

Changing career aspirations : Empirical results & implications for HEIs

Katharina Pernkopf-Konhäsner

Interdisciplinary Group of Management and Organisational Behaviour (ivm),
Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU Wien)
kpernkop@wu.ac.at

Employability of Graduates & Higher Education Management Systems,
Slovenia, Ljubljana, September 27 & 28, 2012

Vienna Career Panel Project ViCaPP



- Launched 2000 by the Interdisciplinary Group of Management and Organisational Behaviour (ivm), Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU Wien)
- ViCaPP follows careers of business school graduates (n=939)
- Longitudinal design:
 - Basic survey around time of graduation: social origin, personality traits, career aspirations
 - Annual survey: various career outcomes (i.e., subjective/objective career success)
- Multi-cohort design:
 - Graduation 1970, 1990, 2000, 2010

Analyzing change in careers

- ViCaPP particularly useful for investigating change in careers over time
- Careers embedded in contexts that change over time (Arthur et al. 2005)
- Longitudinal multi-cohort design allows to distinguish between different time effects
 - Age: changes due to individual development
 - Cohort: changes due to specific circumstances of one cohort
 - Period: changes due to specific circumstances affecting all cohorts

Change of working environment / context - I

■ Context changes

- Drivers for change – Globalisation, liberalisation, information / network society, new businesses in the area of new media
- A move from organisational to post-organisational careers (Mayrhofer et al. 2005)

■ Impact on careers

- Traditional / organisational career
 - Linear advancement within an organisation
- Post-organisational career
 - More flexible, diverse, fragmented; less bound to an organisation
 - More self-initiative and entrepreneurial thinking (Employability in the sense of Bologna)

Change of working environment / context - II

■ Opportunities & Threats

- More freedom and autonomy, more opportunities
 - “boundaryless career”(Arthur 1996)
 - “protean career” (Hall 1996)
- More self-reliance, uncertainty
 - “The Corrosion of Character” (Sennett 1998)

How have career aspirations of graduates changed?

(!) Why is that an interesting question for HEIs?

Relevance for HEIs

- Impact of years of study / time on aspirations (Danziger & Eden 2007; Heckenhausen & Tomasik 2002)
 - “Downgrading” expectations
 - Gender differences
 - From dream to realistic job
- Do HEIs give preference to particular career fields when they increase a certain kind of employability?
 - Co-Constructing i.e. post-organisational context (Latzke & Schneidhofer 2011)
- Do different career fields imply different competences and skills HEIs should develop and provide? If yes, how should HEIs cope with different demands?

Concept: Career fields

(Iellatchitch et al. 2003)

■ 2 dimensions

○ Coupling

- Degree of mutual influence or dependence between actors
- tight – loose

○ Configuration

- Change of actors' composition
- stable – variable

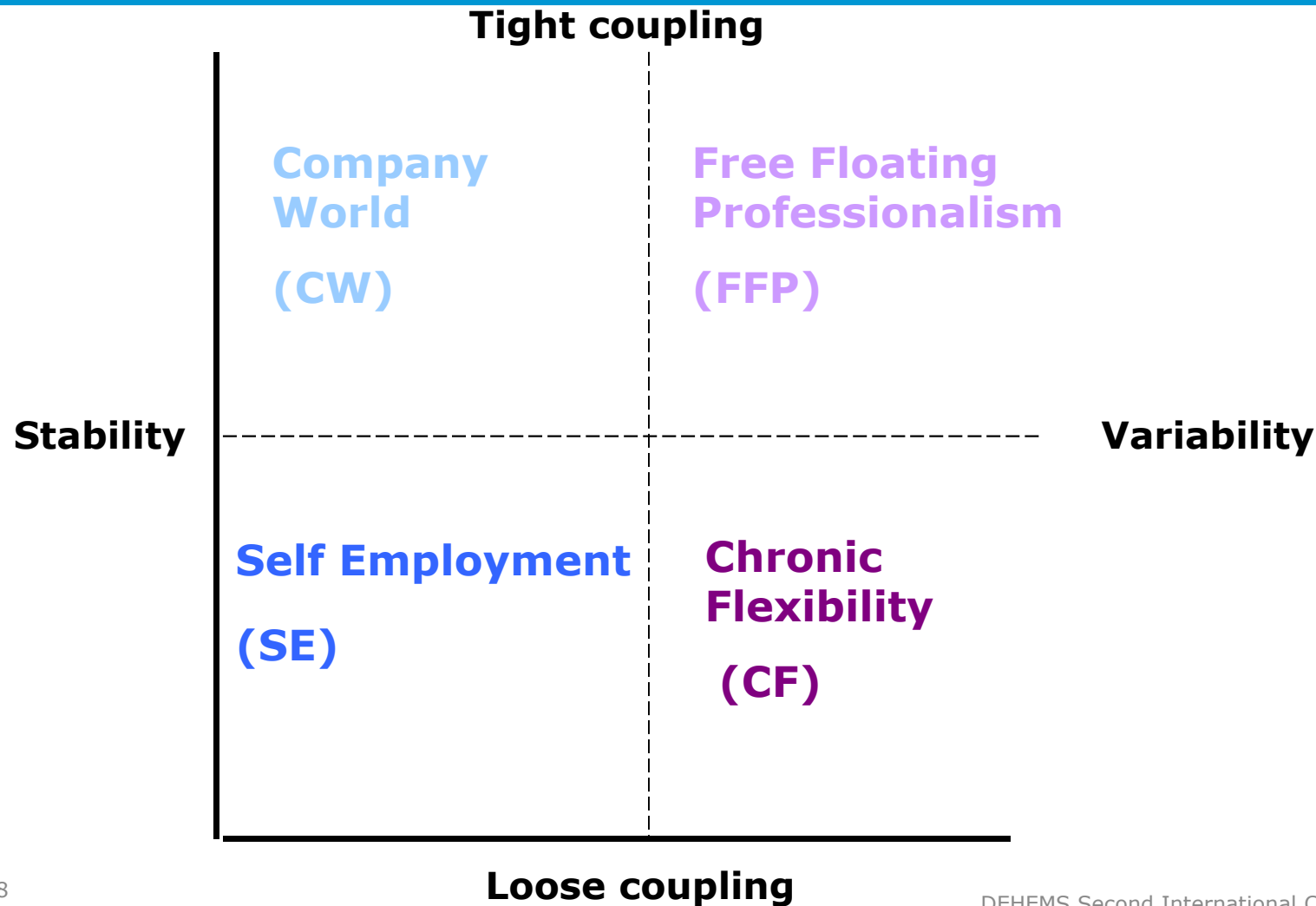
■ 4 fields

○ Company World (CW)

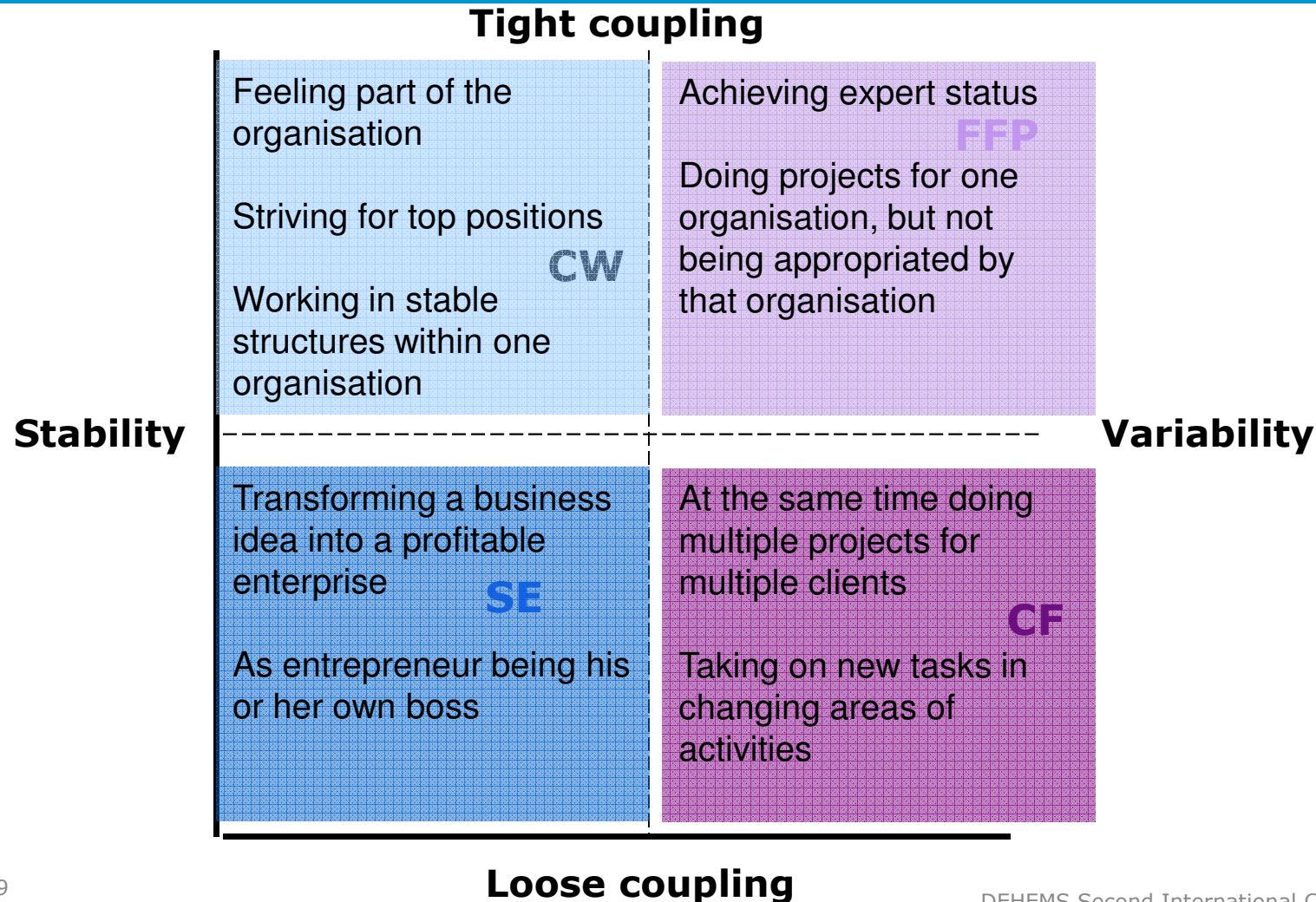
○ Post-Organisational

- Free Floating Professionalism (FFP)
- Self Employment (SE)
- Chronic Flexibility (CF)

Career fields – terms



Career fields – Examples

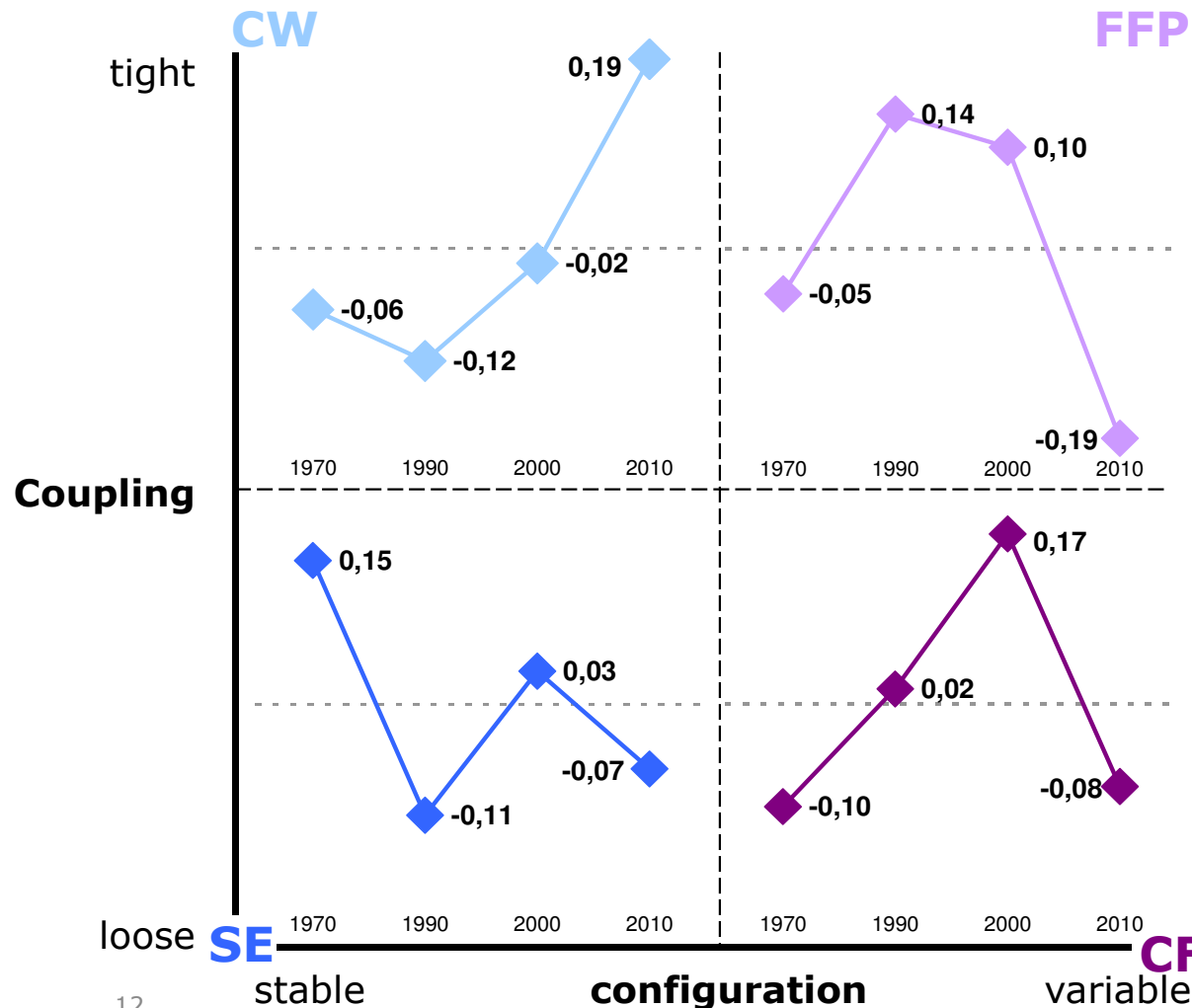


Changes in career aspirations – The sample

- Four cohorts of 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

Results

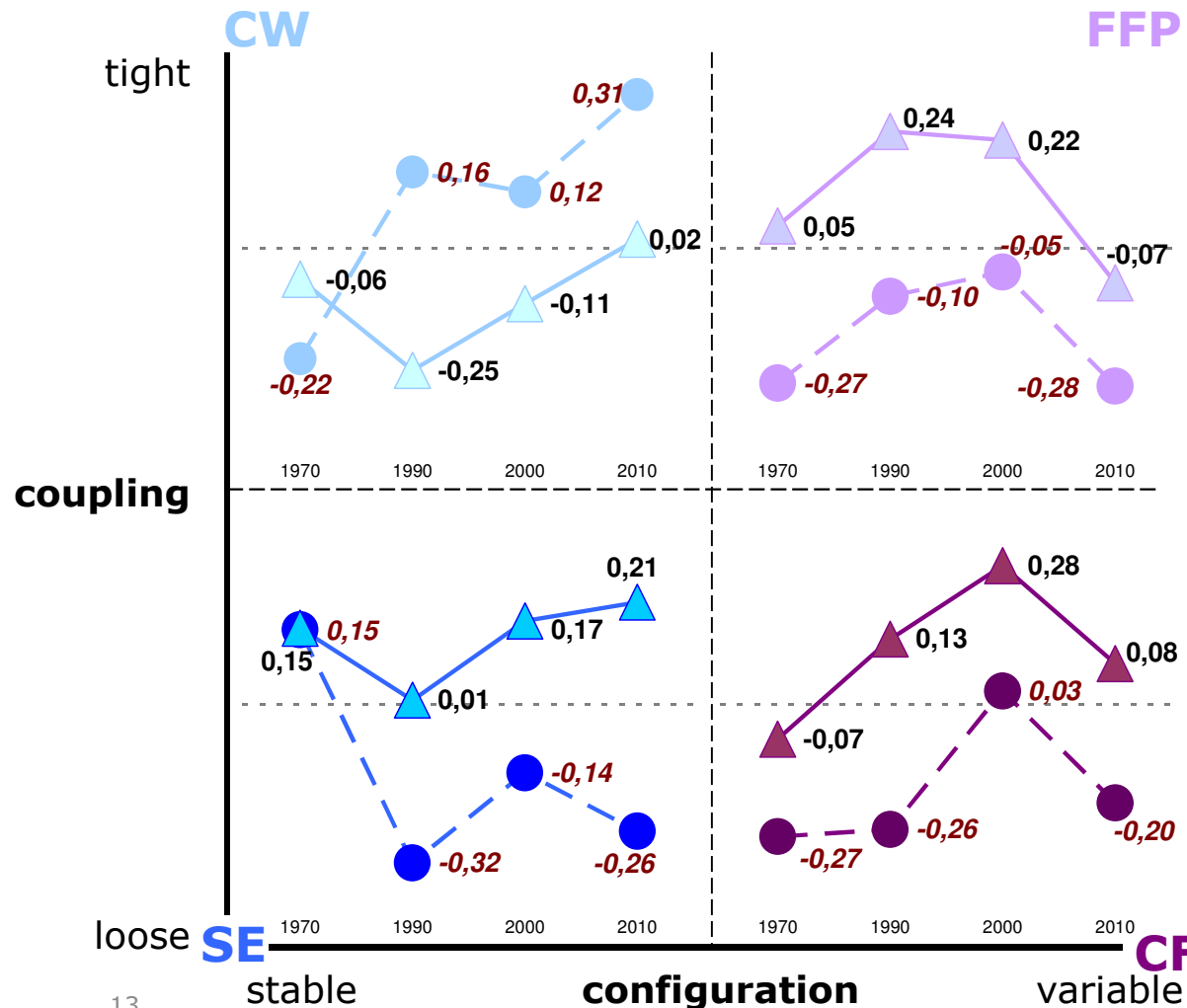
Changes of aspirations over time – 4 cohorts (Mayrhofer, Schiffinger et al. 2011)



- 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 $p < .01$

Changes of aspirations over time – Gender differences in the 4 cohorts

(Mayrhofer, Schiffinger et al. 2011)



- 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

■ 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 $\sim .025$, for gender $\sim .015$)

Discussion

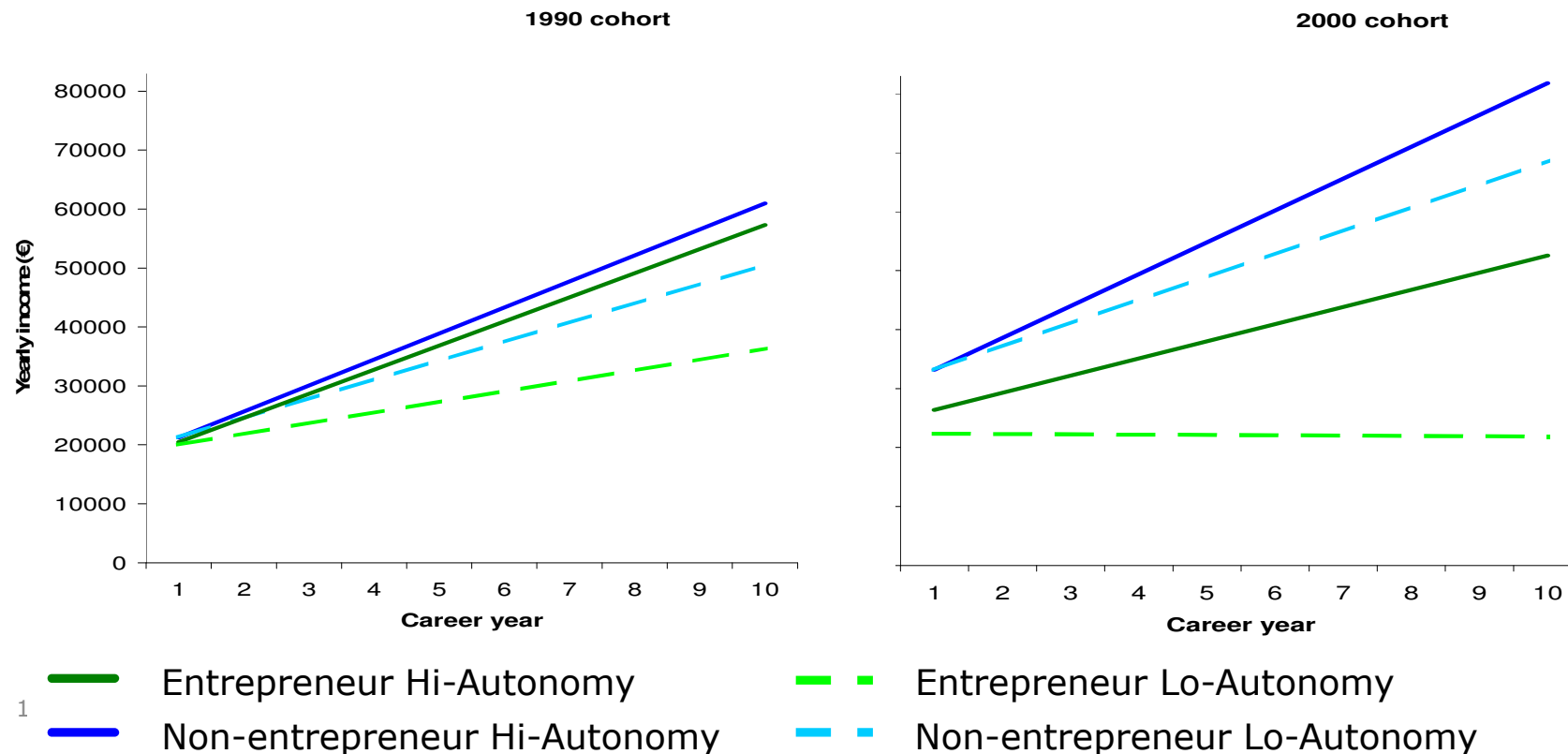
- Changes between cohorts
- Gender differences within cohorts
- Effects of the financial / economic crisis?
- How should HEIs deal with career aspirations?

Implications for future research - I

- Relation between study and career success
i.e., various factors (Mayrhofer & Schiffinger 2005)
 - Studying fast and good grades ~ (but: first career decade +)
 - Working while studying +
 - Study program and specialisation (major) ~
 - Stays abroad 0

Implications for future research - II

- Career aspirations' effect on career success
i.e., Strive for autonomy (Latzke, Schiffinger & Demeter, 2012)



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Katharina Pernkopf-Konhäusner

Interdisziplinäre Abteilung für Verhaltenswissenschaftlich
Orientiertes Management

WU

Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien
Vienna, Austria, Europe

kpernkopf@wu.ac.at

http://www.wu.ac.at/ivm/team/ivm_externe/k_pernkopf

tel. ++43-1-313 366 - 0

Postal address: Althanstrasse 51, A-1090 Wien, Austria,
Europe