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PICK AND MIX: HOW MANAGEMENT GRADUATES CREATE THEIR OWN CAREER PATH, COMBINING EMPLOYMENT MODES, HR CONFIGURATION, CAREER FIELDS AND ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERSHIP AS THEY SEE FIT

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Introduction

Background

The world we live in is changing at an unprecedented rate, and with it so are organisations. Faced with new challenges, such as globalisation, increasing mobility, shifting social norms, deregulation, international insecurity and the growing pace of technology shifts, organisations have no choice but to evolve, or they will be rendered obsolete. However, organisations depend on the people who constitute their workforce, so these changing norms and expectations, as well as organisational modifications, have and will continue to have an impact on one's career and professional development.

This evolving context leads to increased job insecurity, where linear careers based on a relationship of trust are no longer the only option. Today there are a growing number of employment relationships and career types, some more complex than others.

Problem

What career path can a young graduate expect in the future? Which new forms of employment relationship are likely to emerge? How can organisations hope to influence these relationships? Are a young graduate's career expectations and aspirations truly different from those of an experienced manager?

This thesis tries to be innovative in its approach, in that it will determine whether a link can be established between career field, HR configuration, organisational membership and employment mode. While most researchers base their research on one or two of these areas, such as career types or the employment relationship, here they will be studied together. This is a sparsely studied area, and the analysis will be conducted on management graduates, at different stages of their career.

Purpose

Careers and the employment relationship are of interest for many reasons. For organisations, understanding the career aspirations and relationship expectations of employees, can help to better respond to these expectations, and influence their Human Resource Management (HRM) practices. Furthermore, if a clear link is established between the employment relationship and the career field, it will also help employers build the right relationship for the right position. On a personal level, this topic is of interest as a young graduate, faced with a plethora of career paths and organisations to choose between.

Structure

This thesis is structured in two main parts: theoretical and empirical. The theoretical part reviews existing literature. First, the psychological contract will be introduced, as a concept to explain the employment relationship. After looking into the history and the different types of psychological contracts, how they are structured, how they develop and how they can be breached, the psychological contract's role in creating organisational membership will be detailed. The evolution of career types, from the traditional career to the boundaryless one will be described, before studying the emergence of new types of career fields. Each career field is built through different employment relationships, so we will then present different employment modes and relationships and the Human Resource (HR) configurations that they lead to. This section will conclude with a theoretical model created from this literature, as well as hypotheses and research questions.

The empirical part relies on a quantitative survey consisting of 30 questions conducted on 109 management graduates who currently work. The answers that they gave will be analysed using SPSS Statistics 22. The results from this analysis will be used in order to determine whether the theoretical model that was constructed in the first section is valid, and if the hypotheses are verified. The research questions will be answered, conclusions will be drawn and ideas for further research elaborated on.

Key concepts and definitions

Before entering the theoretical section of this thesis, several key concepts need to be defined in order to facilitate and ensure the reader's complete and thorough understanding of the subject discussed. These concepts are the basis of the theory that will be used and elaborated on, and will all be used throughout this thesis.

Affective Commitment: Affective commitment in this context means organisational affective commitment, which is "partisan, affective attachment to the goals and values of the organisation, to one's role in relation to the goals and values, and to the organisation for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth" (Buchanan, 1974; cited in Allen & Meyer, 1990, 2).

Career: "A course of professional life or employment, which affords opportunity for progress or advancement in the world" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015).

Career field: "The social context within which individual members of the work force who are equipped with a specific portfolio of field-relevant capital try to maintain or improve their place in the given and unfolding network of work-related positions through a patterned set of practices which are enabled and constrained by the rules of the field and, in turn, contribute to the shaping of these rules" (Mayrhofer et al, 2004, 483).

Employment mode: "The mode through which the organisation employs the human capital. Specifically, the mode of employment is determined by whether the requisite human capital is acquired (hired), internally developed (trained), contracted for, or gained through a strategic alliance such as outsourcing" (Bryant & Allen, 2009, 348).

Employment relationship: "The style of relationship between the supplier of the human capital (such as an employee, contractor, or alliance partner) and the management of the organisation" (Bryant & Allen, 2009, 328).

Human capital: "The abilities and skills of any individual [...] that enhance potential income earning" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011). It is "regarded as a resource or asset" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015). The two dimensions of human capital that will be used in this thesis are strategic value and uniqueness.

Human Resources (HR): Depending on the context, HR has two meanings, both as **"**the workforce of an organisation", as well as "the office or department in an organisation that interviews, appoints or keeps records of employees" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011).

HR Configuration: A configuration is " human resource system" (Bryant & Allen, 2009, 328). Each configuration is a bundle of HR practices implemented in combination to manage employees (Lepak & Snell, 2002, 517).

Human Resource Management (HRM): "All organisational activities concerned with recruiting and selecting, designing work for, training, and developing, appraising and rewarding, directing, motivating and controlling workers" (Wilton, 2013, 4).

Organisation: "An organised group of people with a particular purpose". It can be a business, an association or a society, a government department, an international organisation, a charity, to name but a few examples (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015).

Organisational Membership: A feeling that employees have of belonging to the organisation, and perceiving themselves to be a member of a community (Masterson & Stamper, 2003, 475).

Psychological contract: "Individual beliefs, shaped by the organisation, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organisation" (Rousseau, 1995, 9).

Social Exchange: "All relationships between individuals or parties in which the actions or contributions of one are motivated by the expected response or retribution of the other" (Delobbe, 2012, author's translation).

Extended Background and basic concepts

The theoretical background is divided into four chapters. The first chapter examines the psychological contract, as it forms the basis of the employment relationship. It is thus a necessary chapter to understand how the employment relationship is built, develops, evolves and can break down. The second chapter looks at the way in which the current economic and organisational context is changing career types. The third chapter describes different employment relationships, and how these develop, through employment modes and HR configurations. The final chapter looks at the theoretical model developed for the empirical section, as well as the research question.

Chapter 1: The psychological contract

The evolving global context is altering the nature of the employment relationship. Expectations of graduates upon entering the workforce and of employees moving to a new organisation cover a vast array of possibilities, both tangible and intangible and differ according to the individual. The employment relationship is a very broad term that encompasses many dimensions, so can be studied in several different ways. Although not without its problems, the concept of the psychological contract will be used to understand the employment relationship (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008; Schalk & Roe, 2007). Understanding the nature of the psychological contract is essential, as it influences the employment mode and the career type.

Following a brief history of the psychological contract, and its link to social exchange theory, the definition and types of psychological contracts will be explained. How a psychological contract is built and can be breached, as well as the limits of the psychological contract as a theoretical construct will then be analysed. Finally, organisational membership theory will be studied.

History of the psychological contract

The concept of the psychological contract was first introduced in the 1960s and gradually became more mainstream, leading to a considerable growth in the literature on the topic, notably following Denise Rousseau's first publication in 1989 (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). However, the underlying ideas behind the psychological contract emerged much earlier.

Argyris (1960) was the first to coin the term and use the concept of the **psychological contract** (Schalk & Roe, 2007), although the idea originally came from clinical psychology, and is evident in work on social exchange theory (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006). Indeed, the idea of reciprocal exchange in the relationship between an organisation and its employees was elaborated upon both by Barnard in 1938 and March and Simon in 1958 (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). Argyris analysed the relationship between the employees and the foremen in a factory (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). From his study, he found the psychological contract to be "an **implicit understanding** between a group of employees and their foreman" (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008, 18). This first conceptualisation was based on an agreement by both parties to an exchange of specific, primarily economic and tangible resources that fulfil their respective needs (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). Yet Argyris failed to clearly define the concept, which was then further developed by Levinson who claims to be its father (Anderson & Schalk, 1998).

Levinson et al. (1962) were influenced by Menninger (1958), and used the concept to highlight "implicit and unspoken" expectations between the employer and employee (Anderson & Schalk, 1998, 638). Levinson et al (1962) viewed the psychological contract as "a series of **mutual expectations** of which the parties to the relationship may not themselves be dimly aware but which nonetheless govern their relationship to each other" (Levinson et al, 1962, 21; cited in Cullinane & Dundon, 2006, 114). Their findings showed that both the employee and the organisation had considerable expectations from one another, and the eagerness to satisfy these expectations and the anticipation of having the expectations met stimulated both parties to maintain the relationship. They also contributed to the notion that a psychological contract can change as the situation or the understanding of the expectations evolves (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008).

Schein (1978) then built upon Levinson et al, highlighting that these expectations go beyond working hours and remuneration to include a set of obligations, privileges and rights (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006). He defined two levels in the psychological contract: individual and organisational, each of which entails different, yet comparable expectations (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). Schein (1965) also examines the importance of the matching of expectations between both parties. A positive job outcome such as loyalty, employee satisfaction and performance arises through the realisation of these expectations (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). This contribution also shows that perceived violations of the psychological contract can lead to employee dissatisfaction and labour unrest (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006).

All the above approaches to the psychological contract share a common theme: the **reciprocal exchange relationship** between two parties (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). However, interest in the application of the psychological contract to management theory, particularly to HRM, only truly emerged in the 1990s, despite the earlier interest that had been shown in its construct. This renewed interest and research, started by Rousseau's 1989 article, came from a desire to design new people-management processes in a context of changing dynamics in the labour market (such as rising flexibility), increasing international competition and economic restructuring (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006).

What is today considered contemporary research begins with Rousseau's re-conceptualisation of the psychological contract in her 1989 article. She defines the psychological contract more narrowly, as "individual beliefs, shaped by the organisation, regarding terms of an **exchange arrangement** between the individual and their organisation" (Rousseau, 1995, 9). This therefore shifts the perspective from the two-level (individual and organisational) approach to the unilateral approach of the individual (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). This definition is contested, notably by Guest (1998), who feels that the contract is in the **interaction** between both parties and does not reside solely with the individual or the organisation. Despite this contested definition, the unilateral approach, concerning only the individual, will be used in this research paper.

The psychological contract defined

Although there is extensive literature on the topic, there is no definition of the psychological contract that is universally accepted. A basic explanation is that "the psychological contract expresses the combination of beliefs held by an individual and his or her employer about what they expect of one another" (Armstrong, 2006, 225). Simply put, "a psychological contract is a perception of **mutual reciprocal obligations**" (Schalk & Roe, 2007, 168). The definition has evolved as the research and literature on the topic has grown, and has developed from Schein's 1965 definition that "there is an unwritten set of expectations operating at all times between every member of an organisation and the various managers and others in that organisation" (Schein, 1965; cited in Armstrong, 2006, 225).

The definition that will be used for this thesis is the one given by Rousseau (1995), as it is the one most accepted by researchers, and most appropriate for this research. Again, Rousseau defined the psychological contract as "individual beliefs, shaped by the organisation, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organisation" (Rousseau, 1995, 9). To put it simply, the psychological contract "encompasses the actions employees believe are expected of them and what response they expect in return from the employer" (Rousseau & Greller, 1994, 386). Through this definition, it is clear that Rousseau sees this concept as residing with the individual, and not in the relationship. This definition is also based on obligations more than expectations (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008).

Several features of the contract are essential to make clear. Firstly, the psychological contract is based on **(perceived) promises**. These promises are in fact interpretations of what is said and meant. These perceptions are subjective, and this implies that individuals can have different impressions of what is included in their psychological contract, even if they work in the same organisation (Rousseau, 1995). Given that the psychological contract is an implicit understanding, this means that the agreement is perceived by the individual and the organisation, and not set in stone, which can lead to disagreements.[1] Secondly, the psychological contract is based on reciprocity and an exchange between the two parties. Finally, the psychological contract is **dynamic**. It is constructed over time, and evolves as the relationship develops.

The psychological contract serves several purposes. Firstly, the reduction of insecurity, as it fills any gaps that cannot be addressed in a formal written contract. Secondly, it empowers employees, giving them a sense of influence within the organisation. Finally, it can "shape" employee behaviour, as employees will adjust their behaviour based on the outcome of their obligations towards the organisation and the obligations of the organisation towards them (McFarlane, Shore and Tetrick, 1994; cited in Anderson & Schalk, 1998).

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[1] "Obligation" and "commitment" must therefore be understood throughout as "perceived obligation" and "perceived commitment" as it relates to psychological, non-written and non-mutually agreed, contracts

The role of social exchange in founding psychological contracts

The psychological contract concept was strongly influenced by **Social Exchange Theory**, which is used today in order to understand employment relationships in organisations. Blau (1964) developed a theory of exchange based on individuals interacting with groups. Social exchange is defined as "all relationships between individuals or parties in which the actions or contributions of one are motivated by the expected response or retribution of the other" (Delobbe, 2012, author's translation).

In the professional world, exchanges are mainly of two types: social and economic. Whilst in an **economic exchange** there is a formal contract that details the obligations of each party and a limited time frame within which these must be fulfilled; a **social exchange** "involves unspecified obligations where one party needs to trust the other that the benefits received will be reciprocated. The reciprocation of benefits enhances trustworthiness which in turn facilitates the on-going conferring of benefits and discharging of obligations over the long term" (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008, 19-20). Social exchange theory therefore scrutinises the development of social exchange relationships, which lead to "feelings of personal obligations, gratitude and trust" (Blau, 1964, 94; cited in Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008, 20).

One essential aspect of the Social Exchange Theory is the **norm of reciprocity**, the notion that the actions of one party are dependent on the reactions of the other. It is this dependence on the interaction between both parties that has led social exchange to be applied to the employment relationship (Stamper et al, 2009). The key common elements of the psychological contract and Social Exchange Theory are twofold: firstly, they both consider that exchange relationships are ruled by the norm of reciprocity; secondly, entering into a relationship implies obligations or expectations that each party must deliver in return for what they receive (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008).

Types of psychological contracts

Many studies on the psychological contract, such as Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997), have found that in terms of the psychological contract, there are many more similarities in employees' and managers' perceptions of the employees' obligations than in the employers' obligations.

Whilst several terms in a typical psychological contract are based on those found in work contracts, others go beyond the legal scope. These differences lead to different types of psychological contracts and distinctive employment relationships. Rousseau suggests two key different contact types: the transactional and the relationship.

The **transactional psychological contract** involves a short-term relationship trade of extrinsic rewards and money for labour. This means that it is based on specific performance terms and exchanges are regarding a limited number of actions over a defined time. Financial rewards are often emphasised in this form of contract. The **relationship psychological contract** involves a long-term relationship trade of personal security for loyalty. It has a larger scope, and unspecified performance terms, which include a broader range of benefits in exchange for deeper commitment. This type of contract implies trust.

However this distinction between two different contract types is nowadays considered too narrow, and these categories are not considered distinct. Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler (2000) and Isaksson, De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, & De Witte (2010) consider that these two categories are different levels of the psychological contract. The basis of most contracts, both short and long term, being transactional; and the relationship elements being added to the contract over time.

Rousseau (1995) identifies two further types of psychological contracts: **balanced** and **transitional,** as contemporary forms of employment contracts. She created a framework built on two dimensions: duration and performance terms, to include all four contract types. The duration is either short or long term, and performance terms can be specified or un-specified. The four types of psychological contracts are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Types of psychological contracts

Duration	***Specified***	***Not Specified***
Short-term	Transactional	Transitional
Long Term	Balanced	Relational

Performance Terms

Adapted from Rousseau (1995)

Transitional contracts, also called "no guarantees condition" are short-term contracts with unspecified performance terms. They are essentially "a breakdown in contracts" (Rousseau, 1995, 98), where there is an absence of commitment from the part of the organisation concerning the employment future, with high uncertainty, instability and a high turnover rate. **Balanced contracts** focus on the long-term and on a relationship, with high member commitment and integration, as well as development and support. The performance terms, although specific, can evolve over time.

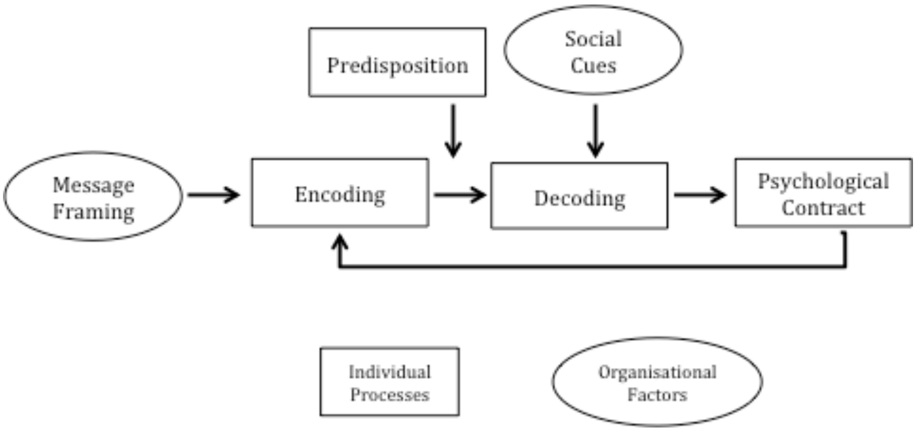
Building a psychological contract

The psychological contract is constructed over time. It begins before an employee enters an organisation, and is continually adjusted as the relationship develops, until after the employee leaves the organisation. The construction of the psychological contract needs to be understood in order to appreciate fully how an employment relationship is created and evolves. How a psychological contract is constructed, individual and contextual influences, and its management will now be explained.

During their early life, before entering the workforce, individuals create a **schema** (or outline) of the employment relationship, which "provides individuals with a knowledge base that serves as a guide for the interpretation of information, actions, and expectations" (Sherman & Morley, 2015). This schema creates a basis for the creation of the psychological contract.

The psychological contract is a "mental model that people use to frame events such as promises, acceptance and reliance" (Rousseau, 1995, 27). It is constructed as the relationship develops, and this therefore implies that it exists before the individual enters the organisation. This anticipatory psychological contract is built based on previous personal and professional experiences, which influence the perception of the contract (Rousseau, 2001). The psychological contract, rudimentary when employees are hired, becomes more elaborate throughout their tenure with an organisation, through the acquisition of new experiences and information (Sherman & Morley, 2015). Figure 2 below details the process and steps involved in creating an individual's psychological contract.

Figure 2: Creating an individual's psychological contract



Retrieved from Rousseau, 1995

During its initial construction and throughout its existence and development, external factors affect the psychological contract. The key external factors that contribute to the creation of psychological contracts are the messages sent by organisations, and the social cues provided by co-workers.

The **messages** that organisations send through their agents (such as managers, co-workers and recruiters) convey intentions and commitments for the future. These can be future plans, potential actions, or references to the past, from which one can derive an image of the outlook. Organisations express themselves notably through overt statements, observations, expressions of organisational policy and social constructions (Rousseau, 1995).

Social cues are "information acquired from one's co-workers or work group" (Rousseau, 1995, 39); they play three roles in the contract making process: "providing messages for contract creation, conveying social pressure to conform to the group's understanding of terms, and shaping how individuals will interpret the organisation's actions" (Rousseau, 1995, 39). It is in fact the messages that an individual receives, and how the individual interprets this information, that influences the contract building more than the actual message that was sent. This socialisation is particularly important in determining the degree of organisational influence in shaping an individual's psychological contract, as it is highly resistant to change once the schema is fully formed (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008).

An **individual's predispositions** or internal interpretations also influence the creation of the psychological contract, notably their cognitive biases (the information processing style) and career motives (Rousseau, 1995). Indeed, individuals develop assumptions about the employment relationship before their first employment experience, which influences how they interpret signals and cues from the organisation (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008).

Encoding refers to the process used by individuals to "interpret organisational actions as promises" (Rousseau, 1995, 40). This depends on three conditions; firstly, the contract maker (who is making the promises) must appear to have the authority to make such promises. Secondly, the promise must be made in an appropriate context, and finally the contract maker should behave in a manner that is consistent with the commitment that was made.

Decoding "reflects the judgements people make regarding the standards of behaviour that must be met to fulfil commitments made by themselves and by the organisation" (Rousseau, 1995, 44). Interpretation is necessary, as the contract has mainly been built on observation and verbal agreement, which need to transform accordingly into action and behaviour.

When a contract is formed, it must be maintained. Although it does evolve somewhat over time, it is quite stable, and largely resistant to change (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). Yet as with all contracts and relationships, a psychological contract can be breached. For some, a contract breach triggers the adjustment of their psychological contract (Payne, Culbertson, Lopez, Boswell & Barger, 2015). However, a contract breach can have some more significant consequences for employees and organisations.

Breaches of the psychological contract

As trust is the basis of the psychological contract, breaches, violations and breakdowns of the psychological contract can lead to strong emotional reactions and intense feelings (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

Contract violations, which range from small misperceptions to "stark breaches in good faith", (Rousseau, 1995, 111) are very common. When conducting a study, Conway and Briner (2002) found that 69% people reported a breach had occurred in the 10 days prior to questioning. Though potentially damaging, they tend to be "frequent and survivable" (Rousseau, 1995, 111).

Rousseau (1995, 112) defines **violation** as a "failure to comply with the terms of a contract". In a psychological contract however, it is the interpretation of the failure that decides whether or not the individual experiences the violation. There are innumerable forms of experienced violations that come from a failure to keep a commitment, and this failure causes damages. The terms "violation" and "breach" were used interchangeably by researchers until Morrison and Robinson (1997) created a distinction between the two. This distinction is made in terms of cognition and emotion. A **breach** of the psychological contract "captures a cognitive awareness that one or more obligations have not been fulfilled" whereas a **violation** "captures the emotional experience that arises from the recognition that a breach has occurred" (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008, 23). This means that one can know that a breach has occurred without feeling violated.

Research has shown that contract breaches can lead to a multitude of **reactions**, from lower psychological well-being, trust in the organisation, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment, to an earlier return from expatriation, and a more cynical attitude towards the organisation. Work engagement is a motivational psychological state of response or reaction to one's work (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006). Psychological contract breach was found to have a negative effect on work engagement (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Zhao, Wayne, Globkowski & Bravo (2007) found that although there were increased intentions to leave the organisation, higher turnover was not a significant consequence of a breach. Research has also found that the greater the importance of the promise, the stronger the negative reaction to breach (Conway & Briner, 2002; Anderson & Schalk, 1998).

Strong relationships with frequent interactions and previous experiences that bind an individual to an organisation create **resistance to violation**. Furthermore, personality traits, such as conscientiousness, can impact the reaction to a breach of the psychological contract (Konovsky & Organ, 1996). Bal, De Lange, Jansen & Van Der Velde (2008) found that age has significant effects on the response to a psychological contract breach, and would moderate the relation between the breach and the development of job attitudes. Older workers respond less emotionally to a contract breach, yet have a greater decrease in job satisfaction. Research found that the relationship between psychological contract and work engagement can be mediated by job satisfaction

(Rayton and Yalabik, 2014). Additionally, a low-trust relationship, where incentives to breach the contract are high and one party places little value in the relationship, makes violation more likely to occur (Rousseau, 1995). Different studies show a self-reported link between psychological contract breach and deviant work behaviour (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002). Following a violation, psychological contracts become more transactional, as the employee withdraws from the relationship, paying closer attention to its monetary aspects. A re-evaluation of what the employee feels they owe the organisation relative to what they are owed is at the core of this change to the psychological contract (Robinson et al, 1994 and Herriot & Pemberton, 1996; cited in Anderson & Schalk, 1998).

Limits of the psychological contract

Although the concept of the psychological contract is widely used and researched, some debates on its use and validity remain as it presents a number of problems. The most important limit of the concept is measuring the contract, as beliefs, expectations and obligations are very subjective, and make quantitative analysis difficult. Other key issues are whether a psychological contract can be considered a contract, mixed messages and divergent expectations, and external sources of influence that impact the building of the contract.

Firstly, can the psychological contract truly be considered a **contract**? From its very definition, this contract is about beliefs, promises, perceptions, expectations and obligations. Comparing these, as they demand different levels of engagement, is challenging. Identifying the, often implicit, promises is also difficult (Conway, 1996; cited in Guest 1998). Calling this interaction between individual and organisation a contract is problematic. A contract is "an agreement, or at least the outward appearance of an agreement" (Cheshire, 1991; cited in Guest, 1998, 652). As subjective perceptions appear to be essential in a psychological contract, and agreement is only "in the eye of the beholder" (Guest, 1998, 652), this undermines the possibility of reaching an agreement. Guest (1998) has described the result of the implicit meeting the implicit as being "two strangers passing blindfold and in the dark, disappointed at their failure to meet".

Mixed messages and **divergent expectations** stem from the fact that employers are generally considered to have a greater deal of power to shape expectations, and can therefore manage a psychological contract (Guest and Conway, 2002). The psychological contract is based on a reciprocal agreement, yet the dimensions of the reciprocity are unspecified and implicit. This creates a conceptual problem, wherein it is extremely difficult to measure a psychological contract using a fixed set of variables (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006). Assuming that measurable indicators exist still does not remove the possibility of miscommunication or mixed messages regarding expectations between an employee and the organisation. An employee can perceive a breach, even if it is based on false expectations. Yet these false expectations often come from promises made, or poorly communicated expectations during the hiring process.

During the building of the psychological contract, potentially powerful **sources of influence** can have an impact on the clarity and precision of the exchange, yet these have been largely missed in the literature (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006). Employees construct their psychological contract under the influence of internal and external factors. Internal factors are within the organisation, such as managers; whilst external factors are any economic and social factors from which employees build up expectations (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006). Yet the messages that employees receive from management and from the wider economy are all interpreted by the employee, which tends to "reinforce a prescribed set of social values that inherently favour a particular command and control culture for management" (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006, 122). Indeed, for many employees, management is the only source of influence in determining the organisations' obligations. This leads to the possibility of employee expectations being shaped to fit the managerial agenda.

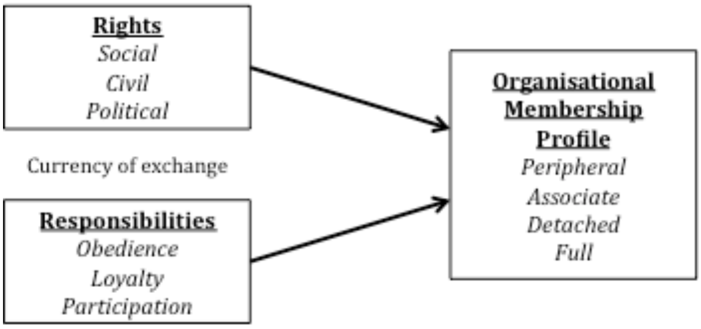
Despite these (albeit important) limitations, the psychological contract will be used in this thesis to analyse the employment relationship, as it is by and large the most developed and accepted method to do so. It is also important to keep in mind that is merely an ideological, theoretical construct.

A typology of organisational membership

The fulfilment of certain aspects of psychological contract has been found to strongly influence employee **commitment** (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000). The terms of a psychological contract and its completion lead the workers to feel more or less attached to their organisation. Stamper, Masterson and Knapp (2009), argue that it is necessary to distinguish between the exchange and the relationship between the two parties. The exchange is often represented by the psychological contract, yet the relationship can be influenced by many other factors.

The mechanisms of exchange within the employment relationship are **responsibilities** that each member assumes voluntarily as well as the level of **rights**, and their nature, offered by the organisation (Stamper et al., 2009). Varying levels of these rights and responsibilities lead to four different **membership profiles**: peripheral, associate, detached and full. This model can be seen below on Figure 3. The exchange of rights and responsibilities will briefly be explained, before looking at each organisational membership profile.

Figure 3: A model of organisational membership



Adapted from Stamper et al (2009)

The work relationships considered here are seen in the context of **social exchange.** The resources that are exchanged are rights and responsibilities, and they play an important role "in signalling the desired nature of the relationship" (Stamper et al, 2009, 306). As Blau (1964) noted in his Social Exchange Theory, how an individual (and in this case an employee) acts is determined by how they want others to treat them in the future. This leads some employees to seek out more responsibility, while others actively choose to reduce their responsibilities, depending on their respective desire to increase or decrease their ties to the organisation. Organisations can also choose to grant their employees more rights and responsibilities in order to make them feel more valuable and to strengthen the relationship (Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1994). Simply put: "organisations offer or rescind rights beyond those legally required to individuals in an effort to negotiate levels of membership" (Stamper et al, 2009, 308). By changing the rights and responsibilities offered, the organisation is hoping to alter the psychological contract.

Peripheral is defined as "being of, relating to, involving, or forming a surface part, or as being auxiliary to the organisation" (Merriam-Webster, 2009; cited in Stamper et al, 2009, 308). Although peripheral membership has been linked not only to having a **transactional psychological contract**, but also to part-time and temporary employees (Stamper et al, 2009; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1994), Stamper et al (2009) suggest that this is not necessarily the case. The basic level of attachment seen in a peripheral membership situation is because both the employee and the organisation choose it, so both the employer and the employee have **low mutual obligations** (Shore & Barksdale, 1998). This exchange is balanced, in that only basic social rights are granted, in exchange for performance of basic and specific responsibilities.

Associate Membership is defined as "having secondary or subordinate status" (Stamper et al, 2009, 309). These members feel that the social rights they receive meet their basic needs, and they are willing not only to complete basic responsibilities linked to their assigned tasks, but also to take on additional ones. Associate members are willing to take on these extra responsibilities in the hope of demonstrating their value and in turn receiving a higher membership status. Associate membership can also be part of the career progression model in some professions such as consulting or law. An **unbalanced exchange**, where employees are giving more to the organisation than they receive in return, is characteristic of this membership profile. This can be considered as **employee over-obligation** (Shore & Barksdale, 1998). This profile is linked to a **transitional psychological contract**, as by assuming additional responsibilities, the employee's performance expectations become ambiguous (Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1994). However, one considerable difference is that an associate member could have an extended duration of employment.

The meaning of **detached** is "standing by itself: separate and/or unconnected" (Merriam-Webster, 2009; cited by Stamper et al., 2009, 310). A detached membership profile, like the associate membership, is **unbalanced** in terms of the exchange of rights and responsibilities, but at the other end of the spectrum, in that the organisation gives more than the employee does. This can be considered as **employee under-obligation** (Shore & Barksdale, 1998). The employee is given a high number of rights (social, political and civil) within the organisation, yet the individual does not seek out any responsibilities that go beyond their basic job description. Despite the organisation finding them valuable, these individuals are actively choosing to remain or become disconnected from their organisation. This profile is not linked to any form of psychological contract as neither employment duration nor performance specificity are defined (Stamper et al, 2009).

Having **full membership** of an organisation is defined as "having all distinguishing characteristics and enjoying all authorised rights and privileges" (Merriam Webster, 2009; cited in Stamper et al, 2009, 310). Often related to as "**core workers**" (Tsui et al, 1997; cited in Stamper et al, 2009, 310), these employees feel that they are valued by the organisation. Full members have similar values, aspirations and goals as the other members and the organisation. They enjoy complete social, political and civil rights within the organisation, and in return accept all forms of responsibilities, both prescribed and non-prescribed, both for the organisation and other employees (Stamper et al, 2009). This exchange can therefore be seen as **balanced**, with both parties giving and receiving a considerable amount, so both the employer and the employee have **mutual high obligations** (Shore & Barksdale, 1998).

In summary, this first section has detailed the psychological contract; from its history and multiple types, to how it is built, develops, can be breached and its influential role in creating organisational membership. It is clear from these organisational membership profiles that the relationship between the employee and the organisation influences the involvement of the employee within the organisation, which can naturally have an impact on their career progression.

Chapter 2: The different types of careers

A **career** is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "a course of professional life or employment, which affords opportunity for progress or advancement in the world" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015). Over the past decade, a rising demand for flexibility and efficiency has led organisations to implement new employment strategies, and traditional careers are no longer the only possibility (Dulac & Delobbe, 2005). The career is "by its nature a multidisciplinary field of study, as it has the peculiarity of mixing social and macro-economic environments with individual behaviours" (Cadin, Bender & de Saint Geniez, 2003, 4, own translation).

In order to understand the different types of career and employment relationships, the development of the traditional career model as well as the changing organisational career philosophy will be analysed. The changing philosophy has led to the rise of contemporary models, notably the boundaryless career and the model proposed by Mayrhofer, Meyer, Iellatchitch & Shiffinge (2004), which will then be looked at.

The traditional career

The **traditional career** is seen as "advancement within a profession or occupation, made possible within an organisation by the provision of a cradle-to-grave employment philosophy" (Sparrow and Hiltrop, 1994; cited in Wilton, 2013, 305). Customarily, an individual's career is a series of steps that one progresses through during their professional life. There is an emphasis on careers "taking place within a bureaucratic context and on continuous vertical advancement through the organisational hierarchy" (Wilton, 2013, 305).

Several authors (Super, 1957; Hall, 1976; Schein, 1978) have proposed **career development models**. Super (1957) defines four successive stages in one's professional life: exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. Hall (1976) builds on this model by adding the age principle, whilst Schein (1978) adds a mid-career crisis phase. One model, based on a combination of these models, will be presented here.

The initial phase, **exploration**, enables an individual to find him or herself, to develop his or her capabilities and to discover all the career options available (Super, 1957). It is at the heart of the career decision-making process, and focuses on three key development tasks: defining, specifying and implementing a career choice. Individuals search for their areas of interest (Schein, 1978).

The second phase is the **establishment** phase, which is when an individual enters into the professional sphere and develops his or her activities. The worker finds their place in the organisation. This phase enables progression whilst knowing oneself and one's environment (Schein, 1978).

Maintenance is the third phase, which refers to the stabilisation of the career orientation (Super, 1957) and the professional role (Hall, 1976). It is a period of growth (Schein, 1978) during which the employee develops his capacities, and searches for greater responsibility and autonomy, as well as becoming more productive for the organisation.

The **mid-career crisis** phase comes next (Schein, 1978). New obstacles and new choices are given to the employee, who has to make a decision. He can remain at his current level of responsibility, change career, or give himself more ambitious objectives and targets to achieve.

The final phase of the career is its **decline**. It is a period of gradual retreat (Hall, 1976) during which the employee has a reduced level of power and responsibility, and is preparing to leave the professional world and retire (Super, 1957).

This model has some limits and weaknesses. Cycles can be discontinuous and environmental factors, such as interactions with people and the environment, are not sufficiently taken into account. An individual's personality can also interfere with his or her career development (Cadin et al, 2003). Furthermore, these models, which date from the 1970s, can appear dated given the current trends in the work environment.

A changing organisational career philosophy

Organisational and economic restructuring, with a growing demand for organisational and labour flexibility, have led to the emergence of new career forms (Wilton, 2013). Flattening organisational hierarchies have led career paths to become increasingly indistinct, and the traditional definition of a career no longer fits contemporary organisational career systems (Adamson, Doherty & Viney, 1998).

Adamson et al (1998, 255) argue that there have been three central changes in **organisational career philosophy**. Firstly, “the employer–employee relationship is not now conceived as long- term, and thus the future-time orientation of careers now seems less appropriate.” Secondly, “whilst career progression may indeed still mean moving between positions over time, it no longer necessarily means hierarchical movement”. Finally, “from both the organisational and individual perspectives it is no longer apparent how a logical, ordered and sequential career may actually evolve”.

Organisations are moving from formal structures and process to more versatility, and more flexible structures (Adamson et al, 1998). Career ladders and explicit hierarchical career paths, with a focus on opportunities for advancement or progression, have been replaced with flatter organisational structures and talk of opportunities to improve marketability and employability (Viney, Adamson and Doherty, 1995; cited in Adamson et al, 1998). Vaughn and Wilson (1994, 44) even suggested that, “the [career] ladder has unexpectedly turned into a hamster wheel”. With this “hamster wheel” comes new career types.

The boundaryless career

Since the 1970s, several new career forms have emerged in literature, the most important being the concept of the “**boundaryless” career** (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). This concept appears due to a desire for flexibility, organisational changes and voluntary reorientations (Delobbe, 2006) to name but a few.

There is no clear definition of the boundaryless career; indeed Arthur & Rousseau (1996, 6) struggle to define it clearly, as it can have “several specific meanings, or emphases”. The most general meaning is “being the opposite of organisational careers”. The most common case of a boundaryless career is when a career “moves across the boundaries of separate employers”. Yet it can also mean “traditional organisational career boundaries, notably those involving hierarchical reporting and advancement principles, are broken”. Several other meanings are possible, yet “a common factor in the occurrence of all these meanings is one of independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional organisational career arrangements." Organisations provide opportunities for employees to develop skills, rather than provide advancement opportunities.

There are many other labels for these **new career types**, such as “protean” (Hall, 1996), “post-corporate” (Pepierl & Baruch, 1997) or “free-form” (Leach & Chakiris, 1988). The protean career is “characterised by frequent change and self-invention, autonomy, and self-direction – driven by the needs of the person rather than the organisation” (Hall, 2002). Though these models present some (subtle) differences, their key idea remains similar: the links between individual and organisations have weakened, becoming less structured and more temporary (Brousseau et al., 1996; cited in Wilton, 2013). One of the reasons for this trend of lower links to the organisation stems, at least partially, from the fact that organisations, when in trouble, now fire indiscriminately and immediately, in spite of many of years of loyalty from an employee. The rise of protean career can therefore be seen as a natural process of self-protection from the individual.

The psychological contract evolves with the career

A psychological contract emerges during one’s career development. These new and changing career types have also led the content of psychological contracts, which differ from a traditional career to a boundaryless one, to change and evolve (Hiltrop, 1995).

In 1978, Schein (1978) studied the interaction between an individual and an organisation and the birth of the psychological contract. He elaborated a 3-stage model, which aims to establish the emergence of the psychological contract in the context of the traditional career. The three stages are entry, socialisation and mutual acceptance.

The first stage is the **entry stage**. It is the individual’s preparation and training period, during recruitment and selection. The organisation then decides to hire the candidate, who accepts the employment offer.

Socialisation is the next phase. The employee learns about the organisation: from how it functions, to how to work within it and how to interact with colleagues. This period enables both parties (employee and organisation) to test one another. Details of the psychological contract are finalised. Both parties build up an image of the other and their future together.

The final stage is **mutual acceptance**. Through a variety of formal and informal processes, the employee becomes a complete member of the organisation and is wholly accepted within the organisation by the end of this stage. It is the phase during which a viable psychological contract is constructed, and for this the needs and expectations of both parties must be aligned (Schein, 1978). This model was elaborated for traditional careers. However, with organisations evolving, and, with it, their career philosophy, it remains to be seen whether this model is relevant for non-traditional careers.

In a boundaryless contract, employees no longer offer their loyalty in exchange for employment security. Instead, they now give their performance in exchange for continuous learning and development and the market value of their competencies (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). **Employability** therefore replaces security for the employee, and thus the focus shifts from career development to personal development (Wilton 2013). Hiltrop (1995, 289) suggested the emergence of a new type of psychological contract "that is more situational and short term and […] that assumes each party is much less dependent on the other for survival and growth".

However both the boundaryless and traditional career are two extremes of career type and psychological contract. Today, both organisations and individuals might seek some flexibility whilst maintaining organisational structure and hierarchy. Mayrhofer et al (2004) propose a model that combines elements of both to form ideal career types.

Emergence of new types of career fields

Having established the key differences between the boundaryless and traditional career, the model for career typology proposed by Mayrhofer et al (2004) will be described in detail.

In this study, the authors examine the career on a European level, looking at 2 variables: the socio-economic origins and the domain in which the employees are now working. Their study, in which 398 graduates from three different graduation years (1970, 1990 and 2000) were interviewed, found that the profession of the parent influences that of their offspring, and that boundaryless careers were becoming more popular. From their study they created a career typology, which identifies four career types. It is necessary to keep in mind that these are ideal (or theoretical) career types, and that reality can be nuanced. Having a matrix that focuses only on two dimensions for such a complex topic is also limiting.

The two dimensions on which the typology is based are coupling and configuration. **Coupling** refers to "the closeness of relationships and the degree of mutual influence" between the employee and other members of the personnel and the organisation

(Mayrhofer et al, 2004, 484). **Loose coupling** represents a relationship where decisions of one employee have little impact on the decisions of others, whereas **tight coupling** means employees are closely interwoven in their decisions. A relationship with tight coupling therefore implies that the actions of one employee reduce the others' freedom to act considerably more than in a loose coupling.

The **configuration** dimension is focused on the changes and evolution in the relationship structure between the employee and other relevant people. It discusses the rate of the configuration change rather than the number. When both the social environment and the tasks of the employee do not change rapidly or frequently, the configuration is considered stable. An **unstable configuration**, on the other hand, implies frequent changes in work related tasks and/or the social environment.

The combination of these two dimensions gives the following matrix shown in Figure 4 of four ideal types of careers. Each quadrant will be explained individually, starting in the top right quadrant with company world, then moving clockwise through free-floating Professionalism, chronic flexibility and ending with self-employment.

Figure 4: Types of career fields – the coupling and configuration dimensions

Configuration	Coupling: *Loose*	Coupling: *Tight*
Stable	Self-Employment 4	Company World 1
Unstable	Chronic Flexibility 3	Free-Floating-Professionalism 2

Adapted from Mayrhofer et al. (2004)

Company World is similar to the traditional organisational career in the sense that there is a well-defined hierarchy and career ladder. Loyalty is given in exchange for high job security, and employees tend to stay with the organisation for a long time. Configuration is stable, meaning that there is relatively little turnover of employees. Coupling is tight, with a high interdependence between employees. The key resource here is the hierarchical position (Mayrhofer et al, 2004).

Free-Floating Professionalism is characterised by specialists working for different customers, but typically having only one customer (often an organisation) relationship at a time. Configuration is unstable, as the relationship is temporary. However, whilst the relationship lasts, there is a high interdependence between the worker and the organisation. The worker stays within their field of expertise, which can grow and develop over time through work experience. The key resources are knowledge and reputation, as they lead to more independence (Mayrhofer et al, 2004).

Chronic Flexibility is a career field characterised by frequent job changes, and therefore a highly unstable job configuration. Yet unlike Free-Floating Professionalism, the worker does not necessarily have a domain of expertise, and can not only change organisation but also industry and contract type. Coupling is loose, as there is little interdependence and weak ties between the different actors in the relationship, and many workers are freelance. The key resource is the capacity to rapidly conquer a new domain (Mayrhofer et al, 2004).

Individuals that work outside organisations typically occupy the **Self-Employment** career field. They are usually entrepreneurs or self-employed. Coupling is loose, as these workers value autonomy and independence. Their configuration is relatively stable, as their professional relationships tend to be steady. The key resource is the professional or role ethos (Mayrhofer et al, 2004).

It is important to remember the underlying logic and characteristics that make up each sub-field, and not their names. Indeed, their labels might be misleading, as they merely illustrate "typical empirical phenomena that correspond with the subfield" (Mayrhofer et al, 2004, 486). For example, a legally self-employed lawyer that only has one large customer does not have loose coupling and would therefore, conceptually, be classified as company world.

This section on careers has detailed the evolution of the career model; how the changing organisational career philosophy has led to a change from the traditional career to the boundaryless career type. These changing career types have led to an evolving psychological contract, and the emergence of new career fields by Mayrhofer et al. (2004). These career types are conceptual, a model, meaning that in practice it is possible to be between two fields. These career fields were built on dimensions (coupling and configuration), which share a commonality: they both look at the relationships an employee builds during his time within an organisation, or the employment relationship.

Chapter 3: Human capital, employment modes and the employment relationship

The employment relationship defines the employment mode that organisations can have with their employees. Just as careers are evolving with the times, so are employment relationship and employment modes. The traditional employment relationship and the new and emerging employment modes, which are built using human capital characteristics, will be analysed, followed by the new forms of employment relationship and HR configuration associated with these modes.

The traditional employment relationship

According to Cappelli (1999) the **traditional employment relationship** is a long-term one based on job security. There is strong hierarchy, with clearly defined jobs, and learning and education opportunities, enabling motivated workers to climb the ladder. Individual performance influences promotions, salary increases and employment decisions.

Since the 1990s this traditional employment relationship has evolved. Salaries are increasingly linked to performance, whilst cost-cutting and business streamlining has led companies to fire employees and outsource some positions. Developing capabilities is no longer necessarily in the best interest of each company. This has led to multiple employment modes and employment relationships.

Human capital characteristics: uniqueness and strategic value

In order to analyse different employment modes and relationships, Lepak and Snell (1999, 32) introduced the term "**HR architecture**" to describe the HR system as an association of "different employment modes, employment relationships, [and] HR configurations". They created a framework in which to analyse this architecture, based on two dimensions of human capital. These two dimensions invoked by Lepak and Snell (1999, 2002) are its uniqueness and strategic value, which will now be briefly explained.

Human capital is defined in the Collins English dictionary as "the abilities and skills of any individual [...] that enhance potential income earning" (Collins English Dictionary, 2011). It is "regarded as a resource or asset" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015). Youndt and Snell (2004) found that human capital was significantly and positively related to organisational performance, making it an important value creator.

The **uniqueness of human capital** refers to how rare, specialised, and, in extreme cases, firm-specific the human capital is. If the skills and competencies required are difficult to find on the labour market and are hard to duplicate or imitate, then they can be a source of competitive advantage (Lepak and Snell, 2002).

The **strategic value of human capital** encompasses the potential that human capital has to improve both effectiveness and efficiency as well as to take advantage of market opportunities and counteract threats. Lepak and Snell (1999) established that human capital can be a valuable asset in the resource-based view of the firm when it contributes to a firm's core competencies or competitive advantage. The value of human capital is defined as "the ratio of strategic benefits to customers derived from skills relative to the costs incurred" (Lepak and Snell, 1999, 35), and it directly influences a firm's performance.

Individuals can increase the significance of their human capital (through learning), creating knowledge "that potentially forms a foundation for organisational-level learning and knowledge accumulation" (Youndt & Snell, 2004, 339). As the human capital that a firm requires becomes more distinctive, internalising and fostering its development within the company become essential and often more cost effective. On the other hand, internal development is not required or recommended for generic skills and capabilities.

New employment modes

The value and uniqueness of human capital can be used to determine different or alternate employment modes. **Employment mode** refers to "the mode through which the organisation employs the human capital. Specifically, the mode of employment is determined by whether the requisite human capital is acquired (hired), internally developed (trained), contracted for, or gained through a strategic alliance such as outsourcing" (Bryant & Allen, 2009, 348). The human capital dimensions are used to create a four-quadrant model, where each quadrant links the characteristics of human capital, employment modes and employment relationships. The model is provided in Figure 5 below. Each quadrant will be developed individually, starting in the top right quadrant with knowledge-based employment, and moving clockwise through job-based employment, contractual work arrangements and ending with alliances.

Figure 5: Human capital Characteristics, Employment Modes and Employment Relationships

Uniqueness	Strategic Value: Low	Strategic Value: High
High	4 Alliance *Partnership* **Collaborative-based**	1 Knowledge-Based Employment *Organisation focused* **Commitment-based**
Low	3 Contractual Work Arrangement *Transactional* **Compliance-based**	2 Job-Based employment *Symbiotic* **Productivity-based**

Employment mode *Employment relationship*

HR Configuration

Adapted from Lepak & Snell (1999, 2002)

In the first two quadrants, human capital is likely to be internalised within the firm as it is valuable, which means that the "strategic benefit [of the skills] exceeds the managerial and bureaucratic costs associated with their development and deployment" (Lepak & Snell, 1999, 36).

In **quadrant 1**, human capital within the organisation is both valuable and unique. It is likely seen as core to the firm, as the employees contribute to its objectives (Lepak & Snell, 1999). The firm is also likely to build its strategies around the knowledge base that these employees represent (Snow & Snell, 1993; cited in Lepak & Snell, 2002). The employment mode for these employees is **knowledge-based employment** (Lepak & Snell 2002), also known as **internal development** (Lepak & Snell, 1999). This mode is structured around the employees' skills and competencies and focuses on internal development of human capital to build long-term employee commitment. This development is done through skill-enhancing activities such as education and training. One example of a typical knowledge based employment mode job is an engineer, who develops new products that create customer value.

Quadrant 2 is characterised by human capital, which, whilst highly valuable, is no longer unique as it is easy to find on the labour market. Companies have a reason to keep the employment internal, but not to develop it. The workers "make significant contributions to the firm while possessing skills that are widely transferable" (Lepak & Snell, 2002, 520). This leads to **job-based employment** (Lepak & Snell, 2002) or an **acquisition employment mode**. This mode focuses on staffing, where employees are hired to perform predetermined tasks. By selecting these employees directly from the market place, the company gains immediate access to their capabilities and saves on investing in their development. These employees could for example be analysts or accountants.

In the final two quadrants, the human capital is often externalised by the firm due to its low strategic value. **Quadrant 3** is characterised by generic human capital of low strategic value. As the skills are easily available on the labour market, investing in their development is not of value for the company. Given their limited strategic value, and their limited potential for value creation, they can be treated essentially as a commodity (Lepak & Snell, 1999). This employment mode is therefore **contractual work arrangements**, as this category of workers is often outsourced, and tasks are of limited scope, purpose and duration (Lepak & Snell, 2002). This can reduce costs and increases flexibility, which can improve a firm's competitiveness (Quinn, 1992; cited in Lepak & Snell, 1999). This is common for lower-level jobs, such as maintenance or janitorial staff, as well as administrative work.

The human capital in **quadrant 4** is unique, but of low strategic value as it does not directly create value for the customer. Given this limited value-creating potential, ownership of the skills brings little benefit to a company. A simple example is that of an attorney, who has unique skills, but is of little value for a small firm (Lepak & Snell, 1999). In such situations, the employment mode that firms should rely on is an **alliance** or **partnership**. These external workers provide knowledge-intensive services to the firm, which does not incur the cost of internal employment (Lepak & Snell, 2002). As alliances require trust and the sharing of information, firms often create long-term partnerships, where both parties invest in the relationship (Lepak & Snell, 1999). This type of employment mode is typical of lawyers or consultants.

New forms of the employment relationship

Lepak and Snell (1999, 32) view each employment mode described previously as "carrying an inherently different form of employment relationship." The **employment relationship** refers to "the style of relationship between the supplier of the human capital (such as an employee, contractor, or alliance partner) and the management of the organisation" (Bryant & Allen, 2009, 348). The different relationships will be analysed, based on the architecture in Figure 5, starting in quadrant 1. The four relationship types are organisation-focused, symbiotic, transactional and partnerships.

In a **knowledge-based employment** mode, the relationship is **organisation-focused**. Exchanges between employers and employees are open-ended, and both parties invest a significant amount in the relationship. This long-term investment and involvement is characteristic of this kind of employment relationship. The purpose of giving employees more responsibilities and a more significant role in decision making is to foster organisational commitment, which has been linked to higher performance (Lepak & Snell, 1999). Rousseau (1995) has found that these relationships increase employee incentives to participate in firm-specific learning, which is crucial when their skills are key to the firms' competitive advantage. According to the career typology of Mayrhofer et al. (2004), this employment relationship is similar to the **company world** career type. They both emphasise the importance of loyalty and the involvement of employees, as well as internal development. Stability is a key factor desired by both parties.

A **symbiotic relationship** characterises the **job-based employment** mode. As the employees contribute value to the organisation but their skills are not unique, this relationship is based on mutual benefit. Simply put, as long as both parties benefit from the relationship, it will be maintained. This leads to employees who are often more career-focused than committed to the firm (Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1994). The firm expects loyalty only while the relationship last, and both parties will terminate the relationship when they feel that the benefits that it brings are outweighed by the costs (Lepak & Snell, 1999). A symbiotic relationship is comparable to Mayrhofer et al's (2004) **free-floating professionalism** career typology. A common characteristic is the need for expertise. The career is focused on an industry and not an organisation.

In a **contractual work arrangement**, the relationship is **transactional**. Indeed, the employees have a relationship based on results and explicit performance expectations (Rousseau, 1995). The economic nature of the contract is the main focus area of this type of relationship (Rousseau & parks, 1993; cited in Lepak & Snell, 1999). The employees have limited association and involvement with the organisation. Unlike a symbiotic relationship, the organisation neither expects nor obtains organisational commitment. According to the career typology of Mayrhofer et al. (2004) this employment relationship can be associated with **chronic flexibility**. Indeed, the short-term aspect of the relationship is a key factor, as is the emphasis on a transactional relationship.

A **partnership** is the employment relationship that is associated with **alliances**. Creating a true partnership is essential, as an alliance requires collaboration, based on reciprocal trust and information sharing (Lepak & Snell, 1999). Trust is essential for both to give, receive and use valuable information (Ring & Van de Ven, 1992; cited in Lepak & Snell, 1999). This true partnership requires mutual investment from both parties, and trust has to be built and earned. This is essential as there is a possibility that the unique knowledge of one party is transferred to the other, which can lead to mistrust (Lepak & Snell, 1999). A partnership is comparable with Mayrhofer et al's (2004) **self-employment** career typology as they both emphasise a long-term approach, based on projects.

Different forms of HR configuration

The employment modes and their related employment relationships lead to different HR practices. An organisation can have several different HR practices based on the different employment relationships they choose to have with employees in different positions. Human Resource Management is "a coherent system" (Verburg, Den Hartog & Koopman, 2007, 185), and combinations of HR practices are used to help an organisation reach its goals. An **HR configuration** looks at "bundles" of HR practices used in combination (Verburg et al., 2007, 185). HR configurations, and not practices, are studied, as they have bigger effects on productivity that the sum of the individual practices, and the individual practices work together creating synergies (Verburg et al., 2007). The HR configurations associated with the employment relationships seen previously are: commitment, market based, compliance and collaborative.

A **commitment-based** HR configuration seeks to maximise a firm's return on its human capital investment and nurture employee involvement. It is associated with **knowledge-based employment** and an **organisation-focused relationship**. Decisions are made based on potential rather than current skills, and jobs are loosely defined in order to allow adaptation. Firms invest heavily in training, mentoring and the development of unique skills to encourage the build-up of idiosyncratic knowledge that is uniquely valuable to the firm, as well as structuring their pay systems on learning and information sharing (skill-based and team-based pay respectively). These sorts of HR practices have been linked to higher productivity and long-employment relationships (Huselid, 1995; cited in Lepak & Snell, 1999).

A **symbiotic employment relationship** and human capital **acquisition-based employment mode** are associated with a **market-based** HR configuration. This system emphasises staffing and immediate contribution from an employee. Workers will receive less training and development, as their skills are not unique, and firms will focus on hiring employees who possess the required skills. Once hired, employees are empowered to carry out their tasks. This HR configuration therefore stresses staffing rather than training (buying rather than building their workers), as well as externally equitable wages.

A **compliance-based** HR configuration is linked to a **transactional relationship** and **contract-based work**. HR activities focus largely on contract compliance through rule enforcing and implementing standards. Given the similarity between transactional and symbiotic relationships, it seems obvious that their HR configurations will also have a similar nature. The main difference lies in the greater emphasis that is placed on recruitment and selection in a market based approach. In compliance based HR configurations, any training or development is focused on company policies, systems, and procedures (Lepak & Snell, 1999).

A **collaborative-based** HR configuration helps an organisation invest in their employment relationship and to build trust and knowledge sharing. It is associated with an **alliance** and a **partnership relationship.** This type of HR system rewards and encourages collaboration, information sharing and cooperation, and invests in the effective functioning of the relationship. Any training emphasises team-building and process facilitation. Firms invest in exchange and mentoring programmes, job rotations and communication mechanisms to facilitate knowledge transfer. Group based rewards are also common.

These HR configurations develop and reinforce the employment relationship that is built between an organisation and its employee. The third background section has dealt with the traditional employment relationship, before detailing the human capital characteristics of uniqueness and strategic value. These characteristics were used in order to explain the new employment modes, new forms of employment relationship and HR configuration that have risen with the changing psychological contracts and career types.

Chapter 4: Problem and research questions

Having reviewed all the relevant literature, the following model (shown in Figure 6), based on the theory detailed above, is proposed. It will be used as a hypothesis during the empirical segment of this thesis, and its validity established or refuted through the analysis of the collected data.

The theoretical section was composed of three chapters: the psychological contract, the different types of career, and finally the employment relationship and HR mode. Based on this information, the model aims to establish links between employment relationship, organisational membership and career fields. This model will largely be based on the works of **Lepak & Snell** (2002), **Stamper et al.** (2009), **Shore & Barksdale** (1998) and **Mayrhofer et al.** (2004) described previously, and will be based on hypotheses of the potential connections between these distinct theories and areas of Human Resource Management.

It is composed of four different, fictitious, profiles. These four profiles will briefly be explained now, with a more detailed analysis given in the empirical portion. The explanation starts with the profile located in the top right quadrant and goes round clockwise.

Figure 6: Combined model

Author's construction, based on Lepak & Snell (2002), Stamper et al. (2009), and Mayrhofer et al. (2004)

The **first profile** is composed of loyal employees, who are engaged in their organisation, choose to develop their skills and competencies with the organisations support, and take on all the responsibility they can.

The **second profile** is comprised of career-focused employees, who are loyal to their field more than their organisation. Their focus is on personal development and the furthering of their own knowledge and expertise, which is valuable on the job market.

Employees in the **third profile** are of low strategic value for an organisation and their employment duration and personal development is minimal. Neither party chooses to form a relationship other than an economic one.

The **fourth profile** is made up of workers who seek out an independent career, and are focused on long–term projects. They can set up their own company, or establish a partnership with an organisation to which they lend their expertise.

This model will be used in order to try to classify the respondent and to establish whether there is a link between the employment relationship and the career type. The following research question and sub questions, and hypotheses are offered in order to guide the empirical portion of the thesis.

The research question that will be analysed is the following:

Do employees' employment relationships match their career field, employment mode & HR configuration?

The psychological contract will be used to understand what employment relationships workers believe that they have, as well as their perceived organisational membership. The pattern of obligations that make up the exchange relationship will be examined, and individuals classified based on the level of obligation and degree of balance in the exchange relationship.

Proposal 1*: Individuals will be classified into four distinct groups, which represent four exchange relationship and organisational membership types: mutual high obligations (full membership), mutual low obligations (peripheral membership), employee over-obligation (associate membership), and employee under-obligation (detached membership).*

At the same time, human capital characteristics of value and uniqueness will be used to define employees' current employment mode, based on the level of both these characteristics, as perceived by the employee.

Proposal 2*: Four distinct groups of individuals can be established based on human capital value and uniqueness, which represent four employment modes: knowledge-based employment, job-based employment, contractual work arrangement and alliance.*

HR configuration will be determined based on the HR practices that are observed by and applied to each individual.

Proposal 3*: There are four possible HR configurations: commitment-based, productivity-based, compliance-based and collaborative-based. Individuals have a dominant HR configuration that can be attributed to them.*

Coupling and configuration will be used to determine the theoretical career field that individuals currently work in.

Proposal 4*: Four distinct career fields (company world, free-floating professionalism, chronic flexibility and self-employment) can be established and individuals classified within them based on the level of the coupling and configuration dimensions.*

The results will determine whether it is possible to fit the respondents in the four quadrants, and therefore whether there is a link between employment relationship, career field, organisational membership and employment mode, both in twos and all together. Affective commitment will also be evaluated.

The following hypotheses concern **quadrant 1.**

Hypothesis 1a*: Individuals classified as having a commitment-based HR configuration have a knowledge-based employment mode.*

Hypothesis 1b*: Individuals classified as having a commitment-based HR configuration have full organisational membership*

Hypothesis 1c*: Individuals classified as having a commitment-based HR configuration have a company world type career field.*

Hypothesis 1d*: Individuals classified as having a knowledge-based employment mode have full organisational membership*

Hypothesis 1e*: Individuals classified as having a knowledge-based employment mode have a company world type career field.*

Hypothesis 1f: *Individuals classified as having full organisational membership have a company world type career field.*

Hypothesis 1g*: Individuals classified as having commitment-based HR configurations have the highest affective commitment*

The following hypotheses are related to **quadrant 2**.

Hypothesis 2a*: Individuals classified as having a productivity-based HR configuration have a job-based employment mode.*

Hypothesis 2b*: Individuals classified as having a productivity-based HR configuration have detached organisational membership*

Hypothesis 2c*: Individuals classified as having a productivity-based HR configuration have a free-floating professionalism type career field.*

Hypothesis 2d*: Individuals classified as having a job-based employment mode have detached organisational membership*

Hypothesis 2e*: Individuals classified as having a job-based employment mode have a free-floating professionalism type career field.*

Hypothesis 2f*: Individuals classified as having detached organisational membership have a free-floating professionalism type career field.*

Hypothesis 2g*: Individuals classified as having productivity-based HR configurations have low affective commitment*

The following hypotheses are associated to **quadrant 3**.

Hypothesis 3a*: Individuals classified as having a compliance-based HR configuration have a contractual work arrangement employment mode.*

Hypothesis 3b*: Individuals classified as having a compliance-based HR configuration have peripheral organisational membership*

Hypothesis 3c*: Individuals classified as having a compliance-based HR configuration have a chronic flexibility type career field.*

Hypothesis 3d*: Individuals classified as having a contractual work arrangement employment mode have peripheral organisational membership*

Hypothesis 3e*: Individuals classified as having a contractual work arrangement employment mode have a chronic flexibility type career field.*

Hypothesis 3f*: Individuals classified as having peripheral organisational membership have a chronic flexibility type career field.*

Hypothesis 3g*: Individuals classified as having compliance-based HR configurations have the lowest affective commitment*

The following hypotheses are connected to **quadrant 4**.

Hypothesis 4a*: Individuals classified as having a collaborative-based HR configuration have an alliance type employment mode.*

Hypothesis 4b*: Individuals classified as having a collaborative-based HR configuration have associate organisational membership*

Hypothesis 4c*: Individuals classified as having a collaborative-based HR configuration have a self-employment type career field.*

Hypothesis 4d*: Individuals classified as having an alliance type employment mode have associate organisational membership*

Hypothesis 4e*: Individuals classified as having an alliance type employment mode have a self-employment type career field.*

Hypothesis 4f*: Individuals classified as having associate organisational membership have a self-employment type career field.*

Hypothesis 4g*: Individuals classified as having collaborative-based HR configurations have high affective commitment*

This study will be conducted on individuals who studied management and who are currently employed. No specific sector or field has been chosen, in order to get a complete view of the employment spectrum for these graduates. It will be interesting to see if the stereotypes regarding certain career paths; such as consulting where graduates typically maintain the relationship only as long as they feel that they are learning and gaining competencies before moving on, therefore adopting a free-floating professionalism, boundaryless career type and a symbiotic employment relationship; are confirmed. The profiles of the different respondents will be analysed in order to answer the research question.

Given the diverse age range and work experience, understanding what employment relationships workers aspire to at different points in their career, and how these translate into career paths should also be possible. Is the traditional organisational career path in the company world reserved to workers who are older, whilst young graduates tend to look towards a boundaryless career and free-floating professionalism? Or with the rise of start-ups, are young graduates tending towards independence and self-employment? Does this lead to a symbiotic relationship, or a partnership? And does this career depend on the field in which the individual is working?

A sub question of the research will therefore be:

Do the career aspirations and employment relationship change over time for management graduates?

Methodology

Objective and approach

The objective, methodology and approach chosen for this thesis will now be detailed (De Moerloose, 2013-2014). The aim is to establish a link between an individual's employment relationship, employment mode, career field and organisational membership. Given that previous theories are being tested, and their validity confirmed, as well as a link between them established, the **objective** of this thesis is therefore **confirmatory** and **exploratory**. The **method** used is **deductive**, as it is going from established concepts to analysing some specific individuals' cases. The approach will be largely based on primary data collected through a structured survey. The survey is written based on questions used in literature to assess the same variables, notably human capital, career fields and the psychological contract. The focus of this research is to test the model and see if it can be generalised. The **approach** must therefore be **quantitative** (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). As the psychological contract and career aspirations are based on an individual's perception, Likert scales will be used, which enable the application of quantitative analysis to qualitative data (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998).

Sample group

As it is not realistic to analyse the entire working population, determining a **sample group** enables research to concentrate on a sub-group of the population. The sampling strategy chosen is convenience sampling. This is done both due to time constraints and for ease of data collection, but as it is not representative of the general population, it can lead to distortions and limits the possibility of generalisation.

The sample group that has been chosen for this study is **management graduates**, who are currently employed. This sample is therefore composed of anyone with a university degree (Bachelors, Masters, PhD or MBA) in the field of management. There is no age or geographical limitation to this selection. As careers for these graduates are becoming more globalised it seemed ideal to try to test a global group. The survey was spread through the author's personal network, and then through word of mouth of friends passing it on to their networks, yet all the responses were anonymous. This mean that the survey is biased towards Belgian and CEMS graduates, as well as INSEAD graduates through the author's parents. As all the respondents were employed, this led to some constraints, both in the survey length, and in managing to gather sufficient responses. In total, the survey reached 215 people, from which 109 completed surveys were received, giving a response rate of just over 50%.

The **final sample** is therefore composed of 109 management graduates, of which 66 (61%) are male and 43 are female. They are between 21 and 60 years old, and have between 1 month and 36 years of professional experience. They graduated between 1980 and 2015. 13% have a Bachelors degree, 70% a Masters degree, and 17% a MBA, although none have a PhD. This is an international sample, with 39% having obtained their degree in Belgium, 12% at INSEAD, and 8% outside of Europe. 37% of the respondents followed the CEMS Master in International Management Programme, an international programme with 29 member schools across the world. 52% work in a private company, 29% in a publicly listed company and 10% in start-ups. Both Non-Governmental organisations and academic institutions only had one respondent working for them. 29% work in an organisation with more than 25 thousand employees, and 13% in organisations with less than 10. The three most common sectors they work in are Finance, Banking and Insurance (25%), Consulting (16%) and Information Technology (8%). Regarding functions in which the respondents work, the most common are consulting and strategy (22%), finance, (20%), sales (14%), and management (11%). For more detailed information on the respondents, see Appendix 1

Data collection method

The data required for this thesis was both primary and secondary (De Moerloose, 2013-2014). **Primary data** is the data collected specifically for the chosen research, through multiple means, such as surveys, interviews or experiments (De Moerloose, 2013-2014). **Secondary data** is data that was not collected directly for this research, and often pre-exists the research (De Moerloose, 2013-2014).

For this research, the secondary data was gathered first. Based on existing literature and scientific publications (see bibliography), it was used to create the literature review, the model to be tested and the survey. The primary data collected specifically for this thesis, was amassed through responses to the survey. This data is **subjective** for two reasons.

Not only is the psychological contract, which is based on perceptions, by its very nature subjective, but so are individuals' personal opinions. This primary data will be analysed through primary analysis, which is "the original analysis of data in a research study" (Glass, 1976, 3).

Data collection

The data collected through the survey was separated into three themes: the psychological contract and organisational membership; the employment mode and HR configuration; and the career field and aspirations. Demographic data, to be used as control variables (such as age, professional experience, current industry) was also gathered. The complete survey can be found in Appendix 2.

The questions related to **psychological contracts and organisational membership** were taken from Rousseau's (1990) 15-item measure evaluating perceived employer and employee obligations. The responses were measured on a 5-point scale of obligation (1 = not at all; 5 = to a very large extent). There were seven items contained in employer obligations, which are "what the employee feels the organisation is obligated to provide the employee" (Shore & Barksdale, 1998). These seven items were promotion, high pay, pay for performance, training, job security, career development and support with personal problems. Eight items made up employee obligations ("what an employee feels they are obligated to provide the organisation" (Shore & Barksdale, 1998)). These were overtime, loyalty, volunteering to do non-required tasks, advance notice when leaving the organisation, willingness to accept a transfer, refusal to support competitors, protection of proprietary information, and spending a minimum of two years with the organisation (Shore & Barksdale, 1998). Organisational Commitment was measured using a 4-item affective commitment measure based on Allen & Meyer (1990) with a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). A sample item is "this organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me".

The **employment mode and HR configuration** were measured based on Lepak and Snell (2002). The employment mode was evaluated using the human capital characteristics, value and uniqueness. Each characteristic was quantified using a 4-item measure on a 5-point scale (1="strongly disagree", 5="strongly disagree"). A sample item for value is "my job requires skills that directly affect organisational efficiency and productivity". HR configuration was assessed through the five different components of HR practices, namely job design, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation. For each component of HR, one practice characteristic of each HR configuration was selected. These practices are presented in Figure 7 below. Each individual practice was measured based on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The HR practices were combined to form a commitment-based, a productivity-based, a compliance-based, and a collaborative HR configuration. For each individual, the mean value of the items in each HR configuration was calculated, and the individual attributed the configuration with the highest value.

Figure 7: HR configurations

I perform **a job** that . . .

	Commitment	Productivity	Compliance	Collaboration
Is designed around my individual skills.				X
Is standardised throughout industry.		X		
Is well-defined			X	
Empowers me to make decisions	X			

The **recruitment/selection** process for my position . . .

	Commitment	Productivity	Compliance	Collaboration
Emphasised my ability to collaborate and work in teams				X
Is comprehensive (uses interviews, tests, etc.)		X		
Placed priority on my potential to learn (e.g., aptitude)	X			

Training activities for my position . . .

	Commitment	Productivity	Compliance	Collaboration
Emphasise improving current job performance.		X		
Focus on compliance with rules, regulations, and procedures			X	
Focus on team building and interpersonal relations				X
Strive to develop firm-specific skills/ knowledge	X			

Performance appraisals for my position

	Commitment	Productivity	Compliance	Collaboration
Are based on input from multiple sources	X			
Are based on objective, quantifiable results		X		
Are based on team performance				X
Assess compliance with pre-set behaviours, procedures, and standards			X	

Compensation/rewards for my job

	Commitment	Productivity	Compliance	Collaboration
Are based on the market wage (going rate)		X		
Focus primarily on my short-term performance			X	
Have a group-based incentive component				X
Include an extensive benefits package	X			

Determining the **career field** was difficult, as the measure for the typology (with the coupling and configuration dimensions), created by Mayrhofer et al (2004), was not provided when requested. It was therefore decided to use a single item to measure each dimension, based on their definition given in Mayrhofer et al (2004) using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The item used to measure coupling was "The decisions that I make have little impact on others' decisions". Configuration was measured by the item: “the social environment and the work-related tasks that I perform change rapidly and frequently”. **Career aspirations** were measured using 5 items taken from ViCaPP, used by Mayrhofer et al (2004) in their study. For each item, respondents were asked to choose between two extremes. The items assessed were expert or generalist; work-life balance; job security, traditional or boundaryless career; and entrepreneurship or company life. These will be used to answer the research sub-question.

Data analysis

The **analysis** was done in five steps. The initial step aimed at establishing the reliability and validity of the data, before any data analysis could take place. Once this was done, the steps for analysing the data were as follows: first, determining organisational membership, through the balance between employer and employee obligations as the basis of the psychological contract; second, establishing the employment mode and HR configuration; third, determining the career field. In each of these steps, membership to one of the four quadrants was, as far as possible, established. In each of these initial steps, demographic variables, such as age, employment sector, career aspirations and company size were also tested. The final step in the analysis was to determine whether there was a correlation between the quadrants that each case was assigned to in the 3 initial steps, and therefore to determine whether the model was verified.

Establishing data reliability and validity

The data reliability was verified using Cronbach’s alpha and the validity of the data construct was established using a Principle Component Analysis (PCA).

Despite recent research challenging its current use and practice (see, e.g. Bonett & Wright, 2015; Cho & Kim, 2015), **Cronbach’s coefficient alpha** was used to estimate **reliability**. Cronbach’s alpha reliability describes “the reliability of a sum (or average) of q measurements” (Bonett & Wright, 2015, 3). In this paper the q measurements represent q questionnaire items that measure one dimension, such as affective commitment, Cronbach’s alpha is therefore a measure of “internal consistency”. The reliability of the data is the extent to which a measurement gives consistent results. The dimensions to which Cronbach’s alpha were applied were affective commitment, value, and uniqueness. The works of Nunnally (cited in Cho & Kim, 2015) have led to alpha levels of 0.7 or greater being accepted as the levels at which a dimension is considered reliable. For each, the alpha if an item is deleted was also measured, in order to determine whether reliability could be improved by removing one of the measures. If the dimension was considered reliable, then a mean of the variables or items that compose it was calculated. Employer and employee obligations were not evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, as each variable within these dimensions measures a different component of the obligations. However, a mean of their components was still established to facilitate further analysis.

The **construct validity** is the degree to which an assessment measures what it is supposed to. The measures used that were taken from theory could be considered valid in terms of construct validity, as they have been tested empirically, but they will still be assessed. A **PCA** was applied to uniqueness and value in order to assess their validity. In this context, the PCA is used to ensure that the variables are not correlated, and can therefore be used together to create a model. In each PCA, two factors will be extracted. For each of the two components, the loading of each variable on the rotated component matrix will be evaluated. The construct will be considered valid if each component is largely explained through one variable. This would mean that in the rotated component matrix, each variable would have a loading factor close to 1 for one of the components. As with Cronbach's alpha, employer and employee obligations were not evaluated, as each variable within these dimensions measures a different component of the obligations.

Validating the hypotheses

The **first step** in the data analysis was to assess correlations between employer and employee obligations and affective commitment (See table 2). Following this analysis, the individuals were assigned an organisational membership quadrant based on the mean employee and employer obligations according to the first proposal. Although Shore and Barksdale (1998) performed a clustering procedure using Ward's clustering algorithm and a k-means clustering method on their data, this method was not used. Indeed, as the number of clusters is already known, as are the clustering criteria, the individuals were assigned to one of four groups by the author. Obligations up to and including 3 were considered as low-to-moderate, and obligations above 3 were considered high. The four groups are: Peripheral Membership (or mutual low obligations), Full membership (or mutual high obligations), Detached Membership (or employee under-obligation) and Associate membership (or employee over-obligation). These four groups were then analysed, using a MANOVA (multivariate analysis of variance), which was conducted between the clusters in order to determine the overall significance of the differences in the level of obligation. The hypotheses were tested using a chi-square test, as the group variables are categorical.

The **second step** in the analysis was to determine the employment mode and HR configuration. Employment mode was evaluated based on the perceived value and uniqueness of the respondent's current job. Each individual was classified in one of the four employment modes according to their value and uniqueness. Characteristic values up to and including 3 were considered as low-to-moderate, and above 3 were considered high. The four groups were knowledge-based employment (high for both variables), job-based employment (high value, low to moderate uniqueness), contractual work arrangement (low for both variables) and alliance (high uniqueness, low to moderate value). This categorisation followed proposal 2. Subsequent analyses were then conducted on each group, using an ANOVA to test the hypotheses. The HR configuration was determined following the method used by Lepak and Snell (2002). For each individual, all four HR indices (one for each configuration) were calculated by taking the mean value of the items (job design, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation) in each configuration, and the HR configuration with the highest value attributed to the individual. Assigning individuals an HR configuration follows the third proposal. The four groups were then analysed, again using a chi-square and an ANOVA, in order to test the hypotheses and determine the overall significance of the differences in the HR configurations.

In the **third step** of the analysis, career field was determined, and the fourth proposal was carried out. Each individual was assigned to one of four groups (Company World, Free-Floating Professionalism, Chronic Flexibility and Self-Employment) taken from Mayrhofer et al (2004), based on their coupling and configuration score. Coupling values up to and including 3 are considered loose, and scores above 3 are considered tight coupling. Configuration values above 3 are considered stable, and values up to and including 3 are considered unstable. Chi-square and ANOVA tests were then carried out on the four groups.

In the **final part** of the analysis, the validity of the combined model was tested. In order to do so, individuals were analysed to see which groups they had been assigned to in the three previous steps and if there was the expected correlation between Organisational Membership, Employment mode, HR configuration, and career field. This final step was to determine if individuals could be placed in one quadrant of the combined model, or not.

Results

The results of the analysis will be detailed following the steps explained above. After establishing variable reliability and construct validity, organisational membership will be evaluated, followed by the employment relationship, HR configuration and career field. Finally, the combined model will be tested.

Reliability and validity

Reliability

Reliability of the measured variables was established as follows: affective commitment had an α of 0.773, implying that it is a reliable measure, and a mean variable was therefore calculated to facilitate further analysis. Unless otherwise said, the mean variable was the one used for all subsequent analyses. Uniqueness, with an α of 0.762, was also considered reliable, and a new variable calculating its mean created. Human capital value's α was 0.641, meaning that it was unreliable. Yet if the fourth value measure "my job requires skills that directly affect organisational efficiency and productivity" was removed, then the item became valid, as the new α was 0.721. The new variable created was the mean of the first 3 value scores. Detailed reliability results are in Appendix 3. Following this Cronbach's alpha analysis, it was established that the three mean variables created for affective commitment, uniqueness and value, were reliable.

Validity

Construct validity was measured using a PCA for human capital uniqueness and value. The first component had a loading above 0.7 for all the uniqueness variables, and a loading below 0.13 for all the value variables. The second component had a loading above 0.77 for the value variables, and low loading values for the four uniqueness variables. This implies that the construct is valid, as each component can largely be explained through one variable: the first component can be considered to be the uniqueness of human capital, and the second component human capital value. Detailed validity results can be found in Appendix 3. Following the PCA, it was established that all the variables had a valid construct.

Having established variable reliability and construct validity, analysing and evaluating the data in order to confirm or refute the hypotheses and answer the research questions then took place.

Descriptive Analysis

Organisational membership

Central tendencies (mean, median, and mode), **dispersion** (standard deviation) and **distribution** (skewness and kurtosis) for the **obligation items** and **affective commitment** are presented in table 1. The minimum and maximum were 1 and 5 respectively for all the variables, apart from the protection of proprietary information, where the minimum was 2, implying that all individuals feel somewhat obliged to keep company data secret.

Table 1: central tendencies, dispersion and distribution of employee and employer obligations and affective commitment.

		Mean	Median	Mode	Skewness	Kurtosis	S. D.
Employer Obligations							
1	**Advancement**	3.67	4	4	-0.669	-0.032	1.010
2	**High Pay**	3.08	3	3	-0.421	0.073	0.963
3	**Merit Pay**	3.72	4	4	-0.754	0.393	1.001
4	**Training**	4.16	4	5	-1.033	0.657	0.925
5	**Career Development**	4.20	4	4	-1.538	2.941	0.911
6	**Job Security**	3.07	3	4	-0.066	-0.903	1.120
7	**Personal Support**	2.28	2	2	0.568	-0.446	1.044
Employee Obligations							
8	**Overtime**	3.39	4	4	-0.517	-0.434	1.096
9	**Loyalty**	3.76	4	4	-0.775	0.902	0.912
10	**Non-required Tasks**	3.34	3	4	-0.547	0.130	0.974
11	**Advance Notice**	3.62	4	5	-0.510	-0.685	1.223
12	**Accept Transfers**	3.06	3	3	-0.112	-0.362	0.97
13	**Non-competition**	3.54	4	3	-0.241	-0.731	1.085
14	**Proprietary Protection**	4.60	5	5	-1.926	3.421	0.722
15	**Minimum Stay**	2.59	2	2	0.431	-0.889	1.264
16	**Affective Commitment**	3.19	-	-	-0.198	-0.081	0.855

Apart from personal support (2.28), all the employer obligations have a mean that would classify them as high (above 3). Career development, with a mean of 4.2, is the obligation that employees expect the most from their employers, yet training, with a mode of 5, and a mean of 4.16, is also very highly regarded. Minimum stay is the only employee obligation with a low-moderate mean of 2.59. With a mean of 4.6 and a median and mode of 5, individuals feel highly obligated towards their employer to protect proprietary information. Given the high values, medians and modes for employer and employee obligations, one can expect that few individuals will be classified as having peripheral membership.

Correlations among the obligation items and affective commitment are presented in table 2. This analysis suggests that the employment relationships are dominated by some moderate correlations (Shore & Barksdale, 1998). As could be expected, there is a significant correlation between the mean employer obligations and its components; and with mean employee obligations and its components. There is a significant correlation between several of the employer obligations, but few between employee obligations, or employee with employer. Loyalty is in fact the only employee obligation correlated to an employer obligation, namely job security, as well as to the mean obligations. Affective commitment is correlated with several variables: namely advancement, merit pay, career development, loyalty and volunteering to undertake non-required tasks.

Table 2: Intercorrelations of employer and employee obligations and affective commitment

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Employer Obligations																		
1 Advancement	-																	
2 High Pay	0.552**	-																
3 Merit Pay	0.264**	0.457**	-															
4 Training	0.294**	0.245*	0.349**	-														
5 Career Development	0.607**	0.519**	0.429**	0.589**	-													
6 Job Security	0.169	0.423**	0.035	0.203*	0.321**	-												
7 Personal Support	0.157	0.226*	0.076	-0.007	0.087	0.347**	-											
8 Mean	0.680**	0.772**	0.569**	0.584**	0.786**	0.587**	0.446**	-										
Employee Obligations																		
9 Overtime	-0.026	0.048	0.042	-0.051	0.005	-0.008	0.028	0.009	-									
10 Loyalty	0.105	0.223*	0.097	0.099	0.159	0.416**	0.177	0.297**	0.148	-								
11 Non-required Tasks	-0.007	-0.079	-0.005	-0.018	0.006	0.113	0.098	0.029	0.431**	0.363**	-							
12 Advance Notice	0.123	-0.036	0.033	0.077	0.127	0.149	-0.157	0.071	0.040	-0.031	-0.063	-						
13 Accept Transfers	0.019	-0.094	-0.031	-0.051	0.029	-0.021	-0.024	-0.039	0.241*	-0.048	0.284**	0.189*	-					
14 Non-competition	-0.157	-0.008	0.075	0.017	-0.065	0.104	-0.010	-0.006	0.049	0.244*	0.052	0.127	0.112	-				
15 Proprietary Protection	0.006	-0.098	0.070	0.109	0.041	-0.066	-0.048	-0.001	0.023	0.092	0.052	0.099	0.125	0.258**	-			
16 Minimum Stay	-0.043	0.043	-0.020	-0.182	-0.136	0.041	0.066	-0.045	0.209*	0.163	0.220*	0.066	0.109	0.090	0.090	-		
17 Mean	0.002	0.005	0.061	-0.018	0.031	0.187	0.027	0.072	0.558**	0.462**	0.578**	0.407**	0.504**	0.486**	0.373**	0.543**	-	
18 Affective Commitment	0.229*	0.102	0.245*	0.108	0.218*	0.106	0.143	0.260**	-0.025	0.382**	0.197*	-0.022	0.121	0.015	0.137	-0.038	0.165	-

Similarly to Shore and Barksdale (1998) full membership, with 66 individuals, was the largest group. Associate membership was the second most common group with 21 individuals, then detached with 17. As expected given the high means of all the obligations, peripheral membership only had 5 individuals. Tables 3 and 4 show each group's mean employer and employee commitment, as well as the mean of each of the variables that compose them.

Table 3: analysis of mean results depicting differences in employer obligations and affective commitment across exchange relationship types

Membership	N	Mean	Advance ment	High Pay	Merit Pay	Train ing	Develop -ment	Job Security	Personal Support	Affective Commitment
Full	66	3.76	4.05	3.41	4.00	4.42	4.53	3.39	2.53	3.2462
Detached	17	3.61	3.76	3.53	3.82	4.35	4.41	3.12	2.24	3.2647
Associate	21	2.62	2.71	2.10	3.00	3.33	3.33	2.29	1.57	3.1190
Peripheral	5	2.37	2.40	1.40	2.60	3.40	2.80	2.00	2.00	2.5000

Table 4: analysis of mean results depicting differences in employee obligations across exchange relationship types

Membership	N	Mean	Over - time	Loyalty	Non-required tasks	Advance Notice	Accept Transfers	Non-competition	Proprietary Protection	Min Stay
Full	66	3.65	3.61	3.92	3.52	3.85	3.17	3.68	4.70	2.77
Detached	17	2.78	2.41	3.53	2.59	2.88	2.59	2.59	4.00	1.76
Associate	21	3.74	3.95	3.81	3.81	3.43	3.29	3.86	4.81	3.00
Peripheral	5	2.58	1.40	2.20	1.60	4.00	2.20	3.60	4.40	1.20

Proposal 1 is verified, as each individual could be classified in one of the four membership profiles. Full membership has the highest employer obligations, followed by detached, then associate membership, and peripheral membership has the lowest employer obligations. Associate membership has the highest employee obligations, followed by full membership, with detached and peripheral membership having the lowest employee obligations; implying that associate members have the highest sense of obligation, greater than that of full members.

As expected, peripheral membership not only has the lowest employer and employee obligations, but also scores a low affective commitment. Surprisingly, detached members have the highest affective commitment. Peripheral members feel the most obliged to give advanced notice when leaving their organisation.

Potential differences in demographic variables (age, sex, graduation year, career length in months, organisational tenure, and number of organisations) across the four types of modes were also examined, and are shown in table 5.

Table 5: analysis of differences in demographic variables across organisational membership types.

Membership	Age	Career Length	Number of organisations	Months in Organisation	Graduation year	Male %
Full	29.8	69.2	2.4	25.6	2009	56.1
Detached	26.2	36.4	1.8	16.0	2011	52.9
Associate	34.0	123.9	3.2	35.8	2006	71.4
Peripheral	39.2	173.4	4.2	60.2	2003	100.0

It appears that the organisational membership evolves over time, going from detached at the beginning of one's career, to full, to associate to peripheral. This evolution is mirrored in the number of organisations that the employees have worked for increasing with each membership type, as does the amount of time spent within the current organisation. With each of these changes, the percentage of women also decreases.

Employment mode

All the individuals were classified following Lepak and Snell's (1999, 2002) four **employment modes**: knowledge-based with high uniqueness and value, job-based with high value but low uniqueness, alliance with high uniqueness but low strategic value, and contractual work arrangement with low value and uniqueness. 52 individuals (or 48% of the respondents) were classified as having a job-based employment mode, 37 knowledge-based, 14 a contractual work arrangement, and only 6 had an alliance-type employment mode. Given that all the individuals could be classified, **proposal 2** is fulfilled. Table 6 shows the **uniqueness** and **strategic value** mean and standard deviation of each employment mode. The high number of respondents with a job-based employment mode, although not surprising given the rise of the boundaryless career and the increasingly individualistic nature of society today, does bias the results for the analysis of the combined model; as does the very low number of alliance-type employment mode respondents.

Table 6: analysis of mean results showing differences in uniqueness and value across employment modes

Employment Mode	N	Uniqueness - Mean	Uniqueness - S.D	Value - Mean	Value – S.D
Knowledge-based	37	3.804	0.504	4.353	0.512
Job-based	52	2.346	0.567	3.936	0.490
Alliance	6	3.375	0.209	2.222	0.655
Contractual Work Arrangement	14	2.321	0.421	2.643	0.423

Across the employment modes, the value of human capital is highest for knowledge-based employment, then job-based, then surprisingly next highest is contractual work arrangement, and finally lowest for alliances. These results differ from the findings of Lepak and Snell (2002), where alliances had a higher value than contract work, yet still clearly demonstrate that human capital value is highest in knowledge and job based employment modes. The uniqueness of human capital is highest for knowledge-based employment, next highest for alliances, and lowest for job-based and contract work. Interestingly, the value of knowledge-based employment is higher than its uniqueness.

Table 7: analysis of differences in demographic variables across employment modes.

Employment Mode	Affective Commitment	Age	Career length	Number of Orgs	Months in Org	Grad year	Male %
Knowledge-based	3.405	32.0	96.7	2.8	36.7	2008	56.8
Job-based	3.111	30.2	77.1	2.4	23.2	2009	57.7
Alliance	3.083	31.5	81.7	2.8	29.8	2008	100
Contract Work	2.964	27.3	41.1	2.1	19.0	2011	64.3

Potential differences in demographic variables across the four modes were also examined, and are shown in table 7 above. As expected, knowledge-based employment has the highest affective commitment and contract work the lowest. Employees with a contract work arrangement have generally been with their organisation the least amount of time (19 months), while those with a knowledge-based employment mode have on average been with their company for more than 3 years. Individuals who accept a contract employment mode have generally started their career more recently, graduating around 2011 and with 3 years less experience on average than the other employment modes. Apart from alliances, the employment modes are quite gender balanced. Alliances seem to be male dominated, but this could simply be due to there only being 6 individuals in this mode.

HR configuration

Individuals were classified according to the **HR configuration**, which had the highest mean score. 37 individuals had a commitment-based HR configuration, 24 a productivity-based, 20 a collaborative based and 13 a compliance-based. 15 individuals could not be classified as they had equal scores for 2 or more HR configurations, which means that **proposal 3** is not fulfilled. The uniqueness and strategic value mean and standard deviation of each HR configuration are shown in table 8.

Table 8: analysis of mean results showing differences in uniqueness and value across HR configurations

HR configuration	N	Uniqueness - Mean	Uniqueness- S.D	Value - Mean	Value – S.D
Commitment-based	37	3.142	0.889	3.956	0.734
Productivity-based	24	2.469	0.815	3.278	0.849
Collaborative-based	20	2.963	0.929	4.100	0.613
Compliance-based	13	2.654	0.673	3.667	0.758

Most important to note is that all 4 HR configurations have a "high" mean human capital value, based on the distinction between high and low that was made by the author, high being above 3. Interestingly the highest mean value is that of collaborative-based HR, which was in theory associated with having low strategic value, and high uniqueness. Compliance-based HR configuration, associated with low value and uniqueness, has a higher value and uniqueness than productivity-based configuration.

Of the 15 that were not classified, 6 had equal scores for commitment and compliance based HR configurations, 5 had equal scores for Productivity and commitment configurations. For 2 individuals there was a three-way tie between commitment, productivity and collaboration. Collaborative and productivity; and commitment and compliance each had one individual tied between the two.

As was done previously, potential differences in demographic variables across the four HR configurations were also examined. The variables are shown in table 9 below.

Table 9: analysis of differences in demographic variables across HR configurations

HR configuration	Affective commitment	Age	Career Length	Number of Orgs	Months in org	Grad year	Male %
Commitment-based	3.439	30.5	77.6	2.4	27.0	2009	70.3
Productivity-based	2.906	28.6	63.2	3.0	16.1	2010	54.2
Collaborative-based	3.250	35.2	136.6	3.1	55.0	2004	50.0
Compliance-based	2.750	31.2	83.6	2.6	20.6	2008	61.5

Affective commitment is, quite predictably, highest in a commitment-based HR configuration, then in a collaborative-based, and lowest in a compliance type configuration. Productivity-based HR configurations appear to be more typical of younger workers (28 years old), with less experience (5 years) that have been in their organisation for the least amount of time (16 months). A collaborative configuration on the other hand appears to be more suited to slightly older workers (35 years old) with a lengthy career behind them (more than 11 years) and nearly 5 years in their current organisation. Commitment-based is slightly male dominated (70%), whilst the other HR configurations are gender balanced.

Career Field

Classification into **career fields** was done based on **coupling** and **configurations** scores. Coupling values up to and including 3 are considered loose, and scores above 3 are considered tight coupling. Configuration values above 3 are considered stable, and values up to and including 3 are considered unstable. Free-Floating professionalism, with 59 individuals (54%) of respondents being classified as having this career field, was the most common, followed by chronic flexibility with 33 individuals. Self-employment and company world were the least common, with 9 and 8 cases respectively. As all respondents could be classified, **proposal 4** is verified. Table 10 shows the coupling and configuration mean and standard deviation of each career field.

Table 10: analysis of mean results showing differences in coupling and configuration across career fields

Career Field	N	Coupling	S.D	Configuration	S.D
Company World	8	4.63	0.518	4.00	0.000
Free-Floating Professionalism	59	4.41	0.495	2.19	0.682
Self-Employment	9	2.67	0.500	4.00	0.000
Chronic Flexibility	33	2.55	0.617	2.27	0.761

Company world has the tightest coupling, followed by free-floating professionalism. Self-employment and chronic flexibility have similar and slightly loose coupling. Company world and self-employment both have stable configurations. Chronic flexibility has an unstable configuration, and free-floating professionalism has highest instability in its configuration.

Across the four career fields, possible differences in demographic variables were again examined. The variables are indicated in table 11 below.

Table 11: analysis of differences in demographic variables across career fields

Career Field	Affective commitment	Age	Career length	Number of orgs	Months in org	Grad year	Male %
Company World	2.875	31.1	90.0	2.5	14.6	2010	62.5
Free-Floating Professionalism	3.309	31.5	92.1	2.7	32.9	2008	59.3
Self-Employment	2.722	26.3	33.4	2.7	14.2	2012	55.6
Chronic Flexibility	3.182	29.8	66.5	2.3	25.0	2009	63.6

Affective commitment is unpredictably highest in the free-floating and chronic flexibility career fields. Those with a self-employment career type are the youngest (on average 26 years old) and have the least professional experience (less than 3 years). Interestingly, those with a company world career have only been with their organisation for 14 months, whereas those with a free-floating career have been with their organisation longer (nearly 3 years) and graduated the earliest. The gender balance is similar across the four career fields, as is the number of organisations the individuals have worked for.

Combined model

Having classified all the individuals into 4 different groups for organisational membership, employment mode, HR configuration and career field, it is now possible to determine whether there is a link between these four different aspects of the individuals' career and employment relationship, as was hypothesised in the combined model.

Given the large differences in the group sizes in each step of the classification, it seems that the exercise is unlikely to yield the results expected in the theory. Indeed, with some groups as large as 66 individuals, and others having only 5, this will have a considerable impact on the results. As proposal 3 is refuted, and 15 individuals not being classified according to an HR configuration, this also decreases the prospect of the model being confirmed. Yet as the model was separated into several hypotheses, these will first be tested before the complete model will be analysed.

Hypotheses a: HR configuration and employment mode

The **first hypothesis** to be tested for each quadrant was the link between **HR configuration** and **employment mode**. As both these variables are categorical, a Chi-square test was performed. The results are in tables 12 and 13 below.

Table 12: Chi-square test on HR configuration and Employment mode

HR configuration	Employment Mode				Total
	Knowledge-based	Job-based	Alliance	Contract work	
Commitment-based	16	17	1	3	37
Productivity-based	2	12	3	7	24
Collaborative-based	9	10	0	1	20
Compliance-based	3	8	0	2	12
Total	30	47	4	13	94

Table 13: Chi-square results

	Value	df	Sig,
Pearson Chi-Square	19.084	9	0.024
Likelihood ratio	20.228	9	0.017

The initial hypothesis was that HR configuration and employment mode were not independent. The Chi-Square test confirms this hypothesis, with chi-square of 19.084 (d.f =9) and a p-value of 0.024, the test rejects the null hypothesis that the variables are independent. A link between HR configuration and employment mode can therefore been confirmed.

An ANOVA was then conducted on HR configuration and the variables that make up employment mode, namely the uniqueness and value of human capital. They are presented in the table 14 below.

Table 14: analysis of variance results depicting differences across HR configurations

HR configuration	Uniqueness	Value
Commitment-based	3.142	3.956
Productivity-based	2.469	3.278
Collaborative-based	2.963	4.100
Compliance-based	2.654	3.667
F value	**3.373**	**5.640**
Significance	**0.022**	**0.001**
Eta squared	0.101	0.158

This ANOVA shows that there are statistically significant differences between the four HR configurations in the mean levels of uniqueness (F=3.37, p=0.022) and value (F=5.64, p=0.001). A number of patterns were apparent for the strategic value of human capital. First, collaborative-based HR configurations have the highest strategic value of the configurations. Second, value was lower for the productivity-based configuration than all the other configurations. The patterns that emerge for the uniqueness of human capital are less clear, but commitment-based has the highest uniqueness, and Productivity-based the lowest.

The results of the chi-squared and ANOVA tests seem to confirm the **"a" hypotheses** for each quadrant, establishing a link between HR configuration and employment mode.

Hypotheses b: HR configuration and organisational membership

The **second hypothesis** to be tested for each quadrant was the link between **HR configuration** and **organisational membership**. Again, a Chi-square test was performed. The results are shown in tables 15 and 16 below.

Table 15: Chi-square test on HR configuration and organisational membership

	Organisational Membership				
HR configuration	Full	Detached	Associate	Peripheral	Total
Commitment based	26	5	5	1	37
Productivity based	14	3	7	0	24
Collaborative-based	9	3	6	2	20
Compliance-based	5	5	2	1	13
Total	54	16	20	4	94

Table 16: Chi-square results

	Value	df	Sig,
Pearson Chi-Square	12.352	9	0.194
Likelihood ratio	12.129	9	0.206

The chi-square test here, with a chi-square of 12.352 and a p=value of 0.194, cannot reject the null hypothesis that the values are independent. A definite link between HR configuration and organisational membership cannot be established.

An ANOVA was then conducted on HR configuration and the variables that compose organisational membership, namely Employer and employee obligations. They are presented in the table 17 below.

Table 17: analysis of variance results depicting differences across HR configurations

HR configuration	Employer Obligations	Employee Obligations
Commitment-based	3.580	3.524
Productivity-based	3.262	3.552
Collaborative-based	3.393	3.444
Compliance-based	3.330	3.337
F value	**1.348**	**0.571**
Significance	**0.264**	**0.636**
Eta squared	0.043	0.019

This ANOVA shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the four HR configurations in the mean levels of employer obligations (F=1.348, p=0.264) and employee obligations (F=0.571, p=0.636). Indeed, both employer and employee obligations are very similar in each configuration, and can all be described as high (above 3).

The **"b" hypotheses** in each quadrant, establishing a link between HR configuration and organisational membership, are therefore not supported.

Hypotheses c: HR configuration and career field

The link between **HR configuration** and **career field** was the **third hypothesis** to be tested for each quadrant. The results of the chi-square test are in tables 18 and 19 below. The Chi-Square test rejects the hypothesis, that there is a link between HR configuration and career field.

Table 18: Chi-square test on HR configuration and career field

HR configuration	Career Field				Total
	Company World	Free-floating Professionalism	Self-Employment	Chronic Flexibility	
Commitment based	3	23	2	9	37
Productivity based	3	7	6	8	24
Collaborative-based	2	11	0	7	20
Compliance-based	0	8	1	4	13
Total	8	49	9	28	94

Table 19: Chi-square results

	Value	df	Sig,
Pearson Chi-Square	14.267	9	0.113
Likelihood ratio	15.928	9	0.068

Indeed, with chi-square of 14.267 (d.f =9) and a p-value of 0.113, the test cannot reject the null hypothesis that the variables are independent. A link between HR configuration and employment mode can therefore not be established.

The ANOVA on HR configuration and the career field variables of coupling and configuration is presented in the table 20 below.

Table 20: analysis of variance results depicting differences across HR configurations

HR configuration	Coupling	Configuration
Commitment-based	3.92	2.30
Productivity-based	3.42	2.96
Collaborative-based	3.75	2.60
Compliance-based	3.46	2.38
F value	**1.250**	**2.651**
Significance	**0.296**	**0.054**
Eta squared	0.040	0.081

This ANOVA shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the four HR configurations in the mean levels of coupling (F=1.250, p=0.296) and configuration (F=2.651, p=0.054). Indeed, both coupling and configuration are very similar in each configuration. All the configurations have "tight" coupling, and "unstable" configuration.

The **"c" hypotheses** in each quadrant, establishing a link between HR configuration and career field, are therefore not supported.

Hypotheses d: Employment mode and organisational membership

Employment mode and **organisational membership** were the next variables to be tested for each quadrant, in order to determine whether a link between them could be established. The results of the chi-square test are in tables 21 and 22 below.

Table 21: Chi-square test on employment mode and organisational membership

Employment Mode	Organisational Membership				Total
	Full	Detached	Associate	Peripheral	
Knowledge based	31	1	3	2	37
Job based	26	10	13	3	52
Alliance	3	0	3	0	6
Contract Work	6	6	2	0	14
Total	66	17	21	5	109

Table 22: Chi-square results

	Value	df	Sig,
Pearson Chi-Square	24.610	9	0.003
Likelihood ratio	25.837	9	0.068

The initial hypothesis was that employment mode and organisational membership were dependant. The Chi-Square test confirms this hypothesis, with chi-square of 24.610 (d.f =9) and a p-value of 0.003, the test rejects the null hypothesis that the variables are independent. This test has therefore established a link between employment mode and organisational membership.

ANOVAs were then carried out: one on the employment mode and the variables that compose organisational membership, namely employer and employee obligations, and the second on organisational membership and human capital value and uniqueness, the dimensions of the employment mode. They are presented in the table 23 below.

Table 23: analysis of variance results depicting differences across employment modes and organisational membership profiles

Employment Mode	Employer Obligations	Employee Obligations		Organisational Membership	Uniqueness	Value
Knowledge-based	3.676	3.612		**Full**	3.129	3.889
Job-based	3.379	3.462		**Detached**	2.456	3.510
Alliance	2.833	3.472		**Associate**	2.536	3.587
Contractual Work	3.408	3.250		**Peripheral**	2.800	4.133
F value	**4.100***	**1.841**		**F value**	**4.777***	**1.849**
Significance	**0.009**	**0.144**		**Significance**	**0.004**	**0.143**
Eta squared	0.105	0.050		**Eta squared**	0.120	0.050

These ANOVAs show that the "d" hypotheses in each quadrant, establishing a link between organisational membership and employment mode, are only partially supported. There are no statistically significant differences between the four employment modes in the mean levels of employee obligations (F=1.841, p=0.144) and between the four organisational membership profiles in the mean levels of human capital value (F=1.849, p=0.143). Indeed, employee obligations are very similar and high in the four employment modes, and human capital value is high for all membership profiles. However there are statistically significant differences between the four employment modes in the mean levels of employer obligations (F=4.100, p=0.009) and between the four organisational membership profiles in the mean levels of human capital uniqueness (F=4.777, p=0.004). Indeed, employer obligations are highest for knowledge-based employment, and lowest for alliances. Contract work has surprisingly high (3.408) expectations with regards to employer obligations. Human capital uniqueness is highest for full membership profiles, and lowest for detached profiles.

These ANOVA and chi-square tests show that the **"d" hypotheses** in each quadrant, establishing a link between organisational membership and employment mode, are only partially supported.

Hypotheses e: Career field and employment mode

The **fifth hypothesis** to be tested for each quadrant was the link between **career field** and **employment mode**. Again, a Chi-square test was performed. The results are in Tables 24 and 25 below.

Table 24: Chi-square test on career field and employment mode

Career Field	Employment Mode				Total
	Knowledge-based	Job-based	Alliance	Contract work	
Company World	3	4	1	0	8
Free-floating professionalism	24	28	4	3	59
Self-Employment	1	4	0	4	9
Chronic Flexibility	9	16	1	7	33
Total	37	52	6	14	109

Table 25: Chi-square results

	Value	df	Sig,
Pearson Chi-Square	17.004	9	0.049
Likelihood ratio	16.652	9	0.054

The chi-square test, with a chi-square of 17.004 and a p=value of 0.049, rejects the null hypothesis that the values are independent. A definite link between career field and employment mode can therefore be established.

ANOVAs were then carried out: on the employment mode and the variables that compose career field, coupling and configuration, and on career field and human capital value and uniqueness, the dimensions of the employment mode. They are presented in the table 26 below.

Table 26: analysis of variance results depicting differences across employment modes and career fields

Employment Mode	Coupling	Configuration		Career Field	Uniqueness	Value
Knowledge-based	3.92	2.24		**Company World**	2.969	3.958
Job-based	3.69	2.52		**Free-Floating Professionalism**	3.059	3.904
Alliance	4.17	2.33		**Self-Employment**	2.139	3.185
Contractual Work	3.07	3.14		**Chronic Flexibility**	2.788	3.687
F value	**2.693***	**3.553***		**F value**	**3.427***	**2.545**
Significance	**0.050**	**0.017**		**Significance**	0.020	0.060
Eta squared	0.071	0.092		**Eta squared**	0.089	0.068

These results show that the “e” hypotheses in each quadrant, suggesting a link between organisational membership and employment mode, are only partially supported. There are no statistically significant differences between the four career fields in the mean levels of human capital value (F=2.545, p=0.060). Indeed human capital value is high for all four career fields. However there are statistically significant differences between the four employment modes in the mean levels of coupling (F=2.693, p=0.050) and configuration (F=3.553, p=0.017), and between the four career fields in the mean levels of human capital uniqueness (F=3.427, p=0.020). A number of patterns were apparent in these results. Concerning coupling, Alliances have the highest (or tightest) coupling of the four employment modes, and coupling was lower (or looser) for contract work than the other employment modes. Contract work surprisingly has the highest (or most stable) configuration of the employment modes, and knowledge-based employment the lowest configuration. Human capital uniqueness is highest for free-floating professionalism and lowest for self-employment career field.

These ANOVA and chi-square tests show that the **"e" hypotheses** in each quadrant, establishing a link between career field and employment mode, are only partially supported.

Hypotheses f: Career field and organisational membership

The **final hypothesis** tested with a chi-square test was the interdependence of **career field** and **organisational membership**. The results are shown in tables 27 and 28 below.

Table 27: Chi-square test on career field and organisational membership

Career Field	Organisational Membership				Total
	Full	Detached	Associate	Peripheral	
Company World	4	1	3	0	8
Free-floating professionalism	38	10	9	2	59
Self-Employment	4	2	3	0	9
Chronic Flexibility	20	4	6	3	33
Total	66	17	21	5	109

Table 28: Chi-square results

	Value	df	Sig,
Pearson Chi-Square	6.546	9	0.684
Likelihood ratio	6.626	9	0.676

The Chi-Square test rejects the hypothesis, that there is a link between Career field and organisational membership. With chi-square of 6.545 (d.f =9) and a p-value of 0.684, the null hypothesis that the variables are independent cannot be rejected. A link between Career field and organisational membership can therefore not be established.

ANOVAs were again carried out: on organisational membership and the career field dimensions of coupling and configuration, and on career field and employee and employer obligations, the dimensions of the organisational membership. They are presented in the table 29 below.

Table 29: analysis of variance results depicting differences across employment modes and career fields

Organisational Membership	Coupling	Configuration		Career Field	Employee Obligations	Employer Obligations
Full	3.71	2.41		**Company World**	3.406	3.214
Detached	3.88	2.65		**Free-Floating Professionalism**	3.492	3.506
Associate	3.71	2.76		**Self-Employment**	3.403	3.270
Peripheral	3.20	2.00		**Chronic Flexibility**	3.519	3.468
F value	**0.533**	**1.438**		**F value**	**0.190**	**0.785**
Significance	**0.661**	**0.236**		**Significance**	0.903	0.505
Eta squared	0.015	0.039		**Eta squared**	0.005	0.022

These results show that there are no statistically significant differences between the four organisational membership profiles in the mean levels of coupling (F=0.533, p=0.661) and configuration (F=1.438, p=0.236). Indeed, all the configurations have "tight" coupling, and "unstable" configuration. There are also no statistically significant differences between the four career fields in the mean levels of employee obligation (F=0.190, p=0.903) and employer obligation (F=0.785, p=0.505). Indeed, all the configurations have high employer and employee obligations

The **"f" hypotheses** in each quadrant, establishing a link between career field and organisational membership, are therefore not supported.

Hypotheses g: HR configuration and affective commitment

The final hypothesis (**the "g" hypothesis**) to be tested for each quadrant was the link between **HR configuration** and **affective commitment**. The results of the ANOVA are shown in table 30 below.

Table 30: analysis of variance results depicting differences in affective commitment across HR configurations

HR configuration	Affective Commitment
Commitment-based	3.439
Productivity-based	2.906
Collaborative-based	3.250
Compliance-based	2.750
F value	**3.042***
Significance	**0.033**
Eta squared	0.092

These results show that there are statistically significant differences between the four HR configurations in the mean levels of affective commitment (F=3.042, p=0.033). A number of patterns emerge. First, commitment-based HR configurations have the highest affective commitment of the configurations. Second, affective was lower for the compliance-based configuration than all the other configurations. Collaborative based-configurations have higher affective commitment than productivity-based.

The results of ANOVA test seem to confirm the **"g" hypotheses** for each quadrant, establishing a link between HR configuration and affective commitment.

Testing the combined model

Some of the **discrepancies** between the theory and the results having been shown throughout the classification steps, notably through the membership variables (such as the high and similar employer and employee obligations in the four HR configurations or the high human capital value in all the career fields, to name but a few). Indeed, only the "a" and "g" hypotheses were fully supported. Therefore, the likelihood of obtaining the four distinct profiles predicted seems to be low.

In fact, the **combined model** is not at all validated by the data. Only one individual could be placed into a quadrant, this individual being positioned in the first quadrant or first profile (full organisational membership, knowledge-based employment mode, commitment-based HR configuration and a company world type career-field). Given that one individual represents 0.9% of respondents corresponding to a profile, it seems fair to say that there is no clear link that can be established between organisational membership, employment mode, HR configuration and career field. The main research question, which was "do employees' employment relationships match their career fields and employment mode?" has been answered with a resounding no.

Despite the model being inconclusive, these results can still be very useful, and carry several implications for researchers and managers, as well as individuals. However the research sub-question on career aspirations must be analysed and the limits of the research be made explicit before any final conclusions can be drawn.

The effect of time

The **research sub question** was "do the career aspirations and employment relationship change over time for management graduates?" During the classification results, age and career duration were demographic variables that were looked at and was seen to have an impact on organisational membership, employment mode, HR configuration and career field.

Organisational membership seems to evolve over time, progressing from detached at the beginning of one's career (around 3 years), to full membership after more than 5 years of experience, to associate (10 years) to peripheral (14 years). Concerning Employment modes, this seems to develop in the opposite direction, going from contract work for those with around 3 years of experience, to job or alliance based after 6 years of experience, ending up with a knowledge based employment mode after 8 years. HR configurations have a similar evolution to that of organisational membership. Productivity-based HR configurations were found to be more typical of younger workers (28 years old), with less experience (5 years). Commitment based HR, with an average age of 30 and a career length of 6 years comes next, followed by a compliance-based configuration. A collaborative configuration was more popular with slightly older workers (35 years old) with a lengthy career behind them (more than 11 years). The career field appears to be influenced by the career length as well: self-employment has a mean of less than 3 years experience, whilst chronic flexibility has 5 and a half years, and company world and free-floating professionalism have an average of seven and a half years.

Discussion

Given the **results** of this research, it would appear that there is a strong difference between what seems valid in theory and what happens in reality. Indeed, the combined model, which seemed coherent in theory, has been shown to have no validity in practice, when applied to management graduates. Yet these results can prove to be interesting and have several implications, for research, for organisations and management (particularly HRM), and for individuals.

On the findings

The **findings** of the survey, although not what one could have hoped for, as they do not confirm the model, are still very interesting, and deserve to be detailed. A table summarising the results of the ANOVA tests is shown below (table 31).

The table will briefly be summarised, starting with employee obligations and moving left. All the dimensions (employee and employer obligations, uniqueness, value, coupling and configuration) have statistically significant differences for the variables that they describe (organisational membership for employee obligations for example). This is predictable, as they were used to create the different groups that they differentiate.

Table 31: analysis of variance results depicting differences across organisational membership, employment modes, HR configurations and career fields

		Employee Obligations	Employer obligations	Affective Commitment	Uniqueness	Value	Coupling	Configuration
Organisational Membership	Full	3.65	3.76	3.2462	3.129	3.889	3.71	2.41
	Detached	2.78	3.61	3.2647	2.456	3.510	3.88	2.65
	Associate	3.74	2.62	3.1190	2.536	3.587	3.71	2.76
	Peripheral	2.58	2.37	2.5000	2.800	4.133	3.20	2.00
	F Value	43.762*	62.105*	1.281	4.777*	1.849	0.533	1.438
Employment Mode	Knowledge-based	3.612	3.676	3.405	3.804	4.353	3.92	2.24
	Job-based	3.462	3.379	3.111	2.346	3.936	3.69	2.52
	Alliance	3.472	2.833	3.083	3.375	2.222	4.17	2.33
	Contractual Work	3.250	3.408	2.964	2.321	2.643	3.07	3.14
	F Value	1.841	4.100*	1.299	65.149*	56.501*	2.693*	3.553*
HR Configuration	Commitment	3.524	3.580	3.439	3.142	3.956	3.92	2.30
	Productivity	3.552	3.262	2.906	2.469	3.278	3.42	2.96
	Collaborative	3.444	3.393	3.250	2.963	4.100	3.75	2.60
	Compliance	3.337	3.330	2.750	2.654	3.667	3.46	2.38
	F Value	0.571	1.348	3.042*	3.373*	5.640*	1.250	2.651
Career Field	Company World	3.406	3.214	2.875	2.969	3.958	4.63	4.00
	Free-Floating Professionalism	3.492	3.506	3.309	3.059	3.904	4.41	2.19
	Self-Employment	3.403	3.270	2.722	2.139	3.185	2.67	4.00
	Chronic Flexibility	3.519	3.468	3.182	2.788	3.687	2.55	2.27
	F Value	0.190	0.785	1.674	3.427*	2.545	103.853*	35.199*

Employee obligations have no other statistically significant differences across the different groups. There are statistically significant differences between the four employment modes in the mean levels of employer obligations ($F=4.100$, $p=0.009$). There are significant differences in affective commitment for the HR configurations ($F=3.042$, $p=0.033$), and not, as could be expected, for organisational membership, employment mode or career field. Uniqueness is, interestingly, significantly different for all four of the items (organisational membership, employment mode, HR configuration and career field) tested. On the other hand, there are statistically significant differences only between the four HR configurations in the mean levels of value ($F=5.64$, $p=0.001$). Coupling and configuration are both distinctive for employment modes. Indeed there are statistically significant differences between the four employment modes in the mean levels of coupling ($F=2.693$, $p=0.050$) and configuration ($F=3.553$, $p=0.017$). This implies that all the other possible links or relationships are not statistically significantly different between the groups of each item.

Implications for research

There are several ways in which this paper can contribute to and suggest directions for **future research** on the link between organisational membership, career field, employment mode and HR configuration.

Firstly, on a general level, **combining different theories** and establishing or disproving links between adjacent and connected fields to create more developed and complete models and theories is both very interesting, and worthwhile, and should be developed further.

Secondly, although this model was not validated for the sample group of management graduates studied, it would be interesting to see if the results change considerably when applied to **different studies, geographies or age groups**. As some partial or sub-links between parameters were found in this survey, it would be of use to determine whether these could be generalised and a new theory established. For example, using the uniqueness of human capital as a means of determining organisational membership, HR configuration and career field.

A third implication of this research is the suggestion that employees seem to enjoy an **unstable work configuration**. This can be seen in the number of individuals who were classified as free-floating professionals and chronic flexibility, and in the low means of all the other items (organisational membership, employment mode and HR configuration). Determining whether this is a generalised phenomenon, and understanding the causes of this popularity, would also be of interest.

Finally, the number of individuals choosing **unbalanced exchanges**, both in terms of organisational membership, but also employment modes is intriguing. Equity theory suggests, “that such inequities lead the parties to seek balance or leave the relationship” (Stamper et al, 2009), yet it appears that this is not the case and such relationships can be maintained over the long term. Further research into these unbalanced exchanges, notably the reasons for maintaining them, or the degree of imbalance that is accepted may also be of interest.

Managerial and organisational implications

The labour force is increasingly being seen as a source of competitive advantage for organisations (Stamper et al, 2009). **Understanding** what employees want, and the relationship types that they are willing to accept, can therefore be of strategic importance for an organisation. The managerial advice is therefore concentrated on understanding the employees’ interaction with the organisation, and how the organisation can influence this interaction to its advantage.

Through this research, organisations can gather some **essential information** to assess what they give their employees, and what to expect in exchange. Furthermore, as the HR configuration does not necessarily impact the organisational membership or career field, organisations can potentially have more **freedom** regarding HR practices. However, human capital uniqueness and value are different depending on the HR configuration, implying that HR practices are not entirely separate from the employment mode.

Regarding **obligations**, training is highly valued and keenly expected by all membership types, whereas support with personal problems is not considered to be a commitment that an employer has to make. Given the high sense of obligation (4 or above on a 5 point Likert-scale) that all individuals have regarding the protection of proprietary information, organisations can to a certain extent trust their employees. Given that all HR configurations had similar employer and employee obligations, it would appear that the chosen configuration does not affect organisational membership. As affective **commitment** is significantly different for the four HR configurations, managers need to take this into account when determining the HR configuration to use. If high affective commitment is essential to the organisation (in terms of company culture for example) or the position, then the appropriate, commitment-based HR configuration should be applied.

The apparent impact of **time** and professional **experience** on several aspects of the individuals relationship to the organisation, should lead HR managers to also take this into account when defining the HR configuration to apply to a certain position or individual.

Implications for individuals

The results of this analysis are also very interesting for **individuals**, as employees of an organisation. It would seem that, contrary to what could be expected or presumed, employees could in fact to a certain extent **choose** any combination of employment mode, organisational membership and career field they want. The extent to which this is true is naturally limited by the organisation. Indeed, the organisation will determine the HR configuration that the employee has, and their level of commitment towards the employee.

The individual can choose whether to make this **relationship** a balanced or imbalanced one, as well as their level of **commitment**. The knowledge that multiple combinations of HR configuration, career field, organisational membership and employment are possible means that employees are no longer defined by their organisation. As these four dimensions were seen to evolve over time, and to vary based on an individual's experience, individuals can also determine when they want to change the relationship that they have, and they can affect change.

For **fresh graduates**, about to begin their career, this is very interesting information. The knowledge that they can define their rapport with their organisation, and build a career path that suits their needs at the time, is very encouraging and motivating.

Limits of this research

Several **shortcomings** of this research must be highlighted before final conclusions can be drawn. These limits concern the sample group (its size, the limited geographic scope and the disproportionate age distribution), the theoretical construct and the questionnaire.

Concerning the **sample group size**, with only 109 completed answers to analyse; this limits any generalisations and conclusions that could be drawn. Furthermore, having this small a number adds bias to the sample, and increases the possibility of one reply distorting the numbers. Testing the model on a larger population size is necessary before it can be considered totally unrelated to the reality of the workplace. This sample was also quite restrictive, and represents a **specific population**: that of management graduates. As all the individuals study management, they are more likely to have similar profile in terms of career and employment. Comparing the results with graduates of other studies would be interesting to see if the responses and findings are different. This survey was sent to and reached a multitude of graduates with a large **age range**, but given the author's age, and her social network, the sample is still influenced by young graduates, with 81 individuals (74%) having graduated in 2010 or later. Furthermore, this research, though not originally confined in terms of **geographical location**, is strongly biased towards European graduates, with only 9% being non-Europeans. Within these Europeans, a large proportion is Belgian, which further distorts the responses.

The **theoretical construct** is limited for several aspects. Firstly, using **quantitative methods** to analyse the psychological contract and affective commitment (which are necessarily subjective), is not without its challenges, as some contributing factors or elements might not be evaluated, and would benefit from a qualitative assessment. Secondly, the **employment relationship** is ideally analysed both from an employer and an employee perspective, in order to combine both viewpoints. As only the employee perspective is analysed here, the consequence is a lack of information, and biased information as it is based only on the individual's perception.

The **measurements** for coupling and configuration, which were created by the author and were previously untested, could also have a considerable impact on the results.

Indeed, they merely used the definition of configuration and coupling and asked individuals to assess these dimensions. However, one cannot be sure that respondents fully understood the definitions, or whether this is the best way to measure these dimensions.

There are many forms of **organisational commitment**, and many different ways of measuring the diverse aspects of the organisational relationship. Only organisational affective commitment was measured in this questionnaire, which could influence the results, or fail to display some other form of commitment that would have been better suited to this study.

Regarding **classification**, this was done with the arbitrary choice of using the median number (3) as the cut-off point between high and low (obligations, uniqueness and value), tight and loose (coupling) and stable and unstable (configuration). It would be interesting to see how the results would change if another measure, such as the mean, had been chosen as the limit, particularly given the high values obtained for the variables measured.

As the **questionnaire** looked at the psychological contract and employment relationship, this required the respondents to be employed, which therefore means that independents, or company owners would have difficulty answering the questions, or their answers would be distorted. Given the high propensity of young management graduates choosing to be entrepreneurs and launch a start-up, or of experienced graduates choosing to build their own company and become their own boss, this does bias the sample. Indeed, the author received numerous comments from individuals who had their own company, and wanted to complete the survey, but felt that it was not adapted to their current work situation.

Conclusion

In order to conclude this thesis, a brief synthesis regarding the research objectives will be presented, before the author gives a personal assessment of the study.

A succinct summary of research will now be given. The concepts of psychological contract, employer and employee obligations were used in order to understand organisational membership. The concepts of the employment relationship, with its dimensions of human capital value and uniqueness, and career fields, based on coupling and configuration, were also developed, in order to link them to the concept of HR configuration and different modes of managing human capital. Once these theories had been detailed, a theoretical model was constructed that hypothesised the possible interactions between these conceptually different yet seemingly connected theories. Four distinct profiles were created, each combining a different type of organisational membership, employment relationship, HR configuration and career field. The basic assumption was that an individual's career path is influenced not only by the organisation, through the employment relationship, obligations, commitment and HR configuration, but also by the individual's own commitment, sense of obligation and involvement in the organisation. The model having been elaborated, the next step was to design a questionnaire, in order to test the model on the ground, and confirm or refute its hypotheses. The purpose of this confirmatory and exploratory research was to investigate the connection between these concepts. The 109 individuals studied were management graduates, who are currently in work. Despite the theoretical construct appearing sound, with the interconnections between the different theories seeming logical and natural, the information gathered showed that these four conceptual profiles did not exist in reality. Although links between HR configuration and affective commitment, as well as between HR configuration and employment mode are fully supported, and the connection between organisational membership and employment mode; and employment mode and career field are partially supported, only one individual could be classified into a single profile, negating the model. This led to the conclusion that organisations do not define the employment relationship or career path of their employees, and that several different combinations of career path, organisational membership, HR configuration and employment relationship are possible. This realisation led to some research, managerial and individual recommendations. The research implications focused on confirming the results on a different, larger sample. The managerial advice concentrated on understanding the employees' interaction with the organisation, and how the organisation can influence this interaction to its advantage. Individuals were told to take their career and employment relationship into their own hands, by determining what they expect from the organisation, and what they are willing to give in return.

The author will now give a personal assessment of the research and findings. The research in this area of HRM was new, as was creating and conducting a survey, meaning that, although it was challenging at times, it was also always novel, stimulating, interesting and led to many personal discoveries. The results of the survey where unexpected, but thought-provoking. The most surprising finding was that only one individual confirmed the model. The high number of individuals with an unstable configuration (free-floating professionalism and chronic flexibility) career field also came as a surprise and can be linked to a rising popularity in the boundaryless career. Yet despite this, full organisational membership, with high employer and employee obligations, remains incredibly prevalent, and the dominant form of psychological contract. There is therefore an apparent conflict between an unstable configuration, focused on the individual's employability, personal development and career; and a desire for commitment and a sense of obligation and membership to one's organisation. This apparent contradiction is however not illogical. Given the importance of work in an individual's life, both in terms of the time that it takes up, but also its role in an individual's socialisation, image and position in society, it is normal that having a successful career is the focus of an individual's career path. And given the volatile nature of the job market since the 2008 global financial crisis, ensuring one's employability in case of job loss is more realistic than blind loyalty and hope. However, given the time and effort that one dedicates to one's work, and therefore one's organisation, a desire to feel at home when at work, is only natural. Employees are willing to dedicate a considerable amount (in terms of obligations, extra responsibilities, time and effort) to their organisation, expecting a lot in return from their employers. These expectations are not only linked to training, but also to the atmosphere within the organisation. Company culture and values are, for young graduates, key decision criteria when choosing where to work, and these should remain a strong focus of HR managers in the coming years.

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