Career transition strategies of doctoral researchers in the 'post-funding' phase in social sciences and humanities
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Research Objectives

Main Goal:

- Understand how doctoral researchers with different backgrounds navigate career planning amidst increasing career management pressures.

Focus area:

- Career strategies in sociology related laboratories
    - Strategy as organizing actions (Swidler, 1986)
    - Albert Hirschman's exit, voice, and loyalty (Hirschman, 1970)

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Literature Review

Research on doctoral careers:

- Current focus primarily on employment outcomes (Buenstorf et al., 2023; Passaretta et al., 2019; Horta et al., 2018; ...).
- Limited studies on decision-making mechanisms in career planning (Pham, 2023; Galimberti, 2023; Rasmussen & Andreasen, 2023; ...).
- Overlooked factors:
  - previous professional experiences
  - type of scientific work

Literature on Career Theory:

- Importance of **community insertion** and **evolution of researchers' cognitive work** and research topics (Gläser & Laudel, 2015; Laudel & Bielick, 2019; Laudel & Gläser, 2007; ...).

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Methodology

Interviews:

- 16 doctoral researchers from sociology-related laboratories in the Paris region.
- All in the final years of their thesis.
- Diverse financial situations and professional backgrounds.

Analytical conjecture:

- Different career dimensions (**cognitive, organisational and community careers**) interact and shape the degree to which doctoral researchers adhere to or depart from established academic career scripts—through voice, loyalty, or exit.

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Results 1/3: Academic Alliances ("loyality")

Characteristics:
- Community Insertion: Strong within their laboratories, close collaboration with one or several academic mentors.
- Mentor plays a key role in managing cognitive and organizational careers of doctoral researchers.
- Reinforces loyalty to the academic system despite criticisms about professional prospects.

Participant Profile:
- Six individuals (+ one exhibiting "pure voice" profile).
- Trajectories: Linear.
- Funding: Stable.

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Results 2/3: Dual Strategy ("hedging")

Characteristics:

- Alliances with both academic mentors and external networks.
  - External: networks linked to previous professional positions.
  - Internal: self-exclusion from immediate workplace (laboratory) due to "atypical profiles." But: strong insertion into "parallel" academic networks (research associations, inter-laboratory collaborations)
- Confidence in non-academic opportunities; thesis seen as an opportunity for career change.

Participant Profile:

- Four individuals.
- Trajectories: Nonlinear.
- Funding: Mostly unstable.

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Results 3/3: Exit Strategy ("exit")

Characteristics:
- Desire to leave emerges during the thesis period. Accompanied by:
  - Disappointment in organizational support.
  - Lack of supervisory guidance in career planning.
- Development of non-academic projects or professional affiliations: managerial or leadership roles within associations (France or abroad).
- Thesis viewed as supporting these non-academic projects, primarily in content.

Participant Profile:
- Five individuals.
- Trajectories: Various (linear and nonlinear).
- Funding: Mostly unstable.

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Conclusion

Previous insertion into academic/non-academic spheres influences career planning strategies.

- In sociology labs, building a cognitive and collegial career base requires long-term solo research and is primarily accessible to doctoral researchers with linear trajectories and stable funding.
- ➤ **Collegial and cognitive career** insertion acts as a gatekeeper for the profession **during the thesis period, not just during formal recruitment**.

Future Research:

- Compare different research fields to examine the role of research methods.
- Investigate whether career paths and planning strategies are discipline-specific.

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