This dissertation deals with the educational and career background of Finnish industrial managers, 1900-1975. The managerial background changed as a result of the industrialisation process, the emergence of large-scale bureaucratic firms, the professionalisation of management and the expansion in higher education.

The educational background rose rapidly during this period and the development took place parallel to the professionalisation process. A first "professionalisation wave" occurred in the first two decades of the 20th century, when the amount of professional managers grew and their level of education increased. A second "professionalisation wave" took place since the 1960s; the number of professional managers increased rapidly and managers with a new educational background, primarily business school graduates and managers with professional management education, entered top management.

Finnish managers appear, moreover, to have been, in an international comparison, well trained. This can be explained by many factors; the managers had a high social background, formal higher education has been in high regard in Finland and the system of higher education was fairly well developed. Moreover, Finnish managers showed a fairly high uncertainty avoidance, which led to the adoption of formal competence requirements on the firm level.

Also the career patterns of the managers changed, as a result of the emergence of large-scale bureaucratic firms, the professionalisation of management and the rise in their educational level. Entrepreneurial careers were replaced by bureaucratic careers. Managers became more mobile and they started higher up in the hierarchical level. Particularly the change in the firms' organisational structure changed the career patterns. For instance, the adoption of an organisational model based on division by branch in the 1960s, brought with it a concentration of power at the head quarter and, as a consequence, the role of the head office in the path to the top increased.

The selection process also changed. Industrial managers were during the whole period mainly recruited on so called internal labour markets for managers, but the base for these markets changed. In the beginning family and other informal social networks formed the most prominent base, but gradually professional and corporate networks became important.