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Careers and Culture

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- Central phenomenon of individual, organisational and societal reality – practical as well as theoretical relevance
- Practical relevance for the individual, e.g.
 - personal success
 - status, political decisions about availability of career paths
- Practical relevance for organisations, e.g.,
 - Investment into human resources
 - Structures professional and personal experience – shapes renewal of organisations
- Practical relevance for societies, e.g.
 - Expression of societal values
 - Shapes conditions for personal life decisions
- Theoretical relevance
 - interface phenomenon
 - micro and macro analyses

Relevance of topic

- Talent management
 - Retention of talent
 - Need to attract talent
- Globalisation/internationalisation
 - increasingly international workforce
 - HRM activities across national and cultural borders
- Understanding of what drives people in their careers is essential for current HRM across the globe

What this presentation wants to do...

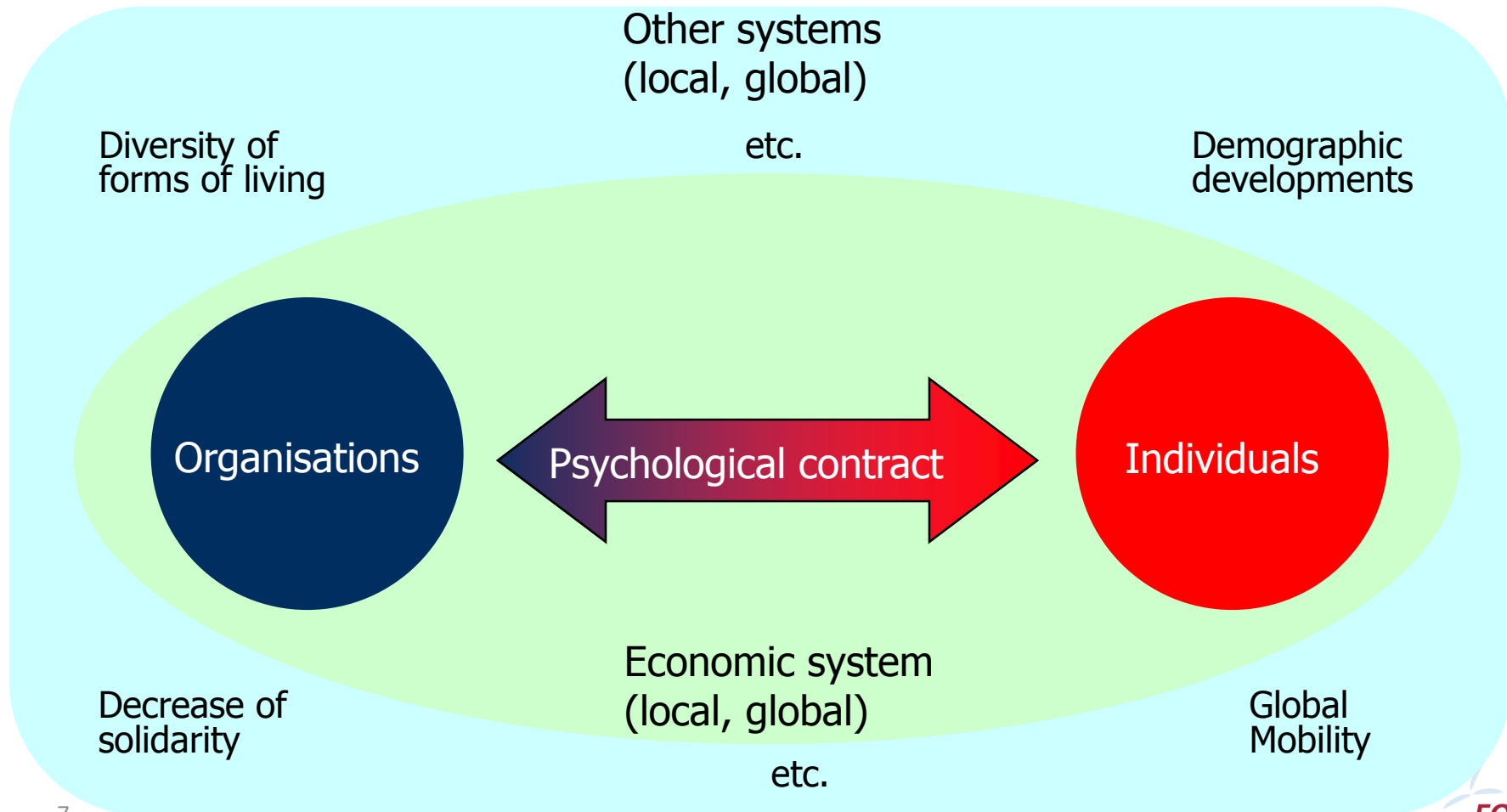
- Share some findings accumulated over the past years about some aspects of careers in various cultural contexts
- Discuss some implications for
 - methodology of culture-comparative (career) research
 - the role of culture in (career) research
 - human resource management

Empirical basis: 5C – Cross-cultural contemporary careers collaboration

- Focusing on career concepts, success and transitions
- Considering three different professional groups
 - Business school graduates
 - Nursing school graduates
 - Blue-collar workers
- Looking at two generations: young/old
- In 11 countries selected according to Schwartz' framework of cultural values
 - Austria, China, Costa Rica, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Serbia, South Africa, Spain and the US.

Conceptual background

Background: changing relationship individual – organisation



Relationship between organisation and employees

- greater variety of legal contracts/forms of employment
- changing psychological contract
- psychological contract
 - set of mutual expectations about obligations, i.e., inducements and contributions
 - referring to the ‚give and take‘ in employment relationships
 - often implicit
 - shared by both parties
 - often felt only if the ‚give and take‘ is felt to be unfair

From relational to transactional psychological contract

■ Relational

- long-term mutual commitment
- value in the relationship
- trust that over time any temporary imbalances in the inducement/contribution-ratio will even themselves out

■ Transactional

- short term exchange of benefits and services
- value in the entities exchanged rather than in the relationship itself
- performance based
- ,one-day contract`
- Employees offer: willingness to change/flexibility, high performance, high commitment
- Organisations offer: talent development, work security, employability

Duality of careers

- Objective career
 - Sequence of position in a social space
 - Observable from outside, clearly measurable
- Subjective career
 - Individual perception of the sequence of position
 - Intra-personal, not clearly measurable, requires introspection
- Success indicators
 - Great variety of categories
 - Objective indicators: e.g. income, performance, hierarchical advancement
 - Subjective indicators: e.g. life satisfaction, career satisfaction

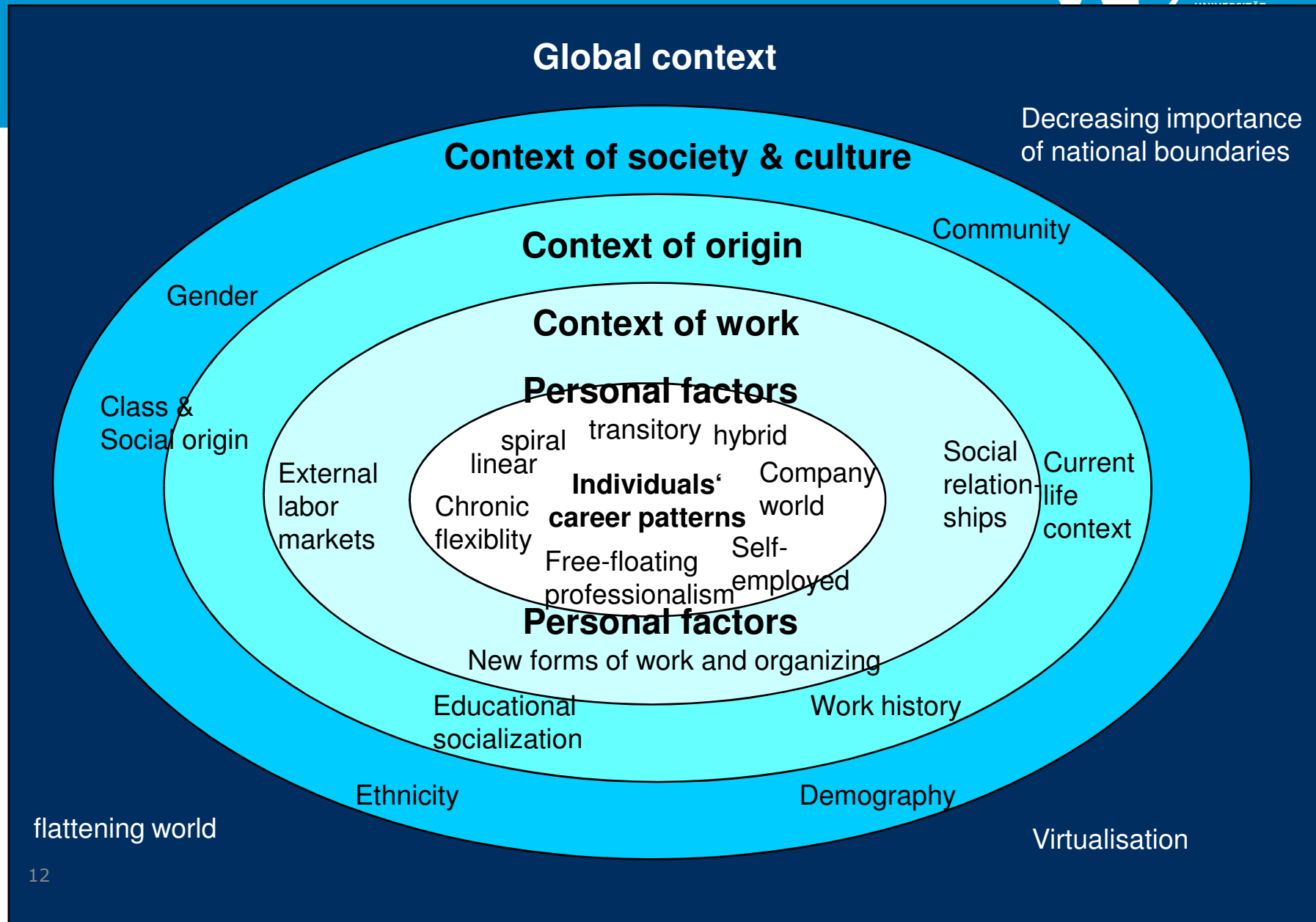
What do we do with careers?



- e.g.,
- * personal career plans
 - * personal growth activities
 - * life styling exercises
 - * value clarification

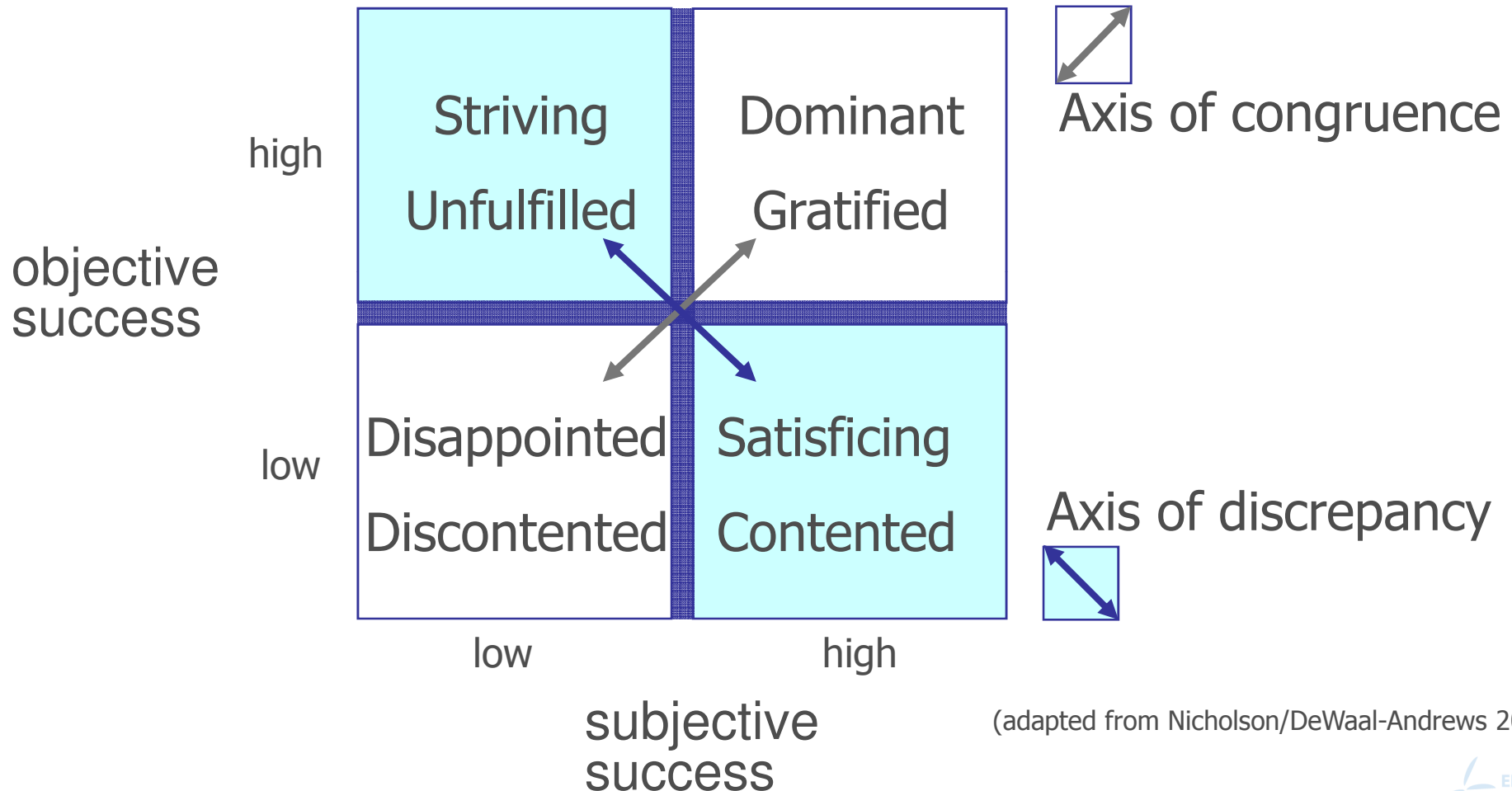
- e.g.,
- * manpower inventories
 - * succession planning
 - * potential evaluation
 - * fast tracks
 - * people development

Layers of influencing factors



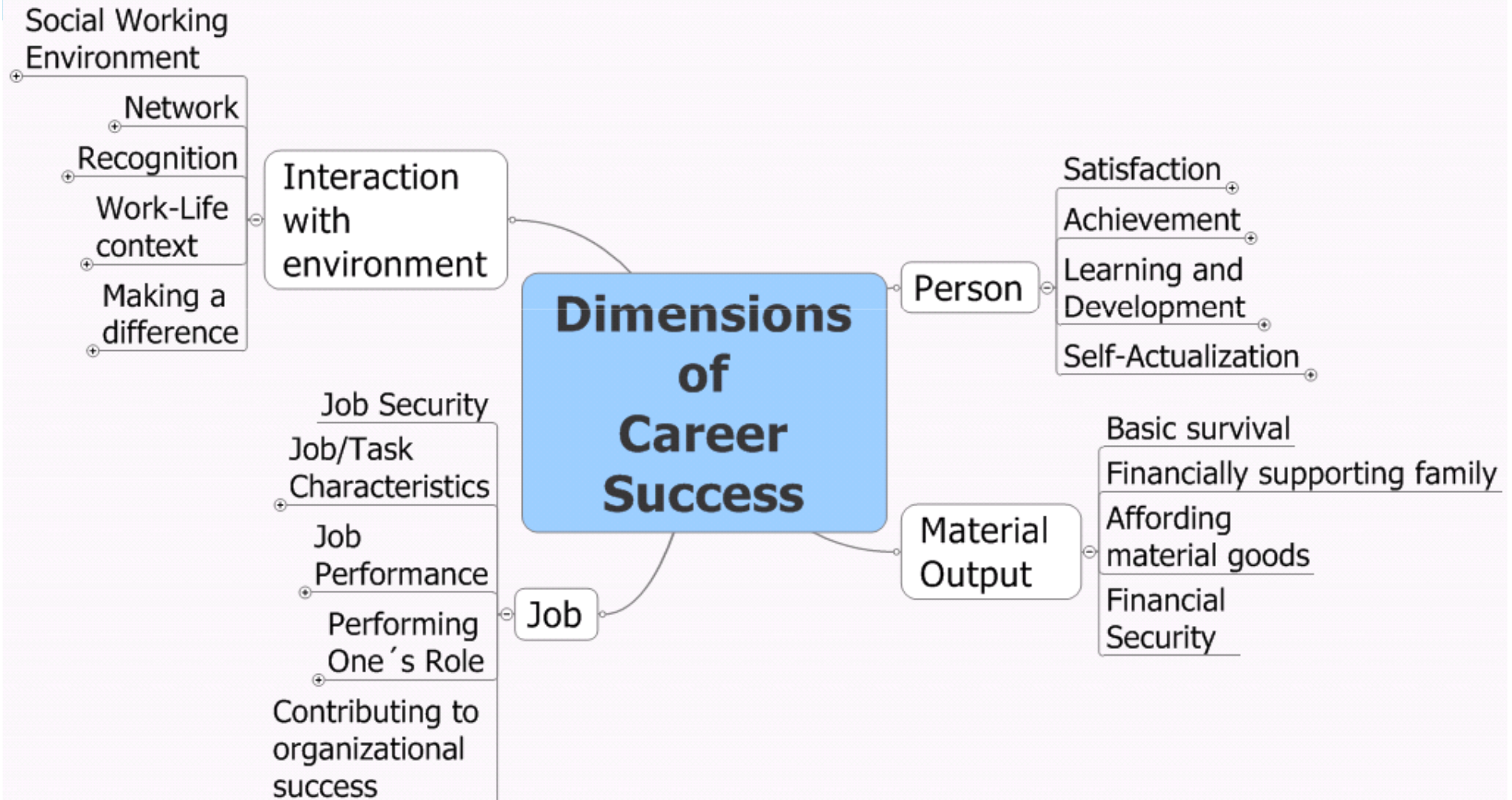
Career success

Objective-subjective career success matrix



(adapted from Nicholson/DeWaal-Andrews 2005)

Career success – core dimensions across the globe



Meanings of career success – a comparative view

- Objective and subjective career success dimension: mentioned in all countries and professional groups
- No universal factor shared by all professional groups and all countries
- Shared meanings of career success among all countries, in at least one professional group
 - Recognition/status and money (objective)
 - Learning (subjective)
- Professional boundaries
 - Nurses vs.
 - Business graduates and blue collar workers

Influencing factors of career success

- No universal factor in all professional groups and all countries
- Influencing factors of career success among all countries, in at least one professional group
 - Education
 - Support from social networks – non-work
- Wide coverage of factors at least in three countries, covering the whole range of career capitals
 - Education and experience (culture career capital)
 - Social support from work and non-work related networks (social career capital)
 - Monetary dimension (economic career capital)

Cross-cultural view on career success factors – attribution theory (Chudzikowski et al. 2006)

		stable	variable			
internal	internal-stable	1. USA: 38.1% 2. Austria: 33.3% 3. Malaysia: 21.1% 4. Spain: 19.2% 27.4%	internal-variable	1. Austria: 35.6% 2. Spain: 30.8% 3. Malaysia: 15.8% 4. USA: 14.3% 25.6%	internal	1. Austria: 68.9% 2. USA: 52.4% 3. Spain: 50.0% 4. Malaysia: 36.9% 53.0%
	external-stable	1. Malaysia: 31.6% 2. USA: 19.0% 3. Spain: 11.5% 4. Austria: 2.2% 17.1%	external-variable	1. Spain: 38.5% 2. Malaysia: 31.6% 3. USA: 28.6% 4. Austria: 28.9% 29.9%	external	1. Malaysia: 63.1% 2. Spain: 50.0% 3. USA: 47.6% 4. Austria: 31.1% 47.0%
external	stable	1. USA: 57.1% 2. Malaysia: 52.6% 3. Austria: 35.6% 4. Spain: 30.8% 44.5%	variable	1. Spain: 69.2% 2. Austria: 64.4% 3. Malaysia: 47.4% 4. USA: 42.9% 55.5%	Sum 100.0%	

Flexpatriates working in different cultures (Demel 2009)

■ Positive Consequences

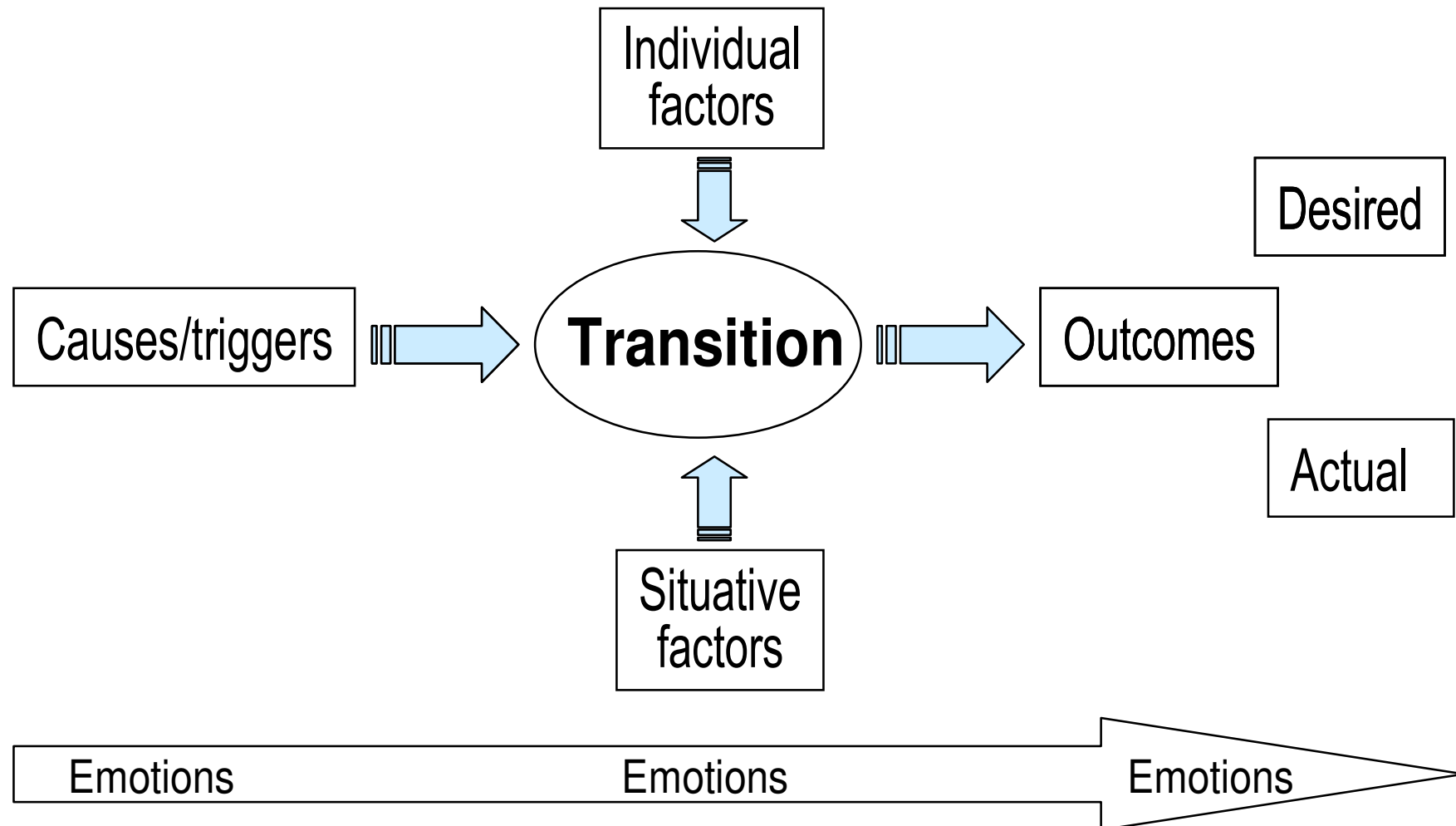
- 17 out of 20 mention positive consequences
- Gained experience, know-how: expert and market knowledge
- Good career perspectives: reputation, international career opportunities, increasing demand
- Contacts, networks abroad

■ Negative consequences

- 5 out of 20 mention negative consequences
- Special emphasis on “getting stuck” in flexpatriation and a specific region (Eastern flexpatriates)
- Work load and time loss, lack of everyday life in home offices, i.e. less contact to colleagues (Western flexpatriates)
- Positive statements concerning the “East versus West” discussion prevail: e.g. know-how from westerners needed, “gold-rush fever”, easier to reach high positions

Career transitions

Model of career transitions



Causes and triggers of career transitions (Chudzikowski et al. 2008)

Countries	USA	Austria	Spain	Serbia	China	Japan	Malaysia	South Africa	Costa Rica	Mexico	Israel
Causes and Triggers	<p>Own initiative - internal source</p> <p><i>Desire for something new</i></p>	<p>Own initiative - internal source</p> <p>Own initiative - external source</p> <p>Organizationally driven</p> <p>Macro factors</p>	<p>Own initiative - internal source</p> <p>Organizationally driven</p> <p>Macro factors</p> <p><i>Desire for something new</i></p>	<p>Own initiative - internal source</p> <p>Organizationally driven</p> <p>Macro factors</p> <p><i>Desire for something new</i></p>	<p>Own initiative - external source</p> <p>Organizationally driven</p> <p>Macro factors</p>	<p>Own initiative - internal source</p> <p>Organizationally driven</p>	<p>Own initiative - internal source</p>	<p>Own initiative - internal source</p> <p>Own initiative - external source</p> <p><i>Desire for something new</i></p>	<p>Own initiative - internal source</p> <p>Own initiative - external source</p>	<p>Own initiative - internal source</p> <p>Organizationally driven</p> <p><i>Desire for something new</i></p>	<p>Own initiative - internal source</p> <p>Own initiative - external source</p> <p>Organizationally driven</p> <p><i>Desire for something new</i></p>

common to all occupational groups within each country

- no factor common across all countries
- strong emphasis on own initiative

Attribution of causes and triggers (Chudzikowski et al. 2008)

- clear differences between countries and culture clusters
- US, Malaysia
 - strong internal tendency
 - e.g. desire for something new, identifying new opportunity
- China, Japan, Austria
 - strong external tendency
 - e.g. organisational restructuring, redeployment of human resources, government policy, labour market

Desired outcomes of career transitions (Chudzikowski et al. 2008)

Cluster	English Speaking	Western Europe		Eastern Europe	Confucian Asia		South Asia	Africa/Middle East	Latin America		
Countries	USA	Austria	Spain	Serbia	China	Japan	Malaysia	South Africa	Costa Rica	Mexico	Israel
Desired Outcomes	Tasks Variety and work experience	Tasks Variety and work experience	None	Tasks Variety and work experience	None	Tasks	None	None	Variety and work experience	Tasks Variety and work experience	Tasks Variety and work experience

- no single factor for all professional groups across all the 11 countries
- some commonalities
 - “Better suited tasks” in the US, Austria, Serbia, Japan, Mexico, and Israel.
 - “Variety and work experience” in the US, Austria, Serbia, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Israel.
 - “Need for enjoyment, happiness or satisfaction, including a better work life balance” in the US, Austria, Serbia, Mexico, and Israel.

Career transitions - acquisition of legal and cultural expertise

- differences linked to professional groups and national settings point towards the relevance of legal and cultural specifics
- HRM requires a substantial amount of legal and cultural expertise to deal with career transitions adequately
 - organisations operating across national borders
 - large multinational corporations (MNCs)
 - small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)
 - domestic organisations with culturally mixed workforce
- Lack of legal and cultural expertise can be costly
 - monetary sense, e.g. violations of labour law
 - cultural sense, e.g. violations of culture specific norms and expectations

Overall tendencies

■ Layers of context

- Stable economical background: micro factors more emphasized
- Unstable economical background: macro factors more important

■ Professional identities

- Tendency of stronger professional identities in more stable, institutionalized contexts

■ Attribution

- Cultural influence observed when looking at internal and external attributions of causes and triggers
- Compared to China, European countries show individualistic tendencies

Methodological implications

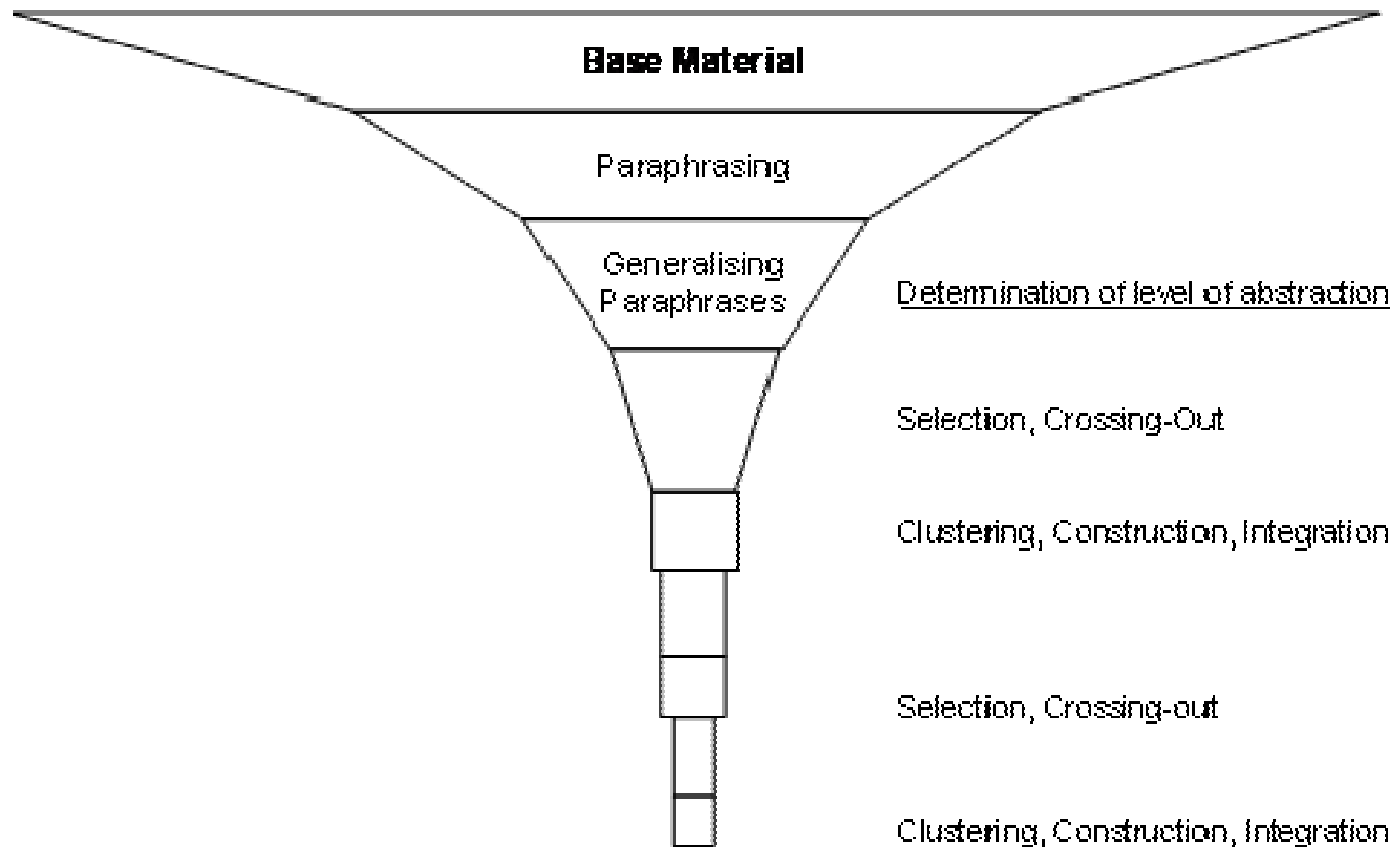
Methodological constraints of comparative analyses

- The use of theoretical frameworks across national and cultural boundaries
 - Well debated (e.g., Hofstede 1980; Adler/Graham 1989; Doktor/Tung/Glinow 1991)
 - Debate seems more or less closed – tacit assumption: Let's assume it sufficiently works (somehow)
- The problem of making sense of results in a comparative setting –
 - positive move from 'safari research' (Peterson 2001) to
 - multi-cultural/national research teams or
 - large scale global research networks, e.g. 5C, GLOBE
- The use of established analytical methods across national and cultural boundaries
 - Widely debated and 'quasi-solutions' in objective paradigm
 - Less debated and 'solved' in interpretative paradigm

Interpretative methods in a comparative setting

- Example: 5C Semi-structured interviews
 - 195 interviews (average 45 min), transcribed
 - 7 languages
 - Mainly face-to-face in local language, fully transcribed
- Method
 - Variant of qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2003)
 - Coding process:
Paraphrasing ⇒ Generalisation ⇒ Categorisation

Method - illustration



Emerging problems

- Basic decision for interpretation: generalisations and core categories in English
 - Potential losses of richness due to language changes
 - No language change: U.S. looks at South African core categories
 - 1 language change: AUT looks at US core categories
 - 2 language changes: AUT looks at Spanish core categories formulated in English
 - Losses of nuances
 - Consulting of original interview texts often difficult or practically impossible - e.g., Japanese interviews
 - Positive effects
 - Enhanced comparability – everybody can access core results
 - Increasing robustness because of concentration on 'main effects'
 - Basis for a research specific Global Coding Book

Emerging problems cont'd

- 'Classical' translation problems
 - E.g. in German 'die Wirtschaft'
 - Of course: economy, industry, commerce, business world
 - Also implies
 - Abstract, collective actors ('Das ist gut für die Wirtschaft')
 - Mythical-religious undertones ('Wirtschaftswunder')
- Citation of interview passages in publications
- (Lack of) Density when discussing texts in culturally mixed interpretation groups or struggling for coding categories

Theoretical implications

Culture vs. institutions

- Culture as important variable
- However, institutional context clearly relevant
- Examples
 - political system – China
 - collective professional identities – nurses
 - stability of the institutional environment – Serbia

HRM implications

Careers across the globe – some commonalities

- Importance of education
- Objective dimension dominates
- Subjective dimension also important
- Hierarchical advancement still important
- Professional and age boundaries relevant
- Input oriented view of career success
- Luck and contingencies often mentioned

- Importance of education and continuous individual development
 - Emphasis on training and development
 - Formal, informal, external and internal learning opportunities for hard competences and social skills
 - Mentoring
 - Possibilities for formal adult education, e.g., certified courses
- Prominence of objective dimension
 - Compensation systems
 - Career systems taking into account hierarchical advancement

■ Importance of subjective elements

- Balance between
 - Support of meaningful „subjective career trajectories“ and
 - Objective aspects such as promotion and money
- Redefining traditional hierarchical advancement: focusing more on increasing horizontal responsibility and monetary income

■ Professional and age boundaries

- Diversity is an important factor to consider regarding overall HR development, compensation, and benefits issues
- Tailored HR instruments taking into account core characteristics of employee groups
 - Compensation packages
 - Recruitment strategies

HRM implications

- Prepare for/deal with a greater variety of 'international careers'
 - expatriation cycle as one of several HR processes
 - consequences of diverse forms of international working for
 - selection
 - training
 - compensation
 - retention

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