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## Buccaneering or Back To A Safe Haven? Career Aspirations Of European Business School Graduates In Turbulent Times

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## Background



## ■ Post-organisational careers

- A move from organisational to post-organisational careers (Mayrhofer et al. 2005)
- More flexibility, boundaryless and Protean careers (Arthur 1994; Hall 1996)
- Is this still the case?

## ■ Changes in career reality?

- Pros and cons
- Even if changes occur
  - What is the kind of change?
  - How fundamental is the change?

## ■ Career fields (Iellatchitch et al. 2003)

- company world
- post-organisational
  - free-floating professionalism
  - chronic flexibility
  - self-employment

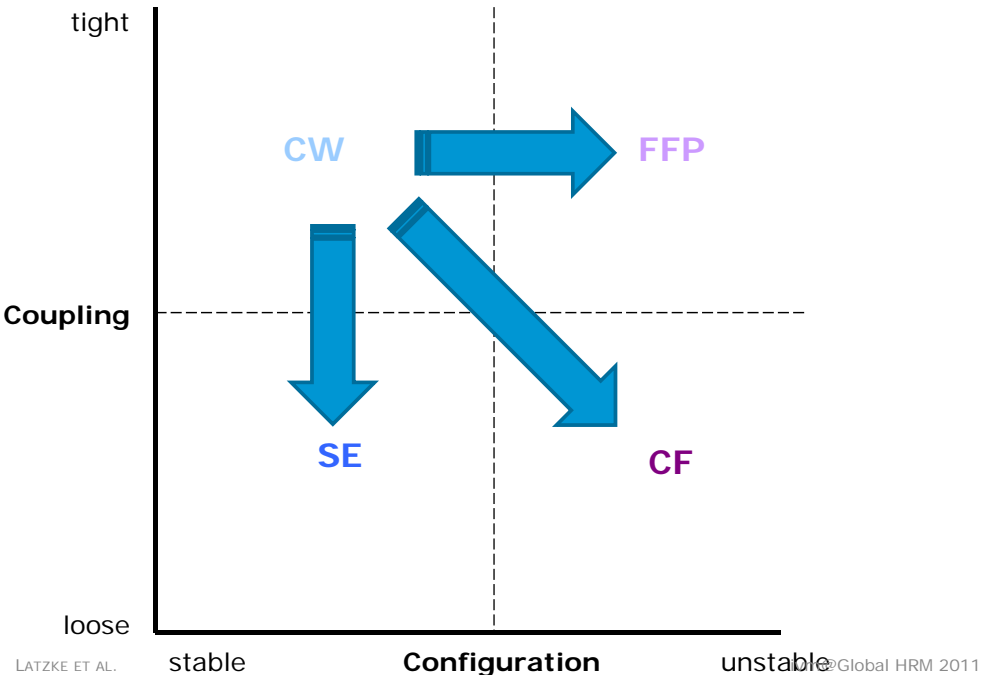
## ■ Move towards post-organisational careers

- Classical organizational careers no longer the only route
- Alternatives become increasingly attractive

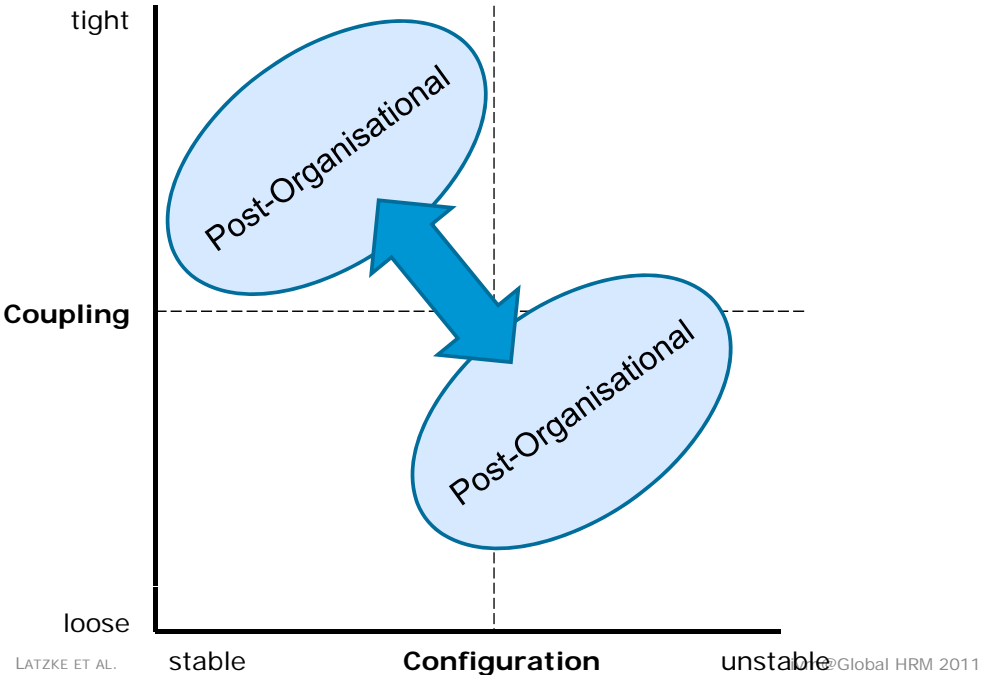
## ■ Emergence of polarisation

- Not necessarily a steady move from organisational to post-organisational
- Both types of work/career arrangements attractive

# Move towards post-organisational careers



# Emergence of polarisation



# Sample

## ViCaPP study

- 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.

- takes a closer look at CEMS-students from the CEMS Master's International management program as part of the pool for future leaders
- Quantitative analysis
  - questionnaire: 339 students
  - Response rate 26% from 37 countries; 53% male, 47% female; average age 24; 37 countries
- Qualitative work
  - 34 interviews at ESADE and WU campus (15 men, 19 women, 16 different countries, average age 23)
  - Categorical content analysis

## Results

# Career aspirations CEMS/ViCaPP

configuration of actors

		configuration of actors	
		stable	unstable
coupling to organisation	tight	<b>Company World</b> strive for a position of responsibility and influence and a long-term career within one organisation  49.5/ <b>50.6</b> %	<b>Free-floating professionalism</b> want to be under contract to one or a few organisations for special and challenging tasks, staying with the same organisation only for a limited time  34.1/ <b>9.1</b> %
	loose	<b>Self-employed</b> seek "traditional" self-employment, i.e. offering a range of quite standardized products and/or services to a relatively stable clientele  4.8/ <b>10.3</b> %	<b>Chronic Flexibility</b> aspire to a "freelancer" career with different projects for various clients and ever-changing work contents  11.6/ <b>30</b> %

CEMS  
ViCaPP

lellatchitch et al. 2003

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## Career aspirations – CEMS

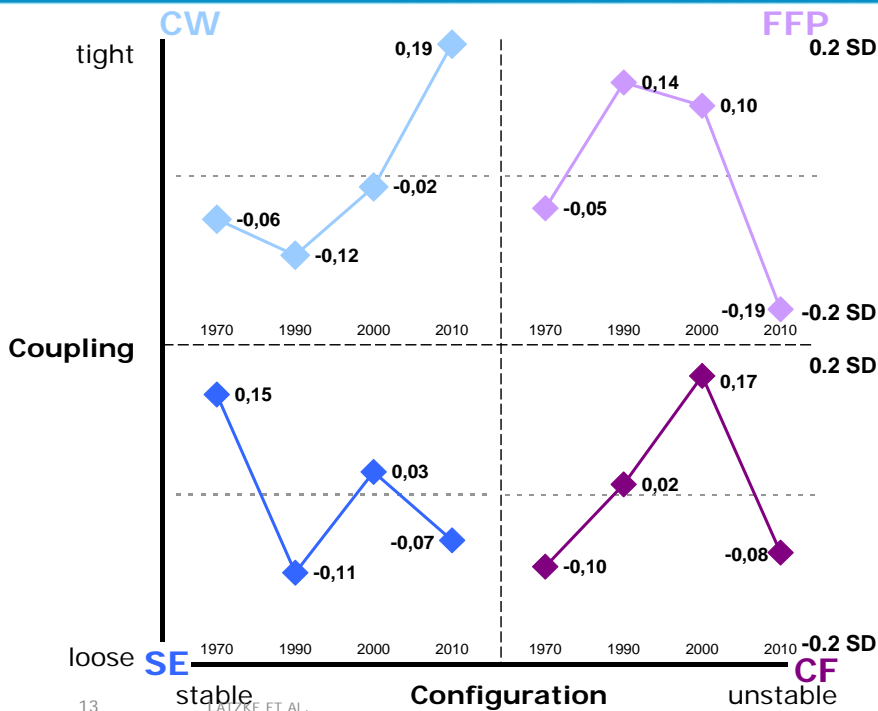
- Only half of the respondents opt for company world
  - Recruitment crisis?
  - Still a solid part of the overall population
- Other half opts for career outside/alongside companies
  - Temporary relationships, "Staying for a brief period in time – then I wouldn't exclude any places", RJ
  - It seems difficult to 'bind' these people long-term to the company
  - Corroborates with the emphasis on job/position and not so much on workplace/employer
- Free-floating professionalism very attractive
  - Building elements of this into classic organisations?
  - Are organisations able at all to get these people long-term?

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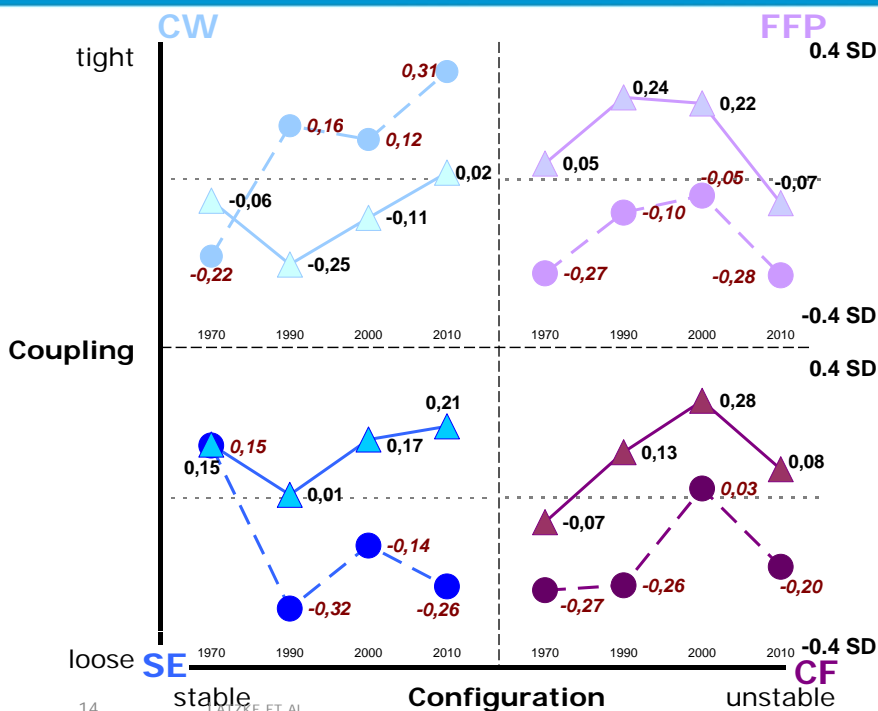
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# Changes over time - ViCaPP



- 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  $p < .01$

# What about women? - ViCaPP



- 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.

△ men ○ women

# Discussion

## Caveats

### ■ ViCaPP

- 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 ~.025, for gender ~.015)

### ■ CEMS

- Snapshot-study
- Specific group



- Change over cohorts
- Effects of 'the crisis'
- Gender differences
- The role of
  - personality traits
  - Social background



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