

Employability: Yes, but post-organizational!? A four-cohort study of business school graduates' changes in career aspirations 1970-2010

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Background

- Concepts of employability
- Changes in career reality?
 - Pro's and con's
 - Even if changes occur
 - What is the kind of change?
 - How fundamental is the change?
- Post-organisational careers
 - A move from organisational to post-organisational careers (Mayrhofer et al. 2005)
 - Is this still the case?

- Career fields (Iellatchitch et al. 2003)
 - company world
 - post-organisational
 - free-floating professionalism
 - chronic flexibility
 - self-employment
- Polarisation hypothesis
 - Not necessarily a steady move from organisational to post-organisational
 - Both types of work/career arrangements attractive

Sample, measures, method

Sample

- Four cohorts of European business school graduates with graduation around
 - 1970 (n = 74, 84.3% male)
 - 1990 (n = 231, 61.3% male)
 - 2000 (n = 643, 54.1% male)
 - 2010 (n = 523, 41.5% male)
- Mean age at graduation
 - 25 years ('70 & '90)
 - 26 years ('00)
 - 27 years ('10)
 - SD 3-4.5 years, women on average 6-12 months younger.

Measures career aspiration scales: attractiveness of career fields

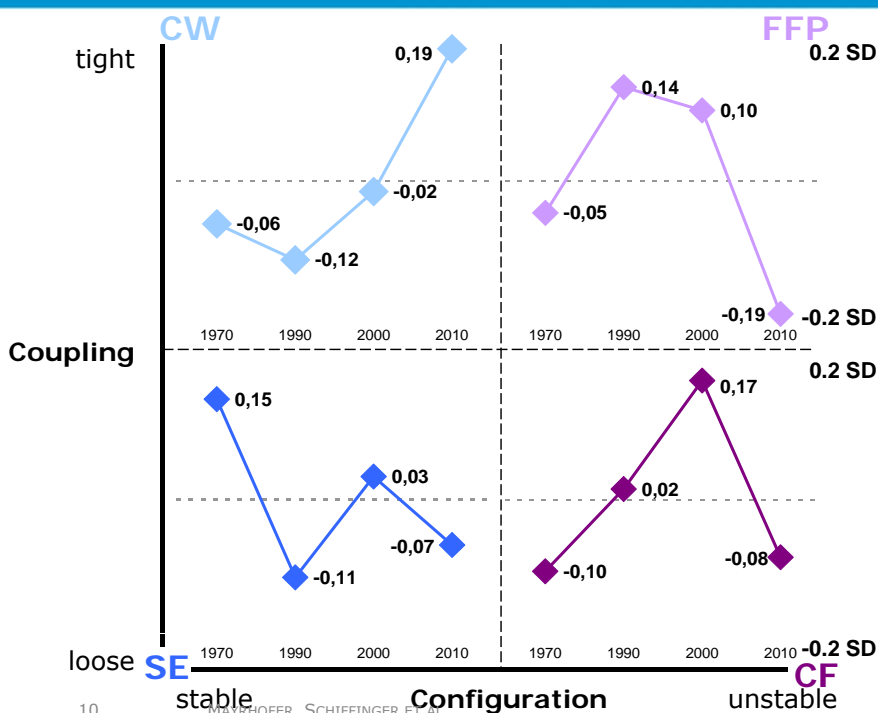
- Company world (e.g., "Feeling part of an organization", $\alpha = .86$)
- Free-floating professionalism (e.g., "Managing projects without being too tightly connected to an employing company", $\alpha = .71$)
- Self-employment (e.g., "Turning a business idea into a profitable company", $\alpha = .81$)
- Chronic flexibility (e.g., "Always taking on new tasks in various fields", $\alpha = .82$)

Method

- MANOVA/MANCOVA (career aspiration scales quite highly intercorrelated, with CW vs. the other three types, suggesting an "organizational vs. post-organizational" distinction)
- Step 1: MANOVA with cohort as predictor
- Step 2: MANCOVA with cohort and gender as categorical predictors and personality traits as covariates
- Dependent variable: z-standardized aspiration scales; norming by total sample (all four cohorts) corrected for different cohort sizes

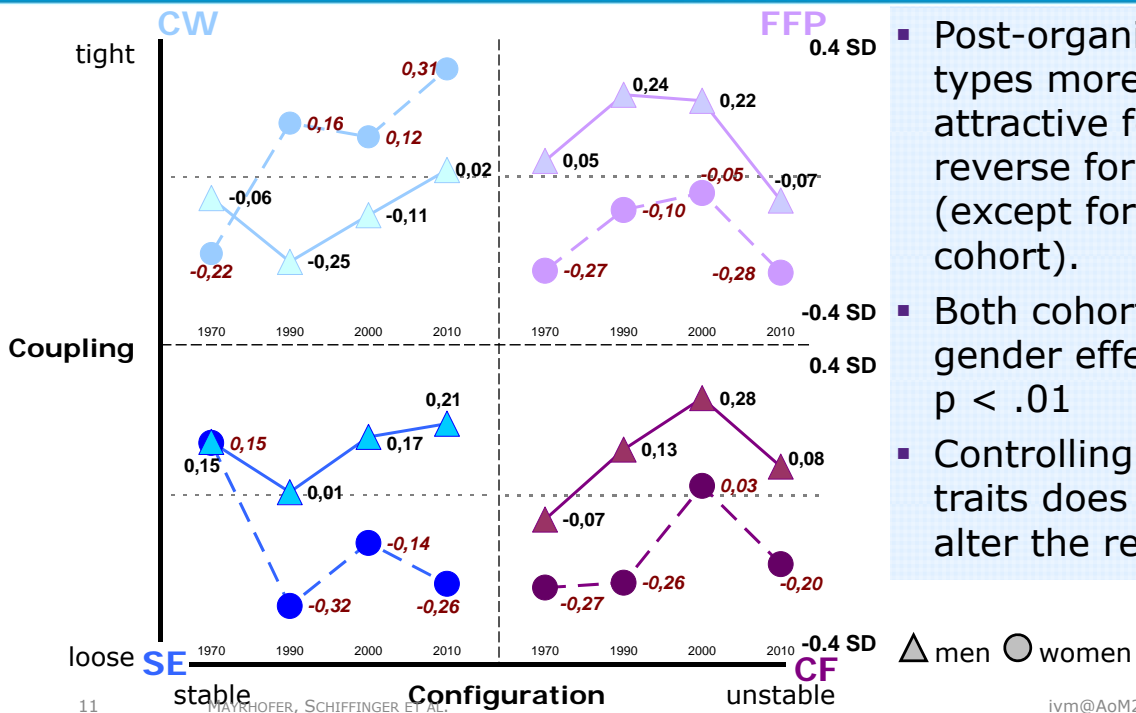
Results

Longing for the good ol' times?



- Unstable types (FFP and CF) more popular among 1990/2000 cohort compared to 1970/2010.
- Reverse applies to CW: more popular than ever after relative "rejection" in the 1990 cohort.
- No such clear trend for SE.
- Cohort effect $p < .01$

Women go traditional?



- Post-organizational types more attractive for men, reverse for CW (except for '70 cohort).
- Both cohort and gender effect $p < .01$
- Controlling for traits does not alter the results.

Discussion

- Data collection: retrospective for 1970/1990 cohort, "actual graduate aspirations" for 2000/2010 cohort (no recognizable distortion though)
- Few and "special" women in 1970 cohort
- Moderate effect sizes (partial eta-squared for cohort $\sim .025$, for gender $\sim .015$)

- Change over cohorts
- Effects of 'the crisis'
- Gender differences
- Consequences for the employability discussion



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