

Theory

1 Background

- Social processes of modernization
- Historical changes of „family“
- Pluralization of family-life
- Balancing family & work
- Equality in partnership & family

2 Main Questions

- Do dual career couples (not) tend to traditional gender relations in partnership and family after a child's birth?
- Which kind of strategies and solutions of balancing family and work do dual career families realize in every-day-life?
- Do dual career families offer a transformative potential as a catalyst towards wide social transformations concerning gender relations?

3 Intention of Research

Investigation of benefits and barriers (along the academic career track) that dual career families have to deal with as keys for balancing family & work

Problems and fights but also successful strategies and arrangements in dual-career-partnerships balancing work and family are connected with the construction of gender as a category of difference.

Effects of tradition binding structures at the transition to parenthood

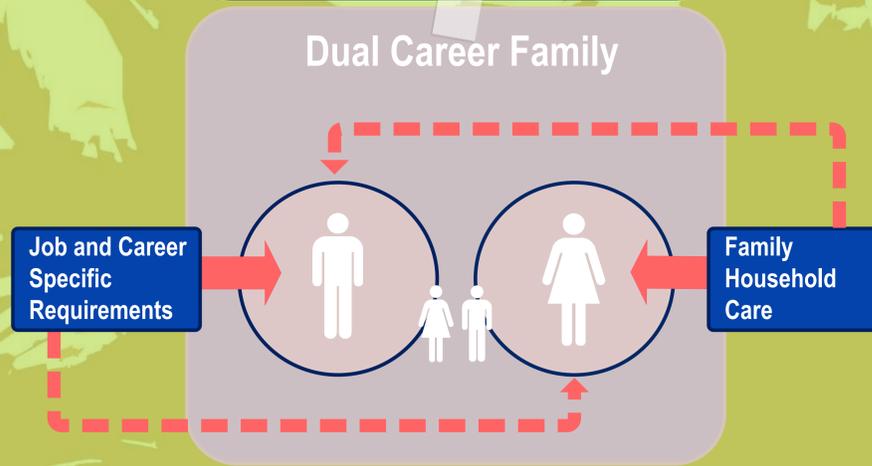
Although the model of the civil German family lost its domination (even highly qualified) couples tend to traditional division of labour in fields of work, household and care. (see Reichle 1996 and Rüling 2007)

Cultural structures along social concepts as well as infrastructural und economic conditions seem to promote the „traditional gender model“ in Germany.

On a normative level there is „verbal openness“ towards equal partnership agreements in the family context, whereas on a real level there exists more or less rigidity.

(see Oberdorfer and Rost in: Peuckert 2002)

Between Wishes and Realities: Division of Labour in Dual Career Families



Definitions & Characteristics of Dual Career Couples

- Higher education qualifications
- Strong occupational orientation
- Professional „commitment“
- Independent career tracks
- Lifelong career-orientation

Frequency of Dual Career

More and more couples live in academic and dual career partnerships although so far only assumptions and estimates provide information on the number of dual career couples in Germany (see e.g. Solga/Wimbauer 2005).

Correlations between Dual Career and ...

- women's increasing participation in professional education
- „new fathers“ family orientation
- egalitarian arrangements in partnerships

Empirical Data

Methodical Procedure

Semi-structured, problem-centered interviews (Witzel 1982) with dual career couples and their children

- Case by case analysis and qualitative content analysis
- Development of a system of categories (no typification)



Sample

Recruitment of families for interviews with the help of dual career services along the following criteria:

- „Academia“
- „Higher Education System of NRW“
- „Career2“
- „Child/Children (0-12 years old)“

Literature

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Extracts from the categorial framework: Insights into the content analysis

	Main Category e.g.	Subcategory e.g.	Interview Statements
Biographical Context	Invisible mechanisms in the context of family, career and gender	Social leitmotifs of family (e.g. male connotation of career) Socialisation in family of origin	"For my mother it was unthinkable to have children and both go to work. That was a concept difficult to imagine."
Lifeworld Context	Realities between career and family orientation	Concepts in partnership The postponement of the desire to have children New imbalances and dependencies after a child's birth Highest demands on family management Time structures around semester schedules Families falling into trap while commuting Biographical uncertainty in response to precarious employment	"Something we always tried to realize was a concept of responsibilities beyond gender attributions." "Time for us, the two of us, is just missing. It actually doesn't exist." "We are always concerned to maintain structures and schedules. Also for self protection [...] because we need a child that [...] is willing to accept schedules as well." "I'm committed to move to town A. My wife, also a professor, same contract, different university, is bound to live in town B. [...] That is paradox!"
World of Work Context	Universities between defending traditional systems in academia and changing views	Academic work culture and german law on higher education institutions Innovation part-time professorship? Recognition, power constellations and gatekeeping effects	"Always higher, further, faster. It doesn't end with the professorship. Output and effort! The main logic of this job is to constantly move on. [...] An increasing imperative!" "Work-life-balance has less to do with science itself than with the organisation of university and the persons acting in it. Most of the people in executive positions do not have a deeper understanding of what family is like."

German Dual Career Landscape (Melzer 2010)

Support programmes in the form of managed services help along the reciprocal coordination of two careers given the requirements of geographical mobility & temporary flexibility in systems of academia.

Dual Career as an element of recruiting strategies and profile building at highly competitive „entrepreneurial universities“ (see Riegraf/Weber 2013)



Woelki and Väth argue that German universities often do not understand „Dual Career“ as an „instrument of family support in their organisation“ with the aim of „overcoming previous barriers in careers“ (2010: 202).

Conclusion

The empirical data shows that there are vulnerabilities of dual career families in academia. This refers to inadequate and insufficient cultural and structural frameworks. The interviewed dual career families report that they are still not pushing at an open door trying to successfully combine and balance work and family life.