Business coaching: The translation of the therapeutic habitus into the managerial realm

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Abstract
The aim of this paper is to trace the processes of translation through which coaching transports, transforms and transgresses therapeutic discourses into the managerial realm. Our empirical analysis, firstly, shows the architectures of coaching as a site of translation between two professional fields, management and therapy. Second, our analysis reveals that coaching as discursive practice is formed through the contextualized interplay between several more or less dominant discourses into relational patterns or translative moves with distinctive effects such as assimilation, unfolding or countering. In the discussion, we suggest that the described translative process is itself situated in and fueled by a larger socio-cultural transformations towards the agenda of what has been termed soft and emotional capitalism (Thrift, 1996; Illouz, 2007). This paper thus documents that coaching like no other psy-practice in management, aligns through various translative moves the intimacy of the therapeutic with the aims of improving managers (self-) management functions.
Introduction

Translation theory has been recognized to allow organizational scholars a path to better understand processes of organizing and organizational change by tracing how ideas, practices and discourses move through time and space and how these are modified during this traveling (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2005; Czarniawska-Joerges & Sevón, 1996). In this paper we zoom into the discursive construction of coaching in the management realm as an empirical site of an ongoing translative process and thus connect to an ongoing discussion on how new ideas, (institutionalized) practices and discourses come to be (Czarniawska, 2009).

Not so long ago, when people spoke of coaching they understood it to be the training of athletes. Coaching, as a person-centered intervention, has only recently emerged to become a fashionable term (Czarniawska, 2005) that serves in a rather arbitrary way to umbrella such dissimilar vocations as business coaching, but also life and spiritual coaching, and even flirt coaching (Clegg & Bailey, 2008). We might say the term has begun to spin autonomously; with each new layer of meaning added it also becomes a more real object in social life or as Czarniawska and Sevón (1996) put it „[t]he simplest way of objectifying ideas is turning them into linguistic artifacts by a repetitive use in an unchanged form, as in the case of labels, metaphors, platitudes“ (ibid, p.32, original emphasis).

With a development that might also be compared to the epidemic spread of a virus (Røvik, 2011), coaching has found an institutionalized anchorage in nearly half of all large Western companies as a personalized intervention for managers (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2009; Bresser, 2009). In light of this dynamic, we come to wonder through which discursive devices this intervention is enacted and translated, thus giving us an insight into the dynamics through which so called "psy-practices and -discourses" (Rose, 1990) are incorporated into the managerial realm.

As coaching is not a stabilized professional practice, it allows us to look into the open, ongoing and ambivalent discursive construction and the various translative moves this requires. With an interest in the sociology of professions, coaching has indeed been diagnosed as a newly materialized industry engaged in an identity struggle (Fietze, 2010; Clegg, Rhodes, Kornberger, & Stilin, 2005; Feldman, 2005) due to a lack of differentiation from Human Resource Manage-
ment (Hamlin, Ellinger, & Beattie, 2008), psychotherapy (Hart, Blattner, & Leipsic, 2001; Grimmer & Neukom, 2009), supervision (Kühl, 2007, 2008) and consulting (Bjorkeng, Clegg, Pitsis, & Rhodes, 2008). The coaching discipline is in a pre-professional state as coherent structures of (narrative) institutionalization have only begun to solidify. As an emerging profession it is "haunted by ontological insecurity" (Clegg, Rhodes & Kornberger, 2007, p. 509), a circumstance which is reflected for instance by the arbitrariness of training structures: everyone can be a coach and everyone can train coaches (Cunningham & Honold, 1998). We consider this unsettled representation of coaching as an expression of an ongoing translation process as "that which is involved in translation - be it knowledge, people, or things - has an uncertain identity" (Czar- niawska, 2009, p. 424).

In understanding the discursive construction of coaching through translation, our argument is that coaching, even if it might appear new, is the effect of connections between discourses of psychotherapy of recent date with contemporary managerial discourses. Business coaching indeed accesses psychotherapeutic frameworks and practices to a considerable extent (Stober & Grant, 2006; Barner & Higgins, 2007) and we thus need to first take a close look at how current accounts on the legitimacy and outlook of business coaching relate back to the historically older techniques, artifacts and frames of psychology and psychotherapy.

It does not lie in our intent to marginalize coaching to a psychotherapeutic practice and with our accentuation of the therapeutic we neither deny that other influences, e.g. from sports coaching, management as well as religious and esoteric practices, are leaving their marks on nowadays enactments of coaching, nor do we suggest that the discussed issues in business coaching and psychotherapy contexts are (always) identical. On the contrary, our analysis will document how psychotherapeutic and managerial discourses are modified through translative moves which aim to install differences, or to diminish the visibility of specific discursive devices. Even if we agree to underline that the therapeutic has established itself as a dominant point of reference for coaching practices (Ives, 2008; Sherin & Caiger, 2004; Gray, 2006; Hart, Blattner, & Leipsic, 2001), our research question is to understand how it is modified and stretched as it becomes played out in the managerial realm.
Conceptual framework

As a means to unravel the „chains of translation“ (Latour, 1996) involved in the discursive constitution of coaching, we link translation theory to discourse analysis and develop a conceptual framework on the basis of two ground assumptions. We understand translation as an open-ended process that is more than simple transportation; translation involves steps of assimilation, contextualization and innovation of meanings connected to words, routines and objects. Translative processes are ongoing, implying that along the movements of meanings across time and space, new meanings are consistently attached or likewise existing ones transformed. As Czarniawska and Sevón (1996) have described: „On its trajectory from an idea to an object, to an institution, to an action and to an idea again, ideas go through many transformations and necessary passage points in the course of subsequent translations“ (ibid, p.4).

The notion of "translation" can indeed act as an inspiring concept for our analysis of coaching as a translative process as it is a rich hybrid that refers in Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to such references as Greimasiñan semiotics or Serres' Hermesian concept of translation (Latour, 2007; Callon, 1996) and can be extended to translation theory (Chávez, 2009) and translation studies (Janssens, Steyaert & Lambert, 2004). Within, organizational analysis, the notion of translation has been extensively elaborated by Czarniawska and Sevón (1996, 2005), who have summoned the idea of translation not only for its ability to explain how texts and objects outgrow their initial boarders, but also for how actions and material agents travel across contexts. This position is exemplified by a well known quote from Latour (1986) as he states that ‘the spread in time and space of anything - claims, orders, artifacts, goods - is in the hands of people; each of these people may act in many different ways, letting the token drop, or modifying it, or deflecting it, or betraying it, or adding to it, or appropriating it’ (ibid, p. 267). In such an understanding, translation is a dynamic social process which affects both the initial source texts as well as the target respectively con-texts.

Our second conceptual premise follows Chávez’ dictum that translation can be analyzed by a focus on how discourses are altered and modified and that translation should de-center the assumption that culture, period and linguistic structure remain the same and inquire into the polysemous character of texts and accounts. Chávez (2009) indicates that the unit of analysis is dis-
course, and thus that "the translator must have an understanding of the discourse out of which a text emerges because the discourse is what provides the meaning for both the source and target texts" (ibid., p. 24). Specifically, we approach discourses as interpretive repertoires (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) to enable a sensitivity for variations and tensions in how agents use language to account for different versions of the social world. As Potter and Wetherell have suggested, agents' accounts of phenomena are limited in number and can be identified as more or less coherent clusters of speech figures expressed though metaphors, tropes and terms arranged in a specific stylistic and grammatical fashion. Such interpretative repertoires have been described as „recurrently used systems of terms used for characterizing and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena” (ibid, p. 203). Talk is understood as action and discourse is understood as an active resource people use it to position themselves, bodies, actions, affects, practices and institutions.

Linguistically, we employ a spatial metaphor of the translative process as this allows us to consider translation as consisting of simultaneously existing side by side processes. We understand coaching as a discursive space, a „dimensions in which discourse and the production of text "happens”“ (Moldoveanu, 2009, p.237). Within this space different discourses are drawn upon, discourses that have spread, developed and been institutionalized in specific domains of social life. By drawing upon these contextualized discourses and arranging them into a new setting the background of these discourses become what Chávez (2009) has called „historical translative scapes“ with unique trajectories. Further, the active discourses are positioned towards one another and arranged into specific patterns of dominance and we would call these maneuvers „translative moves“. These translative moves give interpretative dominance and establish a legitimate and coherent way of understanding the phenomena at hand.

**Methodological approach**

To obtain texts of how coaching currently is phrased and articulated, we collected data in different formats, such as interviews, documents, websites as well as video-recorded coaching sessions. To a large extent, our presented analysis relies on the transcripts of the interviews as we found the materials from web sites and documents to give only very general descriptions, resulting in overly coherent images of coaching while the transcripts from coaching sessions were on the other hand too concrete and revealed how people talk in coaching sessions but hardly how
they accounted for and legitimated the practice in the managerial realm. All data were collected in Switzerland and Germany between the Summer of 2009 and Spring 2011.

We conducted a total of thirty-one interviews with nine HR-managers, nine coached managers and thirteen were freelance coaches. HR-managers and coached managers all worked in large, multi-national organizations in the finance, insurance or crisis relief sector. These organizations set up, contracted and funded the coaching conversations making it into a business investment. Interviewed coaches had an average of eleven years of experience as freelances and were regularly contracted by organizations in the above described sectors. Overall twenty-one men and ten women were interviewed, a bias that roughly mirrors the ratio of men to women on the management floors in the sectors we explored.

Several strategies were used to find relevant interview partners such as a call for participation in coaching newsletters, mailing lists and journals to which only coaches reacted. While coaches readily offered to participate in the study, field access to organizational agents proved to be difficult, due to confidentiality issues. We therefore asked coaches, in the sense of a snowball system, to refer us to their contacts partners within the organizations (Brace-Govan, 2004).

Individual interviews were set up in semi-structured, narrative formats and lasted between forty-five and ninety minutes. Interviews with coaches tended to be longer while company employees were on a tight time schedule, resulting in shorter interviews. In a brief introduction, it was said that the aim of the interviews was to gain insight into how coaching was understood and used in managerial contexts. We asked interview partners a number of prescripted questions and encouraged the narration of thick descriptions of cases and examples of their experiences, but also let interview partners freely share what they thought was important about coaching.

All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and further processed using AtlasTi, a multi-level text program called Scrivener and paper-textmarker-scissor-pinboard methods for a visual overview. In a recursive coding process, the texts were tagged, primary interpretations discussed with a group of colleagues, texts recoded, meta-categories built, discussed again and so forth in various iterative cycles (Wiggins & Potter, 2008; Potter & Hepburn, 2008; Edwards, 2005). In an attempt to find interpretative categories that would allow variation as well as coherence of accounts, we moved though a number of "models" which we validated, tested and re-
worked going through the empirical material until we felt confident that we could sufficiently summarize agents accounts of coaching to one or more of the built repertoires (Alvesson, 2010).

Our interpretation of the data was guided by distinguishing two analytical questions to answer the research question. With our first question we aimed to trace the contexts in which the repertoires used to account for coaching have historically constituted; we thus asked through which discourses coaching is constructed and legitimized. Our analysis was oriented at tracing the multiplicity of representations that lie within the texts into which coaching is embedded. Textual analysis in the tradition of Discursive Psychology (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wiggins & Potter, 2008) looks for variations in the use of interpretative repertoires to account for social processes and how different representations are smoothed out, fragmented, contested and most importantly relate to other repertoires in the texts.

Our second analytical question then builds on this first analysis as we asked how the identified interpretative repertoires build relational patterns, which we come to call translative moves. In this second question lies an opportunity to study how different forms of texts - source texts, target texts and con-texts - are arranged in configuring foreground-background figures that connect the therapeutic repertoires with the managerial ones. Through such a fine-grained analysis we aim to highlight how coaching as discursive practice is formed through the translation of discourses by moving between and relating different social worlds. Also, by mapping out the discursive moves and their effects we hope to add texture and analytic understanding to the translation processes that lead to „new“ practices in management.

**Contextualizing coaching through historical scapes**

Following our first analytical question, we look into the broader historical scapes that are drawn upon to give meaning to coaching (experiences). We identified four interpretative repertoires which agents used to account for coaching. In order to acknowledge the broader historical scapes through which meaning is given to coaching, we refer in giving names to rather general professional disciplines, such as Human Resource Management (HRM), and Human Resource Development (HRD), and repertoires from the fields of the so-called psy-sciences that follow medicalized therapeutic or psycho-therapeutic models. Agents draw upon these repertoires to describe the
change process, to legitimate and make sense of coaching and attribute specific pre-scripted subject positions to the figures of the coach, the coached manager and the HR-manager. An overview of the basic constituents of each repertoire is given in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repertoires</th>
<th>Human Resource Management</th>
<th>Human Resource Development</th>
<th>Medicalized therapy</th>
<th>Psychotherapy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>Assesses gap and yields change techniques</td>
<td>Facilitates reflection</td>
<td>Assesses symptoms - yields healing techniques</td>
<td>Creates intimate setting for conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coached manager</td>
<td>Has gap, needs to be optimized or repaired</td>
<td>Searching for clarity in an ever faster moving world</td>
<td>Patient - needs to be liberated from symptoms</td>
<td>Self-disclosing conversation partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Process</td>
<td>Linear learning models</td>
<td>Open-ended reflection of conflicts and roles</td>
<td>Linear medical model</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims of intervention</td>
<td>Improving individual performance</td>
<td>Creating autonomous managers with better leadership skills</td>
<td>Healing and preventing individual symptoms</td>
<td>Resolving tensions in personal narrations and increasing spaces of possibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible organizational effects</td>
<td>Used as means of governance in the sense of a disciplinary practice</td>
<td>Increased self-management, many lead to super exploitation and intensification of emotional labor</td>
<td>Individualization of organizational symptoms</td>
<td>Emancipation against dominant discourse of performativity</td>
</tr>
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Table 1: Summarizes positions of coach and coached manager, representation of the coaching process and aims of the intervention as well as potential organizational effects of each repertoire.

Classical HRM: controlling performance

The first repertoire we called „Human Resource Management“ as coaching is dominantly described as „coaching-for-performance“ (Whitmore, 2002) or as one HR-manager of a bank put it plainly: » Coaching is the instrument to get people functioning in an individualized, fast and uncomplicated way « (Interview #22)¹. This repertoire's approach to change is aligned to the linear model of rationality with the aim to bring about controllable, anticipated outcomes. Recounting how his coaching process started a coached manager said:

» You get scanned from the HR-department of [BANK] concerning your strengths and weaknesses, especially concerning your leadership behavior. As a result of my scan during a management review it was asserted that I had a deficit in my leadership experience respectively

¹ All interviews were conducted in German and translated as well as anonymized by the first author.
behavior. (...) As an appropriate measurement, the responsible HR-department thought that, in my case, a coaching would indeed create improvements « (Interview #23).

Consequently, the intervention is scripted through a firm alliance between the assessment of deficits (e.g. lack of skills and knowledge, dysfunctional work or social behavior or insufficient work performance) and the use of corrective behavior techniques. The coach becomes a change-maker, an expert who is able to shape the client through the use of selected socio-behavioral technologies.

In our analysis we found several accounts of processes in which the coaching intervention was initiated by the line-managers of the then to-be-coached managers. Furthermore, we found two variations of managers subject positions, a repair mode and an optimization mode, exemplified in the following statement of a free-lancer coach, who we asked to describe his understanding of coaching:

» It's about development and improvement of people, self-decided or externally suggested - I’ll put it like this - and this development can be resolving deficits or becoming turbo. Well, resolving deficit is actually operational: you don’t make certain mistakes [anymore]. And turbo is „he is already in the force track but should not make mistakes“, so support « (Interview #1).

In the „optimization“ mode, managers still need a finishing touch to make the jump into excellence (Interview with coached manager #14), but are already tagged with characteristics such as „high potentials“, „future leaders“ or „top shots“. In contrast, managers who fall into the repair category are perceived to show signs of weak performance and/or dysfunctional social behaviors; they are described as low performers or incompetent. In the later variation, managers are prone to negative sanctions in case of an unsatisfactory coaching outcome, a situation that leads a coach to the following comparison:

» And that sometimes means: „When coaching does not result in changes, then we have to part“. Well, the sword of Damocles hangs above it - much depends on it « (Interview #3).

One HR-manager in an insurance company we talked to even stated that in eighty percent of cases in his organization coaching had been initiated due to performance deficits or the dysfunc-
tional behavior of employees (field notes, 13.12.2010). Considering some of these more critical
effects of this repertoire we conclude that next to the unquestioned amplification of employees
output, the use of coaching can take the form of a disciplinary practice (Foucault, 1979; Barratt,
2003; Deetz, 2003) or sometimes even become a covert maneuver to legitimate the layoff of an
employee. Asked about the coaching culture at his company, a HR-manager recapitulated:

» The motto used to be: „Coach, coached, go“. That means that only those people who got
their last chance before being thrown out received coaching. That had a very bad reputation.
And always when someone got a coaching you knew that they want to get rid of him « (In-
terview #22)

Or a similar statement from a coach:

» Usually it's like this: „I don’t get along with an employee. I have no methods and tools to
develop him. And now we’ll try coaching, and if that also does not work then we have to part.
Well, we don’t have to necessarily throw him out, but displace, somewhere“. That can also
happen « (Interview #7).

We have dubbed this repertoire „Classical Human Resource Management“ due to its apparent
analogy, to a body of practices in which “[t]he individual is the basic unit […]], that is, an essential
human subject whose nature is to be discovered or uncovered, and who is to be motivated
through exercise of correct procedures of recruitment, appraisal, development, and compensa-
tion” (Townley, 1993, p.522; see also Maravelias, 2003). This repertoire of coaching shows itself
as a highly normative discursive practice which subscribes to the managerial belief of rational
control as represented in the body of HRM discourses.

**HRD: steering development**

The second repertoire, Human Resource Development (HRD), shares its overall goals with the
HRM repertoire, namely to produce better organizational performance through the modification
of an individual's abilities. It is different due to its open model of change. The HRD repertoire
breaks away from linear learning models and assumes that organizational life is multi-faceted
and relational, and needs to be interpreted rather than controlled. Taking on a developmental
stance, quality of performance is guaranteed through the improvement of a manager's leadership, self-management and emotional skills. The virtues of this repertoire of coaching are expressed in the next quote from a HR-manager who, in his description of different constellations of coaching, says:

» ... through the striking rise of complexity and the acceleration of the corporate world, people have to increasingly, …. if you imagine a Chinese plate spinner: nowadays people have to turn more and more plates. So, nowadays those who don’t have a coach have a problem. In former times you had a problem if you had a coach, and now it's the other way around because the coach is used as a sparring-partner, especially to bring things to an end. Also, I can purchase time and a space for reflection « (Interview #25).

The belief that managers live in an ever faster spinning world and are in need of help to unravel its complexities to be able to make sense and keep the upper hand on events is what legitimates coaching in this repertoire. The repertoire can be connected to the shift in organizational theory from a quasi-Taylorist stance towards the idea that managers need to become autonomous, innovative and able to capture the heart of their employees in order to guarantee the survival of the company:

» Coaching is pressed ahead very strongly even in the division I work in. And that is really also because the mission statement is to produce autonomous managers « (Coached middle manager in a bank, interview #14)

This shift can be described as a movement from a static form of control and resistance to a relational dynamic that emphasizes autonomy and self-management. Fittingly, the central metaphor of this repertoire to coaching is that of „sparring“, a term that denotes from training fights in martial arts and boxing:

» What has always been the same or has even become more important in coaching is this sparring. And the most important thing in coaching, and that's what those notice who also take advantage of coaching, well, it's helpful for sorting things out. Well, everything that has to do with sorting, with closure and getting in a new perspective from someone else. Top-managers just notice that they can’t take out their own kidney, like a doctor, he can’t do that either. This has to be done by someone from the outside who is not caught up in the system and who can ask questions so you can get a change of perspectives or an expansion of per-
spectives. (…) In combination with self-coaching and coaching, people are, as mentioned, more productive in a shorter span of time « (Interview #22).

We believe this repertoire can be related to current Human Resource Development frameworks, which themselves are informed by systemic, complexity and narrative theories (see also Marshak & Grant, 2008). While Hamlin, Ellinger and Beattie (2008), who have extensively looked at the overlap between coaching and HRD, conclude that the „intended purposes and processes associated with both fields of practice are virtually the same“ (p. 287), we would suggest that this is only one image of coaching with specific effects on the organization of the intervention; the most important effect being that through its developmental stance, behavior is seen as a consequence of motivations, perceptions, available skills and resources the person is able to make use of. Coaching is packaged in such a way that the manager, by free will, wants to learn to improve his self-management, professional role performance as well as leadership behavior/people management (Fogde, 2011; Hancock & Tyler, 2004).

Medicalized therapy: overcoming symptoms

A third repertoire can be named „medicalized therapy“ as it describes coaching as a method of treatment for psychological symptoms and essentially peruses the traditional medical image of change. Linguistically it avails itself to a „psy-language“ (Rose, 1998) and often to the nomenclature of symptoms as ordered for example in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Examples for typically displayed symptoms are burnout, mobbing or more generally stress, but also descriptions of depression or anxiety disorders may surface in the texts. Referring to the symptoms gives legitimation to the installment of the intervention, as coaching becomes a measurement to prevent or overcome (work related) psychic symptoms as is argued in the following statement by a HR-manager:

» Personally, I think it's great when line-managers contact me and say: „I have this employee who I think has a real burn-out going on or he is getting into some form of pathological symptomatic. I have already talked to him and proposed, I could clarify how a coaching could work“. So, the initiative comes from the line-manager, who takes his responsibility as a leader seriously « (Interview #28).
The subject position of the coached manager becomes equivalent to the position of a patient, the bearer of a (potential) psychological symptom, someone who needs to be taken care of. In this image of coaching, the professional coach becomes the yielder of specialized health-constituting techniques and knowledge that allow for overcoming the symptom.

An evident effect of this repertoire is that the manager is almost entirely absorbed by the well-known script of the patient. Also, our next quote, from a coach, demonstrates the individualization of organizational dynamics/symptoms:

» Let's put it like this, in Germany, the audit department said: „We need coaching for our people, they are overburdened, they have stress, they need a coaching now and then“. And then they implemented the method so that everyone who had the feeling he needed support could get a coach « (Interview #1).

While the nurturing intention of the coaching intervention is evident, its other effect is that symptoms are individualized, thus passing up the chance to reflect upon them in relation to the organizational context and the dominant discursive practices of performance.

Psychotherapy: stipulating one's trajectory

The fourth repertoire we call „psychotherapeutic“ as it constructs coaching as a special form of conversation that can be linked to the discursive norms of psychotherapeutic talk and is seen as a potent interaction whose contents need to be kept veiled so coached managers are able to talk about intimate and emotionally charged topics. The theory of change is aligned to therapeutic models which suggest that the illusive and implicit nature of thoughts, behaviors and feelings need to be unraveled and made explicit for reflection. This in turn allows insight and the (de)construction of the biographical narrative. The process as well as the roles of the agents consequently follow this assumption:

» I think my role is essentially that of the person who asks different questions than the coachee asks himself or was asked by his company. My role is always to go beyond the pure phenomenological level, so I always try to, if it's okay for the coachee, but generally there has never been any problems with this, always try to look where the behavior comes from. So: „Where does the behavior you show in the company come from? With what patterns, that
come from somewhere totally different, could this be connected?" Well, such a foundation, sort of in the biography and then to have access points to see what he has to recollect out of this script to be able to reflect about it. If I don’t reflect this script, where this comes from, like from his upbringing or through some sort of experiences in whatever time, then we will not be able to change this script for the future « (Interview #7).

Coaching becomes a practice of biographical analysis and identity assemblage, a practice that is closely interwoven with emotional and personal experiences. This repertoire places feelings, personal needs, relationships and autobiographic narratives center-stage. Asked to explain his coaching experience, an executive manager stated that

» ... it was really important that [the coach] got to know my personal role. At the beginning we somewhat went into the psychological and explored my insecurities and my weaknesses. Of great importance was the individual coach-coachee relationship where you can really talk about everything « (Interview 34).

The quote reflects the central belief of the therapeutic discourse; that change can be obtained through an intense self-reflective process which implies self-disclosure of the client and its counterpart, the cherishing and confidential relationship to the therapist (Bordin, 1979). Moreover the setting of the conversation needs to be organized in such a way that trust and intimacy between the coach and the manager can develop as the following suggests:

» And coaching ultimately has something of a psychotherapeutic intervention. I think coaching and therapy share a long border. And the possibilities you have with coaching, due to the setting, to be together with a person, to be close to someone, not in his office et cetera, et cetera, well everything that is needed ... for one of the most far reaching interventions « (Interview #7).
Assembling translative moves

To further explore the patterns of relation between repertoires, we followed a second analytical question to understand how managerial and therapeutic discursive resources are related and assembled by forming five translative moves through which the therapeutic and the managerial have arranged themselves in specific foreground-background figures during the process of translation.

Absorbing medicalized therapy

A first translative move consists of setting up an interaction between the medicalized therapy and the HRM repertoire. This move can best be illustrated by looking at the ambivalent subject positions of the coached manager who is on the one hand scripted as a symptom bearing quasi-patient and on the other had disqualified as a true professional. In a drastic form this is illustrated in a statement by a HR-manager:

» Coaching is still commonly put in the corner of therapy, thus suggesting: „He can’t cope with the situation, he needs a coaching, he is a milksop « (Interview #25).

When the medicalized therapy repertoire, taken out of the medical-psychological context, is used to legitimate coaching in management contexts, the managerial discourse of rationality and self-management often leads to a strong negative connotation of the intervention. This is not least due to the circumstance that psychological symptoms are often a site of taboo in organizations. Managers who show symptoms are regarded unstable, weak and incompetent, all characteristics that contradict the image of the heroic, successful manager. Simultaneously, coaching is understood „as an instrument in the sense of „We will manipulate him into the right direction“ (Interview #21) and used as a corrective/disciplinary practice for insufficiently performing as well as symptom-struck, which almost becomes an equivalent to insufficient performing, employees. The normative and normalizing effects of both the HRM and the medicalized therapy repertoire allow a convergence between the two discourses. Essentially, the construction of coaching in this translative scape shows parallels to how Michel Foucault has described psychiatric institutions as instruments of political power (Foucault, 1979). The parallel to the culturally well-known script of
the psychiatric setting, with its schematic deficit-oriented subject positions, places coaching in the position of a necessary means that everyone simultaneously fears and despises.

**Instrumentalizing the psychotherapeutic**

In this combination, the psychotherapeutic is embraced as a Human Resource Development practice and understood as a „powerful tool for generating transformative learning“ (Gray, 2006, p.14), making coaching even more effective than traditional HRD-interventions. Consequently, the therapeutic virtues of self-disclosure, emotional involvement and a relationship founded on confidentiality and trust, are seen as key factors. Simultaneously, the soft therapeutic discourse is displaced by a functionalist, performance driven managerial framework. In one interview, a middle-manager described how coaching allowed him to professionalize his behaviors by means of better managing his emotions. He also recounted how through „almost psychoanalytical“ exploration coaching helped him lead „low-performing“ employees to better performance, handle „difficult“ subordinates and strategically optimize his behavior towards his boss:

» …intellectually interpreting the behaviors of myself and others gave me an incredible value, because maybe I normally am too emotional and also react too emotional and through this I get a kind of meta-perspective on the dimensions of my own life, concerning the here-and-now, my career, the involved people, the strategy and the content I produce « (Interview #14).

Also, in a later part of the interview, the manager states that through coaching the company » gets a leader, they would have otherwise not have had « (Interview #14). We follow, that going through the motions of the therapeutic enables the management of the „soft-realm“ e.g. negative emotions, difficult relationships or identity issues.

**Maintaining the paradox**

In this translative move, the tension between the therapeutic and managerial discourses is maintained, continuing their struggle over interpretative dominance. It often materializes as a friction between two agents and a possible third who walks the seam, as an inhouse-coach, phrased:
There is this absolute classic. To say it bluntly and oversimplified, the successful managers are those that have a father complex. And the question is then if you want to amplify this or help the person overcome this issue. From the therapeutic side it’s the latter and from the organizational side it's about reinforcing what is already dominant « (Interview #21).

She later goes on to say:

» Fundamentally it has two aspects for me. The first is about self-development and that is more the therapeutical context. And the other is very strongly about functioning, this sound awful..., the functioning in the organization. And that's where I’m in a dilemma « (Interview #21).

This form of translation is also enacted in the play between disciplining and resistance when for example, coaching is prescribed to employees. A coach, recalls that sometimes

»... the coached managers come and ask „Hey, what's going on here? Now the company has put you onto me as a watchdog!“ « (Interview #5).

In effect, the tension may show in patterns of open or subtle resistance which make the intervention a site of power struggles. Additionally, what is part of this dynamic of maintaining the paradox between the two central logics that differentiate the managerial and the therapeutic discourses is the ways in which the aims are described, towards he organization or the individual. Through this translative move, the tension is not solved but rather is pronounce and often it is suggested that individual paths need to be taken in the concrete coaching practice without giving a general way that leads out of this dilemma.

Marginalizing the therapeutic

The fourth translative move is determined by the attempt to accentuate the managerial characteristics of coaching while distancing itself from both psy-repertoires through defocusing or negating their influence. To maintain the credibility of coaching in the management realm, agents dissociate coaching itself from psychotherapy and actively overturn the opinion that coaching and psychotherapy share the same practices and techniques. An important role in this move is played in the reference to sports coaching as the genealogy of coaching in management is then placed in
its heritage (Gordon, 2007). Asked why a coach, who was trained in psychological counseling and strongly identifies with it, uses the term coaching instead of the psychological counseling to frame his services he stated:

» The term coaching is commonly used, simply because it comes out of sports which is the biggest demonstration of performance in our society [laughs]. And I think that it's just inside people's heads, it's less the fact that people are coached in organizations but more that people are coached in sports « (Interview #9).

Another discursive device through which the dominance of the managerial is established is through the allusion to guidelines and regulations as shown in the following quote from a coach.

» There are these ethical guidelines from the ICF [International Coaching Federation], they are bound to the coaching competences and I think there the boundary to psychotherapy and coaching is very clear when I notice that someone does not go to a doctor. I already had several clients that visited a psychotherapist parallel, we try to differentiate the topics, even though it doesn’t work of course. Still, it partly works very, very well, because I am not a psychologist and especially not a therapist from my basic education « (Interview #19).

The need to separate coaching from psychotherapy is often the starting point of this move but an attempt which seldom succeeds wholly. When coaching is described entirely through managerial terminologies it also defocuses the coaching practice and accentuates what coaching should do on an abstract level without offering sufficient details for a believable narrative. Coaching is also constructed as a kind of management training and distance to psychotherapy is achieved by contrasting therapy as deficit-oriented and coaching as resource-oriented. „Coaching is not only a deficit-oriented approach, but today a potential-driven approach“ (Interview #22). This move presents itself as rather unstable and conflicting as a coherent description cannot be produced, a circumstance that is also reflected in the academic literature, where the question of „Coaching versus Psychotherapy“ (Hart, Blattner, & Leipsic, 2001) has become a major debate (see e.g. Passmore & Gibbes, 2007; Sherin & Caiger, 2004).
Challenging the managerial

In this final move, the managerial discourses are countered by the therapeutic discourses which call for the transgression of alternative voices along the lines of desires, needs, dreams and emotions. Through the installment of these openings, the managerial discourse is critically challenged and a momentum of emancipation, which seeks for alternative ways of organization, is prioritized. A middle-manager (Interview #29), said that coaching was a way for her » to protect my identity within the organization « as she feared having to deform her personality in order to fit into the managerial norms. She attempted » finding a balance among the different pressures or the different inputs you can receive, especially when you start growing in the career path « (ibid).

Within this translative move, the tension between organizational and individual motives emerges and may show in issues like protecting one's identity from a threatening degree of over-conformity, realizing that work has absorbed oneself and has led relationships to the brink of collapse or giving aesthetic considerations voice. As a coach puts it:

» Well, there is this topic „Don’t be so emotional“ that always comes up in companies as a criticism. [...] Then I get rebellious impulses to say „Be emotional, More than ever! « (Interview #7).

This translative move is unique as it seems to break with the managerial agenda, potentially making coaching into a critical-reflective practice (Reynolds & Vince, 2004) which holds the seed for emancipation (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992).

Discussion and conclusion

In the first part of our analysis we asked which repertoires agents use to account and legitimate for coaching. We have identified four interpretative repertoires and we have linked these empirically-based repertoires to general professional disciplines, Human Resource Management and Human Resource Development which converge towards management as well as medicalized and psycho-therapeutic repertoires which connect to the so-called psycho-therapeutic and psychosciences. The HRM and HRD repertoires, while unequal in their assumptions on change, are essentially in line with a general managerial mindset and subscribe to the view that coaching should
aim to improve „leader’s capability to achieve short and long-term organizational goals“ (Ennis et al., 2003, p. 20). Furthermore, the therapeutic repertoires both have the individual well-being in mind, though while the first is organized around the symptoms the latter stresses the dialogical conversation as a means to edit the biographic narratives. Both therapeutic discourses have the common denominator in the psy-practices (Rose, 1990) which places feelings, personal needs, psychological symptoms, relationships and autobiographic experiences center-stage. We have thus suggested that coaching, from a broader general perspective, draws upon two more generally known apparatuses that have historically developed in two different contexts, management and therapy, which we have called with Chávez (2009) *historical translative scapes* of coaching.

As Kilburg (1997) has formulated, coaching for managers aims to improve the self-awareness of the client through articulating problems for exploration, making the unconscious conscious and creating a safe environment (Orenstein, 2002) and we suggest that this formulation and the above described characteristics of coaching are identical to the description of the central discursive norms psychotherapy draws upon which Pawelcyk (2011) has described as communication of emotions, self-disclosure and transparency of meaning. From this position we argue that the notion of coaching has been able to transport the therapeutic habitus into work life due to the positive connotations the term evokes (while the term therapy has been dropped). As Peltier (2001) puts it: "The main reason that coaching is called ‘coaching’ and not executive counseling or workplace psychotherapy is that hard-charging corporate types, especially men, are likely to be happy to have a coach, but unwilling to enter therapy. Most identify with sport and would love to see themselves as athletes, or at least, high performers" (p. 170). This interpretation would mean that coaching is what Erlingsdottir and Lindberg (2005) have termed an „isopraxis“*, a practice that travels relatively unchanged but is renamed in the translation process. Hence, our conclusion from this analysis is that coaching transports a therapeutic habitus deeper into the management realm but with considerable modifications that both underline and hide the soft realm as it is situated within the managerial realm with its emphasis on performance, progress and profit.
The second part of our analysis, which then builds on the first, reveals how the repertoires are assembled into confluent junctions, we call *translative moves*, which define and shape coaching into specific foreground-background figures. We have identified five translative moves, an overview of how the repertoires play out towards the others is given in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repertoires</th>
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Table 2: Signs indicate the level of dominance the repertoire has within the move from (-) not significant, (+) less dominant to (++) dominant. Grey shades indicate the affiliation to one of the translative scapes. The column on the very right summarize the dynamic of the moves.

Coaching, as a discursive practice that is in translation, and thus in a state of uncertainty, has shown to bring forth rivaling, multi-faceted transitive scapes. Following this argumentation, the translative process does not take place in a linear manner but leads to a multifaceted assemblage of translative moves, forming relations between discourses, in which the texts merge, repel each other or try to gain dominance. The translation processes we have shown might be understood more as an ongoing chain of translations in which stable coherent endpoints of institutionalization are not necessarily the norm: as long as one scape is not able to coherently pull others into its trajectory, thus itself becoming a „new“ discourse, repertoires co-exist in form of different translative moves that produce variable effects and images, a state that is reflected in the current polyphony we identified to surround the term coaching.
Concluding, we need to come back to our initial research question, concerning how the therapeutic has been translated into the managerial realm. We suggest that we can further differentiate the relational dynamic of the moves into assimilating, unfolding and countering maneuvers. We would say through the first two moves (absorbing medicalized therapy and instrumentalizing psychotherapy) the general managerial discourse has gained interpretative authority over the imitated therapeutic discursive practices. Here the managerial texts have successfully assimilated the therapeutic in such a way that the managerial ground assumptions need not be further modified. In the third translative move (maintaining the paradox) attention is placed on the incompatible elements of the translative scapes. The conflicting aims that derive out of their initial contextualization in different historical scapes are unfolded and made explicit. Ambivalence, rather than conformity, becomes the ordering discursive device. Finally, we call two translative moves countering as they try to affirm the effects of one translative scape while reducing those of the other. The fourth move (accenting the managerial) tries to play down the therapeutic and amplify the managerial. The last move (challenging the managerial) seems to counter or even de-construct the managerial discourse by subscribing to a therapeutic-emancipatory element that is oriented around the individual’s well-being.

Together, these forms of translative moves have created various kinds of hybrid texts in the different ways that self-disclosure and self-development are fused with professionalism and productivity. We cannot but describe these processes as political. Have we for example a division manager who follows the trajectory of absorbing the medicalized therapy into a HRM framework we might find that he sends one of his subordinate managers into coaching after repeated arguments over the coordination of a project. During one of the arguments the senior manager diagnoses his subordinate as being „agitated“ and „getting on peoples nerves“. The coaching is then initiated with the sentence » You should really do something for yourself! « (Interview with manager #31). Another vignette, when coaching comes in the form of a psychotherapeutic intervention which aims to resist the dominant managerial discourse, was reported from a manager who felt the need to reflect his „work-life balance“ and asked the HR-department to fund a coaching. While he communicated to the outside that he was working on his leadership behavior, he understood coaching as means to distance himself from the strong, almost ideological, performance
culture in his company from which he felt overly absorbed. The manager also used the coaching
to prepare his application for a job at a different company (Interview #14). The central tension
both vignettes describe can be summarized as follows: „On the one hand, the organization trans-
lates its needs into performance targets, and, on the other, the subject has the opportunity to ex-
press its own needs and make the organization responsible for fulfilling them. This is a new
mechanism of governance which makes the employee the focus of a quasi-therapeutic encounter“
(Costea et al., 2008, p. 668). Future research into the field should thus consider coaching as a po-
litically saturated process and, next to its strong affirmative performance, develop a critical-
reflexive stance (Janssens & Steyaert, 2009) to unsettle the overly coherent, positive framing of
coaching as seen in the current literature.

Finally, we would like to formulate a hypotheses on the question why the therapeutic is
translated into the managerial realm and argue that despite the rivaling nature of the moves, all
moves share one central discursive feature: the introduction of coaching as a device that organ-
izes intimacy in order to change behavior. It is this unique feature that we suggest is the main mo-
tor that fuels this translative process. It is in the fusion of productivity and the private self which
addresses the desires and beliefs that, in this specific historical context, shape the momentum of
business coaching as a fashion. Further, we propose to see the specific set-up of the historical
translative scapes we presented in our empirical analysis to be in line with a larger socio-cultural
movement towards what has been termed paradoxically „soft capitalism“, a tendency in which
subjectivity is seized and made governable by the dominant performativity discourse in society.
This is especially prone in the move we have called „instrumentalizing the psychotherapeutic“ in
which the therapeutic habitus finds its zenith. As Costea, Crump and Amiridis (2008) have stated,
soft capitalism „acquires its immediate, everyday concreteness through (…) the therapeutic habi-
tus“ (ibid, p.661) and that habitus „indicates here the complex discursive horizon through which
the ‘self’ is exhorted to project its potentialities not merely in the static manner of routines of
self-maintenance, but as a dynamic through which the subject ought to continuously work upon
itself to become a better ‘human resource‘“ (ibid, p.676). When the therapeutic is assimilated, as
in the case of the suggested first two moves, coaching becomes a practice that organizes the emo-
tional, motivational, and behavioral systems of employees and as a governing structure „pro-
motes the super-exploitation of both managers (who are expected to commit their whole being to
the organization) and workers (who are now expected to commit their embodied knowledge to
the organization's epistemological resources as well)“ (Thrift, 1997, p. 50). In such a framing
coaching produces a strengthening of the relationship between the emotional and the economic
made most evident in the organization of the intimacy towards managerial aims - an amalgam
Eva Illouz (2008) has termed „cold intimacies“.

There are, of course, some limitations to this paper. We have excluded some important
voices from our analysis, for example those of line managers, who take an important part in de-
fining coaching's use in the managerial realm. In our approach we have also not analyzed the
coaching conversations themselves although this might have been an insightful step to better un-
derstand the translation of discursive devices into coaching. Also, by focusing on discourse
analysis we have stressed the importance of language, while defocusing the materiality of the
translation process. Our findings can also take no claim to be generalizable as our data is situated
within unique contexts: coaching with German and Swiss managers in multi-national corpora-
tions performed by a senior group of coaches. Finally, though we have tried to do a thorough data
analysis with different steps of discussion, we represent an interpretative position, which might
also have been assembled differently.
Literature


