The practice of talent management: a framework and typology

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the development of a deeper understanding of the conceptual and empirical boundaries of talent management (TM) so that scholars and practitioners may enhance their knowledge of what TM actually is and how it is carried out.

Design/methodology/approach – A comparative study was conducted of the TM practices of 30 organizations based in Sweden. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 56 organizational representatives. The transcribed interviews were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

Findings – The findings comprise a typology consisting of four distinct TM types that exist in practice: a humanistic type, a competitive type, an elitist type and an entrepreneurial type. Descriptions are provided that probe into how specific practices are differently shaped in the different types.

Research limitations/implications – The study design enabled the generation of an empirically rich understanding of different TM types; however, it limited the authors' ability to draw systematic conclusions on the realized outcomes of different types of TM.

Practical implications – The descriptions of different TM types give practitioners insight into how TM may be practiced in different ways and point to important decisions to be made when designing TM.

Originality/value – The paper addresses two main shortcomings identified in the academic literature on TM: conceptual ambiguity and the paucity of in-depth empirical research on how TM is carried out in actual organizational settings. The empirically derived typology constitutes an important step for further theory development in TM.

Keywords Qualitative, Typology, Talent, Talent management, Talent management practices, Talent management types

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

In the midst of intensified global competition, weakening bonds between employers and employees, and the ongoing shift toward knowledge-based economies, talent management (TM) has become a key business activity and a critically important decision area (Sparrow and Makram, 2015; Collings and Mellahi, 2009). In essence, the dilemma is that talent has become an attractive source of competitive advantage and at the same time, many organizations are encountering talent shortages and finding it increasingly difficult to attract, manage, and retain talented people (Schuler *et al.*, 2011).

The strong interest in talent issues amongst practitioners has been followed by growing scholarly interest and an increasing number of academic publications on TM (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013a). However, scholars consistently point to two main shortcomings in the literature. The first is the conceptual ambiguity of "TM." While substantial advances have lately been

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made toward establishing mature theoretical frameworks for the concept of "talent" (Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013; Meyers *et al.*, 2013; Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen, 2015; Nijs *et al.*, 2014; Tansley, 2011), the framework for TM is considerably less developed (Al Ariss *et al.*, 2014; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013b). Specifically, Dries (2013) states that many scholars fail to define "which specific practices fall under the TM label" (p. 274). In many ways, it is still unclear what TM actually is.

The second shortcoming is the paucity of empirical research (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Dries, 2013; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013; Meyers *et al.*, 2013). Reviews point to an "urgent need" for empirical studies to move the field beyond "assumptions and hypotheses" (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013b, p. 334). In particular, there is a lack of rigorous research that pays close attention to actual organizational practices and develops an in-depth understanding of how organizations define talent and carry out TM activities (Meyers and van Woerkom, 2014; Meyers *et al.*, 2013). An important avenue for such research is the comparative investigation of "typologies that are dominant in organizational reality" (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013b, p. 334). Such typologies inform us of the various ways in which TM is manifested in contemporary organizations and constitute an important foundation for further research on the antecedents and outcomes of different TM approaches.

This paper answers to the call for robust empirical research on TM and poses the following research question:

RQ1. How is TM carried out in actual organizational settings?

In order to answer our question, we develop a comprehensive framework for comparative analysis of TM in organizations. The aim is to develop a framework that accounts for systematic variation in the empirical phenomenon of TM. Next, we present an in-depth study of the TM practices of 30 organizations. The main findings are a typology consisting of four distinct TM types as well as a description of the same.

The paper aims to advance TM research in two ways. Addressing the first shortcoming in the literature, it aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the conceptual boundaries of TM by integrating theoretical insights in extant literature into a holistic framework that delineates the main dimensions of a talent definition and the main practices of TM. Drawing on this base to address the second shortcoming, it aims to contribute empirically by investigating the different ways in which TM is carried out in organizational settings. Together, the framework and the typology constitute an important step for further theory development in TM (Doty and Glick, 1994; McKelvey, 1975; Meyer *et al.*, 1993). Specifically, they provide a solid basis for investigating the conditions under which organizations adopt different types of TM and can therefore contribute to the development of a greater contextual understanding of TM (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013b; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2015).

Literature review

A recent, comprehensive review concludes that three main areas are addressed in the academic literature on TM: the definition of talent, outcomes and effects of TM, and TM practices and activities (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013a). Outcomes are crucial but are beyond the scope of this paper. Here, we focus on the definition of talent, TM practices, and the implications talent definitions may have for TM practices.

Although the literature has long made a rough distinction between inclusive and exclusive approaches to TM (e.g. Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Stahl *et al.*, 2012), scholars have lately begun to explore in more depth the relationship between talent definitions and TM practices. Little work has, however, been done to draw up a systematic TM typology. The configurations of talent definitions and TM practices that are drawn up in the research works of Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.* (2013), Meyers *et al.* (2013) and Meyers and van Woerkom (2014) are an important first step toward conceptually defining

TM types. A common shortcoming of these contributions is, however, that the proposed types are unsystematically and cursorily described. Previous typologies also put disproportionate emphasis on one aspect of the talent definition, such as the innate-acquired dimension, thereby possibly concealing the diversity of different views on talent in practice (Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen, 2015). Moreover, there is a paucity of empirical research that compares configurations of talent definitions and TM practices and identifies distinct types that exist in organizations. The studies conducted to date (e.g. Iles *et al.*, 2010a; Valverde *et al.*, 2013; Cooke *et al.*, 2014; Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen, 2015) constitute valuable empirical contributions, but the field suffers from the lack of a comprehensive, systematic, and detailed framework, which makes it difficult to explore similarities and differences between organizations. In the following, we develop such a framework for comparative analysis based on a synthesis of the literature.

A framework for identifying TM types
Our framework for identifying TM types begins with the talent definition. A number of dimensions of talent have previously been discussed in the literature. In the current framework we include five well-established dimensions derived from theoretical perspectives on talent that exist in six streams of literature: HRM, I/O psychology, educational psychology, vocational psychology, positive psychology, and social psychology (Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013; Meyers *et al.*, 2013; Dries, 2013). Each dimension should be seen as a continuum rather than mutually exclusive poles. Nonetheless, the position an organization takes in each dimension has implications for their TM practices (Dries, 2013; Thunnissen and Van Arensbergen, 2015). The first dimension is whether talent is seen as subject or object. Subject views define talent as individuals, whereas object views define it as characteristics of individuals, such as abilities and knowledge. The second is whether talent is inclusive and thus refers to all employees of an organization, or exclusive and refers to an elite subset of employees. The third dimension is innate-acquired: is talent a natural ability or something that can be taught and learned? The fourth is whether talent is based on input or output. Input-based views define talent as the employee's motivation, interest, ambition, values, and career orientation, whereas output-based views define it as the employee's ability, manifested in performance and achievements. Lastly, talent may be seen as a quality that remains unchanged when transferred between contexts, or as something that emerges and is recognized only in specific contexts.

The literature on TM discusses a number of different TM practices. Integrating practices that often have been discussed separately in the literature, the proposed framework includes five key practices: recruitment, talent identification, talent development, career management and succession planning, and retention management. Main dimensions along which each practice varies are discussed below.

In the TM context, recruitment is defined as the activities to identify and hire talented external job applicants (Meyers *et al.*, 2013). The first dimension is how high the reliance on recruitment is. When high, organizations "buy" talented individuals from the market for positions at all levels; when low, organizations rely on a "make" strategy and recruit primarily at entry level (Cappelli, 2008; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Stahl *et al.*, 2012). Second, organizations may recruit to fast-track programs tailored to talents, or to regular entry-level positions (Dries and Pepermans, 2008; Stahl *et al.*, 2007; Dries and De Gieter, 2014). Third, organizations may employ formal selection procedures or make selection decisions primarily based on personal judgment (Silzer and Church, 2009; Mäkelä *et al.*, 2010; Meyers *et al.*, 2013; Nijs *et al.*, 2014). When formal selection procedures are employed, there are clearly stated talent definitions and assessment policies. In addition, validated assessment tools with high methodological standards are used, and assessors strive for objectivity. When decisions are based on personal judgment, talent assessment is holistic and based largely on assessors' personal understanding.

The second practice is talent identification, i.e. activities to find talent amongst current employees (Meyers *et al.*, 2013). The first dimension is whether regular talent reviews are carried out to create talent pools (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005; Stahl *et al.*, 2007; Mäkelä *et al.*, 2010). Reviews may aim either to identify those that rank at the top (Becker *et al.*, 2009) or to identify each employee's strengths (Downs and Swailes, 2013). When talent reviews are not carried out, organizations may rely on succession planning or informal identification processes (Lewis and Heckman, 2006). The second dimension concerns the degree of reliance on formal procedures (see recruitment). Third, identification may be based on input or output (Meyers *et al.*, 2013; Mäkelä *et al.*, 2010; Silzer and Church, 2009). Output-based assessment is concerned with what employees already have accomplished, while input-based assessment is concerned with what the individual brings into the next job, e.g. motivation and cultural fit.

The third practice is talent development, i.e. activities to nurture talent. First, activities may be mainly program-based and take place through formal learning models, or they may be experience-based and take place through job activities such as challenging assignments and rotations (Yost and Chang, 2009). Second, development activities may be exclusive or inclusive (Stahl *et al.*, 2007; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Yost and Chang, 2009). Exclusive programs, where admission is through nomination, are high-profile programs tailored to an elite group. Inclusive programs provide learning opportunities to the whole workforce. The third dimension concerns whether talent pool activities are organized (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005; Stahl *et al.*, 2007; Collings and Mellahi, 2009). Some organizations see their talents as a group that should develop together, and consequently organize activities to that purpose, e.g. network events and joint projects.

The fourth TM practice is career management and succession planning, i.e. activities aimed at ensuring that organizations optimally use their talented employees by facilitating their flow into the right jobs. The first dimension is career management focus (Dries and Pepermans, 2008; De Vos and Dries, 2013). When organizations focus on traditional organizational careers, they prioritize the organization's needs and implement formalized career practices focused on upward mobility. Careers tend to be bounded and paternalistic. When organizations focus on self-managed careers, they foreground the needs and responsibilities of the employees. Careers tend to be boundary-less and self-directed. The second dimension concerns how clear career paths are (Dries and Pepermans, 2008; Meyers *et al.*, 2013; Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013a). When clearly defined, alternative career paths are drawn up by the organization. When loosely defined, career paths may be drawn up, but it is emphasized that careers may be advanced in different ways. When ad hoc, they are formed depending on the supply of talents and jobs. The third dimension is whether mainly vertical or horizontal promotion is focused, i.e. whether upward mobility or skills development within the same role or at another job on the same level is emphasized (Dries and Pepermans, 2008; Meyers *et al.*, 2013). The fourth dimension has to do with how employees' flow into the right jobs is facilitated (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005; Stahl *et al.*, 2007; Mäkelä *et al.*, 2010). Organizations may regularly review their talent pools to match talents with current job openings, or they may utilize succession planning or an open labor market.

The final TM practice is retention management, i.e. activities to prevent employee turnover. The first dimension concerns the degree of emphasis on creating a strong employer brand and refers to how strong the organization's efforts are to differentiate itself from competitors by formulating an employee value proposition (EVP) that appeals to talents (Stahl *et al.*, 2012; Meyers *et al.*, 2013; Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013b). The second dimension is the degree to which organizations take specific measures to enhance loyalty among talents (Stahl *et al.*, 2007).

Method
We conducted an in-depth, comparative study of the TM practices of 30 organizations based in Sweden. In this section, we describe the data collection and the analytical process that led

to the development of our main findings: a typology consisting of four distinct TM types and descriptions of the types. Our overall research design was abductive (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009; Mantere, 2008). Abductive approaches involve an iterative process of movement back and forth between the studied phenomenon, the researcher's pre-understanding, existing literature, and the empirical data. The aim is to reach what is called "the best explanation," i.e. an understanding of the phenomenon that best takes these different components into account.

We started out with a general research question on what organizations "see" and "do" as TM. Turning to the academic literature on TM, we noted a lack of clarity regarding what TM actually consists of. However, five practices (recruitment, talent identification, talent development, career management and succession planning, and retention management) were recurrently mentioned in different places throughout the texts, and we decided to focus our data collection on these.

Data collection
The first step in selecting organizations was specifying the population (Eisenhardt, 1989). The population included organizations that were explicitly engaged in TM and had implemented numerous activities specifically aimed at managing talent. In order to encourage variation, the population included organizations in different industries. Because formal TM tends not to be implemented in small organizations with limited resources (Schuler *et al.*, 2011; Festing *et al.*, 2013), the population included organizations that were large, although not necessarily in absolute numbers but relative to other organizations in their industry. In the second step, specific organizations were chosen from this population. This selection was not random, but based on the principle that the chosen organizations should be likely to render what was being studied "transparently observable" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 537). Specifically, we chose organizations that were known to be most mature in their TM work and that we thought would "see" and "do" TM differently. In this manner, we selected 30 organizations to include in the study (see Table I).

Data were collected through in-depth interviews. We considered interviews to be appropriate since we aimed not only to record which practices the organizations engaged in, but also to gain a detailed understanding of how these practices were shaped and enacted (Edmondson and McManus, 2007; Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Monks *et al.*, 2013). The interviews were semi-structured. We followed an interview guide that covered the five practices identified in our initial reading of the literature. On a practical level, this means that we asked participants to define talent and describe what specific activities they carried out as part of TM. All five practices were discussed in each interview, but more or less extensively depending on how much emphasis was put on the practice in the particular organization. Through follow-up questions, we encouraged the interviewees to expand on their descriptions and probed into the details of the practices. Our questions therefore passed through a funnel-like structure. For example, we began by asking the general question "what activities do you include in TM," continued with slightly more specific questions on the practices such as "how do you identify talent," which were then followed up with specific questions such as "are there explicit criteria that guide your decisions," "do you use any tools," or "how do you assess the information that is collected."

The study comprised interviews with 56 organizational representatives. The persons within the HR function responsible for TM were interviewed. In some cases, they held the title of vice president HR, but more often the title was the head of TM or similar. They were chosen because they were responsible for the design, implementation, and follow-up of TM in their organizations. We argue that their accounts can be seen as representative of their organizations by virtue of them being key decision-makers regarding their organizations' TM policies and practices. When possible, which was in approximately one third of the organizations, interviews were also held with other senior managers, such as heads of business areas or functions, who were operationally involved in TM practices.

Org.	Industry	No. of employees	No. of countries where present	No. of interviews	TM type (identified in the study)
1	Aerospace and defense	13,000	20	2	Competitive
2	Automobiles and components	40,000	100	3	Humanistic
3	Automobiles and components	1,600	130	1	Competitive
4	Banks	29,400	8	1	Competitive
5	Banks	18,900	20	5	Competitive
6	Banks	1,100	4	1	Humanistic
7	Commercial and professional services	190,000	150	1	Elitist
8	Commercial and professional services	160,000	150	6	Elitist
9	Commercial and professional services	450	3	1	Elitist
10	Commercial and professional services	120	1	1	Elitist
11	Construction and engineering	18,100	9	1	Humanistic
12	Construction and engineering services	15,000	35	1	Competitive
13	Construction and engineering services	9,000	12	1	Humanistic
14	Consumer discretionary	61,000	100	2	Entrepreneurial
15	Food and drug retailing	7,300	1	1	Humanistic
16	Hotels	3,700	10	1	Humanistic
17	Hotels and resorts	77,000	130	1	Competitive
18	Industrial tools	39,800	170	6	Entrepreneurial
19	Investment banking	1,200	7	1	Elitist
20	IT services	6,600	7	1	Humanistic
21	Materials (Steel)	9,000	45	3	Competitive
22	Media and communication	100	1	1	Elitist
23	Paper and Forest Products	28,000	40	2	Competitive
24	Public management	37,000	1	1	Humanistic
25	Public management	10,300	1	1	Humanistic
26	Public management	10,000	1	2	Humanistic
27	Public management	5,300	1	1	Humanistic
28	Road and Rail	2,400	5	1	Humanistic
29	Telecommunication Services	8,300	10	3	Entrepreneurial
30	Telecommunications Equipment and services	109,200	180	3	Competitive

Table I.
Summary
characteristics of
the participating
organizations

The interviews, which lasted between 1 and 1.5 hours, were carried out by two of the authors. They were audio-recorded and fully transcribed. The analysis was based on the original transcripts, but excerpts have since been translated from Swedish to English for the purpose of dissemination.

Data analysis
Already in our first reading of the transcripts, it became clear that there were large variations in how the organizations described their view on talent, what specific activities they included in TM and how much emphasis they put on each practice. However, there seemed to be different patterns in this variation that could be indicative of the occurrence of different types of TM in the empirical data. Searching for ways to make sense of this, we turned again to the literature and looked in detail at publications that conceptually define TM types (e.g. Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013; Meyers *et al.*, 2013). Finding that the proposed types were sketchily described and that they thus could not be used to understand the

patterns we sensed in the data, we began to put together a framework that could be used to identify TM types by searching through academic publications on TM for discussions on the practices. We found that each practice could be described in terms of a number of dimensions along which the practice varied. Putting these together, we created the framework that is presented in this paper's literature review.

In the first step of the analysis, we conducted qualitative content analysis to analyze the interview transcripts (Wilkinson, 2004; Saldaña, 2012). The transcripts were analyzed one by one in order to investigate how TM is carried out in each organization. We employed structural coding, which "applies a content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that relates to a specific research question used to frame the interview" (Saldaña, 2012, p. 84). Using the TM framework as a scheme, we coded sections of the transcripts where the different talent dimensions, practices, and practice dimensions are mentioned. These interview excerpts were placed in data tables, one for each organization. Together, the 30 tables comprised a systematic representation of the studied organizations' configurations of talent definition and TM practices. When there was more than one interviewee in an organization, the transcripts were coded into the same table. Inconsistencies between interviewees were few, but when they occurred we contacted the interviewees to make sure we had a correct understanding of the practice in question.

In the second step, we looked at the coding with a more holistic view and explored patterns across organizations to see if we could identify TM types. We began by closely studying the configurations generated in the first step, looking for commonalities and differences. Once we began to see the contours of types in the material, we moved iteratively between the data tables and the preliminary types, gradually clarifying the common characteristics of each type and the differences between types. In this manner, we derived from the data a typology, where each of the four types constitutes a distinct pattern in how a subset of the studied organizations defined talent and carried out TM practices. This analysis also revealed that each type has a principal practice, i.e. one specific practice was pointed at by interviewees in each type as especially significant in characterizing their TM work. We then went back to the full transcripts to ensure that the types we had identified were faithful descriptions and that the typology included all of the organizations. Finally, we created a summarizing data table with short but illustrative interview excerpts for each type (see Table AI) and constructed descriptions of each type.

The credibility of the results (Silverman, 2011) was enhanced through a procedure involving independent work followed by discussion to resolve differences. In the first step of the analysis, all three authors initially coded the same data separately. We then compared our independent coding, discussed the instances where it diverged, and clarified definitions of the coding scheme. In the second step, each author independently studied all 30 configurations to draw up preliminary types which we then discussed. Similarly, each author independently categorized each organization as a specific type. At this stage, there was a high level of agreement and the final typology emerged.

Findings
The findings offer detailed insights into how TM is carried out in practice. Four distinct types of TM are described below. Table AI (Appendix) contains interview excerpts illustrating each type (the number after each quote refers to the interviewees' organization as listed in Table I). The typology is summarized in Table II.

The humanistic type: developing each employee's talent

It would be problematic if TM only encompassed a small proportion of our employees. A fundamental part of our culture is respect for each human being. All our employees are talents and there is room for everyone and everyone contributes to [organization] (2).

	Humanistic	Competitive	Elitist	Entrepreneurial
View on talent				
(a) Object or subject	Subject	Subject	Subject	Subject
(b) Inclusive or exclusive	Inclusive	Exclusive	Exclusive	Inclusive
(c) Innate or acquired	Acquired	Innate	Innate	Acquired
(d) Output or input	Input and output	Output	Output and input	Input
(e) Transferable or context dependent	Context dependent	Transferable	Transferable	Context dependent
TM practice: recruitment			*Principal practice*	
(a) Reliance on recruitment	Low (make)	High (buy)	Low (make)	Low (make)
(b) Existence of entry-level fast track positions	No	Yes	No	No
(c) Reliance on formal selection tools or on personal judgment	Formal tools	Formal tools	Personal judgment	Personal judgment
TM practice: talent identification		*Principal practice*		
(a) Regular talent reviews	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
(b) Reliance on formal identification tools or on personal judgment	Personal judgment	Formal tools	Personal judgment	Personal judgment
(c) Identification based on output or input	Input and output	Output	Output and input	Input
TM practice: talent development	*Principal practice*			
(a) Program-based or experienced-based development	Equal emphasis	Program-based	Experience-based	Experience-based
(b) Exclusive or inclusive programs	Inclusive	Exclusive	Exclusive	Inclusive
(c) Talent pool activities are undertaken	No	Yes	No	No
TM practice: career management and succession planning				*Principal practice*
(a) Career management focus	Partly self-managed, partly traditional organizational career	Traditional organizational career	Traditional organizational career	Self-managed
(b) Career paths	Loosely defined	Clearly defined	Clearly defined	Ad hoc
(c) Vertical or horizontal promotion	Both	Vertical	Vertical	Both
(d) Regular reviews of talent pools	No	Yes	No	No
TM practice: retention management				
(a) Emphasis on strong employer brand	High	High	High	High
(b) Reliance on loyalty-enhancing activities aimed at talents	Low	High	High	High

Table II.
Typology of TM

Organizations with humanistic TM hold an inclusive view in which literally all employees are seen as talents. Top performers have one type of talent, but other employees have other types of talent, and TM encompasses all. There is a firm belief that talent can be developed throughout a person's lifetime and that the organization can become an important arena for that development by offering opportunities for learning. Ability is a part of talent, but more important are the individual's interests and desires. These organizations pay more attention to how the employee wants to develop and what she/he would enjoy working with than how well she has done in the past. Talent is seen as context-dependent, to the extent that it is

argued that a person who is underperforming in one part of the organization may well be recognized as a talent in another.

There is little reliance on recruitment of talents from outside. Buying external "hotshots" (16) would send the message that current employees are not good enough. Similarly, they do not offer fast-track programs, as that would mean singling some employees out as better than the rest and giving them "an easy ride" (15). Selection relies on clearly defined criteria and formal tools are used to assess these criteria. It is emphasized that this guarantees fair, equal treatment of candidates.

In order to identify talent, talent reviews are performed, most often annually. The purpose is to bring to light employees' strengths and find the right place for them in the organization. These reviews encompass employees that have indicated that they want to develop beyond their current role. The performance of each of these employees is discussed, but the focus lies on a wide range of input-related factors such as personal interests. Plans are made both for those that come out well in the discussions and those that do not. Assessments are informal and based on a holistic understanding of talent rather than explicitly defined criteria. The stated reason for this is that they want to focus their attention on the actual people involved rather than the technicalities and "mathematics" (11) of assessment. It is accepted, even embraced, that assessment is a subjective process. Formal assessment tools may be used, but the results are not taken at face value since they are seen as simplistic.

Talent development is the principal practice of the humanistic type of TM. There is a strong belief that every employee will be valuable if developed in the appropriate way. Development opportunities are thus offered to all, not just a chosen few. Equal emphasis is placed on experience-based and program-based development. The former takes place mainly through job rotations, where people move between different jobs and departments. Program-based development takes place through courses and trainings, often run by internal academies. Admission is through application rather than nomination. Some programs address specific job-related skills and develop people within their current role, while others address general leadership skills and develop people for vertical advancement. Talent pool activities are not organized, since there is a wish not to single out specific groups as more talented than others.

Since the organizations want to encourage their employees to develop according to their interests, career paths are only loosely defined. Consequentially, careers can be horizontal as well as vertical, and both are equally valued. The main idea is to emphasize that it is not only becoming a manager that makes a career. Despite the lack of formalized career practices, responsibility for career does not rest only on the individual. Once an employee has communicated how she wants to develop, managers are expected to support them. Talent pool reviews for matching purposes are not undertaken. Instead, there is succession planning for a few top positions. Those identified as successors are not guaranteed promotion when such positions become available, but they are encouraged to apply.

These organizations differentiate themselves from their competitors by emphasizing that they "take care" of their employees. In particular, the EVP highlights development opportunities for all employees. Instead of offering the most competitive salaries they profile themselves as employee-friendly organizations that support work-life balance through reasonable working hours and flexible work practices. They do not employ specific activities to breed loyalty among talents, but rather emphasize the strong culture of inclusiveness.

The competitive type: identifying the talented few

> In our career ladders there are very clear steps defining the knowledge and the experience that is required for each step. But of course, a vast majority stops at a certain rung on the ladder. And my job is to look for those that can make it to the top (12).

Organizations with competitive TM hold an exclusive view on talent. In any group of employees, there will always be a small number of "stars" (23) whose excellent performance and high potential set them apart. Each employee has an inborn capacity to reach a certain organizational level. Talent processes are therefore aimed at finding and putting all efforts on the few that can make it to the top. These organizations see talent as being about ability rather than input-related factors such as motivation and interest, and the focus on past performance is very strong. Since they believe that a talent will be a talent no matter where she works, there is a strong sense of competing against other employers for talents.

Consequentially, these organizations focus more on buying than making talent. They hire to all levels and are continuously on the lookout for the best in order to sharpen the organization's competitive edge. In particular, they put a great deal of effort into hiring the best young talent. High-status fast-track programs such as graduate and trainee programs are seen as a key to attracting this group, who are talked about as future leaders of their organizations and expected to advance quickly in the ranks. Selection to these and other positions relies heavily on formal assessment tools, including a wide range of tests and assessment center methodology, to ensure that the objectively best candidate is selected.

Talent identification is the principal practice of the competitive type. Substantial time and effort is put into "the enormous machinery" (12) of organization-wide reviews aiming to identify the talented few. All employees are placed in a grid with performance and potential on the axes. While performance relates to employees' current role and potential is defined as readiness for promotion and likeliness to succeed, both are discussed on the basis of the output that the employee has already achieved. Forced ranking is rare, but there is usually an expected distribution. Those that are identified as talents are placed in different talent pools and given individual development plans. The identification procedure is described as rigorous and laborious. The main means to attain objective assessment is using a large number of formal assessment tools. Calibration is also considered a key to ensuring that employees are assessed in an objective manner.

Talent development is mainly program-based. Talents are nominated to exclusive programs designed to have a "turbo effect" (21) on their careers, primarily by providing a strategic outlook on the organization and developing leadership skills. The symbolic value is significant; programs are seen as a means to make talents feel recognized and appreciated. Similarly, a number of different talent pool activities, such as shadow management teams, are organized to stimulate talents, make them visible to management, and provide opportunities for talents from different parts of the organization to network.

In organizations with competitive TM, there are clearly defined career paths for leaders, specialists, and project leaders. Talents follow the leadership track and are expected to become managers at successively higher levels. Careers are traditional, particularly in the sense that the organization takes the main responsibility for providing talents with the right career opportunities. Talent pool reviews are organized, often monthly, to discuss talents ready for promotion and match them with current job openings. This is seen as a key to ensuring that TM supports the organization's strategic goals.

Since the view on talent is that it is transferable, these organizations assume that they are looking for the same talents as their competitors. In this war for talent, maintaining a strong employer brand is seen as a major concern. The EVP emphasizes clear career structures, exclusive talent programs and personalized development. Especially the latter two are also seen as essential for building loyalty among talents. Talent programs give talents the feeling that they are valued, while personalized development plans assure that they will be able to advance quickly. Talents will turn elsewhere if they don't feel that the organization has plans for them.

The elitist type: recruiting the most talented among talents

> We hire highly able and competent people, and amongst them there are a number that are
> exceptional. Not only do they perform well in their daily work, we also see that they have the
> potential to become partners in our firm. That's the group that we work with as our talent pool.
> These are people that we think can really make a difference in terms of business growth (7).

Organizations with elitist TM see talents as the crème de la crème. The exceedingly
selective recruitment process ensures that all employees are the best, but talents
outperform even these peers. Talents are described as "aces" (8) that advance more
quickly in the career ladder. The talent definition is clearly connected to the partner model
these organizations often have; talents are employees that have the potential to become
partners. Talent is seen as an expression of qualities that are inborn; however, it is
understood that talent must be formed by the organization to become "fully fledged" (7).
These organizations see talent as being largely about ability, defined in terms of
delivering in the professional role. However, input-related factors are also important in
defining talent, not least motivation and values. Talent is seen as transferable, and these
organizations struggle to keep their talents onboard but are also proud to see that their
talents are highly attractive on the external labor market.

The principal practice in the elitist TM type is recruitment. A large number of people,
including partners, put a great deal of time and effort into attracting and selecting the best
of the best. These organizations recruit almost exclusively at entry level, and there is a
strong reliance on making or, rather, refining talents – transforming them "from pupae into
butterflies" (7). Only students with the highest grades from the best universities are
considered. Formal assessment tools are often used but interviews are considered most
important. Partners' personal judgment is crucial for assessing whether candidates are
well-suited in terms of motivation level and cultural fit. These organizations do not have fast
tracks; instead, all new recruits enter to the same position, and all must advance in the same
career structure without skipping any steps.

Regular talent reviews are carried out in which employees are assessed not by their
managers but by people "a few notches above on the totem pole" (19). The aim is to explicitly
compare and rank employees in order to identify the very best. Performance is measured in
terms of clearly defined goals, whereas potential is defined as the capacity to grow the
business. Excellent performance is required; however, it is "not enough" (10). Since all
employees are expected to be high performers, excellent performance is considered a threshold.
To be identified as a talent, a person also needs to conduct herself in a certain way (9). The
review process is structured and objective in the sense that it is based on a complex system of
transparent and quantifiable criteria. However, these organizations emphasize that final talent
decisions must be made based on the intuitive personal judgment of the assessors.

Talent development is mainly experience-based. Talents may be assigned partners that
watch over their careers, or they may be expected to find partners who will take them under
their wing. Either way, having a strong relationship to a senior person is a key to being
given development opportunities. Senior people can provide opportunities that employees
cannot apply for or access on their own, such as "tagging along" (10) to meetings and trips.
Although there are some exclusive programs, these are not considered important for talent
development, nor are formal talent pool activities organized.

There is only one career path in the organization. It usually includes four to five steps,
each with a specific title. Employees are expected to take each step in the ladder within a
specified time. Careers are paternalistic in the sense that they "lie in the hands of the
partner" (9), who has the power to make or break a career. Reviews of the talent pool for
placement purposes are not seen as necessary, since responsibility is placed on senior people
to make sure that "their" talents are optimally used.

Organizations with elitist TM emphasize maintaining a strong employer brand, especially among students. They participate in career fairs and organize activities targeted at establishing relationships with the most talented students. The EVP includes clear career structures and competitive compensation, but most important is the opportunity to work with the best and with "the most exciting business on the market" (9). These organizations employ several different strategies to prevent talent turnover, most importantly the possibility of advancement to partnership and annual performance-based bonuses.

The entrepreneurial type: giving talents opportunities to prove themselves

> Our organization is still quite entrepreneurial. Yes, we have TM. But we're not a management consultancy where: ok, you do that and then tick that box and then that. It is not at all that predictable here. I think we have been quite successful in building on what have always been our strengths, that there's a lot of room for taking initiatives and that if you are willing to help yourself there are many opportunities (14).

Organizations with entrepreneurial TM hold a rather inclusive view on talent. While not claiming that all employees are talents, they do say that all employees have the potential to become talents if they find "the right environment" (14). Talent is entirely about input in terms of the individual's ambition to seek out challenges and take on new responsibilities. These organizations are very result-oriented but they see performance as an outcome of an attitude of "appetite and fire" (29), and it is this attitude rather than performance itself that defines talent. As people take on new challenges, gain experience, and learn from that experience, they become increasingly talented. In these organizations, there is a very strong emphasis on cultural fit, which means that a person that is a talent in one organization may not be seen as a talent in another organization.

As a result of the heavy emphasis on culture, these organizations see successful talent provision as the result of home-growing. External recruitment is kept at a minimum, and managers that grow talents that go on to new internal assignments are acknowledged and rewarded. The selection procedure looks not for the right formal competencies but for the right attitude. Skills can be acquired through training, but not drive and ambition. Formal assessment tools cannot capture whether a candidate has the right attitude or not; instead, it is something assessors develop an eye for over time. A great deal of emphasis is placed on interviews and discussions with candidates. These organizations do not offer fast tracks, largely because they believe that employees need to gain experience and prove themselves to become talents.

In organizations with entrepreneurial TM, talent identification is based on self-identification rather than talent reviews. This is because conducting talent reviews to pick out some people would contradict the culture they wish to foster, which emphasizes individual drive and ambition. When talents step forward and ask for challenges, they are told to apply for their next assignment. Talent identification practices are thus kept simple and informal, and based on personal judgment rather than "academic" (14) assessment systems.

Talent is developed from within by offering all employees a wide range of missions and challenges, e.g. project leader assignments, overseas assignments, and P&L responsibility. There is a little program-based development. These organizations argue that programs, especially exclusive ones to which the participants are handpicked, foster a sense of entitlement and discourage talents from taking personal responsibility for their careers. For the same reasons, these organizations do not organize specific talent pool activities.

Although there are few formalized practices for career management and succession planning, this is seen as the principal practice in the entrepreneurial TM type. Core to this practice is instead the open internal labor market. One key aspect is that there are plenty of challenging openings, not just a few which are the gateways to advancement. Another is that anyone can apply for these openings. The idea of the self-managed career is very

strong; again, the emphasis lies on individual responsibility. Career paths are so loosely defined that they may be considered ad hoc. They are formed depending on what challenging assignments are available at a certain point in time and what the talents want.

These organizations differentiate themselves by emphasizing that they give all employees opportunities to prove themselves. The lack of predictability, formalized career practices and talent programs is not seen as a disadvantage; instead, the open labor market is highlighted. An important part of the EVP is the idea of challenge: in these organizations talents will be challenged and are expected to challenge others. Giving talents own areas of responsibility is seen as the most effective method for breeding loyalty. They say that talents crave autonomy and mastery, and put a great deal of effort into organizing work accordingly.

Discussion

The research presented here contributes to the existing knowledge on TM in several ways. First, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the conceptual boundaries of TM. While the notion of talent has become increasingly well conceptualized in the literature, it is still unclear what TM actually involves (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2013; Meyers *et al.*, 2013; Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013a). The framework presented in this paper addresses this need for precision by systematically laying out which specific practices fall under the TM label. Importantly, it also specifies the dimensions along which these main practices may vary. This framework has several strengths. First, it integrates theoretical insights dispersed in various research streams. Second, it may be used as a conceptual basis for empirical studies identifying TM types across organizations. Third, the framework is sufficiently detailed to go beyond observing whether a practice is found in an organization and instead probe into how each practice is shaped. As Meyers and van Woerkom (2014) argue, this is an important avenue for gaining a deeper understanding of TM, since any particular practice may be carried out in different ways. In sum, the framework represents a valuable theoretical contribution that may conspire to make research on TM less fragmented, and knowledge more cumulative.

Second, the study is to our knowledge among the first to systematically map in detail how TM is carried out in organizations. The typology constitutes an important empirical contribution as it gives an in-depth understanding of four types of TM in contemporary organizations. This kind of investigation is necessary for the field to move beyond assumptions and hypothesis about what TM might be, as well as prescriptive notions of what it should be (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Dries, 2013; Iles *et al.*, 2010b; Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013a), toward a well-grounded understanding of how TM is manifested in organizations.

Third, the research deepens our understanding of how talent definitions carry implications for TM practices. While the literature has long made a rough distinction between inclusive and exclusive approaches to TM (Lewis and Heckman, 2006; Stahl *et al.*, 2012; Cappelli and Keller, 2014), the findings presented in this paper nuance our understanding of what it means to take an exclusive or inclusive approach. It shows that there is not one exclusive and one inclusive approach, but rather that the competitive and elitist TM types represent two distinct exclusive approaches and that the humanistic and entrepreneurial types represent two distinct inclusive approaches. This is an important contribution in particular with regards to inclusive approaches, since they are increasingly recognized as legitimate TM approaches but have been paid rather scant attention to date (Meyers and van Woerkom, 2014; Swailes *et al.*, 2014).

The differentiation of four different TM types further points at a second talent definition dimension with far-reaching consequences for how TM practices are carried out. This concerns whether talent is defined primarily in terms of input or output. With regards to talent definition, what differentiates the competitive from the elitist type, and the humanistic from the entrepreneurial type, is the degree to which they see talent as being about the employee's motivation and interest or the employee's past performance. This difference seems to be related to differences in how talent recruitment and identification are carried out. The findings suggest

that the more the organization focuses on output, the more likely it is to use formalized methods of assessment for recruitment and identification of talents.

Interestingly, despite recent arguments in the literature for moving from an individualistic view on talent towards an emphasis on specific skills and competences (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Jones *et al.*, 2012), none of the organizations in our study adopted a view on talent as object. Organizations in the current study use talent as a synonym for people and focus TM practices on talented people (subject) rather than their skills and knowledge (object). By extension, this means that the studied organizations do not grasp the possibility of identifying the pivotal positions where specific sets of skills and knowledge may have significant impact on organizational performance. Thus the strategic outlook on TM, in which the identification of strategic jobs is a central tenet (Huselid and Becker, 2011; Huselid *et al.*, 2005), does not yet seem to have had a strong impact on practice.

Fourth, although our study was not designed to investigate the conditions under which an organization is likely to adopt a certain TM type, the findings invite a discussion regarding if and how contextual factors such as industry, size, and culture play a part in this decision. This is particularly pertinent, since scholars have increasingly emphasized the need to take a contextualized approach to TM (Thunnissen *et al.*, 2013b; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2015; Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Stahl *et al.*, 2012). Starting with industry and size, we find conflicting indications. On the one hand, all four public management organizations have adopted humanistic TM. Also, elitist TM is found in all of the commercial and professional services organizations. Competitive TM appears to be more common in larger organizations. On the other hand, among the four banks and investment banks we find humanistic, competitive as well as elitist TM. There are larger and smaller organizations adopting each type of TM. Based on our detailed reading of the empirical data, we would conclude that what seems to influence the decision to adopt a certain type of TM the most is not industry or size, but organizational culture.

Regardless of what type of TM they adopted, the organizations spoke lengthily about the importance of fitting their TM with their organizational culture and its underlying values. For example, organizations with humanistic TM frequently corroborated their view on talent by stating that an exclusive, innate view on talent and TM practices that only encompass a few would be contradictory to their culture of promoting egalitarianism and teamwork (Iles *et al.*, 2010a). Similarly, organizations with competitive TM argued that an inclusive, input-based talent definition and TM practices that addressed all employees would run counter to their "performance-driven culture" (Stahl *et al.*, 2007). Those with elitist TM argued that their view on talent as innate but formable fit exceptionally well with their culture of emphasizing both high performance and self-conduct (Rivera, 2012). Finally, organizations with entrepreneurial TM associated their view on talent and the practice of offering all employees a wide range of assignments with a culture that puts drive, passion, and energy first.

Although no definitive conclusions can be drawn about the antecedents and outcomes of different TM approaches on the basis of the study presented here, we nevertheless argue that the findings constitute an important step toward theory development in TM. The value of typologies lies in that they pin down the distinct characteristics of complex organizational phenomena and are expected to exhaustively describe the holistic patterns in which these characteristics occur (Doty and Glick, 1994; McKelvey, 1975; Meyer *et al.*, 1993). Rich descriptions of these patterns may then be used to develop and test theoretical propositions about the exogenous and endogenous forces that generate specific configurations and about the outcomes of different configurations. This leads to inquiry focusing on "the patterning of organizational elements" rather than separate analyses of the relationships between "narrowly drawn" sets of variables (Meyer *et al.*, 1993, p. 1,181). Specifically, the typology presented here may be used to develop theory on how contextual factors affect an

organization's TM. It is necessary to be specific about the type of TM that is being adopted in order to be able to investigate the influence of factors such as industry, size and organizational culture. Similarly, studies of the outcomes of TM, such as those Collings and Mellahi (2009) have called for, must be specific about what type of TM it is that the observed outcomes are outcomes of.

Fifth and finally, this paper can provide important insights to the practitioners who are considering implementing TM or planning to change the focus of their organizations' TM. Outside the academic literature, TM is often described in terms of "best practice", which may lead practitioners to implement a type of TM that is unsuitable for their organization. We believe that the findings, in particular the descriptions of the TM types, point to important decisions to be made when designing TM and provide guidance in this decision-making.

Conclusion

Even as the concept of TM has become ubiquitous in contemporary business settings, it has remained ambiguous. The purpose of the present paper was to develop a deeper understanding of the conceptual and empirical boundaries of TM so that scholars and practitioners may enhance their knowledge of what TM actually is and how it is carried out. To this end, we developed a framework for comparative analysis and applied it on 30 organizations to empirically derive a typology consisting four distinct TM types.

The study is, however, subject to a number of limitations that provide opportunities for future research. First, as the typology is based on insights from a rather limited number of organizations, which although mainly multinational are grounded in a specific national context, it should be validated on a larger sample of organizations. Future studies might explore questions such as whether the identified types are found in other contexts, how common they are, and whether there are other yet unidentified types. Additionally, future research might investigate if and how contextual factors such as size, industry, and culture affect which TM type an organization adopts. Second, while the limited sample size of the current study enabled us to generate an empirically rich understanding of the identified TM types, it limited our ability to draw systematic conclusions about the realized outcomes of different types of TM. Future research, based on e.g. survey methodology and archival data, might explore how employees perceive different TM types, how they affect individual outcomes such as employee satisfaction and engagement, as well as how different TM types affect organizational outcomes such as retention rate and organizational performance.

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Appendix

The humanistic type
View on talent

(a) Object or subject: subject	"Stated simply, our talents are our employees" (13)
	"Our talents are our people, all the 40 000 people who work at [company]" (2)
(b) Inclusive or exclusive: inclusive	"Some people say that talent management is about practices targeted at the best. That's it. In that case, the reach and the effects are very limited. We say 'all our employees are talents'" (6)
	"We are not an elitist organization. We are more like a community. For us "talent" includes everyone. We have to take care of people so that they develop and stay, so we have some practices for high performers and other practices for others" (15)
(c) Innate or acquired: acquired	"Talented people are the sum of what they have learned" (6)
	"Talent is about practice, practice, practice. You practice, you learn, you become a talent at what you do" (2)
(d) Output or input: input and output	"For us, talent is about having the potential for more. We know that our people will have to do more and more difficult things and more innovative things. Work is becoming more and more challenging, so we need people with resilience. Talents want to develop and grow" (16)
	"We talk about talent as curiosity and creativity. If something awakens your curiosity, you start to work with it, and then you become talented and then you get the results" (27)
(e) Transferable or context dependent: context dependent	"We have seen many employees that have been very successful in one role, and then completely fallen through in another role. Why is that? We believe it is because talent is inescapably dependent on context" (2)
	"It could be that the person doesn't fit in well in one department, but would be a talent in another department" (13)

TM practice: recruitment

(a) Reliance on recruitment: low (make)	"We want to grow our talents from within, especially managers, not bring in external hotshots. We don't always succeed, often due to reasons outside our control. Sometimes we have to recruit externally, but the main idea is to recruit people that we help grow" (16)
	"We focus on developing our own supply of talent. There's hardly any employee turnover. Some roles are very specialized, and we may not be able to grow all specialists. But that's the exception" (25)
(b) Existence of entry-level fast track positions: no	"If you're sufficiently ambitious to start working part-time here during your studies, then that's your trainee program. […] If you don't want to do that, but want a fast track after your studies, well that's not how we do things" (16)
	"In our organization, people would see fast tracks as an easy ride. It doesn't rhyme with the message that we're trying to convey about how we see talent" (15)
(c) Reliance on formal selection tools or on personal judgment: formal tools	"We have made sure that our selection process holds high quality. We can't have managers inventing things as they go along; it needs to be standardized and fair. So the process is centralized, with criteria definition, screening, tests, interviews and references" (25)
	"Our selection process is sophisticated and detailed. […] We run a whole battery of tests, interviews and so on" (24)

TM practice: talent identification

(a) Regular talent reviews: yes	"Talent identification is all about surfacing the talent that's already there in the employees" (16)

Table AI.
Data table with interview excerpts illustrating the TM types

(*continued*)

"Those that are satisfied in their current role and feel that everything is great as it is, there we wait until they are ready. Those that say that they are ready for something new, there we assess their potential, their strengths and weaknesses, their development needs. When should they be taking the next step, and what should the next step be?" (13)

(b) Reliance on formal identification tools or on personal judgment: personal judgment

"We don't identify people by placing them in a grid. We do it by talking to people. […] There are no objective ways of measuring talent. It's up to the managers to make the assessments. […] If you have a structure for assessment, it's easy to slip into focusing on the structure instead of the individual being assessed" (6)

"Organizations need numbers and facts. But it's not a mathematical process. We treat these numbers and facts as a tool which are included in a holistic assessment, based on managers' appraisals" (11)

(c) Identification based on output or input: input and output

"We could focus a great deal more on goals and past performance, but that's not what we need. […] If there is the slightest streak of appraisal in the meeting, it ruins the dialog. That is to be avoided at all costs" (15)

"We have requirements in terms of competence and results. But we're a public authority and our employees have to interact in a positive way with citizens and companies. And whether they do that or not is a matter of values. So we prioritize values" (25)

TM practice: talent development (principal practice)

(a) Program-based or experienced-based development: equal emphasis

"Some of our talents will participate in our programs. Others need something else. It could be that they need a coach, or that they should do a job rotation" (16)

"We think there are lots of things you can learn in programs. But even then, it's important to emphasize practice. If you attend a program you will get assignments so that you gain experience" (2)

(b) Exclusive or inclusive programs: inclusive

"When we talk about talents, we're talking about everybody. It was a challenge at first, because people thought we were only going to nominate people to programs. So we had to work hard at reassuring – 'No, that's not it. TM encompasses all of you. Everyone will be given development opportunities'" (13)

"There are loads of courses that you can apply for. We have an academy that runs these courses and the reason why is that we want there to be development opportunities for all" (27)

(c) Talent pool activities are undertaken: no

"We don't want to spotlight a group of people as management's favorites and separate them from the rest. […] So no, we don't have talent activities in that sense" (2)

"I'm not sure the employees are thinking: "the organization has a talent process." They know that we develop talent and that that's important to us" (13)

TM practice: career management and succession planning

(a) Career management focus: partly self-managed, partly traditional organizational career

"It's a fine balance. On the one hand, talents have to drive their own careers, because they might get lazy if managers and HR take a lot of the responsibility and anyhow their careers are about how they want to develop. On the other hand, they often don't have the whole picture, so we need to help them navigate the organization" (2)

"We fill their backpacks with things they will need in their careers. But we do that to support them, we don't decide what direction their careers will take" (24)

(b) Career paths: loosely defined

"There is a kind of hierarchical career ladder. But you can develop horizontally in each step. You can specialize, you can be close to the customers or you can transfer to another office. We have many different types of consultants and it's important to show that there are many ways of having a career in our organization" (20)

(*continued*)

Table AI.

"There are many ways of having a career here. We have structured it a bit so we can give new recruits some idea of what to expect. But we still emphasize that there are lots of different career paths and that your career will be formed depending on what drives you" (27)

(c) Vertical or horizontal promotion: both

"You can take a deeper or broader role. You don't have to become a manager, you can specialize, you can be a mentor. […] You can transfer to a different department" (26)

"Some people want to climb the corporate ladder and that's fine. But we have a number of employees and managers that aren't interested in that type of career, but they're still darned good, they are talents. So we have to make different types of careers possible" (16)

(d) Regular reviews of talent pools: no

"We do planning for top managerial positions. If there is a vacancy they are encouraged to apply. But we don't think it makes sense to work with talent pools more generally" (2)

"We have some managers nearing retirement age, and there are some positions which we see are critical. For these positions, we identify potential successors and also try to make sure they could be ready to take over when the day comes" (28)

TM practice: retention management

(a) Emphasis on strong employer brand: high

"We have a very strong employer brand and we work hard at it. We tell them there's a world of opportunity. There are numerous ways to develop" (2)

"Here, you work together with others in a group. The development opportunities are attractive. We emphasize that we are an employer-friendly organization. If you work here, you can combine work with family life. We don't work around the clock" (25)

(b) Reliance on loyalty-enhancing activities aimed at talents: low

"We just communicate what type of organization we are. We show that we are open to all. […] An employer that shows that it takes care of people gets to keep people" (16)

"We show that there are development opportunities for everyone. I'm proud to say that in our organization you can start at the bottom and reach the top" (15)

The competitive type
View on talent

(a) Object or subject: subject

"To us, talents are people who should be on the move, who have the ability to take on more complex missions" (1)

"As soon as you see a talent, you know she is a talent" (3)

(b) Inclusive or exclusive: exclusive

"It might be that all people have talent in a general sense. But in our organization, we're referring to a specific, rather small group of employees. Talents are those that have the highest performance and that are more ready than their peers to advance" (21)

"Working with TM isn't always nice and fluffy. It's about making tough decisions that drive performance culture. It's about finding the talents – the stars – and giving them more resources" (23)

(c) Innate or acquired: innate

"Talent has nothing to do with age or experience. It's an intrinsic quality" (17)

"Naturally, our managers always try to develop and coach all their employees, but most employees can only go so far. Whereas talents, they come in and shine from the start" (5)

(d) Output or input: output

"A talent is someone that has track record in terms of performance, top performance over time" (5)

"Talents are those that exceed expectations in terms of performance, the individuals that we target for investment" (30)

(e) Transferable or context dependent: transferable

"Talents have some sort of inner quality in common. Any one of our talents would easily be a talent in any other organization as well" (3)

"We define our top talents as those who could find work at any of our competitors tomorrow if they wanted to" (4)

Table AI.

(*continued*)

TM practice: recruitment

(a) Reliance on recruitment: high (buy)

"We recruit talents from outside the organization in order to make sure that we always have the best on the market. We are quite aggressive in that sense" (4)

"We have fired people who have worked here a number of years and who are competent. And replaced them with external recruits. Obviously this upsets people. But the thing is, we are trying to find the best within each area. So some people will feel that it's ruthless, but we have to do it to stay on the competitive edge" (23)

(b) Existence of entry-level fast track positions: yes

"We don't think talents should have to make a career from scratch. We recruit them to fast tracks so that they can advance quickly to the level where they are challenged" (17)

"Fast tracks are a great way to attract young talents. And it gives us a chance to observe them during the time they're in the program. We expect them to have taken their next career step within two years. It has a whole lot to do with visibility" (12)

(c) Reliance on formal selection tools or on personal judgment: formal tools

"We use tests to have objective measurement tools. To make sure we don't make decisions based on gut feeling and experience. You know how people can brag about what good judgement they have. No, no we need to base our decisions on solid results" (17)

"It's through our selection process that young talents first come in contact with us. So our selection process forms their ideas of what kind of organization we are and what kind of people work here. We have a rigorous process with interviews and tests, and if they pass through the needle's eye there are online leadership assessment exercises. We want to be sure that they have the potential to be good people leaders" (30)

TM practice: talent identification (principal practice)

(a) Regular talent reviews: yes

"We make decisions about which talent pools they should be admitted to. We make an active decision each year – reconfirm or remove. We make decisions about who should be sent to assessment centers, who should attend our executive leadership programs and who should be given a new job within the next 12 months" (30)

"We discuss all employees in the talent review, and we identify the talents – those that have high performance and high potential, the ones in the upper corner in our grid. […] Depending on their level, we put them in different talent pools" (5)

(b) Reliance on formal identification tools or on personal judgment: formal tools

"Each talent level is defined by a number of measures, so it's very clear what our criteria are. To be even clearer, there are gates between each level. These gates are a smaller number of criteria which are absolutely critical. In that way we define what is needed to go from one talent level to another. It's all very systematic" (3)

"There is a concerted effort to invest in those that are performing very well to augment their performance even more. So we have a very rigorous assessment process, even a mandatory assessment at the junior talent level. The first step is to pass that assessment. And then we have further assessments for the more senior talent pools. So we work those quite rigorously" (30)

(c) Identification based on output or input: output

"We look at a combination of long-term performance and potential. They have high potential when we think, based on what we have seen of them so far in terms of measures and results, that they are willing to take the next step soon and that they have good chances of succeeding" (21)

"There has to be high performance, and we rate that based on goal fulfillment. Then there is potential, but that's basically the same thing since potential means raising the bar on your performance" (17)

(*continued*)

Table AI.

TM practice: talent development

(a) Program-based or experienced-based development: program-based
"We want to create a turbo effect on their careers. Programs are a great way to do that" (21)

"Once they're identified, we put them in programs. They learn a lot and feel appreciated. We get to know them even better, because we can observe how they act in the program environment" (12)

(b) Exclusive or inclusive programs: exclusive
"[Reputational provider] is responsible for delivering the program. Our CEO and HR director are always present, in all five modules. Other members of the top management team sponsor the projects the participants undertake. So it involves a huge investment of time and energy" (23)

"We have a wonderful palette of programs for talents at different levels. These are nomination only, so the management team sits down with our lists of talents and looks at who should be considered. It's time consuming, but it also gives the programs a certain aura" (30)

(c) Talent pool activities are undertaken: yes
"We organize events where the talents spend a number of days with our CEO and our HR director. That way, they learn what TM looks like in our organization and what opportunities there are. There are other "special treatment" activities as well, like creating visibility through projects and special assignments, presentations in the management team" (21)

"It's important that talents meet each other and talk to each other. We pull them out of their local contexts by putting together activities and projects on a global level. It broadens their horizons" (3)

TM practice: career management and succession planning

(a) Career management focus: traditional organizational career
"Once they are in the talent pools, their managers and HR have a shared responsibility for their careers. HR tells them what expectations we have on them, what criteria they are assessed on. But the main responsibility lies on their managers. They need to think about openings and how talents can be given new responsibilities. These managers are, in their turn, assessed on how they develop talents for the organization" (3)

"Of course we don't guarantee that they will be on the group management team in so and so many years. But we work hard to create career opportunities for them" (4)

(b) Career paths: clearly defined
"We have four different career paths, and for each there are very clear steps which show how you advance from one level to another" (12)

"Our career paths are structured, there are different steps and they show how you can advance and what the requirements are for advancing" (3)

(c) Vertical or horizontal promotion: vertical
"We have highly valued specialists, and they may be the ones contributing the most to our profit. But we don't view them as talents. [...] To us, talents are people who are ready to advance to the next hierarchical level" (5)

"Whatever the career path, the focus is on leadership. On getting the best to advance to higher and higher positions and more and more responsibility, as far as their abilities can take them" (4)

(d) Regular reviews of talent pools: yes
"When we go through our talent pool, we work actively with laying the big puzzle. We ensure that we have the right person in the right place, that what we do ties in to our business plan, that our talents are doing the right things and that we are reaching our goals" (5)

"These different pools are reviewed regularly, which is key to getting them to stay. Some should stay in their current position to accumulate more experience and get even better, but those that should move are matched with current openings" (12)

Table AI.

(*continued*)

TM practice: retention management

(a) Emphasis on strong employer brand: high

"We are of course fighting with our competitors to attract the best. It's essential that we build our employer brand, so that we can tell them "if you join us you will be able to go far; cool things will happen to you here'" (4)
"We're very reliant on young talents and the reason why we succeed with bringing in young talent is because we put a lot of effort into branding. We don't just do standard stuff like fairs, but make sure that we're involved in student activities and courses" (1)

(b) Reliance on loyalty-enhancing activities aimed at talents: high

"Showing talents that we have a very clear plan for them is important, because they leave if we don't. […] Our talent initiatives give them a better career, a better salary and recognition" (21)
"To be honest we pay extremely well. And talents get to meet the CEO, they like that. There's the shadow cabinet and management presentations. So they feel that it's very exciting and challenging to work here. We know that these things are attractive and that they keep the talents onboard" (5)

The elitist type

View on talent

(a) Object or subject: subject

"A talent is a person who sticks on you. We use this expression "stickiness" to describe talents. A talent sticks on people within the organization, talents are people that others turn to. They stick on clients. With time, clients become so confident in them that they know they can turn to them just as well as to the partners. Talents drive business" (10)
"It's well known in the organization who our talents are. We really don't need calibrations for that, because everyone knows anyway" (8)

(b) Inclusive or exclusive: exclusive

"Everyone who starts working for us is very good, the best in their university cohort. Our talents are the best amongst these – the best of the best" (9)
"Our talents are our aces. They advance through our different career steps much more quickly than the people they started with" (8)

(c) Innate or acquired: innate

"Talents are talented right from the start. But no matter how talented they are, they of course have to be formed, and we do that here" (22)
"The talents have something special, and it's there from the beginning. But when they start working for us, they are inexperienced. We give them the opportunity to gain the experience that can make them full-fledged. If you don't have talent but work really hard, you still can't become the best. But if you have talent and you're given more and more difficult things to do and you put your heart and soul in your work, then you have the chance to become fully fledged" (7)

(d) Output or input: output and input

"Talents are really good. We never compromise our performance standards. But there's more to it than that. Talents have a flair for handling people, for winning them over. Both clients and colleagues" (10)
"With talents, the track record is always there. But a talent is also a talent because he or she has the right motivation. And a talent is always a quick thinker, decisive, solutions-oriented, communicative, and able to draw boundaries" (7)

(e) Transferable or context dependent: transferable

"We lose talents, not a lot but some. While we of course do our utmost to get our talents to stay, we're also proud of the fact that they are so attractive. Our talents could work anywhere" (10)
"We produce talents that are highly attractive on the external labor market. It's quite a challenge, because we need to produce these talents but we have to make sure they stay" (8)

TM practice: recruitment (principle practice)

(a) Reliance on recruitment: low (make)

"Entry-level recruitment and selection are absolutely critical to us. Our process is meticulous. We put a lot of time and effort into it. We must attract and choose the best. This is a quite elitist environment" (9)

(*continued*)

Table AI.

"In most companies, new recruits come in with a degree and they use what they have learned in their education to complete different work tasks. Here, the degree is just an entrance ticket and then we develop them on the job during their tenure with us. You could put it this way: we are very selective when we recruit and then we transform them from pupae into butterflies" (7)

(b) Existence of entry-level fast track positions: no

"There is a career ladder with very clear steps. You can move more quickly up the ladder than your peers, but you can never skip a step. It's all strictly regulated" (9)

"Everyone starts at the same position. We have long development paths, career paths. Within that structure people work on different projects. But everyone goes through the same steps" (8)

(c) Reliance on formal selection tools or on personal judgment: personal judgment

"We are quite careful when it comes to finding the right candidates. We look at grades, but we look very carefully at the individual's engagement because it is so extremely important for our business. We do tests and we have case interviews. But what's most important is that our partners are involved and meet the candidates. It's quite the needle's eye" (7)

"We get a lot of applications and they are strong applications. The biggest challenge is to get beyond the surface. They are all well-drilled and know the right things to say and do, but we want the genuine talents. The only way to find them is through interviews. We use a case as well, but interviews are even more effective. All in all the interview process includes five interviews. The final one is with our country manager" (22)

TM practice: talent identification
(a) Regular talent reviews: yes

"Each employee is evaluated by someone a few notches above on the totem pole. The evaluation is based both on hard performance data and 360 degree evaluations. […] After that there is a review meeting, and there we add the dimension of potential, where potential is defined as the individual's capacity to grow business" (19)

"We spend hours calibrating to identify the very best. Your placement is relative to everyone else's, of course. It's like a race, a hundred meter dash. Who crossed the finish line first?" (7)

(b) Reliance on formal identification tools or on personal judgment: personal judgment

"Some get chosen and some don't. And those that don't, it could be their performance but it could also be that they are boring types. Sure, it's a tough decision, but somehow it's also crystal clear. There are no absolute criteria; it's more that you feel it" (22)

"Well, there are a number of criteria but each assessor has his or her own approach. […] In the calibrations, we dig into the performance data and have extensive discussions that puts the data into context. So while we have a very quantitative system, the final rating is based on our subjective assessment" (19)

(c) Identification based on output or input: output and input

"Performance is not enough. We expect them all to be high-performers. Talents know how you should be. To advance in our firm, you have to be smart, hungry and curious. You need to be easy to be with, not rigid or cocky" (10)

"Performance and professional competence are important of course. But for us to assess someone as a talent there is a whole sort of self-conduct that needs to be there in the person. We look at how comfortably they relate to others, how they do business, if they get people to listen to them. They have to be able to sell, they have to be able to stand on their own legs and create a lot of value" (9)

TM practice: talent development
(a) Program-based or experienced-based development: experience-based

"They [partners] can let you tag along to pitches and trips abroad and conferences. […] They can get you assigned to more prestigious and perhaps more exciting projects. They can give you more responsibility. They can hand over clients" (10)

Table AI.

(*continued*)

(b) Exclusive or inclusive programs: exclusive	"We have some programs but they are of minor importance. The important thing is that they are developed so that they get the tacit knowledge of this work, and that means development on the job. [...] So, the projects they work in are the basic component of development" (9)
	"The large part of development is through projects and different experiences. But we also have leadership programs for talents. They like the global programs" (8)
(c) Talent pool activities are undertaken: no	"Our employees are very pressed for time and very focused on their client work, so learning in projects will always be the main type of learning. Programs need to hold very high quality to be appreciated. We have case-based programs for talents" (22)
	"The thing is, we don't like to tell people they have been identified as talents. They probably know anyway, but we don't tell them. The climate is competitive enough as it is, since people are used to being the best – in school, at university and so on. So no, we don't have any activities for talents as a group" (10)
	"We don't spotlight talents as talents. We spotlight good work results like bringing in new business, because we want to show off good examples. Managers and HR know who they are, but we don't have an official talent pool and we don't arrange events for them or anything" (8)

TM practice: career management and succession planning

(a) Career management focus: traditional organizational career	"To advance, you have to connect with a partner and get him to like you. [...] Talents know that their career lies in the hand of the partner, it depends on whether he will take you to the next step" (9)
	"Your career depends on how you are staffed. There are projects that are high profile and exciting, that give you a steep learning curve and that advance your career. And then there are run-of-the-mill projects. There is a formal system for staffing, but to get ahead you need to have people who can help you get staffed on the best projects" (19)
(b) Career paths: clearly defined	"We have the classic up or out system that involves climbing a specific and clearly defined career ladder" (9)
	"The first promotion level is the associate level, the next the manager level. And at both of these you start as junior and can be promoted to senior. And then there is the final step up to partner. All levels are of course clearly defined in terms of competencies, responsibilities and behaviors" (8)
(c) Vertical or horizontal promotion: vertical	"We're not like [well-known management consultancy]. Our up or out is not as clear as that. We do have a very clear career ladder, but it's not as clear how long you can stay at each level before you're out. Still, you're expected to advance and not stay at the same level. If you don't advance, that's a very clear signal, and since you have a great job market, there's no reason not to move on" (19)
	"There are all these different career levels. And there are defined criteria that reflect what you have to know and accomplish to take the step up. Today, we are more flexible with how long you can stay at each step. But they know that there needs to be constant progression upwards" (10)
(d) Regular reviews of talent pools: no	"Each talent is assigned a senior partner that is given the task to watch over the talent's career. They have to make really sure that our talents are put on the right assignments. All client projects are not equal in status and the learning curve that they generate. There can also be internal projects that talents should be involved in but, again, it has to be the right projects" (7)
	"There is a formal system for staffing, where the group leader is responsible for making sure that all employees are in projects and everyone is treated equally. But in practice, partners take care of talents and put them in the right projects. So partners have a mandate to place talents in the projects that will develop them the most. It's relationship-based" (9)

(*continued*)

Table AI.

TM practice: retention management

(a) Emphasis on strong employer brand: high

"It's really important for us to build relationships with students. Our brand needs to be very strong. Actually we don't need to address all students, but that's what we do. We only want the best, those that are ambitious and willing to work hard and are best in class academically and good at managing relationships. We want the best to see that they have a lot to gain by joining us. We already have the best people, so they get to work with the best. We have the most exciting business on the market" (9)

"Our employer brand is strategically important. Especially at the universities, since we only recruit young people straight from university, from the elite universities. We ask the alumni from these universities amongst our employees to go back to their alma mater, identify the talents, and market the firm. And I must say we have succeeded well; we have a continuous flow of very strong applications from the elite universities" (22)

(b) Reliance on loyalty-enhancing activities aimed at talents: high

"To be honest, you can become disgustingly rich by working here. That's how we attract the best, and that's how we get the best of the best to stay" (6)

"We pay all employees well, and the system for basic pay is very transparent and easily understood. Above that there is the bonus, where you can get between zero and eighteen monthly salaries. So some get nothing, and one person always gets eighteen months. Everybody knows the average, so our talents know they are our talents and they feel valued" (19)

The entrepreneurial type
View on talent

(a) Object or subject: subject

"A talent is an employee with high potential and ambition to develop" (29)

"If people find their motivation, are challenged and find themselves enough different positions and experiences throughout their lives, they become talents" (18)

(b) Inclusive or exclusive: inclusive

"Of course you have to be intelligent and smart, and most people are. But you have to find the right environment. I really believe that everybody has the potential to bloom" (14)

"I don't believe that we should pick out people and say: "you're a talent and you're a talent and you're a talent and we're going to invest in you so let's get to it." No, I think it is better to let people in and let them show that they deserve to be invested in, partly by applying for different jobs, partly by taking assignments abroad, partly by taking initiative" (18)

(c) Innate or acquired: acquired

"When you've completed different missions at different levels, you learn a lot and become very good at what you do. You become a talent based on that experience" (18)

"It's about attitude. If you have the right attitude you can do anything. […] People want to apply themselves, they want to do well. When they understand what drives them, they run even faster. And then they learn what works and what doesn't. In reality, there is no right or wrong; there is doing, dialog and learning. […] So attitude breeds results and before you know it you are a talent" (14)

(d) Output or input: input

"A talent is someone that is driven and wants to go further. […] I meet a lot of intelligent, extremely well-educated people. But it doesn't always mean they want to develop. Talents are different. They may start from a basic position, but they have an enormous appetite and this fire" (29)

"Our organizational culture is extremely strong. It is what has made it possible for us to be so successful around the world. Talents are defined first and foremost by how they live this culture. They are driven, they take on responsibility, they earn our confidence and they are humble and non-authoritarian. We just assume they also have the right competence" (18)

Table AI.

(e) Transferable or context dependent: context dependent	"We need a special type of talents, we need [organization] type of talents. We have our own culture and our own way of doing things, like most other companies" (18) "You can be a top talent in one company but be average in another company, even underperform. […] It is this corporate culture that is so very important. It is almost the most important thing. You know, how right fit you are" (29)
TM practice: recruitment	
(a) Reliance on recruitment: low (make)	"We have been building our culture for 30 years. We are all born into this culture, we have hordes of people who have been working here for many, many years and basically all staffing is internal. We believe very strongly in building our own talent pool. The organization gets disturbed when external people are hired, and we're not very good at handling it" (18) "For us the natural thing is to make our own talent. Since we've been growing so fast, we've had to develop a culture of drive, independence, action orientation and quick decision-making. We grow talents into this culture by throwing challenges at them and, if they succeed, giving them even more challenges" (14)
(b) Existence of entry-level fast track positions: no	"We are not partial to programs where you pick some employees, put them in a fast track and then pilot them through their careers to specific positions" (18) "New recruits have to show what they can do, they have to deliver. They have to show that they can operate in this environment. If they do that, then we'll promote them; but there are no fast tracks" (14)
(c) Reliance on formal selection tools or on personal judgment: personal judgment	"It's quite easy to see after a while. You feel it. […] You make a judgment. You talk to them. And then we discuss with each other to make sure we agree internally" (29) "When we recruit, we look for passion and energy. It beats formal qualifications, because it's time consuming to supervise people who don't have the energy to get things done on their own. And it's more fun to be with energetic people. Of course, you don't see this on their cv or test results. You feel it when you meet them" (18)
TM practice: talent identification	
(a) Regular talent reviews: no	"You cannot sit and wait for me as a manager to come to you. We don't work like that. It is you who need to almost say "hello, I am very clever, very able, I can do this and this." Ok, she is really ambitious, she is actually delivering – I think she is a top talent" (29) "We have chosen not to identity talents, we have scrapped the idea of talent reviews. What we do instead is to maximize career opportunities so that those who have the drive and interest can expose themselves to challenging tasks" (18)
(b) Reliance on formal identification tools or on personal judgment: personal judgment	"We are not mathematical about it. We don't use any sophisticated tools. It is our culture to be simple, easily implementable, understandable to managers. […] We don't use tests or anything. You are open and express your ambition, and then we can see: is there a drive, is there a motivation? Some companies have a whole team of psychologists that examines people. But to be honest, I don't think the end result they get is any better" (29) "We don't like academic approaches. It complicates things too much. Managers use their judgment. If they seem to be making stupid decisions, we talk to them and ask them what's going on" (14)
(c) Identification based on output or input: input	"Culture beats strategy, policy and procedures. Culture and values is a much more powerful tool. […] So in talent identification, behaviors weigh more than performance. Because you could underperform for whatever reasons, but it is the attitude that is so much more difficult to fix" (29)

(*continued*)

Table AI.

"We have employees that perform really well. And it might be tempting to make talent decisions based on that. But if there is no commitment and drive, then they won't succeed in the future. When we identify talent, we do it on the basis of commitment and drive. It's more important to find people with incredible engagement and drive, even if their performance is not at the top. Because these people will succeed" (14)

TM practice: talent development

(a) Program-based or experienced-based development: experience-based

"What we really focus on is internal development. The important thing is that people do many different things. First of all, you must apply. That's basic. Nobody asks if you want to do something, you have to make it happen. It starts there. Next, when you say that you have seen this assignment and are interested in it and that you think you can do a good job, then you talk to your manager and define the assignment" (18)

"You cannot develop people unless you give them very challenging tasks. […] We have adopted the 70-20-10 approach, which basically 70 percent means learning by doing. In order to do that, you need to have challenging tasks. 20 percent actually comes from interactions, meaning feedback from your manager. You are coached or mentored. You develop just by getting feedback or socializing and networking. And then 10 percent is formal training. People very often see this as being sent out to an external institution and being trained in a classroom. But we don't have programs. Instead, things like reading the internet actually is this ten percent. You know, people don't perceive it as training because knowledge is so available" (29)

(b) Exclusive or inclusive programs: inclusive

"Due to our philosophy and strong belief in an open labor market, it would be difficult to implement a high potential program for only a few. We see that it triggers questions of why we should do it. It would run counter to our basic beliefs" (18)

"We have a kind of condescending attitude to fancy stuff, things organizations do just to look good. We're not like [organization in same industry], we don't have talent programs, we sort of look down on them. We as an organization and talents as individuals don't need fancy programs. They need the chance to develop and show who they really are" (14)

(c) Talent pool activities are undertaken: no

"We don't say: "You are now in the talent pool, so now I will collect you all together and then you will go on this fantastic training." Then they will expect all these activities, and we don't have these things. We just say: "You are fantastic. I will give you more work now'" (29)

"Our culture builds on entrepreneurial thinking and individual drive, so we assume that talents make their own way otherwise they're not talents. There's no need for us to organize anything" (14)

TM practice: career management and succession planning (principle practice)

(a) Career management focus: self-managed

"It is your responsibility as an employee to take responsibility for your development. […] You are in the driver's seat of your career, your life and your development" (29)

"If someone had the same position three or four years, I would tell them: "Hey, do something else" But then that person would need to look for herself, find another exposure or stretch. The individual's career is her responsibility, not the organization's or the manager's. We don't want managers asking around, trying to find the next jobs for their talents. If they don't find their next job themselves, they're not talent" (18)

(b) Career paths: ad hoc

"How am I supposed to know what you want and need? You are the one who needs to tell us. So I think the whole work around [TM] starts with individual responsibility. […] We will not come to you and give you a career path" (29)

Table AI.

(*continued*)

	"People are different and driven by different things. People have very different ideas of career. One of [company's] strengths is that nobody has to stay put within one occupation or profession, where the only way to have a career is to become a manager. We have an open labor market and so each individual's career depends on what openings there are and what the individual wants" (14)
(c) Vertical or horizontal promotion: Both	"You could become manager, but you could also become project leader for this project in the US, you could lead that project in Brazil, you could be R&D manager or you could do that or that" (18)
	"In an organization like this there is a lot of freedom, because it isn't hierarchical. […] Real talents cross boundaries and do different things. And they develop in their current role. They take more responsibility, they are given an extended role, they are highlighted as informal leaders or experts and are made visible in that way" (29)
(d) Regular reviews of talent pools: no	"What's so cool about [organization] is that we have an open labor market. Every single opening is put on our intranet and made visible to everyone" (14)
	"Instead of traveling the world and getting the local offices to work with placement of talent, we travel the world and make sure that the open labor market really functions well. We don't do that thing, you know, where "I think this talent would be a good match for that opening" or "that talent should have advanced so and so in three years" (18)

TM practice: retention management

(a) Emphasis on strong employer brand: high	"It is not at all difficult to communicate to potential employees what we offer. We believe relentlessly that we have able employees. What we communicate is that we don't pick five talents and put all our efforts on them. Here, everyone gets chances" (18)
	"Our EVP fits right in with the way we work with talent. So, our vision is to be the employer of choice for people who like to challenge and be challenged. The EVP has our culture as the umbrella, and a key part is growing our people to grow the business" (29)
(b) Reliance on loyalty-enhancing activities aimed at talents: high	"We want people to develop their own strategies. Their own KPI's. […] When they are done, their manager says "well done, go ahead and apply for your next challenge'" (18)
	"We work with the mindset that you, the employee, are in charge. You will be driving things, we will support you. All of this to drive engagement, and engagement drives profitability" (29)

Table AI.

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