

„Junge Akademie“
an der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
und der Deutschen Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina

Arbeitsgruppe Wissenschaftspolitik
Berichte zum Projekt „Dual Careers of Academic Couples“

Titel der Studie:
**„Dual Careers“ –
Insights from Social Research in Western
Europe and Germany**

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1 Introduction

This report is part of an ongoing research project on academic dual-career couples in Germany.¹ In a first step, a working paper reviewed the research findings of the North American sociology on “dual careers” (Rusconi 2002). This report reviews the research findings of the European sociology.

It is noteworthy that the term “dual-career” was first coined in 1969 by a *European* academic couple (Rapoport & Rapoport 1969, 1971; Fogarty et al. 1971).² Moreover, also the very important distinction between dual-career and dual-earner couples can be first found in the early works of these British authors. However, this topic has been only rarely studied in Europe, and especially in non-Anglo-Saxon countries. As it will be shown in this report, the European research on couples’ careers is often one on dual-earner and not specifically on dual-career couples. Thus, the prevalent interest of European scholars is under which circumstances women – and especially married women with children – enter into the labor market and remain active participants in the labor force. Whether and why these women pursue their own “occupational/professional careers” and whether this relates to the difficulties faced when trying to combine two careers (their own and their partner’s) remains secondary. Only rarely do European scholars look at circumstances, strategies, compromises which enable (or not) dual-earner couples to become dual-career families.

In dual-career couples, both partners pursue an occupational career occupying or seeking jobs which are characterized by high professional standards, a high degree of commitment and a developmental sequence. On the contrary, in dual-earner couples only one (or neither) partner has a career while the other holds an employment without career prospects and/or aspirations. While dual-career couples face a number of problems which are common also for dual-earner couples, five dilemmas additionally challenge dual-career couples: overload, normative expectations, identity, social network, and role cycling (Rapoport & Rapoport 1969).

The first aspect (overload) arises from the fact that, in these families, both husbands and wives are highly committed to their careers as well as to their families, without having a “domestic back-up”. Overload is experienced not only as an accumulation of additional tasks, but also – especially with regard to children – as a “duality of emotional commitment and

¹ For further information see <http://www.diejungeakademie.de/>

² The study cited focused on 16 British dual-career couples. The women in the sample were in the following occupations: 5 architects, 2 entrepreneurs, 3 industrial managers, 4 civil servants, 2 television professionals.

concern” (Rapoport & Rapoport 1969: 9).³ The second type of dilemma (normative expectations) arises “from the clash between their personal norms and social norms” (Rapoport & Rapoport 1969: 13). Normative dilemmas are especially salient at critical transition points in the family life cycle (birth of the first child), in the career life cycle, and/or at critical events in the children’s life space (illness, school problems). Especially women are vulnerable and are the object of distress and pressure, since there is a large set of social norms related to child-care practices and the role of mothers (and wives), which tend to push women out of a professional career and into an exclusive role of mothers and housewives. The third type of dilemma (identity) “stems from the socio-cultural definitions of work and family as intrinsically masculine and feminine” (Rapoport & Rapoport 1969: 15). Men and women who depart from these standard (traditional) patterns of behavior might experience the problem of how to maintain their distinct identities in the professional world, within the family and partnership.⁴ Social network dilemmas arise from the strain of “reconciling obligations (e.g. in kinship relations) with desires (e.g. in friendship relations) and responsibilities” (Rapoport & Rapoport 1969: 26). This kind of dilemma is closely related to the overload of work and family responsibilities, and often results in a smaller amount of and involvement with kin and friendships.⁵ At last, dual-career couples face important family and career cycle dilemmas. Each spouse is confronted with the work system (his and hers) and the family system, each of which poses different demands according to the particular phase and position in the system.

Moreover, the Rapoport (1969) indicate two basic types of role conflicts: between his/her occupational roles and their family roles (career-family cycling dilemmas) and between the occupational roles of the spouses (dual-career cycling dilemmas). The first problem is closely related to the timing of family events – and especially childbirth – within a career. Often dual-career couples prefer to delay childbirth after the establishment in the profession. The rationale behind this strategy is that a secure position and high income should allow greater flexibility and will provide resources for paid help. However, this strategy might also allow some women to ‘drop-out’ from their profession for a period of time and re-enter later on when fam-

³ Next to physical health and energy, one crucial issue is the arrangement of a system of domestic (often paid) help. Frequently, these couples choose to delegate ‘impersonal’ household activities and to retain the more ‘people-oriented’ ones. However, very often these couples have to reduce leisure and social activities.

⁴ The study cited discovered a number of “tension lines”: for some couples income is the crucial point, for others the central issue is authority.

⁵ A particular problem of “career women” exists, when they are the only working women in social activities with business or professional associates, while the other wives do not themselves pursue careers.

ily duties diminish.⁶ Dual-career dilemmas are especially evident for mobility decisions, when the career of one partner should require a move at the expense of the other spouse's career.

2 Theoretical frameworks

A considerable number of recent European research on couples' careers, focuses on the effects of one spouse's resources on the occupational attainment of the other. The interest arises from the recognition that until the early 1990s labor market and social mobility studies adopted uniquely an individualistic (and often male-based) perspective, ignoring the "dynamic interrelationship of spouses over the life course" (Bernardi 1999; Blossfeld et al. 1996). Only recently social stratification research has 'discovered' husband and wives, and there are now a number of studies which focus on how participation in the labor market and its outcomes depend on the partner's career.

Three processes are considered to be behind the association between spouses' success at work (De Graaf & Ultee 1991): (a) assortative mating in respect to education, age, ethnic origin, family background, occupational aspirations; (b) shared restrictions, such as a common residence and, therefore, similar labor market restrictions, responsibility of children; and (c) interaction or spouse effects, i.e. direct influence of the characteristics of one spouse upon the occupational success of the other.

The European literature principally cites two theories which address the issue of spouses' effects: New Home Economics and the Concept of Social Capital. Both arguments are based on one common premise that "spouses have common interests rather than conflicting interests" (Bernasco 1994: 5).⁷

New Home Economics (Becker 1991) assumes that labor market outcomes will depend on the previous investments made by the individuals in their skills and abilities. From a household perspective, the key assumption "is that individual members of the family pool their resources and take decisions in order to maximize the joint utility" (Bernardi 1999: 286). Households obtain the maximal efficiency (or joint utility) when each spouse specializes in those activities in which he or she is most skillful and, thus, productive. Families, therefore, must decide how their members (and especially spouses) should distribute their time be-

⁶ The women in this study tend to see and accept as "inevitable" that they should bear the main burden of childrearing and domestic responsibilities and that "there would naturally tend to be more strain on the wife's career-family cycling problems than on the husband's" (Rapoport & Rapoport 1969: 22).

⁷ An alternative approach is that spouses have both common as well as conflicting interests. Here couples' decisions can be analyzed with a game-theoretical approach (Ott 1989).

tween paid market work and unpaid domestic work. According to this theoretical framework, the decision is taken by comparing the marginal productivity in paid and unpaid work. If one partner (usually the husband) has a greater market productivity, the other (wife) will specialize in domestic work.⁸ Consequently, the husband's resources should have a negative effect on the wife's participation in the labor market. Becker's theory has been also used to explain wives' outcomes on the labor market. Specialization might take place not only in terms of time spent for paid work, but also in terms of effort at work. Wives who have a comparative disadvantage on the labor market and who nevertheless enter the labor force, will invest less effort in paid work than their husbands, because their main effort is directed toward domestic work. They might, therefore, accept a job below their skills or a part-time job in order to combine it with household responsibilities (Bernardi 1999; Bernasco et al. 1998).

The Concept of Social Capital: While the economic theory views human capital as being strictly individual, this approach considers human capital "as a resource that can be shared with others, and also as an indicator of attainment-conductive attitudes" (Bernasco et al. 1998: 18). The husband's (spouse's) occupational resources can be then interpreted as social capital which can be shared and partially transmitted. Spouses can transmit their occupational skills, competencies and experiences in four different ways:

- (a) using their skills to help their partners' educational and occupational attainment;
- (b) suggesting how to speak at, dress for, or generally behave at a job interview;⁹
- (c) giving information about vacancies and/or putting their partners in contact with potential employers; and
- (d) making use of their influence and direct pressure through their contacts to facilitate their spouses' outcomes on the labor market (Bernardi 1999: 288).

Two contrasting hypotheses can be induced from these theoretical frameworks: spouse's resources impede success at work because specialization is efficient (economic theory), or they facilitate success because work-related resources can be shared (sociological approach). Bernasco and his colleagues propose a different view, interpreting these competing predictions "as reflecting different and simultaneous processes rather than competing statements" (Bernasco et al. 1998: 18). These authors suggest then to distinguish between spouse's financial and non-monetary labor market resources: while the former should have a

⁸ The economic theory follows a gender-neutral principle, e.g., the division of labor is predicted uniquely by the comparative advantage. Theoretically either the husband or the wife could specialize in paid work. The sexual division of labor in the family and in the market is viewed as a result of gender-specific educational and training investment and not of biological sex-differences.

⁹ In addition, they might, unconsciously, "transmit" their ability to speak and behave (spouses can "copy" it).

negative effect, the latter should have a positive effect on the partner's occupational attainment.

Next to these theoretical frameworks, Blossfeld and Drobnic (2001b), in their review of theoretical arguments concerning the dynamic of couples' careers, discuss the ***importance and interaction of gender identities, social class and country contexts***. Gender-specific work and family identities might influence couples' decisions with regard to labor market participation and distribution of household responsibilities. While gender-neutral approaches assume that the more resourceful partner will have more power within the couple's decision making, there is wide evidence that this does not apply when the wife earns more. Cultural norms influence the couple's decision making: occupationally dominant women still maintain traditional domestic and childcare roles, in addition many of these women still regard their own jobs as less important (Arber 1999: 180). Moreover, socio-economic, socio-cultural and 'gender' forces might have contradicting effects in various social classes and in different countries. At last, couples' – and especially wives' – employment patterns are closely related to country-specific employment structures and welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1991, 1999). Conservative welfare states support mothers who give priority to family activities encouraging wives' economic dependence on their husbands and mothers' non-employment or part-time work. Mediterranean welfare states, with extremely low public provisions and strong familialism, encourage the polarization of couples between those who follow the traditional model (one-earner families) and those who become dual-earner couples constraining their fertility. Liberal welfare states do not intrude in the market forces with the consequence of producing a large pool of low-wage workers and of reducing the wage rate for middle-class families. As a result, an increasing number of households have to shift from domestic activities to paid work, while domestic and child care services become cheaper. Social democratic welfare states, characterized by egalitarianism, de-commodification and de-familialization, favor women's labor market participation and dual-earner households (Blossfeld & Drobnic 2001b).

In her newest book Hakim proposes a different approach “for explaining and predicting current and future patterns of women's choices between family work and market work”, – called the “preference theory” (Hakim 2000: 1). She argues that social and economic changes over the last thirty years have created new opportunities for women and that “work-lifestyle” preferences become the main determinants of women's choices between family work and market work.¹⁰ Nowadays, women deliberately choose between three different work-lifestyles: home-

¹⁰ According to Hakim, five historical social changes have led to a new scenario for women: contraceptive revolution, equal opportunities revolution, rise of white-collar work, creation of jobs for secondary work, rising importance of preferences, choices and lifestyles in affluent societies (Hakim 2000).

centered, work-centered, and adaptive.¹¹ These different preferences are found at all levels of education and in all social classes. Since only a minority of women are prepared to prioritize their jobs in the same way as men, men retain – and will maintain in the future – their dominance in the labor market. Moreover, since “women continue to prefer to marry men who are at least a little taller and a little older than themselves, and many marry men who are better educated as well” (Hakim 2000: 284), this initial advantage can quickly translate into giving his career priority as soon as the first child is born. Only a minority of wives are willing to pursue their careers irrespective of their husband’s career, while the majority seeks a more equal balance between family and work spheres. These women – especially after childbirth – are ready to give up their own career, cut down their working time, and even reject a promotion if this requires additional “burdensome responsibilities, substantial travel, or relocation to another area” (Hakim 2000: 274). In conclusion, she argues that employers and public policy should recognize the diversity of women’s work-lifestyle preferences and design and develop policies which recognize these different needs and desires and possibly “offer benefits to all of the three groups rather than being unintentionally biased towards one group only” (Hakim 2000: 276).

In conclusion, both Northern American as well as European scholars rely on the neoclassical explanation for explaining couples’ careers (cf. Rusconi 2002). In addition, European scholars have also applied the concept of social capital to coupled careers. Yet, in Europe these theoretical frameworks have been principally utilized to explain couples’ decision with regard to labor market participation, i.e., why one partner (wife) might remain or become a labor market outsider. Thus, European authors principally want to discover under which conditions couples depart from the traditional arrangement – i.e., employed husband and home-centered wife – and become dual-earner couples. Differently, in the USA the focus was explicitly extended to explain under which conditions dual-earner families might become dual-career couples and, in particular, the mobility decisions of couples in which both partners work. Consequently, the role of gender identities appears to be more important in the American than in the European literature. Differently, some European literature discuss also the role played by the state and the influence of different welfare regimes on couples’ decisions. Obviously, these issues are very important in Europe since every country is characterized by specific employment structures and welfare policies.

¹¹ According to her research about 20% of British women are home-centered, 20% are work-centered while the rest (wants to) combines work and family.

3 Dual careers in Western Europe – empirical findings

Before presenting the empirical findings with regard to dual-earner and, if investigated, dual-career couples in several European countries, it is useful to report first the general findings.

From a comparative perspective, Blossfeld and Drobnic (2001a) note that, in all countries¹², married women substantially improved their educational and career opportunities across cohorts, and increased their labor force participation to a large extent. Yet, despite this success, gender differences in roles and responsibilities in the domestic sphere did not change to the same degree. Husbands have not substantially increased their housework and child-care participation, even when their wives are fully gainfully employed. Thus, in all countries – whether capitalist, socialist, liberal, conservative, social democratic – housework and child-care primarily remain “women’s work”. The result of this asymmetric gender-role change is a double burden for women, who are still forced to choose between a career and a family. If they give priority to the family, their career suffers and vice versa. Most women still shape their participation in the market place in response to family needs. Thereby, family obligations spill over into the labor market and make women less competitive. Consequently, an important source of women’s labor market inequality is the division of work within families (Blossfeld & Drobnic 2001a).

Likewise, Hardill and her colleagues (1999) came to the conclusion that also in dual-career families there is generally no equality in the domestic sphere. Men do take on a more active role, yet “his is often a ‘helping’ rather than a ‘sharing’ role” (Hardill et al. 1999: 194). Moreover, while none of these couples defined itself as traditional, quite a few reverted to this model when their children were young. Egalitarian couples are more often childless and younger. “It appears that the egalitarianism in decision making is affected by factors other than the economic status of the female partner. These factors include age of partners, stage in the life-cycle (that is, presence of children), type of job held (and labor market and job search area) by each partner, and lastly, whose career leads” (Hardill et al. 1999: 204).¹³

Some studies focus explicitly on families in which the division of labor is more equally distributed. However, these authors note that men who share most childcare responsibilities are somewhat ‘triggered’ by their partners. Moreover, in order to cut down their paid working time

¹² This book compares the transformation of work within couples in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, the United States, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, and China. Using representative longitudinal data, the study analyses careers of couples over the past 20 years.

¹³ With regard to the “lead career”, the arrangement often changes over time: usually when one partner obtains a more secure job, then this career leads. In the majority of couples studied the male partner has the “lead career” (see also the U.K. section) (Hardill et al. 1999).

(to part-time employment) most of them faced difficulties/discouragement by employers (Duindam 1999). Other findings suggest that, in work-sharing couples¹⁴, both men and women have only a low to moderate career commitment, and that few of these men had experienced some job problems. The two main reasons for choosing a sharing pattern are: the concern for and interest in children, and the desire for equality in own relationship. However, also in these more 'equal' couples traditionally female and male tasks are relatively rarely inverted. Moreover, these couples are aware of the problems connected to this arrangement: above all economic difficulties and reduced career possibilities for both spouses, or disagreements about the work agreement in their shared job. Only a minority, however, reports negative reactions from colleagues or relatives (Gronseth 1978).

In conclusion, in the overwhelming majority of European – as well as American – couples women still maintain the main responsibility in the domestic sphere. Thus, women's professional decisions are still shaped by their family responsibilities. Nevertheless, European countries differ in the extent to which couples follow traditional or more egalitarian strategies. The following paragraphs will summarize each country's specific empirical findings.

The Netherlands

In this country time-related family factors have the strongest effects on women's labor market decisions. Women with pre-school children leave the labor force to a higher extent than childless women, and re-enter less frequently than women with school age children. However, women's resources play an important role: highly educated women are more likely to remain in the labor force and – if they do interrupt their careers – to re-enter once they have children (Hendrickx et al. 2001). Additionally, female employment patterns are also shaped by their spouse's characteristics.¹⁵ The higher a husband's educational level the more likely his wife will enter employment, while his earnings have a negative effect on employment entry. Thus, a spouse's financial resources have a redistributing effect while a spouse's 'informational' (labor market) resources have a cumulating effect. "By being predominantly positive, the effects of spouse's resources on success at work add up to the cumulation of rewards generated by positive assortative mating" (Bernasco 1994: 189). Yet, the presence of children (one

¹⁴ Definition of work-sharing couples: "families in which the couples genuinely share work responsibilities, both within the home and in the occupational world" (Gronseth 1978: 110). Possible different patterns: share same job, separate part-time job (in same or different organization). Essential elements are part-time work and equal sharing of domestic as well as occupational work (Gronseth 1978).

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that according to this research, cohabiting women leave the labor market less frequently than married women. These authors suggest two possible explanations: cohabiting women are more modern or marriage gives a greater economic security than unmarried cohabitation (Hendrickx et al. 2001).

type of shared restrictions) has a powerful redistributing effect: while it has no effect on the husband's success at work, it has a negative effect on the wife's success.

In the Netherlands only 2-5% of the fathers choose to work part-time in order to care for their children. These 'caring' fathers are highly educated¹⁶, live with highly educated partners and hold "emancipated views on the division of labor in the household" (Duindam 1999: 44). Moreover, both partners earn similar wages. The decision to switch to part-time employment was somewhat 'triggered' by female partners: the actual arrangement is the result of clear agreements, discussions and negotiations between spouses. "They talk, discuss, negotiate. Conditions are agreed to, and commitments are made. Progress is guarded, supervised and appreciated. If necessary sanctions are imposed" (Duindam 1999: 49). The majority of these men find a career very important, but value also very highly their private sphere. Almost all had to face difficulties/discouragement by their employers: arrangement of part-time work, flexible working hours, or parental leave are the major difficulties encountered (Duindam 1999). The strategies used to convince employers are different: some work hard (for example during the evenings to compensate part-time) to show that their performance does not change, some have to accept another job, others stress the importance of being clear and assertive, while others are more cautious especially at a job interview (Duindam 1999).

Flanders/Belgium

Empirical results show a strong marriage homogamy with regard to education, religion, and partially, also in respect to type of employment. The presence and number of children induces women to leave the labor force and to become housewives or part-time employees. However, also in this country, education makes the difference: highly educated women leave the labor market to a lesser extent, but reduce more frequently their working time passing from full-time to part-time employment. Spouse's characteristics appear, with one exception, to be irrelevant (Corijn 2001).¹⁷

France

Marital status is an important aspect of labor market participation also for French women. Before the 1960s the participation rates of married women were the lowest, while those of single (never-married) women were typically close to those of the men. Since 1962 married women have considerably increased participation and, nowadays, their rates are higher than for unmarried women (Riboud 1985). However, married women spend more time out of the

¹⁶ 85% finished a school of higher vocational education or attained a university degree.

¹⁷ Husbands' higher education favors only the transition to part-time employment.

labor force than singles, especially when they are mothers. The majority of French married women interrupt their professional lives for more than one year: three-fourths of all married women aged 40-44 and 70% of all women aged 35-39. Yet, women's educational attainment and previous work experience increase the probability of labor market participation, while husband's earnings and children have a negative effect on participation (Riboud 1985).

Research on mobility reveals that, in France, family matters are the main reasons for residence moves, followed by occupational motives and reasons related directly to housing conditions. The distance is closely connected to the reasons adduced to explain residential moves: career-related mobility involves greater distances than other types of moves (Lelièvre & Bonvalet 1994). Marriage, especially for women, triggers a change of residence. Yet, this family event is frequently followed by a period of residential stability. From a longitudinal perspective, "individuals are more mobile at the beginning of their life course while not yet married" (Lelièvre & Bonvalet 1994: 1653). At last, according to these authors "the Paris region appears to be the ideal location to improve one's chances of social advancement" (Lelièvre & Bonvalet 1994: 1663).¹⁸

Italy

This country also shows a high degree of marriage homogamy with regard to education and occupational status at marriage. Thus, "the starting conditions of the husbands' and wives' parallel careers are similar" (Bernardi 2001: 131; Del Boca et al. 2000). Yet, female employment patterns experience two turning points: immediately before marriage, and around childbirth until the children are under 3 years. However, higher educated women tend to stay employed, and if they exit the labor force they are more likely to re-enter after childbirth.¹⁹ A husband's resources do not play a role per se, but only in relation to a wife's resources: when husbands have a comparative advantage in paid work (e.g., his occupational status is higher than his wife's) their wives exit the labor force to a higher extent. "Husband's re-

¹⁸ In fact, men who lived or were still living in this city were more qualified and had more likely non-manual, clerical and service jobs, than those who have always lived in the rest of France. These results refer to careers of men born 1911-1935. Among French women of these cohorts only one out of four had a continuous career and one out of ten had never worked (Lelièvre & Bonvalet 1994).

¹⁹ Labor market participation is especially high for women with an university qualification. In 2001, the participation rate of mothers (30-39 years old) with any university degree was of 77.3% versus 89.3% of single women with the same qualification. In contrast, only 62% of those with higher secondary education (88% of singles), and 33.7% of women with compulsory education or less (72.8% of singles) are active participants of the labor force (ISTAT 2002: 139). Moreover, cohabitation before marriage also reduces the risk of becoming a housewife. Bernardi (2001) argues that this might reflect the rejection of the traditional gendered division of labor, while women whose mothers were housewives are more likely to quit employment and to remain housewives. Del Boca and her colleagues come to similar conclusions, showing that married, employed women not only are more likely to have a working mother, but also to have a working mother-in-law (Del Boca et al. 2000).

sources do indeed have a positive effect on the wife's employment exit but this effect is not linear and is significant only for higher positions in the social stratification system. Moreover in homogamous couples this effect does not lead to an employment exit because of the opposing effect of the wife's individual resources" (Bernardi 1999: 293). In addition, the husband's resources help the finding of a "better" job, when the wife (re-)enters the labor market. Thus, if under some conditions spouses' resources induce labor market exit, they nevertheless favor also wives' occupational outcomes (Bernardi 1999: 295). The factors which drive married women out of the labor force, make also (re-)entry more difficult. Yet, at the end for most women re-entry is "difficult" and housekeeping not a temporary condition: only one out of five women who became housewives managed to re-enter the labor market. These results appear to confirm the picture of a polarization between women who were either never employed²⁰ or who became and remained housewives, and those who have continuous careers (Bernardi 2001; Bison et al. 1996). Bison and his colleagues, however, point out that in Italy marriage and childbearing not only increase the risk of a definitive exit from the labor market, but also limit the career prospects of those women who remain employed. According to their empirical analysis, women with children experience less occupational mobility and this limitation induces the definitive withdrawal from the professional sphere (Bison et al. 1996).

Finally, female employment decisions are, however, constrained by the labor market structure: women residents in Northern Italy (greater availability of social services) tend to have continuous careers as well as those employed in the public sector (greater job protection and often more flexibility).

Spain

A high degree of educational and occupational homogamy is reported also for this country (González-López 2001). Female labor market decisions are closely connected to women's own resources: higher educational as well as occupational status favor the stay in the labor market.²¹ It appears that only a favored group – women with high labor market resources – are able to "minimize the effects of motherhood on their employment patterns and seem to acquire a greater ability to return to work in case of interruptions" (González-López 2001: 169). Husbands' resources favor wives' labor market exits only in heterogeneous couples (e.g., men have a higher educational or occupational status than their wives).²² Highly edu-

²⁰ According to the same research more than 20% of the female sample has never worked.

²¹ In addition, women with mothers with working experience leave less frequently full-time employment and re-enter more often the labor force after an interruption.

²² However, according to this study, homogamous working-class couples tend to follow also more frequently the traditional gendered division of labor.

cated women, who enter homogamous marriages, rarely abandon full-time employment and when they do these women present a very high re-entry rate. However, with the exception of these high-status women, homemaking often becomes a “permanent job”.

Greece

The Greek society is still quite conservative with regard to the roles of women in the family and society. Social and family expectations empathize motherhood as the “prime feminine role” (Etzion 1993). Women in non-traditional professions, such as those who are pursuing technical and scientific careers, “must inevitably face up to internal conflict as well as the conflict with a traditional patriarchal culture”. In order to pursue their careers, these women appear to postpone the formation of an own family (Etzion 1993). The dilemma faced by Greek academic women is quite impressively described by a professor who recalls the patriarch system and her husband’s numerous moves as reasons which impede her to obtain a continuous educational career. Based on her experience she states that: “I felt deceived by this fate ... which forced me, because I was a woman, to choose between guilt and desire, between children and husband, between losing him to another woman and a degree ... For sixteen years my husband had announced each of his decisions, promotion, plans as a fait accompli, heedless of their repercussions on our lives and our relationship” (Inglessi 1998: 67).

Great Britain

According to a British study, assortative mating with regard to occupational status at marriage characterizes at least one-quarter of British couples. The findings of this research reveal that a husband’s effects have only little importance in explaining women’s employment patterns. Women’s characteristics, the presence and number of children explain women’s life-cycle behavior patterns (McCulloch & Dex 2001).²³ “Women’s priorities also appear to vary over their life-cycle. In their early years of working, occupational preferences have priority whereas during the family formation period women often trade off their occupation in order to obtain a job with fewer hours” (Dex 1987: 122). A study on female physicians in the UK reveals persistent inequalities between the genders in the domestic sphere and confirms the necessity for these highly qualified women to plan family formation: what the author calls a “professional approach to family planning” (Stephens 1999: 106). According to the same research, all women felt that they had the primary responsibility for the organization of their children’s well-being, such as finding and deciding which type of childcare, and sort out pos-

²³ Generally, British women are less likely to participate in the labor market than men. Female rates drop with the presence of children, especially of pre-school or of many children (Warren 2000).

sible problems which might come up.²⁴ These women are also responsible for domestic chores; and in this case the most common solution is paid domestic help, which is regarded as “assistance to them, rather than assistance for both partners” (Stephens 1999: 110). Leisure time is also a highly gendered activity: most women do not have autonomous leisure activities (“stolen time”) (Stephens 1999).²⁵ Other empirical findings show important gender differences not only with regard to the domestic sphere and labor market participation, but also with regard to considerable earning gaps (for both part-time as well as full-time employees). However, highly educated women appear to earn at least equally – if not even more – than the average male wages. Moreover, these highly educated women who work in high status occupations have similarly high-waged partners and contribute an almost equal share to the couple’s total earnings (Warren 2000: 354, 357).

With regard to mobility, empirical findings for Britain show that the reasons for moving are different between the genders and that married women are often ‘tied movers’.²⁶ Regardless of marital status, male mobility is triggered by own employment perspectives, while partner’s employment prevails in the migration decisions of married women. Differently, the majority of single women move for educational reasons (Bonney & Love 1991: 340). Moreover, women who moved for their partner’s employment believe that the move was less helpful to their careers than those who moved for other reasons. Yet, only a few of them report that mobility actually hindered their careers, while the majority regards the move as making no difference.²⁷ These ‘indifferent’ women are frequently employed in flexible jobs (nurses, teachers, typists), or women who see their role primarily as housewives or mothers (Bonney & Love 1991). This relative satisfaction with ‘tied’ moves possibly relates to the fact that mobility decisions might follow other couples’ strategic decisions, e.g., “migration might occur after it has become the fact that the female partner is the main domestic worker or secondary earner in the household. The male partner’s labour market career may have been accorded priority before the move” (Bonney & Love 1991: 346).

Evetts’ study on secondary head-teachers provides evidence for three different strategies adopted by couples in which both partners want to pursue a career: postponement, modification, and balancing strategies (Evetts 1993: 308). The postponement strategy is character-

²⁴ Preferred childcare are kin networks, when these are not available then paid professional childcare services are used. This author refers to this arrangement as “bought time” (Stephens 1999: 107).

²⁵ For men one hour less of work means one hour extra of leisure time, for women this often means more time for child-centered activities.

²⁶ This research focuses on moves to the Aberdeen area.

²⁷ Equal proportions regarded the move as being a disadvantage or an advantage. The majority thought it made no difference. However, women who gave up a job in order to follow their partner more frequently report the move as being a disadvantage than those who could keep their job.

ized by the fact that one partner – in the study cited always wives – postpones his/her career development until the other is established in his/her own career. Often the partner who postpones is also the ‘tied mover’ and, for at least a period of time, focuses primarily on family responsibilities and develops an own career only in the context of family responsibilities and career demands of the other partner. While in some cases this strategy can be relatively successful, often postponements result in only “modest promotion achievements” (Evetts 1993: 315). Differently, the modification strategy involves the changing of at least one partner’s career. In the study cited it was again the wife who had altered her career “in order to move to a different area of the country and to adapt to their changing family situation” (Evetts 1993: 316). Balancing strategies are possibly the most difficult patterns to achieve, and are characterized by the attempt of a “complementary career development, where both climb promotion ladders simultaneously or alternatively” (Evetts 1993: 317). It appears that such balancing strategies are especially difficult when both partners pursue the same career (direct comparison) and the wife is the more successful partner. Moreover, not always moves at the advantage of one career can be used to enhance the career of the other. When partnership strategies fail, one-person career or divorce might be the result.

With regard to mobility of British dual-career couples, there is some empirical evidence that these families acknowledge and prefer a location which is accessible to a large metropolitan labor market, because this enables both partners to pursue a career while living in the same location (Green 1995).²⁸ Other egalitarian strategies include: partners looking independently for jobs and then choosing the best joint option; couples applying “as a unit” to the same employer or even for the same job (job sharing); couples being able and willing to commute (Cooper & Lewis 1993). However, empirical findings show that often one career “leads”: i.e., receives first priority in household location and mobility decision. The “leader” is most likely to be the individual with the more highly paid career, or the more secure job. This arrangement might change over time following the ‘ups’ and ‘downs’ of the two careers.²⁹ Yet, in the majority of cases studied the male partner has the “lead career” (Hardill et al. 1999, 1997), and there is some evidence that when the female career leads this is especially stressful for the male partner. This non-traditional strategy can be particularly stressful because it goes against “the traditional stereotype of what is acceptable male behavior”, but also because employers might regard these men as being less committed to their professions (Cooper &

²⁸ Most of the couples interviewed had lived apart for at least a short period of time. In order to live together these couples take into account long daily journeys to their work place.

²⁹ Moreover, alternating arrangements might take into account specific family circumstances such as childbirth; especially if one partner – usually the wife – wishes to take a career break (Cooper & Lewis 1993).

Lewis 1993: 42). When partners' employment situation is equal, then often the more locally-constrained career leads, or the couple agrees on some "ground rules" (Green 1997).³⁰ Most dual-career couples, however, experience mobility decisions as a "juggling act" (Green 1997: 646). According to Cooper and Lewis, the majority of dual-career couples emphasize the importance of agreeing on basic values and principles while remaining flexible in order to adapt plans "as it is impossible to predict every possible contingency" (Cooper & Lewis 1993: 37). One of the most important basic principles these couples should agree upon is their "attitudes to gender roles", i.e. who is responsible for what, and the implications for mobility decisions.

One British study focused on a special case of mobility: international relocation. International mobility presents, next to 'normal' problems, some 'extra' difficulties, above all language and work permit. Assignments in a foreign country are increasing, yet family issues are most commonly mentioned for resigning from an assignment (Hardill & MacDonald 1998). Women appear to be in a special situation: employers only rarely appoint them for foreign assignments, and they experience career interruption if they follow their partner abroad. Only a few of them manage to get employment in the new location, and those who succeed must frequently accept part-time, unskilled or less-skilled work to the detriment of their careers. Moreover, also the return to their country of origin is problematic: quite a few women report difficulties when trying to get a job at the same level as the one they had before the move (Hardill & MacDonald 1998).

Sweden

Also this country presents a high degree of earnings homogeneity between spouses, the correlation for cohabiting couples is somewhat weaker. Women's own earnings affect female labor market transitions more than spouses' earnings. Highly educated women are less likely to leave the labor market, but more likely to shift to (or continue) part-time employment (Henz & Sundström 2001). In addition, women with a higher level of human capital experience shorter work interruptions after childbirth.³¹ Female employment decisions depend, however, also upon employment conditions: white-collar professionals and managers as well as women employed in the public sector choose to a higher extent parental leave and do not become

³⁰ For example when the following partner (usually the wife) can veto a new location.

³¹ The duration of work interruptions should influence their occupational positions, once these women return to employment. Jonsson and Mills argue (2001b) that there are three mechanisms through which duration might result in downward occupational mobility: human capital depreciation, non-availability (missed opportunities), narrow social networks. Their results, however, reveal a great occupational stability, principally because Swedish women – thanks to parental leave legislation – return to the same job they held before childbirth.

labor market outsiders (Jonsson & Mills 2001a). Moreover, spouse's high earnings also reduce the risk of labor market exit. "These results suggest that a large fraction of Swedish women prefer to work part-time during the childrearing years if they can afford to" (Henz & Sundström 2001: 259). These results are strengthened by the observation that 75% of the fathers, but only 6% of the mothers prefer to work full-time after the birth of a child (Haas 1993: 244).³² However, women employed in non-traditional jobs express more interest in working full-time than those occupied in traditional female occupations. According to this author, this gender difference reflects only minimally social-psychological barriers (socialized gender role identities), but more persisting socio-structural barriers.

Another interesting feature of Sweden is that in this country the student population is one of the oldest in Europe and that a considerable proportion of students (20%) enroll in higher education after their 30th birthday, suggesting that educational participation occurs after marriage or parenthood (Henz 2001). On the one side, this might indicate a greater flexibility in integrating education into the life course; on the other side, this might reflect the necessity to "update and improve one's educational credentials in order to obtain or keep a good labour-market position" (Henz 2001: 45). Yet, this author finds evidence that marital status and family responsibilities do effect the transitions rates to universities: married individuals present a lower propensity of taking up full-time studies. However, married women are less likely to enroll into higher education independently from having a child, while men's rates decrease after childbirth. Thus, while parents rarely enroll into university education, marriage appears to mark the end of education uniquely for women and not for men (Henz 2001).

Denmark

Empirical findings show homogamy with respect to age, education, socio-economic status, and income. Women's own resources have the greatest explanatory power for labor market transitions: educational level and income favor the permanence in full-time employment. Consequently, those women who have the better jobs do not interrupt their careers, and if they do they are more likely to re-enter the labor force with full-time jobs (Leth-Sørensen & Rohwer 2001). Women's employment rates in Denmark are quite similar to those of men, and the presence of children appears to play no significant role.³³ However, part-time jobs

³² The research focused on couples who requested parental leave in one Swedish city. 27% of the fathers in the sample had taken parental leave (1984), since then the proportion increased to 44%. However, the length of time out of work is much shorter than that of mothers: 43 days versus 260 days, and this has remained quite stable for the past 10 years (Haas 1993: 248-249).

³³ A considerable number of Danes live in unmarried cohabitation, however empirical findings show that the employment patterns of these couples are not significantly different from those of married couples (Warren 2000: 356).

(whose importance fell during the eighties) remain important for mothers of young or many children (Warren 2000: 354), and empirical findings show that important gender gaps in earnings, also for women employed full-time, exist also in this country.

West-European countries³⁴

To conclude, all West European countries are characterized by a strong marriage homogamy. Moreover, female employment patterns and decisions regarding full-time and part-time employment are strongly related to women's educational and labor market resources: highly qualified women rarely abandon the labor market. Negative spouse's effects are revealed only for conservative and the Mediterranean countries, yet exclusively for educationally heterogeneous couples. Children, and especially the presence of pre-school children, represent the main 'problem' for women's careers.

However, while the aim (or title) of the majority of the studies cited was to explore the dynamic of couple's careers, or the effects of the partner's parallel career, the unit of analysis of the majority of these studies was not the "dual-career" family, but the "dual-earner" family and the factors which favor or discourage the employment of the two partners. Thus, the focus was limited to the effects of educational and occupational resources of one spouse (husband) on labor market participation and outcomes of the other (wife). A closer look within these dual-earner families, how decisions are made and under which conditions they might become dual-career couples (or why dual-career couples return to dual-earner arrangements) are only seldom a topic of study. Consequently, these authors often overlooked the existence of specific dual-career dilemmas: the timing of career stages and mobility decisions. American and British findings suggest, for example, that the birth of a child might only be the indirect cause of women's labor market exit or lower career commitment. Given the difficulties of simultaneously combining two careers, some women might postpone the achievement of their professional goals and in the meantime "realize" their family goals. It is, however, true and the findings presented seem to confirm that this strategy appears to have some self-reinforcing effects: e.g., women's employment often remains a "secondary" career.

4 Dual careers in Germany – empirical findings

Empirical findings for Germany show strong homogamous tendencies between partners with regard to career resources and earnings potentials of first jobs. Yet, this initial symmetry be-

³⁴ Single studies are also found for Switzerland (Corpina 1996; Leeman & Heintz 2000) and for Finland (Mauno & Kinnunen 1999).

comes “very skewed with regard to moves between paid work and unpaid housekeeping work” (Blossfeld et al. 1996: 39). Married West German women, also when they are employed full-time, still interrupt their careers at the birth of the first child.³⁵ Thus, while lifelong employment and realizing upward mobility have become ubiquitous for childless women, occupation and work-time structures have become the crucial factors which permit or also prevent the compatibility of maternity and gainful employment for women with children (Lauterbach 1994).³⁶ The ‘gendered’ division of labor and competencies in the family sphere are incorporated in the labor market and single professions, so that these hinder the realization of a unique ‘normal’ biography for both men and women (Born 2001).³⁷ “The organizational patterns of work and education fixed the ‘fitting’ form of family life: for women in their role as homemakers, and for men in their role as breadwinners” (Krüger 2001: 416). Moreover, while times have changed they did not alter “the stereotyped male and female structures in the transition paths to occupation, nor the male and female occupationally structured and segmented market” (Krüger 2001: 416).

However, women’s own resources do make the difference: well-educated women with higher career resources and income potential are less likely to interrupt employment and – if they do – to re-enter with part-time jobs (Blossfeld et al. 1996, 2001). Further confirmation can be found by another German study, which shows that women with continuous careers prevalently hold a university degree. They have, however, also more often only one child. Moreover, also women who interrupt their careers and then re-enter employment have fewer children than those who remain housewives (Kirner & Schulz 1992).

Blossfeld and his colleagues (1996, 2001) find also evidence for spouse’s effects: husbands’ resources increase the likelihood that wives will leave and stay out of the labor market. Yet, this influence is especially strong when husbands have considerably more earning potential than their wives. Given the strong marriage homogamy in West Germany, these authors come to the conclusion than even when a wife has a considerable level of own resources, her husband’s high career resources might “override her own career potential”. This study

³⁵ There is some evidence that the majority of West Germans still believe that mothers should stay home when their children are under 3 years. Moreover, non-employment is favored by social policy: „gesellschaftspolitisch generell gefördert“ (Kirner & Schulz 1992: 23).

³⁶ “Während für Frauen ohne Kinder eine lebenslange Erwerbsbeteiligung und die Wahrnehmung von Aufstiegschancen selbstverständlich geworden sind, werden für Frauen mit Kinder die gegebenen Berufs- und Arbeitszeitstrukturen zu den entscheidenden Faktoren, die die Vereinbarkeit von Mutterschaft und Erwerbstätigkeit zulassen oder auch verhindern” (Lauterbach 1994: 250)

³⁷ “Aus den Befunden ist zu resümieren, dass die Institution Arbeitsmarkt über die Berufe und bis in die Einzelberufe hinein auch die Zuständigkeit in der privaten Reproduktion inkorporiert hat. D.h. in die Berufe ist ein Geschlechterverhältnis eingelagert, das [...] einer für beide Geschlechter gleichen arbeitgesellschaftlichen Normalbiographie im Wege steht “ (Born 2001: 46).

shows also important social class differences. The most traditional family and employment patterns are found for those couples in which the husband comes from a lower-class family, experiences upward occupational mobility and marries a woman with low career resources.

With regard to mobility, West German empirical findings show that couples in which both partners are employed are less mobile than those in which only one partner works (Jürges 1998; Wagner 1989). Since this appears to be especially true for younger cohorts, Wagner concludes that female employment has gained importance for mobility decisions.³⁸

Mobility takes place very often at the disadvantage of married women, especially when they follow their husbands in small local labor markets. Empirical results show that especially singles (regardless of gender) and married men succeed in re-achieving a qualified occupation after a regional move. The chance for married women to re-enter qualified employment is not only lower, but it is especially low when they move to a smaller place of residence (Büchel 2000). German married women are not only 'tied movers', this author finds also indirect support for the fact that married women fall more frequently in the category of 'tied stayers' (cf. Rusconi 2002). These married women perform more frequently than men and single women jobs which do not require their full qualifications. Once more, this is especially true when these women live in small local labor markets (Büchel 2000). Noteworthy is that the level of education has a gender-specific character on mobility decisions: while male higher education favors migration independently from the education level of the spouse, female higher education has the same effect only when the male partner is also highly educated. When the female partner has more education than her spouse, then these couples are less likely to be mobile (Jürges 1998).³⁹ A possible explanation for this gender difference is that highly qualified couples present a less traditional role allocation, and that, therefore, both partners might initiate a geographical move (Jürges 1998: 374).

Other German research shows that mobility and commuter partnerships are more frequent at the beginning of the career and family cycle. Women who follow their partners' career, live (or end up to live) in more traditional family arrangements, i.e., they become primarily responsible for the family and 'hold on' or sacrifice their own careers. Women who experience mobility to their own advantage are often without family/partner responsibilities (Schneider 2001). The empirical results of this study show that occupational mobility permanently affects

³⁸ Wagner's study compares 3 birth-cohorts: 1929-31; 1939-41; 1949-51. The negative effect of dual-earner couples is found only for the youngest cohort. "Offensichtlich hat das Gewicht der Ehefrauen bei Wanderungsentscheidungen zugenommen" (Wagner 1989: 166).

³⁹ In this study the educational level was measured by the years spent in the educational system (Bildungsjahre). Higher educated individuals are those who spent 12 years or more in the educational system (Jürges 1998).

the division of labor between the partners: when men are mobile, their partners take over most of the domestic and childcare activities. Thus, mobility takes place on the basis of traditionally practiced division of labor between the genders, even when the female partner is fully gainfully employed.⁴⁰ However, when women are mobile their partners do not take over the entire housework, but most of these partnerships experience an egalitarian division of labor.

Research which focused explicitly on dual-career couples reveals that “time” is the most important issue for both everyday professional life as well as for long-term professional perspectives. The timing of career stages, the effect of two careers on family life and the demands of the private life upon the professional spheres are the most problematic issues for dual-career couples. Time issues are especially salient with regard to family formation and childcare (Domsch et al. 1989). The private life of dual-career couples is closely connected to their professional spheres and both men and women experience and describe the relation between these two domains as relatively conflictual (Domsch & Krüger-Basener 1999). Moreover, dual-career couples view mobility issues as being the main source of problems for their professional lives. However, it is noteworthy that only women report the coordination/tuning of two careers as the second most problematic issue, which was frequently solved by their giving up their own career (Domsch et al. 1989).⁴¹ More women than men feel that their careers have been hindered by their partners, while more men feel they have been supported. Women feel supported especially when their partners are considerably older, and these authors argue that this might relate to the fact that these age-heterogeneous couples experience less competition and envy (Domsch & Krüger-Basener 1999).⁴² Behnke and Meuser (2002) come to similar conclusions: according to their research on dual-career couples, it is the female partner who organizes the compatibility/coordination of two careers and eventually holds on or reshapes her career for the sake of her partner’s career. In particular, it is the wife who makes bigger or smaller professional sacrifices and, with regard to mobility decisions, often becomes a ‘tied’ mover or stayer. Yet, these authors notice that the problems faced by dual-career couples and whether these result in more serious conflicts differ among the professions. According to their research, academic scholars and freelancers couples succeed in their coordination strategies more than couples who work in private enterprises. Not only the careers of manager couples proceed more disparate, in addition the

⁴⁰ “Mobilität erfolgt also auf der Basis traditionell praktizierter Arbeitsteilung zwischen den Geschlechtern, auch dann, wenn die nicht mobile Partnerin selbst voll erwerbstätig ist” (Schneider 2001).

⁴¹ “Nur bei Frauen wurde dann die Abstimmung der Paare bei der Karriereentwicklung, was im übrigen wesentlich häufiger von den Frauen und auch nur von ihnen explizit mit dem Wort ‘Verzicht’ beschrieben wurde, als zweithäufigste Thema genannt” (Domsch et al. 1989: 339).

⁴² For men this is true only when their partners are 2 to 3 years older.

competition between partners appears to be stronger because the positions held are objectively more comparable (Behnke & Meuser 2002).

According to Domsch and his colleagues there are three types of dual-career strategies: those in which both partners try to pursue equally their career goals, and those in which one career 'leads'.⁴³ In the first case, both partners agree to compromise, possibly 'taking turns'. A change of residence might take place only when the other partner obtains at least an equivalent position than the one he/she has to give up, or the couple is willing to live apart or commute for a period of time. Differently, when one career 'leads' the other partner pursues his/her career goals only in the context of the spouse's career demands. The 'leading' partner might be either the one with the most successful prospects, or the one who has more professional deficits and, consequently, the worst labor market chances (Domsch & Krüger-Basener 1999).

From an employer's point of view, dual-career couples might present advantages as well as disadvantages. On the one side, given the overload of work and family responsibilities, employed members of dual-career families could present a lower professional engagement. Moreover, they might leave the firm in order to follow their partner in a new location. On the other side, competition between partners and mutual support might lead to higher performance and motivation (Domsch & Ladwig 1997). Domsch and his colleagues argue that dual-career couples should be the target of firms' human resources planning. Since increasingly more employees are members of dual-career households, firms should consider the possibility of reshaping some positions in order to take into account their 'special' needs. Possible examples – indicated by the authors – are flexible work schedules, part-time, residence flexibility. Moreover, firms should also think about active dual-career hiring policies, such as direct or indirect "twin-assignments". Direct "twin-assignments" provide a joint career track for both spouses within the same firm. An extreme example is "job-sharing" which presupposes, however, partners' same qualification and their willingness to work part-time. Strict anti-nepotism rules, which forbid the employment of family members in the same firm, obviously impede such assignments, while regulations which forbid a hierarchical and/or control relationship between partners are not only compatible, but also desirable. Indirect "twin-assignments" might support the mobility of couples employed in different firms, for example when both firms transfer the partners in the same location or when the employer who requests the move assists the partner in his/her job search (Domsch et al. 1989; Domsch & Krüger-Basener 1999; Domsch & Ladwig 1997).

⁴³ The third strategy is an 'unsuccessful' strategy, e.g. dual-career arrangements exist only for a period of time after which one partner gives up his/her own career ambition, or the couple separates.

To conclude, also (West-)German couples are characterized by a strong marriage homogamy. Moreover, women's employment patterns and decisions regarding full-time and part-time employment are – like in other European countries – strongly related to family stages and, especially, to the presence of children. However, educational and labor market resources play an important role: highly qualified women rarely leave the labor market. Yet, there is some evidence that these women “constrain” their fertility. Next to family responsibilities, also mobility constrains women's career chances since relocation often takes place at the disadvantage of (married) women.

Only few German scholars investigated dual-career couples. According to these studies, the timing of two-career stages as well as the timing of family formation are the most problematic issues. Moreover, it appears that women's careers suffer (are sacrificed) more than men's and that women hold the “leading” career less frequently. These first results reveal the necessity of further research on the dynamics and strategies of dual-career couples.

5 The German academic “world” – viewed from the women's career perspective

Indirect evidence for the problems faced by dual-career couples can be detected from studies which focus on academic women and on gender differences in the academic world. Given the strong marriage homogamy in Germany, academic women often have partners who are as highly qualified, if not even professional colleagues.

Several findings show that the German ‘academic world’ is male dominated: women are underrepresented in the university labor market – with the exception of support staff where they constitute the majority (Pfister 1998; Schultz & Hagemann-White 1991). Moreover, also the consequences of German re-unification have been at the disadvantage of female academics, since dismissal particularly affected women in tenured positions in the middle levels of the hierarchy to the advantage of West German men (Pfister 1998).

‘Supply-oriented’ explanations for these gender differences claim that decisions, qualifications and competence as well as the motivation to pursue a career are decisively influenced by the anticipation of family duties. Moreover, women's opportunities are limited by their family situation: among all factors especially by time (scientific work requires a lot of time, flexibility, self-discipline), but also by mobility constraints. “Mobility is a prerequisite for every step up the career ladder” (Pfister 1998: 40). In addition, women who pursue academic careers are still confronted with a male-dominated system: they might not have the ‘right’ contacts,

might choose the 'wrong' topics⁴⁴, and are generally more committed to teaching. Studies on the situation of young scientists in Germany reveal that women feel less motivated and encouraged than men to pursue an academic career (Aisenbrey & Pflaum 2001). Women experience less support, have lower access to professional networks, and find only rarely female role models in the scientific world (Allmendinger et al. 2000: 45; Allmendinger et al. 2001, cf. also Leeman & Heintz 2000).⁴⁵ From the 'demand' side, women are often discredited as unreliable workers, because they might – at least for periods of time – give priority to their children and families. "Not only the stigmatization of women scientists as being (potentially) family-oriented and lacking originality, but also their reluctance or inability to adjust completely to the masculine world of science, lead to the exclusion of women from the top rungs of the university hierarchy" (Pfister 1998: 42). Another study reveals a different type of discrimination: full-time positions might be denied to married women with the argument that they do not need an employment because their husbands provide for them.⁴⁶ Moreover, for the same reasons married women might be offered temporary positions, since employers can dismiss them after the end of the contract/project without having to worry about their financial situation (Engler 2001).

According to the perceptions of female scientists, the main difference between them and their male colleagues lies in the problems that women have to face when combining their career with a family. They recognize that the academic world is made for men or single women; mothers are not considered seriously and they feel out of place (Poppenhusen 1986). However, while the majority of female scientists did not consider their career as a result of conscious planning – "it just happened", "slipped in"⁴⁷ (Poppenhusen 1986; Schultz & Hagemann-White 1991)⁴⁸ – , over 60% of female Ph.D. students report that they do plan to

⁴⁴ An academic woman – now a university professor – recalls for example that the director of the research institute where she worked for 10 years refused to supervise her "Habilitation" in gender studies. Only after she found two female professors who were willing to evaluate her work, did her director agree to support her (Engler 2001: 280-284).

⁴⁵ "Auch unsere Untersuchung zeigt, dass sie [Frauen] im direkten Vergleich zu Männern an karriererelevanten Punkten weniger Unterstützung und Betreuung erfahren, weniger Zugänge zu professionellen Netzwerken bekommen und kaum weibliche Rollenvorbilder in der Wissenschaft finden." (Allmendinger et al. 2000: 45)

⁴⁶ "...bei den Erziehungswissenschaftler, die haben mich angeguckt und haben gesagt: ‚Sie sind doch verheiratet, da brauchen sie doch keine Stelle.‘ [...] Und bei den Soziologen habe ich dann eine Stelle gekriegt [...] mit irgendwie ein paar Stunden für ein spezielles Projekt, ich weiß nicht mehr wie viel; das waren ganz wenig". (Engler 2001: 291-292)

⁴⁷ "Hat sich so ergeben, bin reingerutscht." (Poppenhusen 1986)

⁴⁸ According to Schultz's results, both female and male professors report luck and fortune as having been important for their professional development. Yet, while men regard luck and fortune, i.e. the informal structures of the university world, as being important together with their intellectual capacities and successful strategies; women feel at the mercy of these external factors and do not emphasize their own initiative and performances (Schultz & Hagemann-White 1991: 66-67).

combine work and family life (Pfister 1986). Thus, these young women are not willing to sacrifice one sphere. They are, however, aware of the future dilemmas they might face and expect to reduce – at least for a period of time – their professional engagement.

However, there is some empirical evidence that the German reality is different: academic women are more frequently singles, and when they live with a married or unmarried partner they rarely have children (Hageman-White & Schultz 1986; Kuckartz 1992; Schultz & Hagemann-White 1991). According to Kuckartz's empirical findings on university research scientists ("wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter"), 45.6% of the women but only 28.7% of the men are singles. Moreover, only 14% of the female scientists but 25.5% of the male scientists are married with children (Kuckartz 1992: 685-686). In addition, gender differences in the family status increase in successive age groups/career stages. These traits are especially evident among progressed ("habilitierte") women: over half of them are singles and many are separated. These results suggest that women who are not willing to sacrifice their family life exit the academic world (Kuckartz 1992). Further support can be found by a research on psychologists, which revealed that not only female careers are characterized by less advancement than male ones, but also that those women who obtain equally higher positions are more often intentionally childless or have only one child (Hoff et al. 2001: 6). According to Schultz and Hageman-White (1991) female professors take their choice for or against a partnership (and children) quite early, before they become established in their profession. Those women who want a family delay, however, childbirth until they achieved their professional goals.

With regard to dual-career issues, only a minority of male professors are prepared to compromise for their spouses' careers and they also believe that part-time employment and 'job sharing' arrangements are not a compatible solution for university professors (Schultz & Hageman-White 1991). Those few who are willing to compromise for their wives' careers are prepared (or already did) to renounce a better position if this is linked to a change of residence and the loss of their wives' employment. Generally, however, male professors believe that their wives/partners had to sacrifice their own careers because of the demands of family and children. Also female professors are not willing to give up their careers for their spouses. Yet, there are two main differences: their partners did not abandon their own careers nor did they reduce their professional commitment, while some of these women had to choose between a partner (and family) and a career. Some of these 'single' women explicitly report that they did not marry because they did not want to face family/partner-career conflicts. However, those women who live with a partner appear to have no problems in asserting their careers, their work is recognized by their spouses and the only difficulties arise in the domestic sphere in the division of household and domestic duties. Moreover, women who attained

higher professional positions than their partners often argue, as their male colleagues, that they have the 'leading' career because they occupy higher positions (Schultz & Hagemann-White 1991). Nevertheless, according to the same research, male professors receive more intellectual or non-intellectual assistance/support from their partners for their scientific work than female professors. Women appear to be afraid to take advantage of their partners, especially when these are not colleagues, and they also judge "not being hindered by housework" as assistance, while males see this as a matter of course.

A recent research project on German academics who are living and working outside Germany reveals the importance of dual-career and family issues for the satisfaction with the own occupational activity and for mobility decisions (Backhaus et al. 2002). The compatibility of the job with family responsibilities, the availability of suitable schools, good professional chances for the partner, and flexible childcare services are among the 10 most important aspects of a 'good' job listed by these academics. Moreover, the majority believes that the partner has better professional possibilities abroad than in Germany. This is especially the case for those who work in a university in another European country. A satisfactory job offer for the partner is often the prerequisite for returning to Germany: 80% of the married/cohabiting Germans who are working in a university abroad see this as essential and mention this condition in second position after a good job offer for oneself and even before earnings and promotion prospects. Finally, also foreign academics who are living and working in Germany consider flexible childcare services, professional chances for the partner, and the compatibility of the job with family responsibilities insufficient (Backhaus et al. 2002).

Some empirical findings suggest that family responsibilities influence differently the productivity of female and male scientists. On average male academics publish more articles and books than their female colleagues. Among female research scientists ("wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter") the least productive are women with children, while the most productive are married or cohabiting women without children (Kuckartz 1992).⁴⁹ According to the empirical findings by Schultz and Hagemann-White (1991), the most productive women are those whose partners are also professional colleagues and whose partners 'help' at home and with childrearing. Differently, the most productive male professors are those whose partners retain the main responsibility for family and household duties and who receive intellectual or non-intellectual assistance/support.

A different and very interesting view is proposed by Hoff and his colleagues (2001, 2002). These authors distinguish between two definitions of professional success: an occupational

⁴⁹ Among men the most productive are singles, yet the presence of children plays no significant role.

career which leads to the achievement of higher positions, high income and prestige (narrow definition); or a career which inserts itself optimally into an integrated concept of life organization and is coordinated with the private life sphere (broader definition) (Hoff et al. 2001, 2002).⁵⁰ According to these authors, less women achieve higher positions and more present discontinuous careers⁵¹, because women coordinate and integrate work and family spheres to a higher extent than men. Moreover, coordination and integration are not only used on an everyday basis, but are (and become) lifelong strategies, which shape successive occupational patterns.⁵² Thus, women choose part-time employment or become self-employed (for example as physicians in their own practice), because these arrangements allow more flexibility and chances to successfully integrate professional and family spheres (Hoff et al. 2001). However, different professions give different chances and there is some evidence that female psychologists can arrange their professional careers in much more flexible and successful ways than physicians, which appear to be more constrained by institutional settings (Hoff et al. 2000, 2001).⁵³

According to this research there are three different forms of coordination between professional and private life spheres (Hoff et al. 2002: 14-18):

- a) Segmentation: when everyday professional and private activities do not require complex co-ordination but exist parallel to each other, and also long-term goals can be achieved relatively independently from each other.⁵⁴
- Supremacy of the professional sphere: This arrangement is found typically by men (often physicians), who are married and have children and whose spouse holds the main responsibility for household and family. The few women who have such a pattern are often childless.
 - Supremacy of the private life: This arrangement is found only by women, who have reduced, rather involuntarily, their professional activity to a minimum, while their partners work for long hours and hardly perform any family/housework.

⁵⁰ „Berufserfolg im engeren Sinne heißt: Erfolgreich ist der Berufsverlauf, der zu Aufstieg in höhere Positionen, zu hohem Einkommen und Prestige führt. Berufserfolg in einem weiteren Sinn heißt: Erfolgreich ist der Berufsverlauf, der sich optimal in ein ganzheitliches Konzept von Lebensgestaltung einfügt und auf den privaten Lebensstrang abgestimmt ist“ (Hoff et al. 2002: 20).

⁵¹ Their research focused on physicians and psychologists.

⁵² „Frauen und Männer bilden entsprechend unterschiedliche Vorstellungsmuster zu Bezügen zwischen den Lebenssphären, unterschiedliche Formen der Lebensgestaltung und unterschiedliche Handlungsstrategien aus, die ihre Berufswege fortlaufend beeinflussen.“ (Hoff et al. 2002: 4)

⁵³ Moreover, it appears that female psychologists who interrupt their careers at childbirth for more than 1 year succeed in reentering (part-time) employment more frequently than physicians. In medicine either women present continuous careers or, given the difficulties they face when trying to combine family responsibilities and employment, they drop completely out of their profession (Hoff et al. 2002).

⁵⁴ „...wenn Tätigkeiten im beruflichen und im privaten Alltag routinisiert und ohne aufwendige Koordination parallel nebeneinander herlaufen. Außer kurzfristigen Handlungszielen können auch längerfristige Ziele in beiden Lebenssträngen ohne aufwendigen Bezug aufeinander bzw. relativ unabhängig voneinander realisiert werden“ (Hoff et al. 2002: 14).

- Equilibrium: Work and private spheres run completely separately from each other. These individuals, however, regard as equally important both their professional as well as their private life.
- b) Integration: when everyday professional and private activities require complex coordination. Moreover, integration might itself become a paramount life goal.⁵⁵
- At the cost of both life spheres: This is a result of an unsuccessful integration when, for example, the uncertain professional position prevents from realizing the desired family size.
 - At the cost of the occupational sphere: This arrangement is found almost exclusively by women, all of whom have children. Childbirth is linked to long interruptions and reentrance with part-time employment. The male partner pursues his career full-time, while these women hold the main responsibility for family and household. These women, however, measure their success on the basis of whether they were able to integrate their professional and family spheres.
 - At the cost of the private/family sphere: The pursuit of a continuous career is realized at expenses of private life. These individuals desire a partnership with symmetrical division of labor, yet they were not able to fully realize this goal.⁵⁶
 - At no costs: These individuals are successful (using a narrow definition) in both their occupational as well as private life.
- c) Without boundaries: either the private life 'disappears', to a certain extent, in the dominating professional life (unmarried childless woman, whose social contacts are almost exclusively of professional type), or the professional and private interests are not separable (psychoanalyst couple with (planned) common practice).

According to the empirical findings of Hoff and his colleagues (2002), the overwhelming living arrangement for men (both physicians and psychologists) is segmentation with the supremacy of the professional sphere. Women differ between the two professions: among female physicians segmentation prevails, while among psychologists integration prevails (Hoff et al. 2002: 19).

Moreover, the division of household/family labor between partners closely relates to the different forms of coordination between professional and family spheres. Generally, the division of labor is skewed at the disadvantage of women, but those men who segment professional and family spheres report more frequently a complementary division of labor to their advantage (Hoff et al. 2002: 22).

⁵⁵ „...wenn Tätigkeiten im beruflichen und im privaten Leben starke Koordinationsleistungen erfordern [...] Die Integration selbst kann zu einem übergeordneten Lebensziel werden“ (Hoff et al. 2002: 15).

⁵⁶ „[Sie] haben vielfach den Anspruch einer partnerschaftlich symmetrischen Arbeitsteilung, können diesen Anspruch aber nicht vollständig realisieren“ (Hoff et al. 2002: 17).

This research is part of an ongoing project⁵⁷, which plans to focus also on couples' coordination arrangements. On the basis of the empirical findings attained till now these authors expect to find six different arrangements (Hoff et al. 2002: 25-26):

- 1) Traditional and complementary arrangement: couples in which segmentation of the male partner prevails and his professional career dominates, while the female partner integrates her professional life with private/family responsibilities;
- 2) Non-traditional and complementary arrangement: couples in which the female partner's professional sphere dominates (segmentation), while the male spouse integrates reducing his career commitments;
- 3) Short-term complementary, but long-term symmetrical arrangement: i.e., the long-term goal of equal opportunities for both partners is achieved through short-term role exchanges between partners;
- 4) Traditional symmetrical arrangement: both partners integrate both life areas;
- 5) Individualistic and symmetrical arrangement: segmentation and supremacy of both partners' professional careers;⁵⁸
- 6) Without boundaries: partners with a "symbiotic" relationship, which possibly have the same occupation and whose activity fields overlap.

6 Conclusions

In the last part of the report a number of European empirical studies will be schematically presented (see Appendix B). In the perspective of future investigations, it is important to review the focus, unit of analysis and methods used by previous research.

Although dual-career issues have been first pointed out by European research, this problematic has been only rarely a topic of study in non-Anglo-Saxon countries. The unit of analysis is often dual-earner and not specifically dual-career couples. The majority of European studies have used an individual perspective focusing on the factors which favor or discourage women's – and especially married women's – labor market participation. Yet, only seldom have scholars investigated the factors which allow (or not) the pursuit of two careers. Thus, while there is now a considerable number of studies which look at the so-called spouses'

⁵⁷ For further information see: <http://www.fu-berlin.de/arbpsych/>.

⁵⁸ According to these authors, this life style should characterize dual-career couples, at least as long as they are childless.

effects on labor market participation, only few make a further step and look at the spouses' effects on professional careers. Moreover, only rarely do scholars look at the employer's perspective. Consequently, the conditions, strategies, compromises under which dual-earner couples might follow dual-career arrangements are still quite unknown.

Finally, there is also a considerable number of studies which focus on female academic careers and on the disadvantages women have to face in the academic world. Often the explanation emphasizes the importance of the family situation, and especially the fact that these professional women seldom have a 'domestic backup' and must deal, therefore, with an overload of professional and family responsibilities.

Yet – apart from revealing that considerably more female academics remain single or divorce and generally constrain their fertility – the dynamic of two academic careers is still to be discovered. How academic couples manage (or not) to climb the professional ladder, which strategies and compromises they use, which difficulties they face and, last but not least, how universities – and more generally academic organizations – support or discourage their joint struggles are still unanswered questions.

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Appendix A: Statistical annex

Table 1: Proportions of women in different stages of the academic career (Germany¹), 1980-2000 (in %)

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Studienanfänger	40.2	39.8	39.4	47.8	49.2
Studierende	36.7	37.8	38.3	41.7	46.1
Absolventen	34.1	36.8	36.5	40.7	44.8
Promotionen	19.6	24.1	27.8	31.5	34.3
Habilitationen	4.8	7.2	10.0	13.5	18.4
Hochschulpersonal insgesamt	--	--	--	50.0	50.8
Hauptberufliches wissenschaftliches und künstlerisches Personal	12.5	14.2	17.7	22.6	25.6
Wissenschaftliches und künstlerisches Mitarbeiter	16.4	18.6	22.7	27.2	30.4
Professoren	5.3	5.1	5.5	8.2	10.5
C4-Professoren	2.5	2.3	2.6	4.8	6.5

¹ Since 1995 unified Germany

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt Hochschulstatistiken (<http://www.destatis.de/basis/d/biwiku/hoctab8.htm>)

Table 2: Gender differences in proportions of associate and full professors in several European countries (column percentages in each category)

	Full Professors		Associate Professors		Reference Year
	Women	Men	Men	Women	
Finland	18	82	55	45	1999
Portugal	17	83	64	36	1997
Spain	15	85	65	35	1998
France	14	86	63	37	1999
Italy	12	88	74	26	1999
Sweden	12	88	75	25	1999
UK	12	88	76	24	1999
Greece	10	90	79	21	1997
Dutch-Speaking Belgium	8	92	85	15	2001
Denmark	8	92	80	20	1999
French-speaking Belgium	7	93	90	10	2000
Germany	7	93	89	11	2000
Netherlands	6	94	91	9	1999
Austria	6	94	89	11	1998
Ireland	5	95	92	8	1998

Source: National reports on the situation of women in science in Europe (Europäische Kommission, DG Research, Women in Science Unit) (<http://www.cordis.lu/improving/women/reports.htm>)

Appendix B: List of studies (alphabetical order)

Author(s)	Unit of analysis (number of cases)	Focus	Methods
Allmendinger et al. 2000	Academics (222)	Germany. Integration and academic careers of scientists employed by the Max Planck Society	Quantitative
Allmendinger et al. 2001	Academics (318)	Germany. Careers, work attitudes and integration of male and female scientists working in two prestigious research organizations (MPS and FhS)	Quantitative: administrative data and questionnaire with retrospective questions Qualitative: in-depth interviews with individuals and groups at all hierarchical levels
Arber 1999	Dual-earner couples (6774)	U.K. Earnings inequality between partners; effect of children and social class on earning inequality between partners.	Quantitative: General Household Survey (GHS)
Behnke & Meuser 2002	Dual-career couples (13)	Germany. Work and family arrangements.	Qualitative: biographical interviews with couples (together)
Bernardi 1999	Married women (2958)	Italy. Effect of husbands educational level and occupational status on their wives' labor market participation and occupational status	Quantitative: Second National Survey on Fertility Control and Expectations (INF-2)
Bernasco et al. 1998	Married couples (700)	Netherlands. Effects of spouse's resources on occupational attainment	Quantitative: Dutch Family Survey
Bison et al. 1996	Individuals (3 data sources)	Italy. Employment patterns of men and women and influence of marital status and childbirth.	Quantitative
Blossfeld et al. 1996	Married couples (1289)	West-Germany. Effects of husbands educational level and occupational status on their wives' labor market participation	Quantitative: Socio-Economic Panel Study (GSOEP), Panel waves 1984-1992
Bonney & Love 1991	In-migrants (194)	UK. Geographical mobility, differences between the genders and between married and single women	Qualitative: follow-up survey of the 1986 Social Change and Economic Life survey of the Aberdeen area

Author(s)	Unit of analysis (number of cases)	Focus	Methods
Büchel 2000	Qualified individuals (759 + 3042)	West-Germany. Chances of re-entering a qualified occupational after regional relocation. Risk of over-qualification for married women.	Quantitative German Socio-Economic Panel Study (GSOEP). First longitudinal data on people who were regionally mobile from 1984-1995 (754). Second cross-sectional data (1995) (3024)
Corpina 1996	Firms' representatives (21)	Switzerland. Firms' views and provisions with regard to dual-career couples	Qualitative: interviews with structured guideline
Del Boca et al. 2000	Married couples (5868)	Italy. Employment decision of married women.	Quantitative. Bank of Italy Survey (1995)
Domsch et al. 1989, 1997, 1999	Dual-career couples (68)	West-Germany. Advantages and disadvantages of dual-career arrangements	Qualitative: open-ended questionnaire
Duindam 1999	Caring fathers (182)	Netherlands. Advantages and disadvantages of caring fathers role	Quantitative questionnaire Qualitative: in-depth interviews with 19 men
Engler 2001	University professors (9 men + 6 women)	Germany. Professional career and social development.	Qualitative: biographical interviews
Evetts 1993	Head-teachers (10)	UK. Interrelationships between careers and personal lives. Strategies of dual-career couples	Qualitative: history interviews with 10 male and 10 female head-teachers
Gronseth 1978	Couples (28)	Norway. Work sharing couples: couples share working and domestic (childcare) responsibilities	Qualitative: 16 work-sharing couples, 7 couples who wanted to adopt the pattern and 5 'ordinary' families.
Green 1997	Dual-career couples (30)	UK. Location and mobility strategies of dual-career households. Whose career leads and why. Impact on international relocation on dual-career households	Qualitative: semi-structured face-to-face interviews (together & separately). Couples selected to be representative of the age and occupational structure of dual-career households
Hardill et al. 1997	Dual-career couples (30)	U.K. How dual-career households take decisions and make compromises in relation to career development and prioritization.	See above
Hardill et al. 1999	Dual-career couples (30)	U.K. How dual-career households take decisions and make compromises in relation to career development and prioritization.	See above
Hageman-White & Schultz 1986	Professors (52)	West-Germany. Gender differences in the subjective and objective career track	Qualitative: guideline with circa 70 questions

Author(s)	Unit of analysis (number of cases)	Focus	Methods
Henkens et al. 1993	Married couples (22352)	Netherlands. Relationship between spouses' labor market status (employed/ unemployed/ disable/ housework)	Quantitative: Housing Demand Study 1985/86 conducted by the Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics
Hoff et al. 2000, 2001, 2002	Physicians & Psychologists (936)	Germany. Career patterns of physicians and psychologists, segmentation and integration of professional and private life spheres	Qualitative: questionnaire to employed physicians and psychologists 15 years after their licensure (physicians) resp. university degree (psychologists) Qualitative: in-depth interviews with 100 prototypical physicians and psychologists
Jürges 1998	One and dual-earner households (132 + 109)	Germany. Professional mobility, differences between the genders and one and dual-earner households	Quantitative: Socio-Economic Panel Study (GSOEP.) Panel waves 1984-1996
Kirner & Schulz 1992	Mothers (2363)	West Germany. Female career patterns and family interruptions	Quantitative: Socio-Economic Panel Study (GSOEP), Panel waves 1984-1989
Mauno & Kinnunen 1999	Dual-career couples (215)	Finland. Married or cohabiting dual-career couples with children underage living at home. Work-family interaction/conflict .	Quantitative: two structured questionnaires to be filled independently by each spouse
Krüger 2001	Parents and children (220 mothers +74 husbands + 149 children)	Germany. Employment patterns and orientations of two generations	Quantitative: standardized survey Qualitative: in-depth interviews with sub-samples chosen on the basis of their family relations and employment patterns
Kuckartz 1992	Academics (454)	West-Germany. Influence of professional career on family formation. Influence of gender and family on scientific productivity and career	Quantitative: questionnaire
Leemann & Heintz 2000	Academics (257)	Switzerland. Mentoring, Network and productivity of young scientists	Quantitative: questionnaire
Pfister 1986	Female Ph.D. students (198)	West- Germany. Conditions of Ph.D. students and their expectation for their further life course	Quantitative: questionnaire

Author(s)	Unit of analysis (number of cases)	Focus	Methods
Rapoport & Rapoport 1969; 1971 Fogarty et al. 1971	Dual-career couples (16)	U.K. Dilemmas faced by dual-career families, which have at least one child at home.	Qualitative: joint and separate interviews with husbands and wives
Schultz & Hagemann-White 1991	University professors (22 men + 21 women)	West-Germany. Gender differences in professional careers, importance of family and partner, discrimination against women	Qualitative: in-depth interviews with structured guideline and open ended questions + standardized questionnaire
Stephens 1999	Women doctors (17)	U.K. Management of time between work, child-care and leisure activities for female doctors working part-time	Qualitative: semi-structured interviews
Wagner 1989	Individuals (2171)	West Germany. Influence of family status, child birth and women's employment on mobility	Quantitative: German Life History Study (Max Planck Institute for Human development, Berlin), 3 birth cohorts (1929-31, 1939-41, 1949-51)