on the one hand structured by the unequal distribution of capital. On the other hand, individuals strive to maximise their capital. In the proposed project, much of the empirical work to explain careers will focus on the interplay among what Bourdieu distinguishes as social, cultural, and economic capital.

Economic capital is the most efficient form, for it alone can be conveyed in the appearance of general, anonymous, all-purpose convertible money from one generation to the next. In addition, its institutionalised form, i.e. property rights, has the longest tradition and strongest entrenchment in our legal system. It can be more easily and efficiently converted into cultural, social and symbolic capital than vice versa (Postone et al. 1993: 5).

Social capital involves relationships of mutual recognition and acquaintance, resources based upon social connections and group or class membership. It might be legitimised and institutionalised by family-, group- or class-membership and works as a multiplier which enhances the effects of economic and cultural capital. Social networks can be regarded as a product of permanent efforts in form of continuous acts of exchange in order to institutionalise social relationships, whereby economic capital may also be spent. (Bourdieu 1983: 191f.).

Cultural or informational capital designates education, i.e. durable dispositions of the body (culture, cultivation). To attain these, an internalising process is necessary which consumes time. Thus, the duration of this process seems to be the most exact indicator (Bourdieu 1983, 186). It appears in three forms: (1) incorporated, i.e. durable dispositions of habitus, (2) objectivised, that is in form of cultural products (books, paintings, machines) and (3) institutionalised, in form of academic titles and degrees, which are relatively independent of the actually incorporated cultural capital. Institutionalised cultural capital may be compared and converted into other forms of capital more easily. In any case, cultural capital is the accumulated result of educational and cultural effort, undertaken either by the agent himself or by his ancestors.

One of the most important assumptions of Bourdieu (e.g. 1983) is that capital is *inheritable* and thus passed on from ancestor to successor in all its forms: Hence children of families wealthy in terms of cultural capital can achieve much more profit out of the educational

system than children of less-educated families. For example, the parents' social connections work as a start-up capital for the children's networking efforts. As a consequence these processes reproduce social structure and distribution of power in social systems.

Symbolic capital is the form of capital perceived and recognised as legitimate. The rules valid within particular social fields specify which combination of the basic form of capitals will be authorised as symbolic capital.

In Bourdieu's social topology *social fields* may be defined as the location of positions and the relationship between agents; this structure reflects the distribution of power based on the distribution of capital. The purpose of Bourdieu's concept of *field* is to provide the frame for a 'relational analysis', by which he means an account of the multidimensional space of positions and the position taking of agents. The position, i.e. the 'objective' career-success of a particular agent, is the result of an interplay between that person's habitus and his or her place in a field of positions as defined by the distribution of the appropriate form of capital. Each social field is historically constituted. Therefore the study of a social field has to take into account its genesis, which strongly influences its current working. Each social field is semi-autonomous, characterised by its own determinate agents, its own accumulation of history, its own logic of action, its own forms of capitals, and its specific currency-rate which determines the transformation of economic, social and cultural capital into symbolic capital. The degree of autonomy of a field depends on its global volume of capital (especially symbolic capital) accumulated in time (Bourdieu, 1999). Capital rewards gained in one field may be transferred to another. Each field is a site of struggle, i.e., there are struggles within a given field and there are struggles over the power to define a field (Postone et al. 1993: 5f.).

Because of the access conditions that it defines, a field tends to reproduce itself. This doesn't mean that it cannot change: new agents may acquire dominant positions if a new form of capital appears and is valorised (e.g. mastery of new technologies, new diplomas). Becoming a player in a field presupposes the acknowledgement of the 'value of the game' as well as practical knowledge of the rules. The mentioned semi-autonomy of social fields means the reciprocal influence of other fields. Not at least, the links with the 'field of power', which is dominated by the state (Bourdieu, 1998), are of great importance in our case, because some forms of capital (e.g. diplomas) and their evolution are derived from this field.

As shown above, habitus, field and capital interact in a number of ways. Thus a particular social field can only function if there are objects of interest (in terms of capital) and persons willing to take part, who possess the habitus which provides them with both practical knowledge and acceptance of the inherent rules of the game (Bourdieu 1993a: 108). Habitus and field both enable and determine each other: Structures are (habitually) incorporated only in particular social fields, and social fields cannot exist without participants who have internalised the 'rules of the game' in accordance with their social and habitual dispositions. Kraus (1985) and Müller (1986: 163f.) identify four assumptions within Bourdieu's concept of habitus:

- (1) *Unconsciousness*: Habitus operates at the subconscious level throughout life and is therefore largely resistant to reflection and modification.
- (2) *Incorporation*: Habitus may be defined as a cognitive, perceptive and action matrix (Bourdieu 1977: 82f.), whereby cognitive structures are regarded as internalised social structures; thus socialisation is a process of incorporation of social structure.

- (3) *Strategy*: Habitual thinking, acting and perceiving is directed towards objects specific for a particular social field. These objects of interest are regarded as specific combinations of economic, cultural and social capital.
- (4) *Stability*: Habitus is primarily formed by constraints and freedoms given by class situation prevalent in primary socialisation, and is largely of an inert disposition. This does not imply that habitus is innate; it can, however difficult, be modified by the influence of a 'career', i.e. by secondary, professional and organisational socialisation. "Membership of a profession actually exercises a kind of censorship which exceeds institutional or personal constraints. One does not, cannot ask certain questions. (Bourdieu 1992: 27)

These assumptions help to make habitus operational as well as they enable us to link socio-psychological constructs traditional within career research with Bourdieu's framework.

4.2 Habitus-based concept of managerial careers

Careers can be regarded as (an agent's struggle for) a sequence of positions within one or several social fields that is determined by

- the career fields' structure, i.e. the rules concerning acquisition and transformation of capital and its specific value,
- the habitually incorporated capitals of the agent and
- his strategies and actions.

As far as *habitus* and *capital* are concerned, attribution theory (Herkner 1980, Kelley 1967, Heider 1958) helps to further specify our questions: Habitual characteristics will probably be attributed to internal/stable causes, whereas careerists' strategies and actions will rather be regarded as internal/unstable. As for the social and cultural capital at stake, social fields may prefer either stable and easily exchangeable forms (e.g. academic degrees, social class) or rather unstable forms (e.g. job commitment).

Because of the assumption of *incorporation*, the most important characteristics of social structure should be embodied into habitus. Thus even characteristics of organisational structure and social fields may partly be revealed by analysing members' habitus. The following figure summarises the four assumptions concerning habitus and the connections between habitus, career field, and capital.

As shown in Figure 1, most of the individual, interpersonal, and organisational factors relevant for careers and discussed in the state-of-the-art-chapter are integrated within our conceptual frame. Compared with most of former research, however, we look at these questions from a slightly different angle. Personal traits as a specific form of incorporated cultural capital, for example, may explain careers just because of their role within the rules and structure of social fields. In the same way the agents' political tactics and strategies must fit in with career rules. Relating our research questions formulated above to the framework illustrated in Figure 1, we can say that the descriptive question (1) focuses on the single variables of the framework, i.e., habitus, fields of career, capitals and career patterns, whereas the explanatory question (2) concentrates on the interplay of these variables and their relative importance.

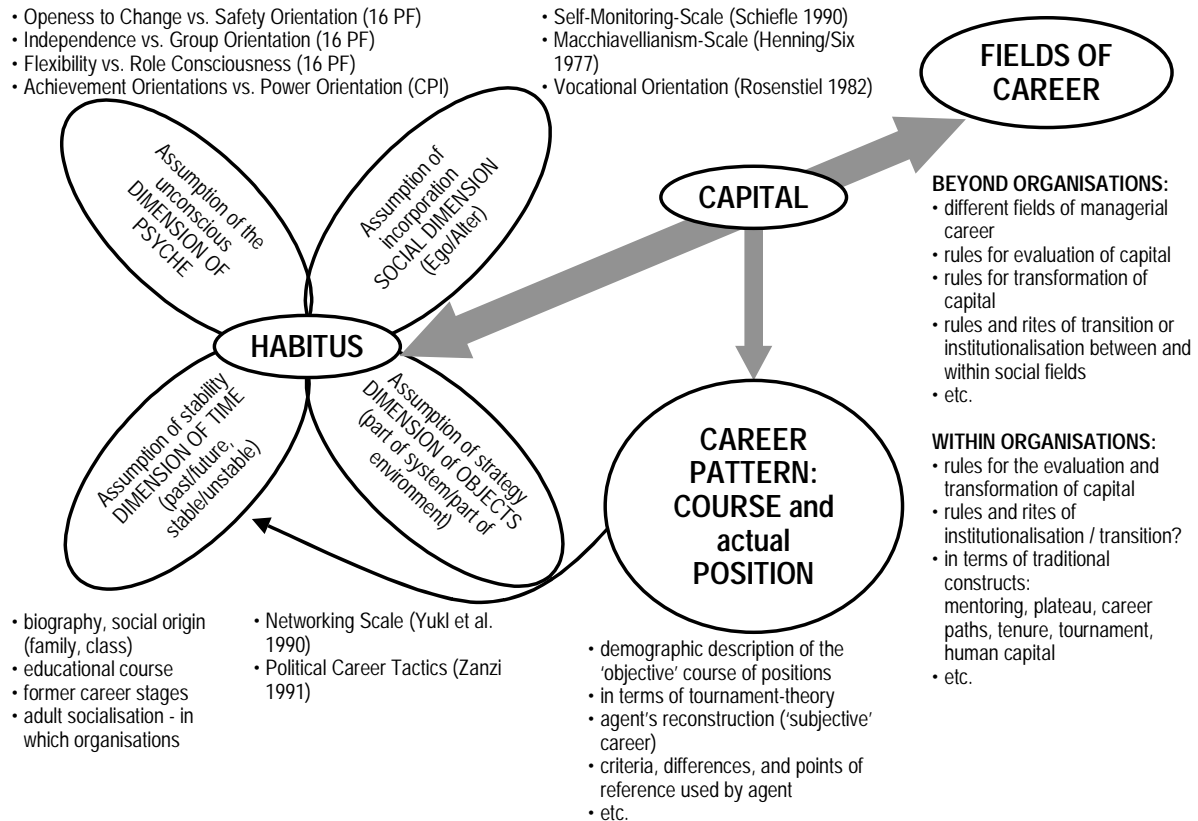


Figure 1: A habitus-based concept of career

Bourdieu himself emphasises the importance of social origin and primary socialisation for the forming of habitus (e.g. Bourdieu et al. 1997: 651ff., Bourdieu 1992). Social Origin and demographic similarity might play a crucial role in explaining careers, too (Hartmann 1995, 1996). On the one hand, Tharenou (1997b: 25) states that demographic similarity other than gender and minority is not related to managerial promotion. On the other hand, McClelland's longitudinal analysis (1990) demonstrates impressively that social origin is one of the most important factors explaining the development of social ambition and career expectations; and in Gattiker's and Larwood's study (1990) demographic variables (e.g., education, age, sex) predicted a significant part of the subjective career perception.

4.3 Typology of career fields

Career fields are characterised by the specific rules for the acquisition and transformation of capital and its specific value for the careers of an individual. Two basic dimensions influence the kind of rules that emerge in these fields, both referring to the relationship between relevant actors in the field: the individual as the focal person pursuing a career, i.e. a sequence of positions, and relevant other actors that make such positions available. For the latter, organisations are the most prominent and widespread example. However, other individuals acting for example as single customers are also contained in this category.

The *first dimension* describing the relationship between relevant actors focuses on changes over time in the configuration of relationships between the focal person and other relevant actors. A *stable configuration* would mean that there is a low rate of change in the actor configuration. Vice versa, a *variable configuration* implies that there is a frequent change in the configuration, i.e. actors leave and enter the fields often. To be sure, this dimension does

not say anything about the number of actors relevant for the focal actor but about the rate of change in the configuration.

The *second dimension* focuses on the closeness of relationships and the degree of mutual influence between the focal actors and the other actors in the configuration. In other words, it describes how integrated the actors in the fields are, i.e. how much actions by one of the relevant actors influence the decision room of the others. *Tight coupling* indicates that the actors in the field are closely intertwined in their decisions. On the other hand, *loose coupling* indicates a type of relationship between actors in a field where the decisions of one actor have only little consequences for the decisions of the other actors in the field. Thus, in a tightly coupled relationship decisions of one partner reduce the other's degrees of freedom much more than in a loosely coupled relationship.

Combining these two dimensions leads to a four-cell typology of career fields. It is important to note that the career fields provide the context for actual career patterns.

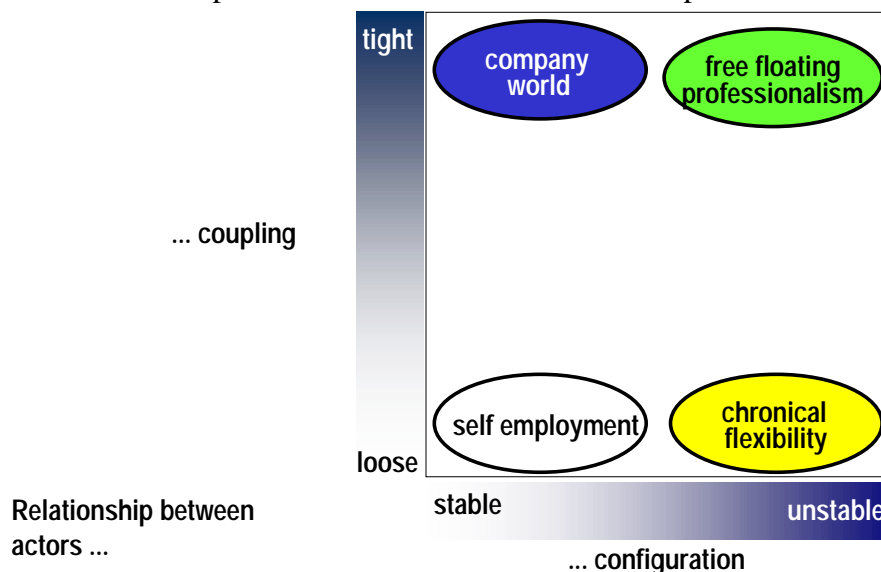


Figure 2: Typology of Career fields

4.4 Scales and measurements

There are a number of standardised instruments available to measure the various dimensions of habitus. Many of these instruments are already adapted to different languages including the German speaking area. The following scales that could be used for future empirical research were selected according to the following criteria:

- assumptions on the closeness of the hypothetical connections between individual dimensions and the career fields investigated
- the psychometric quality of the instruments
- a low the number of necessary items for reasons of research economy and respondent acceptance
- translation into other languages – in our case: German – to allow some international comparisons.

4.4.1 Habitus

Dimension of psyche

In order to examine psyche dimensions of personality that influence important aspects of career advancement in different career fields a mix of scales out of different psychological inventories could be applied. Out of the “16 PF-Test” (Schneewind et al. 1994) three scales could be used: “Openness to Change” (versus “Safety Orientation”), “Independence” (versus “Group-Oriented”) and “Flexibility” (versus “Rule Consciousness”). This instrument has the advantage of having a high psychometric quality and a low number of 12 items per scale. Furthermore, one could use two scales from the “California Psychological Inventory” (CPI), for which a new German version is expected for next year (Weinert et al. 1982, 1993): “Achievement Orientation” and “Power Orientation” with 20 items per scale. One could also examine whether some scales (e. g. “openness to experience”, “conscientiousness”) from the German version of the “Neo Five Factor Inventory” (Borkenau and Ostendorf 1993) are more appropriate for our population than the scales from the “16 PF-Tests” mentioned above.

Social dimension

In the German speaking area there are several validated scales used to measure the „Self-Monitoring“ attribute. These include, among others, the „Self-Monitoring Scale“ by Schiefle (1990); the „Questionnaire of Efficacy of Self-Presentation“ by Mielke (1990) and the „Impression-Management Scale“ by Mummendey and Eifler (1994). The “Self-Monitoring Scale” by Schiefle (1990) has in its original version and in its German translation 25 self-descriptive statements, which are assigned to three different dimensions in factor analysis: “self-representation ability”, “self-consistency” and “person orientation”.

There are also a number of scales for measuring the characteristic of „Machiavellianism“. These include, among others, the “Machiavellianism and Conservatism Questionnaire” by Cloetta (1983); the „Machiavellianism Scale“ by Henning and Six (1977); the „Machiavellianism Scale“ by Kalpprodt (1975). For psychometric reasons one might favour the 18-item scale by Henning and Six (1977), which addresses the following categories: “tactic procedure when dealing with others”, “concepts of human nature” and “concepts of moral principles”.

Rosenstiel (1982) has developed a scale which addresses the dimensions of the change of values with regard to different “Vocational Orientation”: “career orientation”, “leisure time orientation” and “alternative engagement”. By means of this scale one could link future research to the results presented by Rosenstiel, Nerdinger and Spieß (1998) in their longitudinal study about university graduates.

Dimension of time

Biography, social origin (e.g., family or class), the education individuals have gone through, former work places and organisations worked for can comparatively easily be asked from respondents within a personal interview or a ‘biographical data’ section of a questionnaire as long as the information contains the ‘hard facts’.

Dimension of strategy

For this dimension, no German instruments for measuring the relevant interpersonal factors exist. English versions are, however, available. The „Networking Scale“ from the „Managerial Practices Survey“ (Yukl et al. 1990) could be applied to analyse the

„Networking“ variable (15 items). The operationalisation of various “*Political Career Tactics*” in a career context can be found in Zanzi et al. (1991). Given this situation, the development of a scale which could describe the situative fit of given political strategies with the four different career fields would be necessary to conduct empirical and comparative research.

4.4.2 Career patterns and career success

Given the potential complexity of managerial career patterns beyond formal positions it is difficult to design standardised instruments. Following the theoretical framework presented above, operationalisation has to go beyond classical dimensions such as line/staff assignments, functional specialisation, job/organisational mobility, employment gaps and work experience/tenure. Within the "stable configuration" dimension, the duration of the relation to customers/organisations has to be operationalised. The number of customers/organisations is one indicator for the tightness/looseness of the relationship. This divergence between tight coupling and loose coupling can also be dimensionalised by the closeness of the relationship (e.g. exclusivity), the dependence (e.g. economic, concerning social law, or concerning questions of legal warranty), as well as the strength of the mutual influence between the persons involved (e.g. definition of project content or degree of achievement of objectives).

“*Objective career success*” is usually operationalised as „salary progression“, e. g. the difference between starting and current salaries, „upward mobility“, e. g. total number of promotions, current management level as a percentage of current level/total levels or increases in the “scope of responsibility” or authority. There are also many kinds of operationalisation of “subjective career success” like „career satisfaction“ by Greenhaus et al. (1990).

The following figure gives an overview about the scales and the measurement discussed above

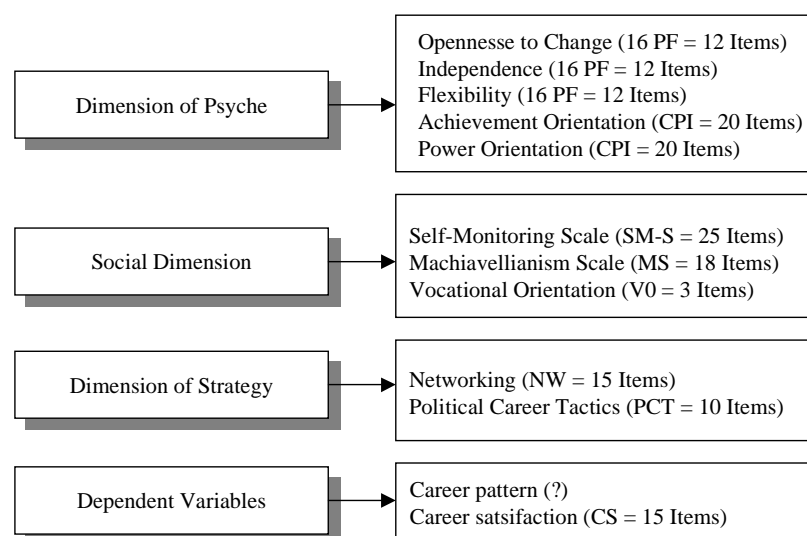


Figure 3: Scales and measurements

5 Directions for future research – some hypotheses

We on links our assumptions about the development of career paths, career patterns and the crucial factors influencing them with the habitus-based concept of career and the typology of career fields presented above one can formulate two kind of hypotheses: (1) Differences between career fields, groups, etc. and (2) assumptions of causal relations between certain factors and career success. The core assumption behind these hypotheses is the notion that we are in a ‘paradigm change’ between ‘old’ and ‘new’ careers as roughly outlined in the first chapter. Managerial careers starting in the 70’s represent the ‘old type’ of careers with stable, more long term assignments, a high importance of ‘traditional’ organisations etc. Due to macroeconomic and organisational changes, however, ‘new type’ career patterns start to emerge in the 90’s characterised by a more ‘fluent’ environment, more changes, flexible working patterns, less link between individual and organisation etc. Thus, we will speak of ‘careers of the 70’s’ and ‘careers of the 90’s’ to indicate these developments.

5.1.1 Career patterns and career fields

- a) Careers of the 90’s will increasingly take place within career fields characterised both by more loosely coupled relations between actors and by more unstable configurations than careers of the older cohorts: on the one hand, because “new” types of career fields such as *free floating professionalism* and *chronical flexibility* spread, on the other hand because even in more traditional fields the couplings get looser and the configuration more unstable (see Figure 4).

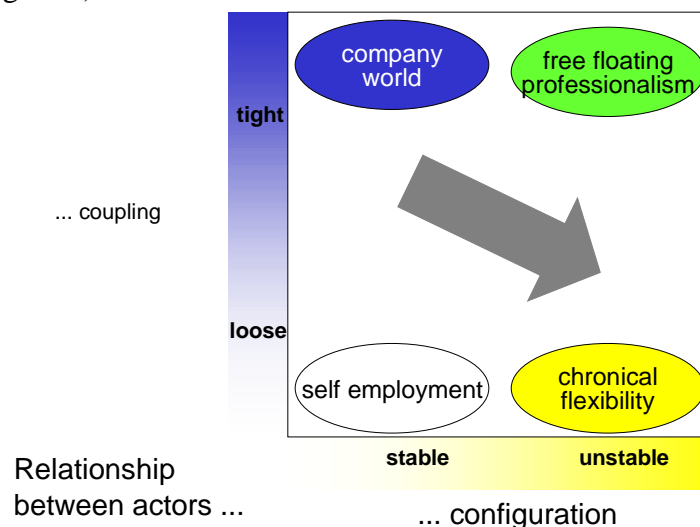


Figure 4: Development of Career Fields

- b) As a consequence and specification of hypothesis a), the share of classical “in-house-careers decreases continuously from 1970 to 2000.
- c) In the course of a careers of the 90’s, the managers come in touch with more different types of career fields than their 70’s counterparts. Thus their career pattern resembles much more a patchwork than the pattern of the latter (see Figure 5).

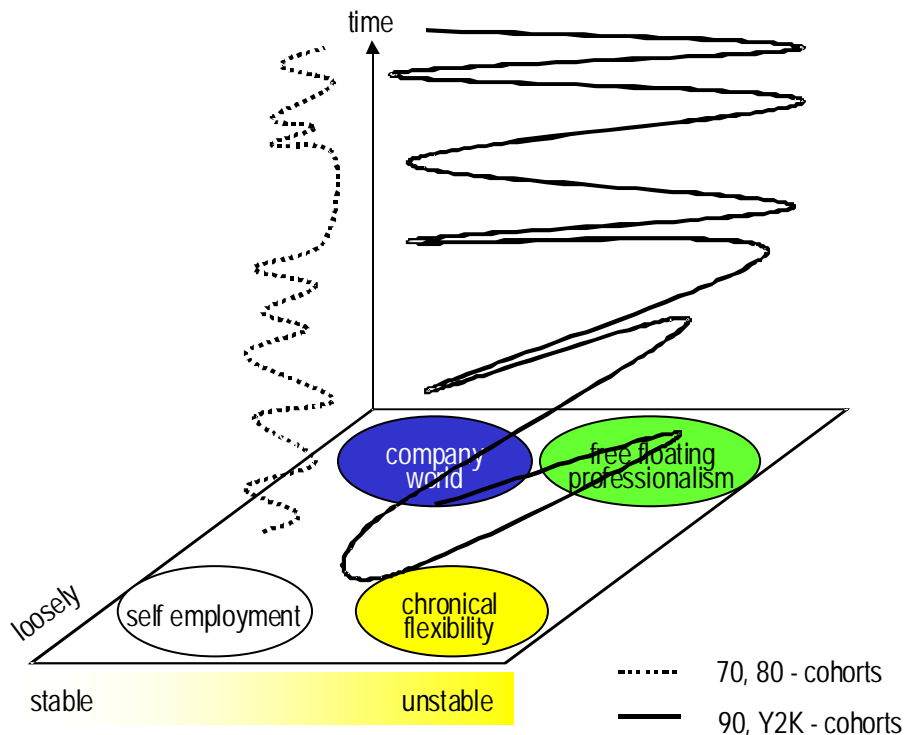


Figure 5: Development of Career Pattern

- d) Whereas in a career of the 70's the overall career can typically be divided into a trial, a stabilisation, a maintenance and a decline stage, this is not feasible for careers of the 90's which consist of many short learning cycles over the whole span of a person's life. Thus the classical career stages characterised by certain attitudes and behaviours vanish.
- e) Whereas former careers (1970-graduates) can be described sufficiently in terms of tournament theory (Rosenbaum 1979a; 1979b; 1984), this is not fully the case for careers of the 90's. Tournament theory defines early advancement as a predictor of career success, in case of winning a round it predicts an increasing extension of time between tournaments and a decreasing number of competitors. In careers of the 90's early advancement is not a sufficient condition for success any more, there is no regularity of rounds, the number of competitors does not decrease automatically, and in most cases there is no perceivable advancement (in terms of hierarchy) at all.

5.1.2 Career factors and career habitus

According to the habitus-approach all the constructs selected from the 16PF-personality inventory *are socially affected*, therefore the separation of psychic and social dimension is difficult. Thus we add all personality traits measured by the 16PF-inventory to the psychic dimension, whereas Machiavellianism and Self-Monitoring are added to the social dimension.

Dimension of psyche

- a) Managers acting in tightly coupled career fields attain higher scores in *safety orientation*, *group orientation*, *role consciousness* and *career orientation* than those participating in loosely coupled fields, whereas the latter attain higher scores in *openness to change*, *independence*, *flexibility* and *alternative engagement* (see Figure 6).

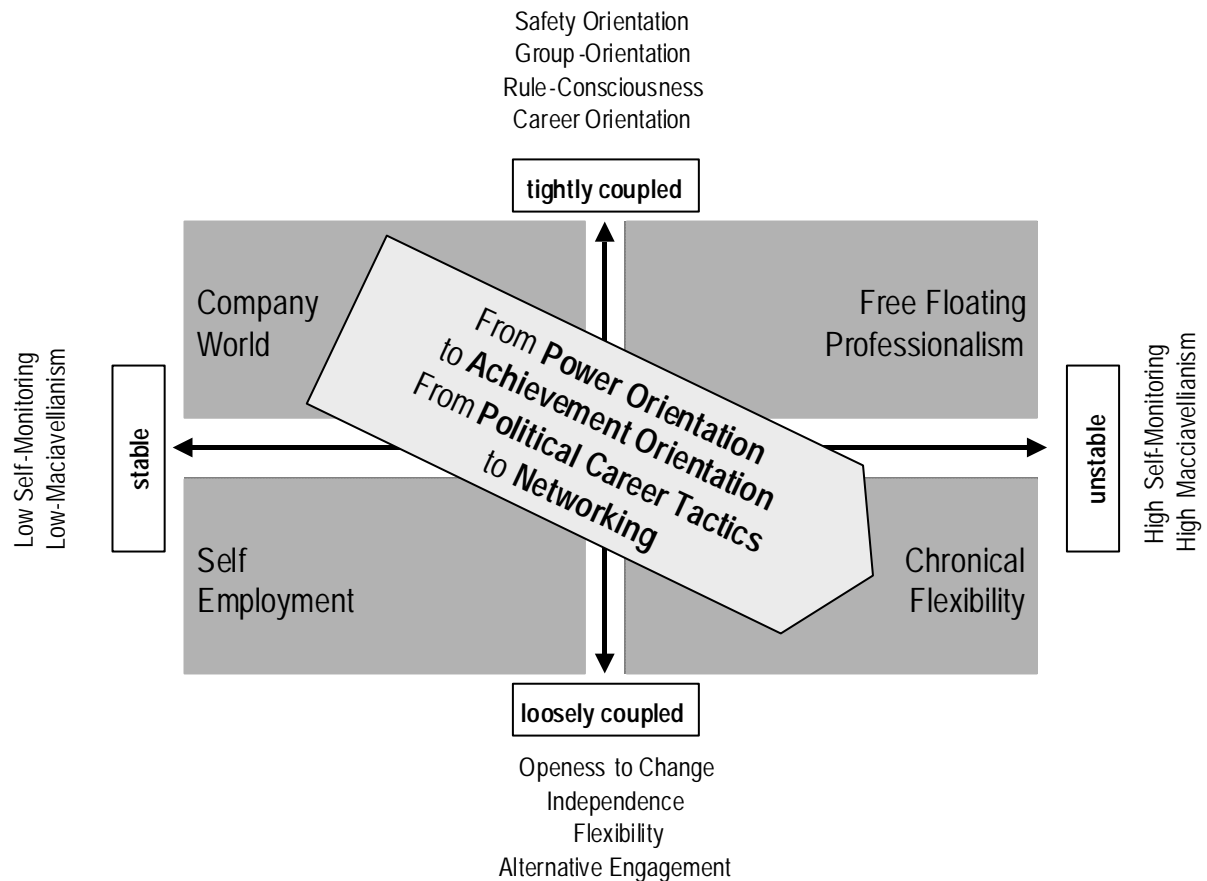


Figure 6: Career Fields and Career Habitus

- b) (1) In tightly coupled career fields both objective and subjective career success are positively influenced by *safety orientation*, *group orientation*, *role consciousness* and *career orientation* (rather than *openness to change*, *independence*, *flexibility* and *alternative engagement*). (2) In loosely coupled career fields both objective and subjective career success are positively influenced by *openness to change*, *independence*, *flexibility* and *alternative engagement* (rather than *safety orientation*, *group orientation*, *role consciousness* and *career orientation*).
- c) In tightly coupled and stable career fields, actors are more oriented towards power than towards achievement, whereas in loosely coupled and unstable career fields, actors are rather oriented towards achievement than towards power.
- d) Within tightly coupled and stable career fields, power orientations contributes more to career success than in loosely coupled and unstable fields, where achievement orientation is more important for career success.

Social dimension

- a) Managers acting in rather unstable career settings attain high scores in both *Self-Monitoring* and *Machiavellianism*, whereas those in stable fields attain relatively low scores.
- b) Within stable career settings, *Self-Monitoring* capabilities and *Machiavellianism* contribute to both objective and subjective career success.

Dimension of strategy

The probability of success of different career strategies depends both on the stability of social configurations and on the form of coupling (tightly, loosely). The more unstable and loosely coupled the career field, the more successful networking becomes. The more stable and tightly coupled the career field, the more political career tactics turn out to be promising.

Dimension of time

According to the assumptions about career patterns and career fields above, for managers in a career of the 90's secondary socialisation within organisations is less important than in careers of the 70's. Therefore, both social origin and biography explain more variance of the career success in unstable and loosely coupled fields than in stable and tightly coupled fields.

5.1.3 Forms of capital and career success

- a) Managers in careers of the 70's acquire more of their capital relevant for career by organisational socialisation. Thus social origin, primary socialisation and biography gets more important for the career success in careers of the 90's (see Hartmann 1995, 1996).
- b) Assumption a) can be specified for both social and cultural capital: (1) Social relationships which stem from the milieu of origin are more important in careers of the 90's. (2) Capabilities and knowledge acquired "off the job" are more important in careers of the 90's. This applies to institutionalised titles and degrees, too. Among these degrees some are more important because of their distinctive power (e.g. postgraduate degrees, degrees from universities abroad).
- c) The more unstable and loosely coupled the actors within the career field, the more important *weak ties* get among all social capital to enable career success.
- d) Managers in careers of the 90's lack well defined symbols of career success which are easily identifiable. Because of this lack of symbolic capital one can find more ambiguity and insecurity in evaluating subjective success in this group.

6 Conclusions

Changes in the empirical field often call for new developments in the area of theory building, too. This paper presented some ideas that might enhance our understanding of influencing factors of managerial careers. Basing the presented theoretical framework on the writings of Bourdieu allows (at least partially) the integration of various levels of analysis. At the same time, the numerous theoretical and empirical studies already existing can be used and integrated into this framework. Furthermore, the framework presented allows the formulation of hypotheses that are guided by theoretical considerations. Thus, it is hoped that the generation of knowledge about this field is enhanced

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