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In diesem Heft:

Schwerpunktthema: Mobility and family

- Does it matter for us if my partner or I commute?
Spatial mobility and the quality of conjugal relationships in France, Germany, and Switzerland
- Geographic job mobility and parenthood decisions
- Decisions concerning job-related spatial mobility and their impact on family careers in France and Germany
- Walking the tightrope
Combining family life and job mobility
- Entwicklung eines neuen multidimensionalen Fragebogens zur Erfassung der Partnerschaftsqualität
- Forschungsnotizen

ifb-Mitteilungen

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Editorial

Liebe Leserinnen,
liebe Leser,

Mobility and family – so lautet der Titel des Schwerpunktthemas in diesem Heft. Gastherausgeber sind Detlev Lück und Norbert F. Schneider. Wie schon im vorangegangenen Schwerpunkt zu *Minority ethnic groups' marriage patterns in Europe* sind auch diese Beiträge international vergleichend ausgerichtet und befassen sich mit verstärkter beruflicher Mobilität und den sich daraus ergebenden Konsequenzen für die Familie in insgesamt sechs europäischen Ländern: Deutschland, Frankreich, Spanien, Polen, der Schweiz und Belgien. Wesentliche Datenbasis ist dabei die 2007 abgeschlossene Studie zu *Job Mobility and Family Lives in Europe*.

In den kommenden Ausgaben werden – neben regulären Beiträgen – die *Geschlechterverhältnisse in Europa* sowie *Stieffamilien* Themen in unserer Zeitschrift sein.

Wir wünschen Ihnen eine gute, ein anregende Lektüre. Über Rückmeldungen zu den Beiträgen der Zeitschrift würden sich die Herausgeber(innen) und die Redaktion sehr freuen.

Hans-Peter Blossfeld
Geschäftsführender Herausgeber

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Introduction to the special issue on *Mobility and family*: Increasing job mobility – Changing family lives

Mobility is one of the core topics of sociology from the start. It is associated with modern society, especially with late modern societies in the globalised world (Urry 2007; Sennett 1998; Durkheim 2007; Tönnies 1988). After decades of being interpreted as the core driving force in transformation processes by sociological theories, mobility recently has become a popular object for empirical research (Schier 2010; Schneider/Collet 2010; Schneider/Meil 2008; Stutzer/Frey 2008; Kesselring/Vogl 2008; Schneider/Limmer/Ruckdeschel 2002). Results confirm at least one assumption of the theories of late modernity: People in Europe have become more mobile over the course of the last two decades (Lück/Ruppenthal 2010; Haas/Hamann 2008; Haas 2000).

What are the consequences for families? It has been assumed that increasing mobility fosters weak bridging ties and hinders strong binding ties (Viry/Kaufmann/Widmer 2009; Granovetter 1982). Optimistic interpretations emphasise the first part of this assumption (e.g., Giddens 1990; Beck 1997). They claim that individuals have more freedom and more opportunities to build social ties according to their personal preferences, even over large distances. Pessimistic interpretations emphasise the second part of the assumption (e.g., Sennett 1998; Baumann 2000). They warn that individuals become uprooted and socially isolated, even disoriented. In any case, the prophecies sound threatening for families. Families certainly represent strong ties and require immediate face-to-face time for their maintenance. Mobility implies leaving a common home and interrupting common face-to-face interactions for certain phases. We therefore must assume that mobility is a potential hindrance to building up and maintaining partnerships, becoming a parent, and realising a good quality of family relations.

This is reason enough to focus empirically on the relationship between mobility and family life. Does mobility affect family life at all? If so, which aspects of family life are concerned, in what way, and under which circumstances? What can we deduce from current trends in mobility regarding the future of European families?

The arguments above are a very rough approach to the topic. Several differentiations need to be made. First, the term *mobility* is being used for a series of different phenomena. They certainly are related to each other, but they also certainly may have different

impacts on family life. What kinds of mobility are there? And which mobility is most relevant in terms of studying influences on family life?

Multiple meanings of the term *mobility*

The most general use of the term *mobility* refers to *social change* (“soziale Veränderung” Bonß/Kesselring 2001: 177). It is even used as a synonym for change of any kind. The phrase *cultural mobility*, for example, is used by some authors for describing cultural change (e.g., Greenblatt et al. 2009: 12ff.). Following this practice, mobility seems too broad to use for any thesis or empirical operationalisation.

Mostly the term is used somewhat more specifically by referring to a change in position. One understanding is *spatial mobility*: the movement of people or things through geographical space. This still includes a large variety of phenomena, such as the export and import of goods or the travel of people from home to work or to a vacation destination. Aside from differentiating between who or what is moving, it is important to distinguish between purposes of mobility. Since private reasons to travel are, to a large extent, expressions of individual interest, they are more likely to be affected by the family situation than to affect family life. Therefore, they are of lesser interest in this context than professional reasons. Also the travel of individuals is more likely to affect families than the travel of goods. Of central interest, therefore, is the mobility of people for job-related reasons, referred to by the term *job mobility* or *job-related mobility* (Limmer/Schneider 2008: 13). The consequences for families, as indicated at the beginning of this article, are multiple and potentially grave.

Another phenomenon that is frequently addressed by the term *mobility* is *social mobility*: the change of position of human beings within the social structure of a society (e.g., Goldthorpe 2003). A similar understanding is, again, connected to the term *job mobility*. This term is common for referring to a *change of jobs*, to transitions from employment to unemployment or non-employment, as well as to re-entries into the labour market (e.g., DiPrete et al. 1997). These mobilities no doubt have strong impacts on family lives. For example, the increasing risk of employees’ losing a job or moving downwards socially when changing jobs may be an important reason for an increase in female labour market participation (Hofmeister/Blossfeld/Mills 2006).

A fourth phenomenon addressed by the term *mobility* is *virtual mobility*: the movement, or rather the spread, of information from one individual to another through space (e.g., Kenyon/Lyons/Rafferty 2002). Mostly, the term is used for communication using technical appliances in a non face-to-face situation over large distances. There are not many grave, but a few possible, consequences for family life: Partnership formation may occur more often interregionally or internationally (Schneider/Ruppenthal/Lück 2009; Döring 2000), and partner relationships can be maintained over large distances for longer periods of time. Also work from home is easier to organise in knowledge-based jobs, which – in turn – may make it easier to combine paid work with family life. This means that virtual mobility may, on the one hand, increase the number of long-distance relationships and the need for family members to become spatially mobile and, on the other hand, moderate the consequences of multilocality and job requirements.

Finally, some phenomena related to movement through space are also addressed by the term *mobility*. It can mean the social *valuation* of people's travelling (Bonß/Kesselring 2001: 182f) or the *ability* of individuals, groups, or things to move (e.g., Giddens 1990). To capture this ability theoretically and empirically, the term *motility* has recently been introduced (Kaufmann 2002; Kaufmann/Bergman/Joye 2004).

Theoretical publications in particular often talk about several or all of these understandings of mobility at the same time. Perhaps a theoretical description could reach a high enough level of abstraction to make such a broad concept useful. However, it is certainly better for empirical research to narrow down its concept to one understanding of mobility. The choice of definition needs to be justified by a theoretical reflection about the way in which mobility is relevant for a given research topic.

Regarding the impact of mobilities on family life, spatial and social mobility are likely to have the most relevance, which means they should be the first choices for study in family research. Given the rather advanced state of the art in the study of social mobility and its consequences on family life, the focus here will be on spatial mobilities – more precisely on job-related movements of people through geographic space. Here, the state of the art of empirical research is very rudimentary.

The relationship between spatial and social mobility

The practice of summarising several different phenomena under the one term *mobility* suggests that these phenomena are related, maybe closely enough to be treated as one concept. Is that so? What is the relationship between spatial and social mobility? Is social mobility also involved when spatial mobility is measured – as a cause, as a consequence, or as a second manifestation of the same social processes? Can we assume a statistical correlation between being spatially and being socially mobile?

Answers to questions like these are highly dependent on the perspective. Spatial and social mobility are highly correlated if the process of modernisation in Europe over the course of 300 years is taken into account. Both have increased over time because both are manifestations of the processes of modernisation and individualisation: Individuals have gained a greater degree of freedom, which allows them to move – socially as well as spatially. And for the same reasons, the other understandings of mobility have also increased. Technological progress that occurs within the process of modernisation, of course, fosters mobility as well. This is what the above-mentioned theories state and what legitimises them to treat several, maybe all, mobility phenomena as closely linked (Giddens 1990; Durkheim 2007; Tönnies 1988). However, this is only a correlation on the macro level, looking at a certain chapter of history. It does not imply a correlation among contemporary societies. And it does not imply a micro-level correlation in the sense that an individual who is spatially mobile should also change position in social space or vice versa. Does such a correlation exist?

Spatial mobility has been associated with career advancement. And even if data and empirical evidence are missing, this connection has been plausible over the past decades. As a general rule it can be assumed that any change of jobs is linked to a change of work place. Within a large company or organisation, this may even be true for a change in po-

sition. A change of work place, again, means a chance that the new work place is far away from the previous one so that the employee either needs to relocate or to start commuting long distances. So, as a general rule, frequent job changes should correlate with being spatially mobile for job-related reasons on the individual level.

In the late 1950s and 1960s, a time of strong and steady economic growth in most European and North American countries, a change in jobs or positions was likely to reflect career advancement. Social downward mobility seldom occurred. Contracts were typically unlimited so that less engaged employees would probably keep their jobs. Whole companies also seldom closed nor did they move their manufacturing to Asia. The job changes that did happen, in comparison, were much more likely to be freely chosen by the employee and to reflect personal improvement. In that sense, social upward mobility probably was a typical cause for spatial mobility.

This correlation does not exist in the same way today (Ruppenthal/Lück 2009). Assuming that it has existed, the disconnection can be explained by the flexibilisation of economies and labour markets. Contracts are more often temporary. Periods of unemployment have become more common among all social strata. As a consequence, among younger cohorts more horizontal job-to-job changes and more exits from and re-entries into the labour market are visible (Mills/Blossfeld/Klijzing 2005). Even social downward mobility in job changes can occur. Job changes should still be a cause for spatial mobility, but they do not necessarily reflect upward social mobility anymore. If social mobility is operationalised as a continuum, with negative and positive values, the statistical correlation between social and spatial mobility may disappear because upward and downward moves neutralise each other in the statistical balance. If it is operationalised as a binary, in terms of changing social position at all or being fixed, there still may be a correlation – if the majority of job changes are not horizontal. This question could be answered empirically only by analysing both mobilities longitudinally in a life-course perspective; however, suitable data so far do not exist.

There are other hypothetically imaginable connections between spatial and social mobility: It would be imaginable that the requirement for being mobile as part of an occupation concentrates on jobs with an especially high or low job prestige or pay. However, there is no theoretical reason for such an assumption, and empirical research reveals much heterogeneity instead: Mobility is required from consultants as well as from truck drivers, from pilots as well as from workers on construction sites. It is certainly true that mobility demands are more likely in specific occupations; but it does not seem as if there is a higher concentration of these occupations in high or in low levels of job prestige. Therefore it is unlikely that social upward or downward mobility increases or decreases the likelihood of being in an occupation that demands mobility.

It would also be imaginable that for various reasons certain social strata tend to have shorter or longer commutes. For example, wealthy people may tend to live outside the cities where land for building houses is available and therefore, on average, have longer commutes. Or wealthy people may live in places with better transportation infrastructure and, therefore, have shorter commutes. But even if such a statistical connection exists, it is specific for time and place: for certain nations and even for regions. Again, there is no good reason to assume a clear or even a general individual-level correlation between spatial and social mobility.

The linkage between social and spatial mobility is not a general one and cannot be deduced from theoretical reflection. It is variable and can be detected empirically only for specific regions and specific times – as an ongoing challenge for empirical research.

The relationship between spatial mobility and motility

Motility is the “capacity of a person to be mobile” (Kaufmann 2002: 37). This concept seems quite close to the idea of being spatially mobile, almost in the sense of a tautology. How close is the linkage? How much reason is there to distinguish between mobility and motility?

The factors defining this capacity to be mobile can be sorted into the categories of access, skills, and appropriation. Access includes the available means of transportation (e.g., the existence of railroad networks or the availability of high speed trains) and the practical conditions under which these means can actually be used (e.g., the price for a train ticket or the train schedule). Skills are comprised of the physical abilities (e.g., the ability to walk), the achieved competences (e.g., a driving licence), and the organisational competences that help to make mobility happen (e.g., the ability to research cheap flights). Appropriation is an individual’s subjective interpretation of his or her access and skills. It implies whether or not people consider their skills and access to be sufficient for becoming mobile and whether or not they consider mobility worth investing time, money, and energy (idem: 38ff.).

Motility can be regarded as a resource or capital – in the sense of Bourdieu’s economic, social, or cultural capital. It is unevenly distributed in society and reflects social inequality. And it is shaped by the socio-economic background. Kaufmann, Viry and Widmer (2010) show that motility correlates with common socio-demographic variables, such as education, income, age, gender, and family situation. Parental family forms, for example, rather go together with restrictions in motility. The interpretation of this fact makes it obvious that the interrelation between motility, mobility, and family life is not unidirectional but reciprocal. Analyses on this issue have to keep in mind that not only may mobility affect family life, but also the family situation may influence whether or not people become mobile.

Kaufmann, Viry and Widmer (2010) also find that motility is statistically related to mobility. It can be regarded as an intervening variable, specifying the causal mechanism between socio-demographic background and spatial mobility. However, none of the interrelations mentioned is a simple proportional correlation. Motility turns out to be not a metric variable or a one-dimensional consistent phenomenon, but rather heterogeneous and multi-dimensional. The authors find six empirically relevant categories of motility, such as “anchored” people or people with “poor access”. These are combinations of specific motility aspects. Not only can high access and low skills be combined or vice versa, but also ambivalent combinations of sub-dimensions exist, such as low appropriation of relocation with high appropriation of daily long distance commuting or vice versa. These combinations again correlate with sub-forms of mobility, such as relocation or daily long distance commuting, which will be introduced in more detail below. However, the interrelation is far from being a strong predictor. Thus motility and mobility cannot be treated as one phenomenon. Capability does not necessarily lead to realisation, and restrictions do not necessarily prevent realisation.

For the relationship between spatial mobility and motility at least three conclusions can be drawn. First, motility increases the chance to become mobile. Second, motility conveys the influence of social context on spatial mobility: Parents, for example, may be less mobile either because they evaluate mobility worse or because they have chosen a place of living with poorer access to transport infrastructure. Third, a specific combination of motility aspects increases the chance that a certain way of being mobile is chosen.

A fourth and a fifth possible relation has not been empirically tested yet: Motility is likely to moderate the consequences of mobility. A daily long distance commute, for example, should cost less time, energy, and stress if the mobile person has good access, high skills, and a positive relation to travel. Fifth, being mobile should act back and increase motility. This is plausible at least for the dimension of skills. By frequently travelling, an individual will, for example, get to know train schedules or the procedure of checking in for a flight in an airport better. It is somewhat plausible even for the dimensions access and appropriation. If an individual is forced to travel, he may buy a car, an annual pass for local public transport, a cell phone, or a laptop. He may move closer to the train station. He may find strategies of dealing with the inconveniences of travelling and begin to appreciate the travel more.

Motility is closely linked to spatial mobility. However, this connection is far from allowing the assumption that the relationship to family life is the same. Motility may be an enlightening background variable to control for understanding how mobility is influenced by and influences family life. However, it must be treated as a complex phenomenon with a reciprocal and complex relationship to mobility.

Characteristics of spatial mobility relevant within family research

Deciding that job-related spatial mobility will be the focus of this issue is far from determining how mobility shall be operationalised. This decision, again, needs a theoretical reflection how and why spatial mobility is connected to family life. Which characteristics of spatial mobility are responsible for this connection?

The first reason why spatial mobility has an effect on family life is that it may be costly. The expenses for travel are not always carried by the employer – for example, in the case of long distance commuting. In the case of weekly commuting, the employee even has the expenditure of a second residence. These expenditures may reduce the disposable household income very significantly with all the consequences for family life that income differences have. For example, the neighbourhood and the quality of housing (in the first residence) may be less family friendly, and the choices of kindergartens or schooling may be reduced. This aspect is very relevant; however, operationalising mobility (only) in terms of its costs is less likely to produce many new insights since the relationship of disposable income and family life has already been studied.

A second reason why spatial mobility affects family life is that it requires physical and mental energy. The energy that travel requires varies according to circumstances. For car drivers traffic jams, bad road conditions or bad weather may make the journey stressful. Travel by train requires more energy if many changes and tight connections are involved, if luggage is heavy, if train cars are packed, or if seats are uncomfortable. If the travel time fa-

tigues the mobile person, the consequence may be that he or she will not be in the mood to make conversation at home and will not be able to support the family as much as if the mobility were not involved. Family relations and family organisation may suffer.

The third and strongest reason why spatial mobility has an effect on family life is, as explained earlier, that it causes relatively long periods of absence: The absence of one partner in a couple may prevent family planning and family formation; the absence of one member of a family may burden the organisation of family responsibilities and the quality of family relations. Contributions to childcare or housework, as well as the face-to-face interaction necessary to maintain intimate relationships, are reduced. Such interaction is not simply difficult because the mobile person may not be concentrated enough for significant support or for good conversation; rather, through absence it is made impossible. Therefore, the duration of absence is an important aspect in predicting how grave the consequences of the mobility will be. In addition to the duration, the predictability and the regularity of mobility are also relevant for its consequences. The more regular and foreseeable the mobility, the better it can be integrated into the family and into private life.

An example may illustrate that the duration and the frequency of mobility are not a self-evident way of operationalising spatial mobility: A local bus driver is highly spatially mobile. He spends several hours each day moving through geographical space, travelling many kilometres. However, his presence at home will not be reduced by his mobility at all, and his family will not notice the difference from an employee working in an office or shop. Therefore, it does not make sense to consider him mobile in this context. The situation is quite different for the driver of a chartered bus who takes groups of people on vacation. He will be gone not only during the day, but also for several days and nights in a row until the vacation tour is over. His mobility causes a long period of absence.

The same is true for truck drivers, seamen, pilots, and other professions that deal with transporting people or goods. A similar situation occurs when people need to work in (immobile) workplaces that are too distant from home to return each night. This is a typical situation for workers on varying construction sites or for consultants who work for varying customers. It is also true for weekend commuters in any job that requires working in a fixed workplace distant from home, for example, because they have a partner who has a job near home and is unwilling to move.

A long period of absence from home that affects family life does not necessarily need to involve overnight travel. It is entirely possible that a daily long-distance commute can make a noticeable difference. The commuter will need to leave the house early. He will not be able to take the children to school, and there will not be time for a chat with family members over breakfast. In the evening he will return relatively late, maybe too late to get involved in household tasks or to kiss the young children goodnight.

The common criterion of these examples is that ongoing *recurring* forms of spatial mobility are causing absences beyond the usual daily work hours and the usual duration of a daily commute. "Beyond the usual," of course, is a vague criterion. It needs to be defined with respect to the overall distribution of commuting durations (not of commuting distances); however, that still leaves more than one possible definition.

Job-related spatial mobility can occur in a completely different form – as *residential* mobility. Instead of continually commuting a long distance between home and the workplace each day or each week, one can move the entire household and take a new home

that is close enough to the workplace for a “normal” daily commute. Is this form also relevant in the context of family research? It may well be, but for different reasons. The relocation does not reduce the face-to-face time between members of the nuclear family. It may, however, burden other social ties by increasing the distance to members of the extended family, as well as to close friends and other significant people. The children may lose playmates; the grandparents may now be too far away to take care of their grandchildren. Also the old school, the sports club, the favourite pub, etc., will be too far away. The family loses a social network as a support and the local infrastructure in which it was organised. It therefore has to reorganise itself and build up a new social network or get along with less support. This certainly can have effects on family life. The criterion in this case is not the duration of absence of one family member, but the fact that the distance between the new and old homes is too large to bridge daily.

These reflections allow several methodological conclusions. Generally it is worthwhile to study several mechanisms: the consequences of the *expenses* for mobility, of mobility *effort and stress*, of long distance *relocations* as well as the consequences of *phases of absence* due to mobility for family life. In this context all four mechanisms are of interest, as the articles in this issue will reflect. If possible, the single effects could be empirically estimated by controlling them simultaneously in multivariate analyses. However, since all four characteristics of mobility are likely to correlate with each other, it will usually not be possible to isolate any single effect. Then, at least on a theoretical level, interpretations need to reflect that the relation between mobility and family life is complex, and several mechanisms may explain an existing statistical relation causally. It is even more complex since counter-directional effects of family life on mobility also exist, such as the above sketched influence of parenthood on restrictions in motility. Several other connections are imaginable: For example, in dual earner couples it is more likely than in single earner couples that (at least for one partner) a long-distance commute becomes necessary (cf. the article of Collet and Bonnet in this issue).

Definition and further differentiation of “job mobilities”

The previous section has demonstrated two things: First, even the specification of mobility as the job-related spatial mobility of people leaves a heterogeneous range of mobilities that requires further differentiation. The most fundamental distinction is the one between recurring and residential forms of mobility. Within recurring mobilities we need to distinguish those with more or less frequent and with shorter or longer periods of absence; especially those job mobilities that involve overnight travel must be distinguished from daily long distance commuting. And we need to consider circumstances such as effort and costs of travel.

The second insight from the previous section is that at least four characteristics can be considered for operationalising job-related spatial mobility in the context of family research. In order not to make the operationalisation too complex, only two aspects will be taken into account here: absence and relocation. In the following, people will be called “mobile” if at least one of the following four criteria is fulfilled¹:

1 More precise definitions can be found in Limmer/Schneider (2008).

- A person has spent 60 overnights or more away from home, for occupational reasons, during the last 12 months.
- A person lives in a long distance relationship in which both partners maintain separate households predominantly for job-related reasons.
- A person commutes daily with an overall commuting time of at least two hours (one hour each way as a mean).
- A person has changed his/her main place of residence over a distance of at least 50 km, predominantly for occupational reasons.

This operationalisation, however, does not imply that the costs and effort of travel are not also aspects that need to be considered within the analyses and interpretations. And, to make things even more complex, there are further aspects of relocating and of the absence caused by recurring mobilities that very likely play a role, too. Within residential mobilities – aside from the distance to the previous place of living – it may be relevant whether or not a relocation occurs across a national or a language border or only across regions, as well as whether it is a “one way” relocation, whether it involves a foreseeable return later on, or whether it is already a return move after an assignment. Within recurring mobilities – aside from the frequency or rhythm and the duration (daily or overnight) of travel – the regularity and the predictability may affect family life.

Being unable to contribute to childcare or housework is not simply a question of the number of hours at home. Often responsibilities require planning ahead. A couple will probably decide in the morning who will pick up the child after choir practice in the evening. If it is unforeseeable whether or not one partner will be back in time to do this, it will need to be the other partner who takes on the responsibility. Tight train connections that can be missed, busy highways that may congest, and also flexible mobility requirements on the job introduce such uncertainties. These uncertainties may be graver if their range includes not only hours of return, but also the question of whether or not a person will leave at all and for how many days or weeks. Such unpredictable absences are typical, for example, of military staff. It is a burden for couples and families and a frequent reason for separation (Wendl 2005).

Not as grave as the unpredictability but also highly relevant is the (ir)regularity of mobility and of absences. Given the large range of chores within family life, couples tend to organise many of them in terms of a permanent distribution of responsibilities. For specific tasks, such as grocery shopping, cooking, or repairs around the house, it is mostly the same partner who takes care of them (with gender roles serving as an orientation). This reduces the effort of daily coordination and negotiation. Irregular absences, such as are typical for flight crews or salesmen, complicate or prevent such a general division of responsibilities. Then the frequent spontaneous reorganisation and coordination becomes a challenge of its own. Irregular absences also complicate the establishing of family routines. These are important for the maintenance of family relations. Children may appreciate a bedtime story each evening; the partners may enjoy going out for a dance class each Thursday. Families with an irregularly mobile member are restricted in this regard.

Increasing mobility – Increasing relevance

Job-related spatial mobility, defined as described above, is a widespread phenomenon among Europeans. In 2007 a six-country survey – including Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, and Spain – found that almost one in five (18%) fulltime employees aged 25 to 54 is currently mobile; and roughly one in two (48%) has experiences with mobility either currently or in the past (Lück/Ruppenthal 2010). The percentages vary only slightly between the six countries. Given a certain heterogeneity among the countries included in the survey, there are good reasons to believe that the situation is similar also in other parts of Europe that were not included.

In all six countries recurring mobilities are also more frequent than residential mobilities (*idem*). According to the study, 5% of fulltime employed people aged 25 to 54 are frequently away overnight; 7% are daily long-distance commuters; 3% have relocated; and 2%² are mobile in more than one way. As mentioned earlier, commuting appears to be a common strategy for avoiding the consequences of an interregional relocation: the loss of contacts to the extended family or to friends, the loss of a local social network as a support, and the loss of a local infrastructure. Europeans must be considered sedentary, also because of an emotional attachment to their home regions. Recurring mobilities serve as a compromise between the reluctance to be mobile and the necessity of doing so. However, as sketched above, the compromise has the downside of introducing pressure on the immediate family relations.

What becomes more frequent becomes more relevant. As mentioned in the beginning of this article, there is empirical evidence that mobility has increased during recent decades. And this is particularly true for recurring mobilities (Lück/Ruppenthal 2010; Haas/Hamann 2008; Haas 2000).

Without denying that modernity or postmodernity may be theoretical frameworks that are able to explain this trend in the long run, for the recent increase several specific causes have been identified (Ruppenthal/Lück 2009; Schneider/Ruppenthal/Lück 2009). A first cause is the globalisation of economic relationships. With the fall of the iron curtain and the rise of East Asian economies, with the restraints of international trade and of employment being reduced, and with the transport of goods being cheap in comparison to wage differences, economic collaboration and product as well as labour markets are becoming more international. As a consequence, more people have to bridge larger distances for contacting customers or colleagues. A second cause is the flexibilisation of labour markets. In order to react to market developments faster and to increase the pressure on employees, contracts are more often time limited or employees are even outsourced as formally self-employed contractors. This increases the number of job changes in individual job careers so that workplaces also change more frequently and mobility becomes necessary. It also reduces the ability to plan careers in the long run so that a large distance to a new workplace will be bridged by commuting rather than by the more binding investment of relocation. A third cause is the increase of female employment (Lück 2009). With more couples being dual earners, the choice of the residence has to take into account two workplaces instead of one. This makes it less probable that a long distance to a new

2 The percentages do not add up to 18% because of rounding.

workplace can be solved by relocation. If the two workplaces are far away from each other, at least one partner needs to be a weekly or a daily long-distance commuter.

Not all parts of societies are affected by mobility in the same way. Younger cohorts are affected much more than elder cohorts are – which documents the increase. This difference is especially visible in Poland, an indication that the protection of labour markets and involvement in international markets matters. People in time-limited work contracts are more likely to be mobile than other employees, which confirms that the flexibilisation of labour markets may be part of the explanation for the mobility increase (Lück/Ruppenthal 2010).

There are other characteristics that identify specific “risk groups.” Beyond the cohort differences, mobility is typical for young adults. They are not as well established in their job career as are older people, so that they probably cannot refuse mobility requirements as easily. They are also not as strongly committed to a certain place of living since they seldom are homeowners or parents. In fact, parents are also less likely to be mobile than are people without children. People with a partner are less likely than those without. These are the first indications that mobility does have an effect on family life – and vice versa.

Consequences of mobility for family lives

These interrelations are studied in detail in the articles in this issue. All articles work with the mentioned data collected in a six-European country survey in 2007. The overall sample size is $n=7220$. The data are representative for the residential populations of the six countries, aged 25 to 54 years. An oversampling of mobile people allowed analysing mobility in a differentiated way. A design weight corrects the oversampling for descriptive analyses (Huynen et al. 2008; Huynen et al. 2010).

Gil Viry, Eric Widmer and Vincent Kaufmann (“Does it matter for us that my partner or I commute?”) focus on the consequences of mobility for the partnership quality in the French, German and Swiss context. They find few effects of mobility or of the form of mobility as such. What turns out to be relevant is the process by which a person becomes mobile and the circumstances that accompany this process. In brief, one can state that two types of processes are associated with high conjugal satisfaction and few conjugal conflicts: first, when mobility was started willingly, motivated by own interests and second, when mobility was forced by the job market but families and networks did not intervene in the decision making. This result is clearer for Switzerland and Germany than for France, which reflects that certain conditions on the macro level (and certainly also on the micro level) moderate the effects on partnership quality.

Gerardo Meil (“Geographic job mobility and parenthood decisions”) asks whether and under which circumstances mobility affects the emergence, development, and timing of parenthood. He finds that mobility does have effects, at least if the period of being mobile overlaps with the life-course stage of family formation and if it is long enough. For men, mobility leads to a postponement of family formation rather than to childlessness. For women, the effects are much stronger. Mobility increases both: the risk of remaining childless as well as the age at first birth. Meil also interprets the fact that relatively few women are mobile as a consequence of persisting gender roles, defining family work as a

female responsibility and thereby intensifying the conflict between mobility and family planning, especially for women. Long periods of mobility for both men and women may reduce the family size.

Beate Collet and Estelle Bonnet (“Decisions concerning job-related spatial mobility and their impact on family careers in France and Germany”) compare mobility and decisions regarding becoming mobile in France and in Germany from a couple’s perspective, using quantitative and qualitative data. They find that mobility is more frequent among dual earner couples than among male breadwinner couples. The connection between mobility and family situation is stronger in Germany than in France. Becoming mobile can be either a common decision or a decision of the one mobile partner only. If the latter is the case, men have different motivations for doing so than women have, and women in France have different motivations than women in Germany. The results reveal a complex interrelationship between nationally differing gender roles, family cultures, and mobility patterns.

Detlev Lück (“Walking the tightrope”) raises the question of how mobility affects the challenge couples face in combining two careers with having a family. He finds that couples tend to be childless rather than give up one partner’s job if both goals are incompatible. Job mobility reduces the ability of couples to combine both, similar to the way working overtime or other unfavourable circumstances do, but job mobility does so rather more than other circumstances. This is especially true if the woman is mobile. There is also evidence of influence if the man is mobile, but these effects are not nearly as strong. The national context matters in several ways: In certain countries the compatibility of professional work and parenthood is generally easier than in others. In certain countries job mobility reduces this compatibility more severely than in others, and in certain countries the gender differences on this effect are stronger than in others. The reasons for these effects can be found in culture – for example, in the social construction of gender roles – as well as in policies and infrastructure – for example, in the predominant forms of mobilities or in the availability of public childcare.

All in all, the findings document that causal relations between job-related spatial mobility and family life are never simple. Often effects are rather connected to subtle aspects, such as the circumstances of becoming mobile, than to obviously visible criteria. They always appear as interaction effects. And mostly macro and micro level circumstances, as well as structural and cultural conditions, need to be considered. The timing within the life course matters as well as the gender, the working conditions may matter as well as the job situation of the partner. Gender roles and national family policies need to be taken into account.

Mobility does have effects on family life. And most of these effects demonstrate that with increasing mobility, family foundation becomes more difficult to realise and family life becomes more difficult to organise. However, the relation between mobility and family life is moderated by many circumstances and probably can be actively moderated.

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Gil Viry, Eric D. Widmer & Vincent Kaufmann

Does it matter for us that my partner or I commute?

Spatial mobility for job reasons and the quality of conjugal relationships in France, Germany, and Switzerland

Macht es einen Unterschied für uns, dass mein Partner oder ich pendle? Berufsbedingte räumliche Mobilität und Partnerschaftsqualität in Frankreich, Deutschland und der Schweiz

Abstract:

Spatial mobility has often been considered a detrimental factor for families for various reasons, stemming from increasing stress, unpredictability of daily life, increasing gender inequalities, and decreasing investment in parenting and partnerships due to time and space constraints. This contribution considers how daily long-distance and weekly commuting, frequent absence from home, and long-distance relationships for job-related reasons affect conjugal quality. To investigate this issue, we used data from a large European survey on job mobility and family life (JobMob), based on 2,914 individuals reporting a stable partnership and living in France, Germany, and Switzerland. We first empirically defined eight positions in the social space according to the current mobility practice from each partner and major socio-demographic variables. We then explored the extent to which those positions affect conjugal satisfaction and conjugal conflict within the three national contexts, complementing the analyses by including the process by which one became mobile. We found that job mobility had no significant effect on conjugal quality. Lower quality of conjugal relations rather concerned mobile people who experienced decisions to become mobile both negatively and collectively. We further discuss the importance of our results for understanding the functioning of contemporary couples facing mobility demands.

Zusammenfassung:

Mit dem Verweis auf erhöhten Stress, Unplanbarkeit des alltäglichen Lebens, verstärkter Ungleichheiten zwischen den Geschlechtern und sinkenden Investitionen in Elternschaft und Partnerschaft angesichts zeitlicher und räumlicher Restriktionen ist berufliche Mobilität häufig als negativer Einfluss auf Familien beurteilt worden. Dieser Beitrag fragt, wie sich tägliches Fernpendeln und Wochenendpendeln, wie sich beruflich bedingte häufige Abwesenheit von zuhause und Fernbeziehungen auf die Partnerschaftsqualität auswirken. Um dieser Frage nachzugehen, verwenden wir Daten aus einer großen europäischen Umfrage zum Thema berufliche Mobilität und Familienleben (JobMob) zu 2.914 Befragten, die angeben, eine feste Beziehung zu haben, und die in Frankreich, Deutschland oder in der Schweiz leben. Zunächst bestimmen wir empirisch aufgrund des aktuellen Mobilitätsverhaltens beider Partner sowie zentraler sozio-demographischer Variablen acht Lagen im sozialen Raum. Danach untersuchen wir, inwieweit diese Lagen in den drei unterschiedlichen nationalen Kontexten Partnerschaftszufriedenheit und Partnerschaftskonflikte beeinflussen. Ergänzend wird der Prozess berücksichtigt, im Zuge dessen Individuen mobil geworden sind. Wir kommen zu dem Ergebnis, dass berufliche Mobilität keinen signifikanten Einfluss auf die Partnerschaftsqualität hat. Eine verminderte Partnerschaftsqualität ist eher charakteristisch für Menschen, die die Mobilitätsentscheidungen als negativ und als kollektiv erlebt

haben. Abschließend diskutieren wir, welchen Beitrag diese Befunde für das Verständnis der Organisation des Beziehungslebens von Paaren haben, die mit Mobilitätsanforderungen konfrontiert sind.

Key words: Job mobility, spatial mobility, long-distance commuting, process of becoming mobile, conjugal quality, family functioning, international comparison

Schlagwörter: berufliche Mobilität, räumliche Mobilität, Fernpendeln, Übergang in die Mobilität, Partnerschaftsqualität, Familienorganisation, internationaler Vergleich

1. Introduction

Spatial mobility has often been considered a detrimental factor for families for various reasons, stemming from increasing stress, unpredictability of daily life, increasing gender inequalities, and decreasing investment in parenting and partnerships due to time and space constraints. This contribution considers how recurring forms of job-related spatial mobility affect conjugal quality and conjugal conflict. Recurring forms of job-related spatial mobility summarise all variations of commuting mobility and of frequent absence from home because of longer business trips and faraway workplaces. To investigate this issue, we used representative data from the “Job Mobility and Family Lives in Europe” (JobMob) project¹ for France, Germany, and Switzerland, three countries with distinct family policies, spatial structures of population, and transport infrastructures. This transnational data enabled us to estimate the reliability and robustness of our results across various contexts, as well as the extent to which macro- and micro-sociological factors contribute to the effect of job mobility on families.

Job mobility as a detrimental factor to conjugal quality?

Previous research has shown that spatial mobility, whatever the form practiced, requires people and their families to adjust and cope with a variety of strains (i.e. Anderson/Spruill 1993; Hardill 2004; Kümmel 2005; Willis/Yeoh 2000). Some studies have more particularly highlighted specific burdens on the partnership linked with job mobility. The study of Schneider et al. (2002) in Germany showed that about one third of people which are highly mobile for occupational reasons declared problems in their relationships caused by a mobile way of life. Problems were particularly frequent in the case of weekend commuters and long-distance relationships. For the most part, they declared having too little time to invest in their relationships, and thus partners increasingly went their separate ways. Mobile people also complained about the lack of spontaneity in their relationships. Their mobile lifestyle allowed them little time to share spontaneous adventures. Conjugal conflicts that are directly related to mobility were, however, rarely mentioned. Interviewees rather referred to spill-over effects, in which the job stress of the mobile persons led to

1 For more information about the survey: www.jobmob-and-famlives.eu

conflicts and quarrels between the partners. In another study of German career soldiers relocating frequently and practicing weekend commuting (Biehl et al. 2005; Collmer 2002, 2005; Wendl 2004, 2005), it was further observed that commuters often feel as a “guest in their own home”. To take advantage of their weekends at home with the family, they worked more during the week, leading to increased stress. At the same time, the weekend was often overloaded with leisure activities which caused additional leisure stress. In the case of absence of several months from the family home, partners suffer from the separation. Spouses missed the closeness of family and sexual intimacy and developed a substantial fear of loss, in particular among younger couples (Biehl et al. 2005).

As for research on family functioning, it was highlighted that couples emphasising a high autonomy between partners are more likely associated with a lower quality of conjugal relations (Widmer et al. 2003; 2006). This also prevails for couples having frequent contacts with the outside world. Job mobility could thus affect the quality of conjugal interactions by fostering partners’ individual autonomy and personal investments outside of the couple at the expense of similarity of orientations and ideas, time spent together, and consensus. Another important dimension to consider is that conjugal quality is influenced by the characteristics of both partners’ social networks. Couples with dense networks characterized by supportive relationships with relatives and friends and both partners’ frequent contact with them, present a significantly higher conjugal quality than couples with sparse and asymmetrical networks (Widmer et al. 2003, 2009). Precisely, some pioneer studies revealed that, in the situation of long-distance commuting, mobile people present personal networks which are less dense (Viry et al. 2009) and more centred on the immobile partner than non-mobile people, because contacts outside of the professional environment are unlikely and often delegated to the spouse (Becerril 2003; Schneider et al. 2002; Soriano 2005). By favouring sparse and unicentric networks, as one partner’s network is predominant, job mobility could likewise affect conjugal satisfaction.

Little is known about the consequences of recurring forms of job-related spatial mobility on conjugal functioning and conjugal networks and a systematic overview based on representative data and predictive models is missing. Although it is empirically proven that, firstly, a strong orientation toward partners’ autonomy and, secondly, sparse and asymmetrical conjugal networks have negative effects on couples, proof of such effects for job mobility are currently lacking. Based on the literature, we hypothesize that job mobility is associated with poorer conjugal interactions as it decreases couple cohesion, network density, and network symmetry between the two partners.

Mediating effects on the relationship between job mobility and conjugal quality

However, several other processes may interact with the impact of job mobility on conjugal relationships at the micro, meso, and macro levels and make this impact less widespread than expected. Overall, job mobility practices seldom have a general effect on all individuals in the same way and its impact on conjugal quality may concern some social categories more specifically. A variety of factors, such as life course, social policy, and cultural meanings can play a mediating effect on the way in which job mobility influences couple cohesion, couple networks, and herewith conjugal quality.

The mediating effect of the mobility form

First of all, job mobility actually covers a variety of situations which may have distinct consequences for conjugal functioning and conjugal networks. Previous research indeed has stressed the importance of making a distinction between various forms of mobility (Limmer 2005; Schneider et al. 2002). Because of absence during the week, weekend commuters, persons on frequent business trips, and people in long-distance relationships for job-related reasons are more likely to emphasise partners' autonomy than daily long-distance commuters. In some cases, the irregularity and unpredictability concerning the time and duration of absence could also reinforce individual autonomy, because couple routines would be more difficult to implement. Concerning social networks, daily and weekend commuters have fewer contacts outside of the professional environment, and such contacts are more delegated to the immobile partner than people in long-distance relationships (Schneider et al. 2002). Rather than measuring the impact of job mobility as a homogeneous category, a careful empirical examination of the consequences of its various types should then be done before any conclusion can be drawn. Moreover, by choosing the form of mobility that is most adapted to their degree of autonomy, couples may potentially lessen the impact of job mobility on conjugal quality.

The mediating effect of the life course

Empirical research additionally shows that much job mobility happens in the early life stages of adulthood, especially to single persons or individuals with short-term intimate relationships early in their professional careers. This corresponds to the stage of life in which individuals have not yet had children. As conjugal quality typically decreases when partners become parents (Belsky/Pensky 1988; Cowan/Cowan 1992), the impact of job mobility on conjugal quality might be weaker than expected, especially in life stages where partners are not yet parents. Indeed, previous research has shown that childless couples already place stronger emphasis on individual autonomy as a leading value (Widmer et al. 2003). Therefore, they may adapt more easily to the demands of job mobility than older couples, who have to face the constraints associated with parenthood in terms of unequal division of household labour and time and interests to be spent in common. What is proposed here is the inclusion of the life course as an intervening variable between job mobility and conjugal quality. Based on previous analyses (Viry et al. 2008), we have reason to believe that job mobility is less likely practiced in situations where young children are involved. Moreover, because job mobility is strongly gendered (with males much overrepresented), only few women with children are job-mobile. This organization of family life may actually insulate a majority of couples from the burdens associated with job mobility.

The mediating effect of the process by which one becomes mobile

In a life course perspective, it is also necessary to take the ways in which one has become job-mobile into account. The hypothesis that all individuals make personal decisions which optimize their preferences in the mobility realm is not supported by empirical evidence (Widmer et al. 2010). Various processes by which individuals become mobile co-

exist. Some individuals are constrained by the structural dimensions of their environment to become mobile (lack of job opportunities in the area of residence, etc.) and consider the process by which they have become mobile very negatively. Others, while emphasizing the negative dimension of the situation, see it as a personal decision. Social psychology stresses the importance of self versus hetero attributions of responsibility as a main way of achieving self-worth (Rotter 1966). It is likely that the ways in which the process of becoming mobile is experienced by individuals have consequences for conjugal quality. We expect that individuals who consider that their mobility is a consequence of their own choice and who see it positively cope better with the constraints associated with job mobility on conjugal interactions (lower couple cohesion, sparse and asymmetrical conjugal networks) and have thus a higher conjugal quality than those who see it as a consequence of their context (including their interpersonal relationships, of which their partner is central) and who perceive it negatively.

The mediating effect of the social embeddedness

Former analyses have shown that the position and resources of individuals in the social space significantly shape their mobility practice, mobility perceptions, and mobility consequences in tilting the balance of constraints and opportunities (Schneider/Meil 2008; Widmer et al. 2010). In particular, people with high levels of educational and economic resources are more likely to follow a social mobility trajectory which requires them to be spatially mobile in order to get a high-value job, often concentrated in metropolitan areas. Moreover, these individuals are more often employed in occupations that require inherently high mobility practices (business trips, consulting, airline pilot, etc.), where being mobile makes more sense and is better perceived than in other settings. Conversely, more disadvantaged individuals are more often mobile because of precarious working situations and higher constraints in their residential choices (work contracts of limited duration, settlements in peripheral areas and on the outskirts of urban centres, etc.), which can lead to more problematic situations (Baccaini 1994; Kaufmann et al. 2001). Additionally, among households with modest economic means and low educational credentials, both partners are more forced to work full-time, either for survival reasons or as a way to promote a middle-class lifestyle. The resulting commuting forms are then more likely to be problematic for conjugal functioning and conjugal networks than in the case of a well-heeled dual-career couple that decides to work and commute on an upward career trajectory (Challiol/Mignonac 2005). Furthermore, there is evidence that spatial mobility is differently experienced by men and women. Permanent forms of spatial mobility, such as daily or weekly commuting, are pre-eminently practiced by men (Limmer 2004, Schneider/Meil 2008). The gendered division of labour, with women still mainly responsible for housekeeping and children, as well as the set of gendered norms and constraints internalised by men and women, mainly explain the weak mobility rate and mobility willingness among women. Because of the strains between family tasks and job responsibility, job-related mobility is more likely to be experienced in a problematic way by women, in particular mothers, than by men. In conclusion, because mobility is more burdensome for women and people with low educational and economic resources, we expect that they will have a lower conjugal satisfaction and more frequent conjugal conflicts than mobile men

and mobile people with high resources. Previous research has nevertheless shown that job mobility is predominantly associated with highly-qualified people. Because these people already place higher emphasis on individual autonomy than less qualified persons (Widmer et al. 2003), the overall impact of job mobility on conjugal quality may therefore be limited.

The mediating effect of the national context

In a macro-sociological perspective, additional factors are likely to intervene. Indeed, the impact of job mobility on conjugal functioning and conjugal networks is likely to be weakened or increased depending on social policies, especially those which deal with families. Stemming from Esping-Anderson's typology of welfare states (1990), Fux (2002) stresses the presence of three distinct types of family policies which may interact quite distinctly with job mobility. Social democratic regimes characterized by a strong central government (e.g., Scandinavian countries, to a lesser extent France) promote gender equality and universal coverage of needs for citizens; they do not promote one type of family situation (e.g., married couples and their children) over another one (e.g., single-parent family). Quite distinctly, familialistic regimes (e.g., Portugal, Italy, Spain, West Germany) consider it their task to support the nuclear family – but not to take the place of it – within a logic of subsidiarity which seeks to promote the inner strength of families. The role of women as mothers is stressed rather than their independence as individuals. Finally, liberal family policies (e.g., the United States, UK, Switzerland) stress the separation of family issues and policy issues. Individuals are considered fully responsible for the way in which they organize their family lives, and the state should not interfere with individual decisions either by regulating or by subsidizing any family arrangements. Families are more dependent on the economic market in that latter case than in the two former cases. These three approaches of family life by state policies are likely to have consequences for the impact of mobility on conjugal quality. Indeed, in liberal systems, couples are left by themselves to face the burdens associated with mobility so that the partners' autonomy and the decrease of social integration could be more marked. In familialistic systems, only gendered organizations receive some resources from the state, whereas in social democratic systems, alternative family forms (such as living apart together) may get some attention from legislators. Note, however, that family policies only intervene when children are at stake. Since job mobility mostly takes place before the arrival of children, their influence on conjugal quality may be limited.

In addition to family policies, a whole series of contextual factors relating to space likewise may influence the quality of conjugal relations between mobile individuals. To begin, let us mention the quality of the amenities in residential neighbourhoods that serve as recreational facilities for both preschoolers (day cares) and school-age children (after-school programs, supervised study halls, recreation centres). Such facilities are pivotal to quality of life inasmuch as they relieve activities schedules of the non-mobile partner when children are present in the household. Generally speaking, the quality of transportation systems (their reliability, etc.) naturally influences conjugal relations (Kaufmann/Widmer 2006). For example, comfortable, regular, and frequent high-speed rail service allows individuals to control and limit the impact of mobility on their personal lives and

the lives of those close to them; conversely, a mediocre system naturally introduces temporal questions that are difficult for mobile individuals and their families to handle on a day-to-day basis (Kaufmann et al. 2010).

Finally, it is worth noting that the spatial structure of a country or region's population dispersal can also affect the quality of conjugal relations by influencing the form under which mobility is practiced. Two ideal types can be differentiated in this domain: the first is countries with a *Rhineland*-type spatial structure (such as Rhineland Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland), which are characterized by a predominance of medium-sized urban agglomerations (100,000 to 500,000 inhabitants) roughly 50 to 100 kilometres apart – in other words, a framework that favours long-distance commuting. The second is centralized countries with a dominant capital, where agglomerations are spread out (France or Spain, for instance) – in other words, a framework that favours overnighting and long-distance relationship practices (Kaufmann et al. 2010). We therefore expect that individuals living in a national context with a state-based regime and high-quality transport infrastructures cope better with the burdens associated with job mobility on conjugal interactions and have thus a higher conjugal quality than those living in a national context characterized by weak family policies and poor transport amenities.

Based on the literature, we hypothesize that job mobility has an effect on conjugal quality because it affects couple cohesion and social integration. However, we also expect that the impact of job mobility is distinct according to the type of mobility, some mobility types being more demanding to family life than others. Mobility is moreover one dimension of the position of individuals in the life course and the social space. Indeed, job mobility has quite different consequences according to the family life stage and the social embeddedness (income, sex, and level of education) of individuals. By the same token, job mobility is very much correlated with those dimensions (Schneider/Meil 2008). Therefore, rather than testing the effect of mobility independently from other dimensions, we will consider in the analyses below how types of social positions (including mobility of both partners) influence conjugal quality. This static approach of mobility will be complemented by taking the process by which one becomes mobile as well as the national context into account.

2. Data

The data are drawn from the European project “Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe” (JobMob), which is the first large quantitative European survey studying the interactions between family life, professional career, and all forms of job-related high mobility (daily and weekly long-distance commuting, frequent business trips, migration, etc.). All respondents aged 25–54 were selected by random method and questioned by phone on the basis of a standardized questionnaire in six European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, Spain, and Switzerland). Spatially mobile people were additionally oversampled. For the present study, data from France, Germany, and Switzerland were used. Although sharing similar economic development, these three countries feature contrasting realities in terms of social policies, gendered division of labour, mobility culture, transport infrastructures, and spatial structure of population (see above). This diver-

sity of contexts ensures a high degree of reliability and robustness of findings, as well as possible interpretations of national differences according to these specificities.

The unweighted sample is composed of 2,914 persons from the three national contexts aged 25–54 who mentioned a steady life-partner. Two different weighting procedures were applied. The first procedure created a sample with equal national sample size and adjusted for response, household size, and oversampling of mobile people biases. The representative (weighted) sample so obtained is composed of 2,188 persons. For analyses on mobile people only, a second weighting procedure eliminated non-mobile people and adjusted for response and household-size biases. This (weighted) sample includes 779 mobile persons. All sample sizes mentioned in the following tables are weighted.

3. Measures

Five dimensions are central in this research: mobility, positions in the social space, mobility processes, conjugal conflict, and conjugal quality.

Types of mobility

Three recurring forms of job-related spatial mobility were considered. The first one is composed of the daily long-distance commuters, defined by a trip to the workplace of at least 2 hours for travelling back and forth at least three times a week. The second category includes all forms of commuting that include staying away overnight (at least 60 nights a year). This category is relatively heterogeneous, because it includes people who hold jobs which require frequent and often irregular business trips (representatives, flight crews, international truck drivers, and so on), seasonal workers, and weekly commuters with a second residence near the workplace. Finally, the third type refers to people in long-distance relationships. These couples do not have a common household due to job-related reasons. Both partners maintain an apartment of their own, characterized by a travelling duration between them of at least 1 hour. Fifteen percent of men and five percent of women from the representative sample are mobile in one of these forms; 36% of men and 29% of women were in the past. For both genders, the bigger mobility category is the daily long-distance commuters (5%), followed by the overnighters (4%), and the long-distance relationships (1%), whereas 0.5% combine two mobility forms. The percentages are similar across the three national contexts.

Mobility processes

The process of becoming mobile was measured for mobile people only. We focused on two dimensions of this process (Widmer et al. 2010). The first dimension includes the particular circumstances under which the decision of becoming mobile was made. Five indicators were used: the encouragements and discouragements from the close network, the degrees of freedom and difficulty of the decision making, and the respondent's opin-

ion about whether the same decision would be made again today. The second dimension refers to the current perception of the practised mobility form. Three indicators were used here: the perceptions of the mobile individuals themselves, on a scale going from “something good and positive” to “something problematic and negative”, the perceptions of their close relatives and friends on the same scale, and finally their opinion about how they think of their mobility: “as an opportunity, a need, or a coercion”.

Conjugal satisfaction and conjugal conflict

Conjugal satisfaction and conjugal conflict were measured with one indicator each. Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their partnership. Possible answers were “very dissatisfied”, “somewhat dissatisfied”, “somewhat satisfied”, and “very satisfied”. In order to have a dichotomous variable, the first three modalities were grouped together, distinguishing between very satisfied people and others. Sixty-two percent of men and 59% of women were very satisfied with their partnership. For conjugal problems, respondents had to indicate how often they felt stressed because of conflicts with their partner in the past 3 months. Responses were “never”, “seldom”, “sometimes”, “often”, and “very often”. We distinguished between people having conflicts sometimes or more often than others. Twenty-two percent of men and 25% of women mentioned some conjugal conflicts.²

4. Results

We first made a preliminary analysis crossing mobility types with conjugal satisfaction and conjugal conflicts through bivariate statistics. We then constructed eight types of positions in the social space and four types of processes of becoming mobile, including mobility of both partners. We next investigated the impact of the positions in the social space and the processes of becoming mobile on conjugal quality and conjugal conflict using several logistic regression models.

Mobility types and positions in the social space

In order to measure the impact of various forms of recurring mobility on conjugal satisfaction and conjugal conflict, bivariate analyses were run (*Table 1*). Multi-mobiles are defined as people who are mobile in more than one of the three forms of current mobility.

2 The satisfaction rate was strangely much lower in France compared with Germany and Switzerland (51% compared to 66% and 62%, respectively). Similarly, the proportion of conflict is higher (30% compared to 20% for the two other countries).

Table 1: Conjugal satisfaction and conjugal conflict by mobility types (in %)

	Long-distance commuters	Overnighters	Long-distance relationships	Multi-mobile	Non-mobile	Total	Cramer's V
Conjugal satisfaction							.029
Else	36	38	50	40	40	40	
High satisfaction	64	62	50	60	60	60	
Total (N)	100 (118)	100 (79)	100 (18)	100 (10)	100 (1955)	100 (2180)	
Conjugal conflict							.015
Never or seldom	77	78	82	80	77	77	
Sometimes or more	23	22	18	20	23	23	
Total (N)	100 (120)	100 (79)	100 (17)	100 (10)	100 (1954)	100 (2180)	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007, weighted. The weight correction was used to create equal national sample sizes and adjust for response, household size, and oversampling of mobile people biases.

The analyses revealed that mobility types had no effect on conjugal satisfaction and conjugal conflicts. Only individuals in long-distance relationships (unweighted $n = 60$) were somewhat less likely to be very satisfied with their partnership and had less frequent conflicts compared with other categories of mobile people and non-mobile people.

As mobility forms were not significantly different from each other in terms of their associations with conjugal satisfaction and conjugal conflict, we aggregated the three mobility types in a unique category of currently mobile people in order to gain statistical power in multivariate analyses. Moreover, because mobility practice is strongly interlinked with the social embeddedness of individuals (sex, family life-course, level of education and income, residential context), we constructed a typology of positions in the social space, including the mobility of the respondent and that of the partner. The positions were then used as predictors of conjugal quality in a statistical model, instead of successive single variables, characterised by a strong collinearity and confounding effects. In this perspective, we considered the method of cluster analysis.

Cluster analysis makes it possible to go beyond specific dimensions and to find holistic configurations of variables in interaction (Everitt 1993; Lebart et al. 1997). Rather than describing each case by a single variable at a time, it builds types that show how socio-demographic variables interact with each other in specific types of social positions. Note that the interpretation of clusters is based on the comparison of scores across clusters (see *Table 2*). We used a principal component analysis followed by a hierarchical cluster analysis with the Ward's method and squared Euclidean distances on factor scores³ drawn from the mobility practice of both partners and socio-demographic variables. For all variables to have equal weights in the factor analysis irrespective of their number of response categories, we standardized them by dividing them by their maximum value in order to obtain scores ranging from 0 to 1. A series of solutions was examined, and the final eight-category choice was made on the basis of empirical criteria for purposes of clarity, parsimony, and homogeneity and because of the representation of all the main dimensions un-

3 The factor scores were weighted by the eigenvalue of each factor.

derlined by the factor analysis in the eight groups. Profiles of final groupings are presented in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Types of positions in the social space (means)

	Non-mobile men living with partner & children low re-sources	Non-mobile men living with partner high re-sources	Non-mobile women living with partner & children low re-sources	Non-mobile women living with partner & children high re-sources	Persons living without partner without children	Mobile persons living without mobile partner, without children high re-sources	Mobile men living with partner	Women living with mobile partner & children high re-sources	Total	Anova
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII		
Size of Cluster (%)	22	20	27	11	8	1	6	5	100	
N	353	322	420	172	133	19	92	80	1591	
Socio-demographic characteristics										
Sex (Male)	.97	.93	.00	.03	.68	.47	.96	.28	.54	790.05**
Living with partner	1.00	1.00	.99	1.00	.38	.00	1.00	.98	.93	389.21**
Living with children	.53	.32	.54	.59	.08	.11	.37	.49	.44	22.50**
Education	.36	.78	.41	.80	.57	.69	.57	.71	.56	118.70**
Partner's education	.14	.65	.10	.85	.39	.53	.34	.61	.37	140.43**
Household income	.22	.60	.20	.61	.16	.15	.49	.64	.37	81.80**
Municipality size	.13	.41	.19	.24	.60	.52	.18	.19	.26	44.67**
Mobility										
Mobility	.00	.00	.00	.00	.20	1.00	.96	.39	.10	535.59**
Partner's mobility	.00	.00	.08	.00	.15	1.00	.04	.81	.09	230.18**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007, weighted. The weight correction was used to create equal national sample sizes and adjust for response, household size, and oversampling of mobile people biases.

The first type was composed of non-mobile men living with non-mobile partners and children (22% of the sample). Both partners had low credentials and incomes and lived in very small municipalities. Individuals from the second group (20% of the sample) were again non-mobile men living with non-mobile partners, but in this case, they were less likely to live with children and had high levels of income and education. Moreover, their places of residence were located in quite large municipalities. Individuals from cluster three (27% of the sample) were non-mobile women living with non-mobile partners and children in small municipalities. Their educations, as well as that of their partners, were low, like their household incomes. Women from the fourth type (11% of the sample) had the same characteristics as the previous group, except for education and income levels, which were high for both partners. Quite distinctly, individuals from the fifth cluster (8% of the sample) were mainly characterized by the fact of living alone. They were more likely young people in a pre-child situation with a low household income and a residence in a big city. They were more often male and some of them were mobile and/or had mobile partners. As in the previous type, individuals from cluster six (1% of the sample), were more likely young people living alone, but in this case both partners were mobile.

They presented a high level of education and lived more often in large municipalities. This social position concerned only a very small proportion of the weighted sample. These couples were nevertheless kept as a specific category, because of their particular bi-mobile living arrangement. The seventh group (6% of the sample) was composed of mobile men living with non-mobile partners in small municipalities. Finally, women from the last category (5% of the sample) were mainly defined by the mobility of their partners. In some cases, they were themselves mobile. They lived with partners and children and had high levels of education and income. Their residences were located in small municipalities.

Cluster analysis revealed eight contrasted positions in the social space. There were great variations among those types in terms of education and income levels, gender, and living and mobility arrangements. In particular, there was no specific type of mobile women living with non-mobile partners. Mobile women were either living alone in a pre-child situation (clusters five and six) or living with a mobile partner and children (cluster eight).

The frequency distribution of the eight positions was similar across countries (table not reported). Germany was somewhat distinct with an over-representation of individuals living alone and lower proportions of non-mobile men and women living with non-mobile partners and children. Furthermore, men in France experienced less mobility with non-mobile partners, and women in Switzerland were less likely to live with mobile partners and children.

The processes of becoming mobile

The same clustering procedure as for the positions in the social space was followed to build types of processes. From the mobile subsample, a principal component analysis was first used, followed by a hierarchical cluster analysis with the Ward's method and squared Euclidean distances on factor scores⁴ drawn from all variables regarding the decision to become mobile and the perception of the practiced mobility form, presented previously. For all variables to have equal weights in the factor analysis irrespective of their number of response categories, we standardized them by dividing them by their maximum value in order to obtain scores ranging from 0 to 1. Four clusters were chosen because of a clear shift of the decrease in the inter-cluster distances identified by the dendrogram between four and five groups and because of the representation of all the main dimensions underlined by the factor analysis in the four groups. Two oppositions which were underlined by the two main axes of the factor analysis structured the cluster. Profiles of final groupings are presented in *Table 3*.

4 The factor scores were weighted by the eigenvalue of each factor.

Table 3: Types of processes (means)

	Structurally enforced negative process	Network- enforced negative process	Network- enforced positive process	Opportunity driven process	Total	Anova
	I	II	III	IV		
Size of Cluster (%)	48	17	12	23	100	
N	412	147	100	199	858	
Decision to become mobile						
Encouragements	.08	.60	.94	.50	.37	178.75**
Discouragements	.02	.43	.86	.07	.20	276.58**
Perceived decision: easy	.82	.40	.52	.91	.74	111.23**
Perceived decision: free	.85	.72	.89	.96	.86	23.24**
Same decision again today	.83	.61	.82	.94	.82	44.90**
Perception of mobility						
Perception from the others: positive	.36	.33	.68	.81	.49	134.32**
Self-perception: positive	.56	.43	.76	.93	.65	108.62**
Self-thinking: opportunity	.53	.43	.79	.88	.62	110.75**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007, weighted. The weight-correction was used to create similar national sample size and adjust for response and household size biases.

In the type *structurally-enforced negative process* (53% of the sample of mobile respondents), the decision to become mobile was made by individuals without reference to their relational contexts. Network members had neither encouraged nor discouraged individuals to become mobile. The structural components of the social situation were rather viewed as the main factors (lack of job opportunities in the area of residence, lack of affordable accommodation near the workplace, etc.). Mobility was experienced for the most part as negative and compulsory: individuals would have liked to stop it if they could have done so.

Individuals featuring a *network-enforced negative process* (18% of the sample) were also extremely critical about their mobility practice, which they experienced as a need or a constraint. In their case, however, the decision was made collectively, with family and network members strongly intervening in the decision of individuals to become mobile. Although network members perceived the mobility of respondents mainly negatively, they intervened in contradicting ways, some promoting mobility and some being critical of it. Therefore, the decision to become mobile was difficult to make and individuals did not know at the time of the interview if they would make it again. As in the previous type, individuals experienced mobility as a coercion and were not motivated to continue it if not forced by external circumstances or by network members. One illustrative case of this process is an individual who decided to commute against his or her will because the partner refused to move.

Quite distinctly, individuals of cluster 3 (8% of the subsample) considered mobility as an opportunity rather than as a constraint and wished to continue it in the future. As in cluster 2, the decision to become mobile was made after network members voiced their opinions, either negatively or positively. Therefore, the decision was again not easy to make. The outcome of mobility, however, was extremely positive. Therefore, we call this type *network-enforced positive process*. One illustrative case of this process is an individual in a dual-career relationship who decided to take a second residence near the job location after difficult negotiations because it enables both partners to combine two different workplaces.

Finally, cluster four (21% of the subsample of mobile individuals) features a decisional process in which individuals got strong support from their network members and no negative opinion about mobility. The decision was rather easy to make and led to positive outcomes which enticed individuals to remain mobile in the future. Therefore, one may refer to this type of process as an *opportunity-driven process*.

Overall, the cluster analysis revealed four contrasted types of decisions leading to mobility. Three processes of the four implied a pressure from the environment, either structural or relational, to become mobile.

The four process types were quite similarly distributed among the three countries of residence (table not reported). Mobile people from Germany showed, however, some dissimilarities, as they more often experienced structurally and network-enforced negative processes, whereas they were half as likely to have experienced an opportunity-driven process compared with mobile people in the two other countries (15% as compared to 27% in France and 30% in Switzerland).

Accounting for conjugal quality

We next examined if the positions in the social space and the processes of becoming mobile predicted conjugal quality. *Table 4* presents the results of a set of logistic regressions with conjugal satisfaction and conjugal conflict regressed on the positions in the social space and the processes leading to mobility, separately in the three national contexts. Two models were tested. In model A, the impact of positions was estimated, while in model B, the processes were added. In the latter model, the regression was applied on the mobile subsample only, so that the four positions characterized by non-mobility were not included in the analysis. Mobile men living with non-mobile partners and the network-enforced negative process were used as the reference categories.

Table 4: Logistic regressions of conjugal satisfaction and conjugal conflict on position and process types (*Odds Ratios*)

	Conjugal satisfaction A	Conjugal satisfaction B	Conjugal conflict A	Conjugal conflict B
France				
Position types in the social space				
Non-mobile men living with partner & children low resources	1.25		1.08	
Non-mobile men living with partner high resources	1.01		1.50	
Non-mobile women living with partner & children low resources	1.22		2.16	
Non-mobile women living with partner & children high resources	1.01		1.49	
Persons living without partner without children	.61	1.25	1.39	1.66
Mobile persons living without mobile partner without children high resources	.75	.59	1.37	1.40
Mobile men living with partner	–	–	–	–
Women living with mobile partner & children high resources	1.18	.48*	2.77	1.61
Process types of becoming mobile				
Structurally enforced negative		1.29		.26**
Network-enforced negative	–	–	–	–
Network-enforced positive		2.36		.62
Opportunity driven		1.79		.49

	Conjugal satisfaction	Conjugal satisfaction	Conjugal conflict	Conjugal conflict
	A	B	A	B
Fit of the model (χ^2)	3.50	13.00*	11.43	12.54*
Degrees of freedom (Df)	7	6	7	6
N	618	239	619	239
Germany				
Position types in the social space				
Non-mobile men living with partner & children low resources	.92		.96	
Non-mobile men living with partner high resources	.88		1.14	
Non-mobile women living with partner & children low resources	1.08		1.14	
Non-mobile women living with partner & children high resources	.79		1.56	
Persons living without partner without children	.82	1.19	1.39	.95
Mobile persons living without mobile partner without children high resources	.69	.38*	1.14	2.00
Mobile men living with partner	–	–	–	–
Women living with mobile partner & children high resources	1.24	1.18	.65	.80
Process types of becoming mobile				
Structurally enforced negative		2.15*		.32**
Network-enforced negative	–	–	–	–
Network-enforced positive		1.25		.79
Opportunity driven		6.89**		.20*
Fit of the model (χ^2)	1.71	15.21**	2.57	10.75
Degrees of freedom (Df)	7	6	7	6
N	463	231	464	231
Switzerland				
Position types in the social space				
Non-mobile men living with partner & children low resources	.73		.46	
Non-mobile men living with partner high resources	1.11		.96	
Non-mobile women living with partner & children low resources	.90		.54	
Non-mobile women living with partner & children high resources	.67		.77	
Persons living without partner without children	1.35	1.84	.58	.50
Mobile persons living without mobile partner without children high resources	1.25	1.27	.94	1.56
Mobile men living with partner	–	–	–	–
Women living with mobile partner & children high resources	1.17	2.19	1.01	.29
Process types of becoming mobile				
Structurally enforced negative		3.08**		.22**
Network-enforced negative	–	–	–	–
Network-enforced positive		4.27*		.13**
Opportunity driven		4.42**		.28**
Fit of the model (χ^2)	5.28	13.31*	7.77	16.83**
Degrees of freedom (Df)	7	6	7	6
N	506	192	507	193

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007, weighted. In model A, the weight correction was used to create similar national sample sizes and adjust for response, household size, and oversampling of mobile people biases. In model B, the weight correction created similar national sample sizes and adjusted for response and household size biases.

The odds ratios measure the strength of the association between the conjugal quality (dependent variable) and the position and process types (independent variable). When the coefficient is below one, the association is negative. When it is above one, the association is positive.

Results from model A showed that the positions in the social space predicted conjugal satisfaction and, conjugal conflict in none of the three countries. In other terms, controlling for respondents' social embeddedness (life course, sex, education etc.), spatially mobile people do not differ from non-mobile ones in their conjugal satisfaction and their conjugal conflict. With the inclusion of processes (model B), it appeared that bi-mobile couples not living together in Germany and mobile women living with mobile partners and children in France were less satisfied compared with mobile men living with non-mobile partners, who constituted the reference category. But the most significant results concerned the impact of mobility processes. The analyses confirmed that the network-enforced negative process was associated with lower conjugal satisfaction and more frequent conjugal conflicts in Germany and in Switzerland, irrespective of the individuals' position in the social space. In Switzerland, mobile people who experienced one of the three other processes featured higher conjugal quality than people who experienced a network-enforced negative process. In Germany, people who experienced an opportunity-driven or a structurally enforced negative process presented higher conjugal satisfaction and fewer conjugal conflicts than others. In these two countries then, it was not the fact of being mobile that influenced conjugal quality but the process by which individuals entered a mobile way of life. This situation was different in France, where no significant effect of mobility processes on conjugal satisfaction was observed. In this country, only mobile people who experienced a structurally enforced negative process had a lower chance of feeling stressed because of conflicts with their partners.

5. Discussion

Based on the literature, we hypothesized that job mobility had a negative impact on conjugal quality because it promoted higher individual autonomy and lower network density, which were shown to be predictors of conjugal dissatisfaction in various studies (see e.g. Widmer et al. 2006, 2009). The empirical results showed that this hypothesis should be rejected on the basis of the JobMob data. We first considered job mobility per se by differentiating the impact of various mobility arrangements that were stressed by former research. We found that none of the mobility types were associated with lower conjugal satisfaction or more frequent conjugal conflicts than the non-mobile situations. In order to take into account the correlations existing between mobility and other dimensions of individual positions in the social space, we constructed a typology of the social space based on cluster analysis. This enabled us to capture the complex set of interacting variables characterizing the social embeddedness of job mobility in contemporary Western societies better than by using a long set of supposedly independent variables. This second analysis confirmed what was found by the use of the single indicator of job mobility: Job mobility had no impact on conjugal quality in all three countries considered in this analysis.

This unexpected result leads us to propose several explanations. First, a large share of job-mobile individuals experienced their mobility before becoming parents, in a life-course stage in which they were either single or in a relatively new partnership. Because job mobility was associated with social mobility occurring in earlier stages of the profes-

sional career (Viry et al. 2008), it did not interact, in most cases, with the decrease of conjugal satisfaction usually associated with the transition to parenthood (Belsky/Pensky 1988; Cowan/Cowan 1992). Therefore, conjugal satisfaction may not have been strongly decreased by job mobility because couples that experienced it were not subject to the burdens associated with parenthood. This argument certainly does not explain the whole matter, as mobile individuals with children in the JobMob sample were not different than non-mobile parents. But let us again stress that they were relatively few and that they may have developed strategies to deal with the drawbacks of their situations.

A second explanation holds in the large proportion of job-mobile individuals having placed personal autonomy in the foreground, although this autonomy was not directly due to mobility practice (Schneider/Meil 2008). We have indeed good reason to think that a large part of mobile people did not become more independent in the situation of mobility because those couples had already developed individual autonomy. This was probably particularly the case for people who opted for weekend commuting and long-distance relationships. In these couples, in which both partners usually work, career disadvantages could be avoided (Limmer 2005). Because their independence was important, these persons probably considered their mobility less of a burden for their relationship. Again, this interpretation does not explain the whole matter, as mobile individuals in the JobMob sample emphasising conjugal closeness and time spent together were not different from the equivalent non-mobile group. These more cohesive couples may have chosen to commute long distances daily as one possible strategy to limit the burdens of mobility (Limmer 2005). In this way, they could still find a balance between occupational absence and family cohesion by choosing the form of mobility that is most adapted to their degree of autonomy.

One may likewise think that job-mobile people developed other strategies to adapt themselves and their families to their mobile way of life so that their couple cohesion, their social networks, and hereby the quality of their conjugal interactions were not markedly affected by mobility. The abilities of partners to communicate at a distance or the concentration on leisure activities with the family are some examples of such strategies. By a selection effect, one may thus expect that many couples who did not adapt themselves to the constraints caused by mobility stopped either their mobile living arrangement or their relationship. We can additionally think that the effects of the different factors previously highlighted as potentially influencing conjugal quality counterbalanced each other in the specific mobility arrangements of families. Let us take the case of long-distance relationships. This mobility form takes both partners' autonomy to an extreme. But at the same time, empirical research showed that this living arrangement was associated with the maintenance of both partners' dense personal networks (Schneider et al. 2002), which could partly compensate for the effect of personal autonomy on conjugal quality.

Finally, another explanation holds in the importance of the ways in which mobility has come into existence in specific families. From a life-course perspective, we hypothesized that various processes by which individuals become mobile coexisted, some stemming from strategic decisions made by actors who perceived themselves as having a high level of self-mastery, others imposed on individuals by the structural constraints of the environment (lack of jobs, lack of affordable accommodation near the workplace) or by

their network members (necessity of financially supporting the partner or the family, to abandon the idea of moving, and to commute to preserve the integration of the family within its social environment). We expected that these pathways to mobility, in turn, may have had consequences on conjugal quality, because individuals and their partners may have developed frustrations and misunderstandings if the process of becoming mobile could not be attributed to shared cultural meaning among spouses (Berger/Kellner 1964).

This expectation was actually confirmed by the data. In all three countries considered in this paper, the process of becoming mobile had an impact on conjugal quality, although in quite distinct ways. Interestingly, structurally enforced negative mobility was associated with greater conjugal quality than network-enforced negative mobility. In other words, individuals who perceived their experience of mobility as forced by the job market were actually better off in their conjugal interactions than those whose families and networks strongly intervened in the decision making. The impact of this process was rather strong and could not be called into question as it showed up in each of the three countries. Individuals mobile for structural reasons may have been able to deal with the burdens of mobility by attributing the negative consequences of mobility to the context rather than to themselves or to their partners. They may have also experienced mobility as a temporary living arrangement rather than as a permanent way of life. This may have helped them and their partners make sense of the current situation.

In Switzerland, network-enforced positive mobility was additionally clearly associated with higher conjugal satisfaction and less frequent conflict. That is, individuals who experienced with the partner and family a difficult decision-making process regarding mobility but who perceived their current mobility arrangement positively showed higher conjugal quality. In this situation, mobility was probably seen as the best possible compromise between work and family life (Vincent et al. forthcoming), and taking into account the interests of both partners, this reflected positively in the couple dynamics. Furthermore, various studies have shown that it was more the subjective feeling of equity in both partners' family investment than the real investment that influenced conjugal satisfaction (Kellerhals et al. 1988; Widmer et al. 2003). In this regard, mobile individuals for whom the decision was made collectively may have seen their job mobility as an investment for family per se (financial support), contributing to conjugal quality.

In Germany and Switzerland, opportunity-driven mobility was also clearly associated with higher conjugal satisfaction and lower conflict. Because mobility was the consequence of an optimizing calculus made by persons who had several options available, it was probably interpreted as a fruitful step in a career of professional development. In both countries, the careers of elites include spatial mobility, either within the country, from small towns to university areas and business places, or internationally within Europe or to the United States. The strong impediment to having various professional experiences beyond the place in which one grew up may have led several individuals to be mobile in the early stages of their careers, not because they did not find jobs in their birthplaces, but because they found better ones (or more promising ones in the long run of their careers) if they accepted being job-mobile. Occupational mobility as a contribution to self-development goes hand in hand with conjugal quality, which also contributes to the emphasis on the life course servicing the self in an individualistic twist. This is especially the case for individuals who are temporarily or more permanently childless, who significantly empha-

size autonomy more than others in their conjugal interactions (Widmer et al. 2003). Overall, Germany and Switzerland presented similar results on the impact of mobility processes on conjugal quality. France was a special case, as no significant effect of opportunity-driven mobility could be found in the country. One may interpret that as a consequence of the more gendered division of labour in Germany and Switzerland. Indeed, the significant association between opportunity-driven mobility and high conjugal quality in these two national contexts concerned mainly men living with children (table not reported). The strong occupational investment of these fathers may have been more positively related to couple quality in countries characterized by family policies and social norms favouring an unequal division of labour, with women still carrying the main responsibility for childcare and participating in the job market far less.

The study presented here discusses some dimensions associated with job mobility effects on partnership. It has, nevertheless, several limitations. First, the JobMob data provided only limited measures of conjugal quality (two indicators). Additional indicators, such as various conjugal problems, conjugal instability, or coping strategies, would be necessary for a more in-depth examination of the dynamics of conjugal interactions. Second, there are no specific measures of conjugal cohesion, conjugal network density and network symmetry. This would have allowed to test the mediating effect of these variables on the relationship between job mobility and conjugal quality. In addition, the necessity of dealing with various life situations regarding mobility and living arrangements creates some categories that are represented by only very few cases, limiting the statistical power in multivariate analyses. Added to this, because of cross-sectional data, we cannot exclude that questions about the decision of becoming mobile made in the past may be post-hoc reconstructions that mobile individuals developed from family situations experienced at the time of the interview. Finally, one can wonder about the reliability of international comparisons in this kind of survey, because of the variability of some results across countries. The conjugal dissatisfaction is indeed strangely higher in France compared with the situation in the two other countries. Do we then measure the same concept across countries?

Finally, there are several open issues that should be dealt with by further empirical inquiries. First, the analyses are synchronic for the most part. Indeed, mobility forms and conjugal quality were measured at a single point in time. A better understanding of the lack of effect of structural positions certainly goes through a longitudinal panel survey, which would enable us to consider how previously non-mobile couples adapt their relationships to the demands of mobility. Longitudinal data would also allow to consider the possible long-term effects of past mobility practice on conjugal quality. Second, it would be helpful to produce a qualitative understanding of the specific strategies developed by some categories of couples to deal with their mobility.

These analysis dimensions must still be scrupulously studied, but our findings are nevertheless solid. Recurring forms of job-related spatial mobility had no effect on conjugal quality in all three countries considered in this analysis. Conjugal quality rather depended on the process by which the individual has become mobile. Lower quality of conjugal relations concerned mobile people who experienced decisions leading to mobility both negatively and collectively.

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Geographic job mobility and parenthood decisions

Räumliche berufsbedingte Mobilität und Familienentwicklung

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to analyse, differentiated by gender, the effects that high geographical job mobility has on parenthood decisions. In particular, in a first part we will examine whether job mobility fosters childlessness and/or postponement of childbearing and if mobility implies a lower family size. In a second part we will analyse how the specific working conditions of mobile people and their resources for balancing working and private lives affect childlessness and postponement of parenthood. The analysis will be based on a representative survey of people aged 25 to 54, performed in six European countries (Germany, France, Spain, Poland, Switzerland and Belgium) in 2007, oversampling mobile people in order to get enough cases to analyse. Results show that the impact of high job mobility on the timing and quantum of parenthood is important, both for men and women, but stronger for the latter. Besides gender, the strength of the impact depends on the duration of job mobility and when it takes place in the lifecycle. Resources for promoting a better balance of working and private lives such as flexitime and teleworking have no clear impact on parenthood decisions, but having a supportive employer facilitates family development of mobile employees. A greater involvement of men in unpaid work does not seem to facilitate fertility decisions of mobile women.

Zusammenfassung:

In diesem Beitrag wird der Frage nachgegangen, inwieweit hohe berufsbedingte räumliche Mobilität negative Folgen auf die Familienentwicklung hat. Im ersten Teil des Aufsatzes wird getrennt nach Geschlecht analysiert, ob Mobilität Kinderlosigkeit fördert, eine Verschiebung des Geburtenkalenders verursacht und ob sie eine Reduktion der Familiengröße zur Folge hat. Darüber hinaus wird in dem zweiten Teil analysiert, welchen Einfluss bestimmte Arbeitsbedingungen sowie die Ressourcen, die Familien zur Verfügung stehen, um Familie und Beruf zu vereinbaren, auf die Entscheidungen bezüglich Elternschaft ausüben. Die Analyse stützt sich auf eine repräsentative Umfrage in sechs europäischen Ländern (Deutschland, Frankreich, Spanien, Polen, Schweiz und Belgien) mit Personen im Alter zwischen 25 und 54 Jahren. Die Daten wurden in 2007 erhoben. Mobile Erwerbstätige wurden überproportional erhoben, um eine ausreichende Fallzahl zu gewährleisten. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die Auswirkung der Mobilität auf die Familienentwicklung von Bedeutung ist, wobei sich Mobilität von Frauen stärker auswirkt. Darüber hinaus ist von Bedeutung, wann im Lebenslauf Mobilität und Elternschaft stattfinden und wie lange die Phase der mobilen Arbeit andauert. Flexible Arbeitszeiten oder die Möglichkeit, einen Teil der Arbeit zu Hause zu leisten, haben keinen eindeutigen Einfluss auf die Entscheidungen zur Elternschaft von mobilen Erwerbstätigen, wohl aber die Unterstützung durch den Arbeitgeber. Unterstüt-

zung seitens des Partners scheint die Entscheidung mobiler Frauen für Kinder nicht zu fördern.

Key words: job mobility, spatial mobility, fertility, parenthood, balancing working and family lives

Schlagwörter: berufliche Mobilität, räumliche Mobilität, Fertilität, Elternschaft, Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf

Introduction

In recent decades, fertility rates have been decreasing in almost all industrialised countries, reaching values well below the replacement level. The first approach to explain the causes of very low and lowest-low fertility in these countries is the so-called Second Demographic Transition Theory (Lesthaeghe 1983; Van de Kaa 1987), which relates fertility decisions with the increasing individualisation of industrialised societies. According to this theory, individuals have been gaining ever more freedom to decide on life domains that were traditionally subject to tight social norms. Together with other social changes that make family arrangements less important for the material well-being of men and women, this phenomenon has led to a drastic drop in fertility. The main forces behind the fertility decline would be ideational factors, such as changing values and attitudes and increased female autonomy and independence. Later approaches, assuming that fertility decisions were made less determined by social norms and more dependent on the subjective evaluation of personal circumstances and aspirations, that is in a context of family planning, have stressed more structural factors, such as educational investments and labour market circumstances (among others, Blossfeld/Huinink 1991; Billari/Philipov 2004; Bazzurri/Martin García 2007). Special attention has been given to analysing the changing relationship between women's employment and fertility at a macro level. While, in the sixties and seventies, this relationship was negative in the OECD area, it became positive after 1986 (Bewster/Rindfuss 2000; Adsera 2004, Kravdal/Rindfuss 2008), so countries where more women were involved in paid work had higher fertility rates than those where women were less frequently employed. In this context, attention has been devoted to analysing the effects of labour market characteristics on women's fertility levels, showing the relevance of unemployment levels, barriers to reassume paid work after parental leave, type of contracts, availability of part-time jobs, and, more generally, job insecurity for fostering postponement of maternity and lower levels of fertility (Ahn/Mira 2002; Ekert-Jaffé/Hoshi/Lynch/Mougin/Rendal 2002; Meron/Wimer 2002; Adsera 2004; Matysiak/Vignoli 2008; Bernardi/Klärner/von der Lippe 2008). Policies for balancing working and family lives, or greater job security derived from a flexible labour market, would account for higher fertility rates in countries where women's employment is high (Adsera 2004; Muszynska 2007; Matysiak/Vignoli 2008).

The aim of this paper is to analyse, in the context of family planning, how geographic mobility derived from specific working conditions (for short: mobility), as has been defined in the article by Lück and Schneider in this volume, affects parenthood decisions of the involved persons. In particular, in a first part we will examine whether job mobility fosters childlessness and/or postponement of childbearing, first on an aggregate level and

then differentiating by mobility type. Based on the family size of mobile people whose reproductive period has ended, we will also speculate about whether the observed postponement strategy could translate into lower family size. In a second part we will focus not only on the effects of mobility but analyse also how the specific working conditions of mobile people and their resources for balancing working and private lives affect their parenthood decisions.

The analysis will be performed at a micro level. We will not perform a cross-country comparative analysis, as those cited above, but will analyse the mobility experience of working people in the six countries of our database on an aggregate level. As the database we have at hand provides only cross-sectional data, though with retrospective information, we can perform the analysis only with regard to comparing different relevant groups and inferring the corresponding impact. Although fertility patterns change over time and parenthood decisions change with age, controlling for age and comparing homogenous age groups provide reliable information about the effects of the circumstances of job mobility on family development.

As parenthood decisions, in the context of family planning, are made mostly by balancing pros and cons of the decision, taking into account the personal circumstances of the individuals, we will analyse only those cases where individuals are living in a partnership or have ever lived together with a partner longer than one year. Although, in the context of the individualisation process, parenthood and partnership have been differentiated so that it is no longer necessary to have a partner to become a parent, continuous partnership is a key condition when deciding on parenthood for most people. As individuals with no partnership cohabitation experience are overrepresented among mobile people (Schneider/Meil 2008), the decision to exclude them from the analysis is not ideologically driven, but was made to make more evident the effects of mobility on family development and avoid the necessity of controlling systematically by partnership status.

The data are drawn from "Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe", a survey of people living in six European countries (Germany, France, Spain, Switzerland, Poland, and Belgium) and representative at the national level of people aged 25 to 54. Spatially mobile people were oversampled in order to get a minimum of 400 people per country, so that overall sample size includes 7220 interviews. A design weight corrects the oversampling for descriptive analyses. The survey was conducted by phone during the first half of 2007 (Lück/Schneider in this issue; Huynen/Montulet/Hubert/Lück/Orain 2008; Huynen/Hubert/Lück 2010).

Geographical job mobility and its effects on parenthood decisions

Mobile people are more often childless than non-mobile people (27 and 43%, $p=.000$) people, and if they have children, they also have fewer (1.96 and 2.12, $p=.005$). But these differences are strongly conditioned by age and gender, as well as by partnership status. As gender is a key dimension, we will analyse the impact of mobility on family development differentially for men and women.

Men's mobility and its effects on parenthood decisions

Men who have ever lived or are living together with a partner tend to be more often childless if they are mobile than otherwise (31 and 22%, $p=.001$), but if they have children, they do not have fewer (2.06 and 2.07). Mobile men also tend to be more often childless if they possess university degrees than otherwise (42 and 26%, $p=.000$), and if they do have children, they have fewer (1.96 compared to 2.10 otherwise, $p=.05$). In principle then, mobility seems to foster childlessness among men. But mobility patterns are strongly conditioned by age (Schneider/Meil 2008), as is fertility. Many mobile people use mobility as a strategy for advancement in their labour and professional careers, mainly during the first stages of their involvement in the labour market. Once they have stabilised their position in the career, in the market, or in their working organisation, they give up their mobility (Bonnet/Orain 2010). Thirty-nine percent of mobile men are aged 35 or less, while that is only the case for 30% of non-mobiles, and, in Poland and Spain, the figures are 56% and 52%, respectively.

Table 1: Percentage of childless men by age and mobility experience

	Never-mobile	Past-mobile	Mobile	Total
25-29	51	67	67	60+
30-34	28	36	53	36***
35-39	27	35	28	29
40-44	17	10	15	14
45-49	14	14	11	14
50-54	9	15	11	11
Total	22	25	31	25***

Note: The difference of each cell till 100 is the proportion of men who have children. Men who have ever lived or are living with a partner in a common household. + $p<.10$, * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$. Weight: w_equal

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007.

However, this difference in childlessness disappears after controlling for age. While, among men younger than 35, those who are mobile are more often childless, among older men, there is no difference (cp. *Table 1*). The difference according to educational level also disappears after controlling for age. Men who were mobile in the past, but not when the interview was performed, when younger than 35, are also more often childless than non-mobiles, but differences disappear also among older men. Although fertility changes over time and the data we are analysing are cross-sectional, these results suggest that mobile men are postponing their paternity rather than renouncing it because of job mobility, whatever their educational level.

The subjective evaluation of the involved men reinforces this interpretation. Asked about whether their working conditions had some role in their being childless, mobile men living in a partnership and younger than 35 state more often than past-mobiles and even more frequently than never-mobiles that their working conditions had at least some influence in their being childless (55% of mobiles, 50% of past-mobiles, and 40% of never-mobiles, $p=.11$). Among men older than 35, on the contrary, there are no statistically significant differences between the different mobility experiences.

The age at which mobile men had their children also confirms the postponement strategy of mobile men. Controlling for the age at which mobile men became fathers and their mobility situation at the moment, a fact that we can control for because we created a mobility biography for mobile people, we observe that men who were mobile before they had their first child, were 3.1 years older than those who were mobile after fatherhood and 2.5 years older than never-mobiles. Even though there are strong differences according to the educational level, as is well known (among others, Blossfeld/Huinink 1991), these differences hold for all main educational groups (cp. *Table 2*). Men who became mobile after having become fathers, on the contrary, did not postpone their parenthood decision, as compared to other fathers; they were even about one year younger than never-mobiles. The same pattern of postponement of fatherhood derived from mobility can also be observed for the age at second parenthood, again for all educational levels. Therefore, couples in which men are mobile tend to postpone parenthood decisions further than other non-mobile couples, irrespective their educational degree, yet mobile men with a lower educational level tend to have children earlier than mobiles with higher degrees.

Table 2: Mean age at first and second parenthood of men by different mobility experiences

	First child			Second child		
	Less tertiary degree	Tertiary degree	Total	Less tertiary degree	Tertiary degree	Total
Mobiles	27.2	29.7	28.0***	29.9	31.8	30.5**
Child born before mobile	26.2	28.6	26.9***	29.2	30.0	29.3+
Child born while mobile	29.3	31.8	30.2***	31.3	33.8	32.2***
Past-mobiles	27.1	29.6	27.9***	29.8	32.7	30.4***
Never-mobiles	27.3	29.5	27.8***	30.3	32.2	30.8***
Total	27.2	29.6	27.9***	30.0	32.3	30.6***

Note: Men who have ever lived or are living with a partner in a common household. + $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Weight: w_equal

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007.

The subjective perception of involved persons is also quite coherent with this result. So the proportion of mobile and past-mobile men who state that they had their children later than initially planned for job-related reasons is twice as big as among never-mobiles, yet not very widespread (12% of mobiles, 12% of past-mobiles, and 5% of never-mobiles, $p = .000$). Those who became fathers while mobile make this statement more frequently than those who began their mobility after their first child was born, though differences are not statistically significant at conventional levels (14 and 11%, $p = .30$). Further, the proportion of men in their typical reproductive age (younger than 40 years) who acknowledge that they are currently postponing having more children for job-related reasons also show that mobile men postpone their fertility decisions more often than never-mobiles (10% of mobiles, 13% of past-mobiles, and 5% of never-mobiles, $p = .003$).

Table 3: Mean number of children of fathers by mobility status

	Never-mobiles	Past-mobiles	All mobile	mobiles 1st child before mobile	1st child while mobile	Total
25-29	1.39	1.25	1.27	1.36	1.13	1.33
30-34	1.80	1.57	1.54	1.72	1.31	1.68+
35-39	2.06	1.78	2.14	2.25	1.77	1.99*
40-44	2.15	2.39	2.10	2.27	1.84	2.24*
45-49	2.13	2.22	2.37	2.41	1.99	2.20
50-54	2.34	2.10	2.30	2.39	2.10	2.26
Total	2.08	2.05	2.06	2.21	1.73	2.07

Note: Childless men are not counted to calculate the mean. Men who have ever lived or are living with a partner in a common household. + $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Weight: w_equal and w_mob_equal

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007.

The postponement of fertility decisions often translates into a smaller family size (among others, Kohler/Billari/Ortega 2002), but this seems not to be the case among most mobile men. While among younger generations aged less than 35, mobile fathers and those who were mobile in the past have fewer children than those who were never mobile as a consequence of the postponement strategy, among older generations, there are no significant differences between different mobility experiences (cp. Table 3). This result holds also when controlling for educational level (results not shown). However, men who fathered their children while mobile tend to have fewer children than other mobiles and never-mobiles, whatever their age, which implies that only when mobility holds for very long periods and begins before the building of a family does it translate into smaller families. Therefore, recurring mobiles (*Long-distance commuters*, *Overnighters* and *Multi-mobiles*) are at greater risk of having smaller families. But as this longstanding mobility experience affects only a small proportion of all mobile people, most mobile men have no smaller families than other men with partnership experience.

Summarising, if we analyse real family size as well as the subjective evaluations of men who cohabit or have cohabited with a partner, mobility tends to postpone parenthood decisions so that mobiles and past-mobiles are more often childless at younger ages than never-mobiles. When they become parents, only when the decision was made while mobile were they much older than other men (about 2 years), but not when mobility began after the transition into parenthood. The postponement of the transition into parenthood does not necessarily translate into a smaller family, as can be deduced from the comparison of family size and the subjective evaluation of older men according to their mobility experience. Only men who were mobile before becoming a parent and stay mobile over time tend to have smaller families.

Women's mobility and its effects on maternity decisions

Mobile women who have cohabited or are cohabiting with a partner are much more frequently childless than never-mobiles and past-mobiles (40, 15 and 17%, $p = .000$) and also

more often than mobile men (41 compared to 31%, $p=.000$). This pattern holds for all age groups (with the exception of 45-49), while women who were mobile in the past do not renounce maternity more often than never-mobiles (cp. *Table 4*). These results suggest that mobility hinders maternity decisions, forcing many women who want to become mothers to give up their mobile job. We have not collected data about the reasons for giving up mobility, but the fact that there are no significant differences in childlessness among women who were mobile in the past and those who never experienced mobility supports this interpretation. In addition, the fact that the proportion of mobile women, being much lower than that among men, decreases sharply with age in all countries (Schneider/Meil 2008), also suggests that a sizeable proportion of women give up mobility in order to achieve a better balance between private and working life. The higher the educational level, the more frequently mobile women are childless (55% among those with a tertiary degree, as compared to 30% without, $p=.000$), a relationship that remains stable for most age groups (with the exception of women older than 45).

Table 4: Percentage of childless women by age and mobility experience

	Never-mobile	Past-mobile	mobile	Total
25-29	53	39	79	53***
30-34	13	26	46	20***
35-39	11	18	32	15**
40-44	8	8	19	9
45-49	10	15	19	12
50-54	6	6	19	7+
Total	15	17	40	18***

Note: Women who have ever lived or are living with a partner in a common household. + $p<.10$. * $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$. *** $p<.001$. Weight: w_equal

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007.

Subjective evaluations about the reasons for not having children also point in this direction. Among women aged less than 35, more mobile than never mobile women with partnership experience state that their career has at least some importance in their being childless (65 and 51%, $p=.11$). This is also frequently true among those who were mobile in the past (61%). Among older women, where the proportion of those who are mobile is low (around 6% in the different age groups), there is however no difference according to mobility experience. In this case, educational level does not play a significant role, as there are no statistical significant differences between both educational levels, both for younger ($p=.38$) and older women ($p=.58$). Therefore, while, among men, mobility fosters postponement of fertility decisions but not childlessness, among women, it fosters postponement and childlessness, particularly among well-educated professional women, but also among those with lower educational degrees.

Among women, mobility fosters not only childlessness but also postponement of fertility decisions with similar patterns as seen among men. Women who were mobile when they had their first child were aged around 2.8 years older than never-mobiles, the same amount as among mobile men, but (unlike among men) more when they had a university degree than otherwise (2.5 years, as compared to 1.7 years older than never-mobiles).

Those who became mobile after they became mothers, on the contrary, were younger (0.6 years, as compared to never-mobiles). Past-mobile women, unlike men, have also postponed their transition to motherhood around one year, particularly those with higher professional skills. The same pattern can also be found in the case of the second child. Despite this postponement in childbearing, mobile women do not tend to compensate through a strategy of concentration of their reproductive period, having therefore higher parity children later than other women (cp. *Table 8*).

Subjective evaluation also supports the conclusion that mobile women with partnership experience and children have postponed maternity. Mothers in their typical reproductive period (younger than 40 years old) state more frequently that they are postponing having more children because of their career when they are mobile than non-mobile (20 and 7%, $p=.000$), irrespective of their age and the time when the first child was born ($p=.46$). This result also holds if we split non-mobile women between those who have a paid job and those who do not: Mobile mothers postpone having children nearly three times more often than working non-mobile mothers (20 and 8%, $p=.000$). However, those who were mobile in the past do not state more frequently than never-mobiles that they are postponing having another child (9 and 7%, $p=.34$). In general, mobile and past-mobile mothers state more frequently than never-mobiles that they had their children later than initially planned because of their career (16, 15, and 9%, $p=.000$), which holds roughly for all age groups. However, women who had their first child while mobile do not state more frequently that they are currently postponing having more children ($p=.46$), nor that their children were born later than initially planned ($p=.66$), even if they had them much later.

Table 5: Mean age at first and second parenthood of men by different mobility experiences

	First child			Second child		
	Non tertiary degree	Tertiary degree	Total	Non tertiary degree	Tertiary degree	Total
Mobiles	25.0	28.0	26.0***	27.5	31.2	28.6***
Child born before mobile	24.5	26.9	25.2***	26.3	30.1	27.2***
Child born while mobile	26.6	29.7	28.1***	30.5	32.5	31.3***
Past-mobiles	25.6	28.9	26.4***	28.2	30.9	28.8***
Never-mobiles	24.9	27.1	25.3***	27.6	29.7	28.1***
Total	25.1	27.7	25.7***	27.8	30.2	28.3***

Note: Women who have ever lived or are living with a partner in a common household. + $p<.10$. * $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$. *** $p<.001$. Weight: w_equal and w_mob_equal .

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007.

If we consider the family size of those who have children, mobile mothers have fewer children than mobiles in the past (1.82 and 2.05, $p=.06$) and fewer than never-mobiles (2.17, $p=.001$). Mobiles in the past also have fewer than those who never experienced mobility ($p=.06$). This pattern holds for both women who became mothers while mobile as well as for those who became mobile after bearing their first child, but only till they are around 40 years old. On the other hand, among older women, there are no statistically significant differences among the age groups at conventional levels. But if we broaden

somewhat the statistical significance level, we can observe that mobile mothers have fewer children than non-mobile mothers (2.08, as compared to 2.27, $p=.19$, among women older than 40), particularly when they became mothers while mobile. These results suggest a postponement of fertility decisions among those women who have managed to balance their family life with mobility requirements. This also translates into a smaller family size if they remain mobile over time. The fact that women's mobility decreases steadily with age suggests that many mothers give up mobility in order to accomplish their family project and those who remain or become mobile at older ages are mainly those who can fulfil their family project and combine it with mobility. Mobile women with higher educational degrees are more affected by difficulties balancing their mobility, family, and work so that they tend to have a smaller family size than those with no tertiary degree (1.9 children, as compared to 2.1 among those older than 40, $p=.16$; if we also include childless women when computing completed fertility, the negative impact on well-educated mobile women with partnership experience is even stronger, 1.4, as compared to 1.8, $p=.03$).

Table 6: Mean number of children of mothers by mobility status

	Never-mobiles	Past-mobiles	Mobiles All mobiles	1st child before mobile	1st child while mobile	Total
25-29	1.61	1.47	1.16	1.08	1.27	1.54++
30-34	1.96	1.75	1.59	1.69	1.18	1.88*
35-39	2.21	1.99	1.65	1.58	1.57	2.12*
40-44	2.24	2.19	1.76	1.97	1.80	2.20++
45-49	2.34	2.36	2.40	2.33	2.25	2.35
50-54	2.32	2.15	1.96	1.98	1.79	2.25
Total	2.17	2.05	1.82	1.88	1.62	2.12***

Note: Childless women are not counted to calculate the mean. Women who have ever lived or are living with a partner in a common household. ++ < 0.15. + $p<.10$. * $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$. *** $p<.001$. Weight: w_{equal} and w_{mob_equal} .

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007.

Mothers whose reproductive periods have typically ended (i.e., older than 40) and who had a mobility experience state more frequently than never-mobiles that they have fewer children than initially planned because of their career: 17% of mobile women and 11% of women who were mobile in the past make this statement, as compared to 8% of those who never had a job that required high mobility ($p=.06$). The subjective perception of mobile women reinforces then the conclusion that women's mobility translates into smaller families.

As a general conclusion, therefore, among men mobility tends to foster a postponement of parenthood, but not always a smaller family size. Smaller family size occurs only among those with long-term mobility who were mobile before entering parenthood. Among women, long-term mobility more often implies childlessness and not only postponement but also smaller families. Women who give up their mobility before their reproductive period ends also tend to postpone maternity but neither end up with a smaller family size nor are more often childless. Further, mobile women with higher educational

degrees tend to be more affected by the difficulties balancing mobility, family, and work so that they are more frequently childless and tend to have fewer children if they remain mobile over their family-building period.

Differences by countries

The negative impact of mobility on parenthood decisions can be found in all countries, though at different intensities. The postponement effect is particularly high among men in Switzerland and among women in Spain, but in terms of completed fertility the strongest impact can be found among mobile German women, who are much more frequently childless or have fewer children than non-mobile German women and mobile women in other countries.

Ages at first birth of children vary from country to country, but in all countries, mobile men with children postpone their parenthood decision if they are mobile before fathering a child, but if they become mobile afterwards, they have their children even earlier than never-mobiles in all countries but Switzerland. The length of the delay compared with never-mobiles varies greatly from one country to another, ranging from 0.9 years in Germany to a maximum of 6.5 in Switzerland, where a sizeable proportion of mobile men entered fatherhood when they were over 40. With the exception of Switzerland, the delay tends to be higher in countries where mobile people are mainly younger, as is the case in Spain and Poland.

The family size of mobile men older than 40 (an age at which most men will have no more children) is not smaller than among never-mobiles of the same age in any country. The same happens among those who were mobile in the past. The only exception to this pattern seems to be Poland, where mobile men of those ages have 1.8 children compared with 2.2 among non-mobiles (including in the mean those without children, $p=.05$ for un-weighted data). Therefore, in most countries, men's mobility does not imply having fewer children than non-mobiles. Yet, mobile people at those ages who began fatherhood while mobile tend to have fewer children than non-mobiles in all countries for which there are enough cases to make the comparison (France, Spain, Switzerland, and Belgium). As a consequence, although in most analyzed cases men's mobility does not seem to be at the cost of the family life project, this is not the case in all countries or when mobility lasts for very long periods.

Table 7: Family development indicators by mobility experience, gender and country

	Mean age at first birth			Mean number of children of people aged 40+ (including childless)				
	(1) Born while mobile	(2) Born before mobile	(3) Never mobile	(1)-(3) Delay	(4) Mobile	(5) Non-mobile	(6) Total	(4)-(5) Difference
Men								
Germany	29,2	26,7	28,3	0,9	1,9	2,0	2,0	-0,1
France	29,2	26,2	28,1	1,1	2,1	2,1	2,1	0,0
Spain	31,6	28,0	29,0	2,6	1,8	1,6	1,6	0,2
Switzerland	34,7	31,6	28,2	6,5	1,9	2,0	2,0	-0,1
Poland	28,3	24,9	26,2	2,1	1,8	2,2	2,1	-0,4
Belgium	29,3	26,6	28,0	1,3	2,3	1,9	2,0	0,4
Total	30,3	26,9	27,8	2,5	2,0	2,0	2,0	0,0
Women								
Germany	29,5	26,2	25,4	4,1	1,1	2,0	2,0	-0,9
France	27,5	26,7	25,2	2,3	1,8	2,2	2,1	-0,3
Spain	31,2	25,5	26,7	4,5	1,7	2,0	2,0	-0,3
Switzerland	27,8	26,1	26,7	0,9	1,6	1,9	1,9	-0,4
Poland	26,4	22,5	23,8	2,7	2,0	2,3	2,3	-0,3
Belgium	26,3	25,2	24,9	1,4	1,9	2,2	2,2	-0,3
Total	28,3	25,1	25,6	2,6	1,6	2,1	2,1	-0,5

Note: Due to the small number of cases, the mean number of children includes in this case also those without children. Weight: w_nation.

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007.

In the case of women, mobility in all countries also fosters postponement of fertility decisions when they become mothers while mobile, but not otherwise, and this is true in some countries even more than among men. The length of the delay compared with never-mobiles also varies greatly from one country to another, ranging from 0.9 years in Switzerland to 4.5 in Spain. Among women, the delay tends also to be higher in countries where mobility is more prevalent among young people than otherwise (with the exception of Germany, where the delay of 4.1 years is high and mobility is not concentrated among young people). The postponement effect is stronger among women than among men in most countries, only in Switzerland it is less than among men. Differences however vary greatly from one country to another, ranging from 3.2 years in Germany to 0.3 years in Belgium.

Unlike among men, in all countries family size of mobile women older than 40 is smaller than among non-mobiles, either because they are more often childless, or because they have fewer children. The negative impact of mobility on fertility, however, varies from one country to another. Also counting in those who are childless, mobile women older than 40 have between 0.28 and 0.35 fewer children than non-mobiles, while in Germany the difference is three times higher, reaching 0.94 children. The degree of negative impact does not seem conditioned by the scope of family-friendly policies developed in different countries, as countries with very different approaches to the work-family challenge show similar negative impacts (e.g., France compared with Spain, Belgium

compared with Poland). In all countries, then, but particularly in Germany, mobility for women is at the cost of not having children or of having fewer than non-mobiles, either because those who are mobile decide so in light of difficulties to balance mobility, work, and family, or because becoming mobile is manageable only when they have no children or only a few.

Mobility type and parenthood decisions

Besides gender, the effects of mobility on family development also differ by mobility type¹. Relocation derived from job requirements is strongly associated with childlessness, both for men (49% of recent relocators with partnership experience have no children) and women (55%), due to the fact that this form of job mobility takes place mainly during the first stages of the working career (Bonnet/Orain 2010). Fifty-six percent of men who are recent relocators are aged 25 to 34, a percentage that is even greater among women (65%). The open question is whether this form of mobility fosters childlessness or rather if childless people are more willing to relocate for job-related reasons, as has been shown they are (Schneider/Meil 2008). Subjective evaluation of the people concerned indicates that relocating for job-related reasons plays a role in people's being childless, particularly among women, as 65% of recent relocator women who have or had a partner state that they have no children because of their career, as compared to 49% of never-mobiles. Among men, many recent relocators relate in some way their childlessness with their career (48%), but not more than never-mobiles (43%). These results suggest that relocation for job-related reasons could play some role in childlessness among women, but not among men, an interpretation that would be supported when we focus not only on people who have recently relocated (3 years before the interview) but also on those who relocated in the past. While men who have ever relocated for job-related reasons are not more often childless than others (23%, as compared to 26%, $p=.23$), women with such an experience are more often childless (21%, as compared to 17%, $p=.05$).

When recent relocators become parents after relocation, they are much older than never-mobiles, but not necessarily much older than other mobiles. Only recent relocator men enter parenthood later than other mobiles (when they were 32.5 years old, as compared to 30.2 years old for all mobile men), while this was not the case among women (27.6 years old, as compared to 28.1 years old for all mobile women). Further relocation for job-related reasons is not associated with a smaller family size. As this form of mobility is so strongly conditioned by age and, unlike other mobility forms, is usually a discrete event and not a recurring experience, the comparison of mean number of children is misleading. Most recent relocators will not have finished their reproductive period when they relocate. For those who do it at older ages, unlike serial relocators, it is likely that they will not be affected by relocation during their family-building period. Therefore, the fact that recent relocators older than 40 do not have fewer children than never-mobiles, irrespective of whether it is a man's or a woman's job that causes the move, cannot be interpreted as evidence that relocation does not affect family size. But if we consider all peo-

1 For the definition of the different mobility types, see Lück and Schneider's article in this volume.

ple who have ever experienced relocation for a job-related reason, we can observe that they do not have fewer children than other people, neither men (2.1 in both cases) nor women (2.0, as compared to 2.1, cp. *Table 8*).

Therefore, relocation for job-related reasons is associated with greater childlessness among women but not men; in both cases, it generates a postponement of parenthood decisions, but does not seem to translate into a smaller family size among those who have children.

Overnighting is the mobility pattern that is most affected by gender, as it is mostly a male phenomenon (86% of all overnights are men), while not conditioned by age for either men ($p=.78$) or women ($p=.57$). The effects of frequent and continuous overnighting out of the home on family development for men is small, as it is not associated either with childlessness or with a smaller family size (there are no statistically significant differences on both dimensions either considering all ages or only people older than 40 –cp. *Table 8*). The only sizeable effect is that when the first child is born while mobile in this form, the age of the transition into parenthood is much later than among never-mobiles (29.7 years old, as compared to 27.8 years old), but not later than among other mobiles who father their children while mobile (30.2). However, when this form of mobility is maintained during the whole family-building period, it tends to translate into a smaller family size (1.7 children among those who are mobile before parenthood, as compared to 2.4 among those who become overnights after building a family, $p=.000$, cp. *Table 8*).

Table 8: Main family development indicators by mobility type

	LDC	OV	RR	MM	Total	N-M
Men						
% childless 25-54	26	28	49	35	31***	22
% childless 40+	10	13	24	8	12*	13
Mean age at first birth	28.3	27.5	28.3	28.0	28.0	27.8
Born before being mobile	27.0	26.0	28.3	26.9	26.9**	
Born while mobile	30.4	29.7	32.5	29.4	30.2	
Mean age at second birth	30.9	29.4	29.1	32.2	30.3***	30.7
Time lag between first and second child	3.5	3.0	2.8	4.2	3.3***	3.5
Mean number of children 25-54	2.06	2.1	2.05	2.05	2.1	2.1
Mean number of children 40+	2.31	2.15	2.54	2.24	2.27	2.19
Women						
% childless 25-54	31	40	55	62	40***	15
% childless 40+	20	:	29	33	20	8
Mean age at first birth	26.4	24.5	25.9	26.2	26.0*	25.3
Born before being mobile	25.4	24.0	25.9	23.8	25.2	
Born while mobile	28.3	26.1	27.6	28.6	28.1	
Mean age at second birth	29.1	26.7	28.0	28.1	28.5*	28.0
Time lag between first and second child	4.0	2.9	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.5
Mean number of children 25-54	1.8	2.0	1.7	1.5	1.8	2.2
Mean number of children 40+	2.1	2.1	2.3	1.8	2.1	2.3

Note: LDC= Long-distance commuter. OV= Overnighter. RR= Recent Relocator. MM= Multi-mobile. N-M = Never-mobile. * $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$. *** $p<.001$. Significance levels refer to the comparison between the different mobility types. Weight: w_equal and w_mob_equal .

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007.

In the case of women, the fact that there are so few with this mobility pattern, unlike other forms (14% of overnighters, as compared to 38% of other mobility types, are women, $p=.000$) suggests that it is hardly compatible with family life projects so that most women are not really willing to accept this mobility requirement. Those who are mobile in this form are more often childless than never-mobiles (40%, as compared to 15%) and than men (28%), but we cannot extrapolate whether this translates into lower completed fertility, as there are not enough cases among older women. As with men and other mobile women, they also postpone their transition to motherhood if they were mobile before bearing a child, but this postponement is much shorter than among other forms of mobility (0.8 years, as compared to 2.8 years) and among men (1.9 years). However, the family size of these mobile women is not smaller than that of other women, irrespective of age and mobility status when the transition to motherhood occurred. ($p=.69$).

In the case of *long-distance commuting* (LDC), we can observe a similar pattern as among overnighters, but without so intense negative effects on family development for women. LDC men are not more frequently childless than never-mobiles, nor do they have a smaller family size, but postpone parenthood while they are mobile before fathering their first child (2.6 years later than never-mobiles). Men who are LDC throughout their family-building period tend, however, to have fewer children (2.0 among those who entered fatherhood while LDC, as compared to 2.4 among those who entered afterwards).

LDC women are more often childless, even at later ages. If they have children, they have fewer than never-mobiles, though the difference in family size disappears among older women, which can be interpreted in the sense that this type of mobility does not foster a smaller family size among women. Unlike among men, the mobility status when the transition to motherhood occurred does not affect the final number of children. However, the postponement effect is strong (3.0 years), even more so than when they are overnighters or than among men.

Multi-mobility is a mobility form that appears mostly at young ages among women (65% are aged 25-34), but not among men, where it is not so strongly related with age. Additionally, it is not so uncommon among women as could be expected, as 1% of working women are multi-mobile, as compared to 2% of working men, not having statistically significant differences according to gender ($p=.29$). Multi-mobility is associated with higher levels of childlessness, both among men and women, but controlling for age it can be observed only for women. As other forms of mobility, it implies a postponement of the transition to parenthood, but not more than other mobility types, neither among men nor women. However, when they have more than one child, the time lag between the first and second child tends to be larger than among never-mobiles and, among men, also more than other mobility types. However, the family size of multi-mobile men is not affected by the specificities of this type of mobility, while, in the case of women, it is also associated with smaller families. Therefore, while, among men, this mobility form only generates a postponement of family development, in the case of women, it also generates childlessness and a smaller family size.

All in all, the effects of mobility on family development are far stronger along the gender dimension than according to mobility type. For men, no mobility type appears to have stronger effects on family development than others. The most relevant dimension for assessing the impact is not the specific form that mobility takes, but the duration of the mobil-

ity experience during the family-building process and whether mobility happens before or after entering parenthood. If mobility becomes a lifestyle that holds for very long periods and begins early in the individual's working life, this tends to translate into late parenthood and the building of a smaller family, irrespective of the form it takes. For women, besides the stronger impact on their family life project, only LDC seems to have a smaller impact in terms of childlessness and family size; all other forms show self-selection processes concentrating the mobility experience to younger ages and abandoning mobility to fulfil family aspirations and lead to more frequent childlessness and/or smaller families.

Working conditions, gender, and family development among mobile people

In this section, we will analyse the effects of specific working conditions and employer measures to promote a better balance between working and private lives on childlessness and postponement of parenthood. Although parenthood decisions do not require having a partner, we will focus on cohabiting partners because we want to analyse the impact of the partner's working conditions as well as the impact of his or her role in housework. We assume that parenthood decisions are made conditioned by the evaluation of the possibilities of balancing working and family lives. In this context, the partner's working conditions and cooperation between partners could play a relevant role, particularly in the case of women, but also in the case of men. It can be assumed that a mobile woman will be more prone to have children if the time she has to invest in work and mobility is not all-consuming and/or if she has some flexibility in organising her working time and/or if she can count on the collaboration of her partner. In the case of a mobile man, it can be assumed that he will be more prone to father a child, in the most traditional version, if he has a partner who can assume all the work of taking care of the children or, in a more egalitarian version, if he has time enough left from work to devote himself to his family obligations.

The analytical technique we will use is logistic regression analysis where we will first analyse how working conditions affect the odds ratio of the probability of not having children, as compared to the probability of having at least one child. Through this analysis, we will identify which working conditions are more associated with childlessness and which working conditions facilitate having children. Implicit to this analytic strategy is the assumption that everybody living in a partnership wants to have a child, which is only true for a proportion of childless couples, but not for all. As we have collected data on the subjective evaluation of how personal working experience affects fertility decisions, we will also analyse, for people living in a partnership without children, whether the fact of not having children is influenced by their working conditions². In particular, we will analyse the odds ratio of the probability of stating that job-related reasons played an important or very important role in not having children, as compared to the probability that they did not play any significant role. The information we get through the analysis of this question is much more precise than just looking at who has children or not, as it also provides clues for causal interpretation. For the analysis of the postponement of fertility deci-

2 The question which was asked in the interview was: "How important are job-related reasons for the fact that you not have children? Are they not important at all, not important, important, or very important?"

sions among people with children, we will use the question included in the questionnaire; it asked whether the interviewed person was postponing having more children because of his or her career. We will also perform a logistic regression analysis of the odds ratio of answering yes instead of no.

As control variables, we will introduce age as a continuous variable while educational level and (in the case of the estimation of the odds ratios of postponing fertility) the number of children will be treated as dummy variables, as we do not have enough cases to perform a more detailed analysis. As variables measuring working conditions, we will focus on the two most relevant variables of time investment in work. On one side, we will consider the time devoted to paid work: part time, when they invest less than 35 hours a week; full time, when they invest between 35 and 42 hours; and long hours, when they invest more than 42. In the case of the partner's working time, we will also consider whether he or she has no paid work. As a reference point, we will take the situation when paid work is full time (35 to 42 hours a week), as it is quite common among job mobile people (44%). Further, we will also consider the four mobility types we have analysed in the previous section; though in the case of the partner, we will distinguish only whether he or she has a mobile job or not.

As resources for balancing working and private lives, we will consider, on one side, those which are available at the working place and, on the other, those which are available in the private sphere. In the first category, we will focus on the most commonly considered measures of flexitime and teleworking possibilities (Riedmann/Bielenski/Szczurowska/Wagner 2006; Parent-Thirion/Fernández Macías/Hurley/Vermeulen 2007). But having an understanding supervisor is also particularly important (Meil/García Sainz/Luque/Ayuso 2007; Rossi 2006; Meil/Ayuso/Mahía 2010), as it is he or she who controls and evaluates the work done by the employee and adjusts formal working conditions, generating more or less overload and margin to balance working and private obligations. To measure this kind of resource, we rely on *perceived support*, the feeling of being supported by the employer³, which we have collected only for mobile people. In the case of the self-employed, we consider that they feel supported by themselves. As resources available in the private sphere, we will include the involvement of both partners in housework, distinguishing whether housework is performed equally by both partners or mainly by the woman, according to the evaluation of the interviewed person.

As gender is a key dimension, we will perform and discuss our analysis separately for men and women, as we did before. In *Table 9*, we have collected the estimated odds ratios for our independent variables in the case of men. We have made the estimations not only for mobile men but also for all working men, irrespective of their mobility status.

Men's working conditions and parenthood decisions

Against a first impression that the workload has an important impact on the parenthood decisions of mobile men, the detailed analysis of the odds ratios reveal that, in most cases, how much time men devote to paid work (in the workplace and in the associated mobility) does not affect their family projects in a relevant manner.

3 The question in the questionnaire was, how well do you feel supported by your employer? Not at all, a little, reasonably well, or very well.

Controlling for age, mobile men with a part-time job are more likely to be childless, to state that it is because of job-related reasons, and, when they have children (controlling for the number) to state that they are postponing having more children because of their career, as compared to full-time job mobiles. This pattern seems to reflect the persistence of some traits of the bread-winner role model, whereby a man has to earn a full income in order to be a proper father. But not all working men show this pattern, as can be seen in columns 4 and 6 of *Table 9*, which suggest that it could reflect more the economic situation of the couple than specific role models, because high mobility is associated with high financial and personal costs (Meil/Ayuso/Mahía 2010). In any case, only a small proportion of mobile men work part time (6%, mostly younger ones).

Mobile men who have to work long hours, which is quite frequent (48%), do not base their family life project on the time they have to devote to paid work. They are not more often childless than full-time mobiles, although those without children tend to attribute it more frequently to their career. But those with children are not postponing more often having one more child than full-time mobiles. Compared to all working men, mobiles do not appear to be more conditioned in their family planning by the time they have to invest in paid work than other men. In fact, non-mobile men working long hours tend to say much more often that they do not have children or are postponing having more children because of their career. Therefore, the time invested in paid work does not hinder the family development of mobile men more than others.

As we have seen before, mobile men are more often childless than non-mobiles, but, after controlling for age, this difference disappears, which suggests that the extra time they have to invest in their working life, taken from their private life, does not foster childlessness. This same result is confirmed in column 4 of *Table 9*. The type that this mobility adopts does not seem to play any significant role. So compared to long-distance commuters, who have to invest 2 hours a day in their commute between home and work, overnighters, who have to sleep very frequently away from home for job-related reasons (more than 60 times a year), are not more often childless, do not state more frequently that they have no children because of their career, or, if they have children, state more frequently that they are postponing (cp. *Table 9*, column 1). The same happens with multi-mobiles and non-mobiles (cp. *Table 9*, column 4). Only men (living in a partnership) who have relocated recently are more often childless, whatever their age, which suggests that relocation is much more probable when there are no children, as balancing relocation and family is associated with important adaptive costs for all family members (Green/Canny 2003).

The resources for balancing working and private lives have only a limited impact on facilitating the family development of mobile men. Ironically, those who enjoy flexitime are more likely to be childless, but they state more often that it is because of other reasons than their career (if we accept a significance level higher than the conventional 5%) and it has no impact on the timing of having children. The same result can be observed if we consider the whole working population of men, which implies, according to our data, that this kind of measure in the case of men has no impact on family development. This does not mean that it does not help in balancing working and family lives (Parent-Thirion/Fernández Macía/Hurley/Vermeylen 2007), as it reduces work overload and increases satisfaction (Meil/Ayuso/Mahía 2010).

Table 9: Odds ratios of the multivariate logistic regression analysis on parenthood decisions of men

	Mobile men			All working men		
	Has no children	No child because job career	Postponing because job career	Has no children	No child because job career	Postponing because job career
Age	0.86***	0.96+	1.02	0.90***	0.97+	0.92
Educational level						
Ref.: Less than tertiary	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tertiary	1.7***	1.11	4.1***	1.49**	0.61+	0.86
Nr. Children						
Ref.: 1 child			1			1
2 or more			0.19**			0.63++
Work time						
Part-time (34 or less)	4.55***	6.26***	6.15+	1.30	2.81*	0.66
Ref.: Full-time (35-42)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Exceeding (43+)	0.87	2.04*	0.81	0.91	1.71	2.68**
Mobility status all						
Ref.: Non-mobile				1	1	1
LDC				1.06	0.98	0.70
Overnighter				1.14	1.09	1.14
Recent Relocator				1.93*	0.93	0.43
Multi-mobile				1.29	1.43	0.50
Mobility status mobile						
Ref.: mobile	1	1	1			
LDC	0.92	0.76	2.07			
Overnighter	0.82	1.32	3.19			
Recent Relocator	1.28	0.71	1.11			
Multi-mobile						
Flexi-time						
Ref.: no possibility	1	1	1	1	1	1
At least some	1.31++	0.64++	0.58	1.25+	0.64+	0.65
Tele-working						
Ref.: no possibility	1	1	1	1	1	1
At least once a month	0.72+	0.83	3.11*	0.72*	1.39	1.01
Employer's support						
Ref. no support	1	1	1			
Supports mobility	0.81	0.79	0.37+			
Housework division						
Ref. Woman does most	1	1	1	1	1	1
Both equal or man more	1.58**	1.47++	3.86**	1.03	1.28	1.16
Work time partner						
Not working for pay	0.73++			0.38***		
Part-time (34 or less)	0.46**			0.35***		
Full-time (35-42)	1			1		
Exceeding (43+)	3.10***			1.43*		
Partner mobile						
Ref. not mobile	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mobile	1.90*	1.92+	0.63	3.77***	1.97*	3.66+
Number of cases	1072	299	336	1773	397	579
Likelihood ratio	926.5	340.0	137.7	1523.3	428.9	300.0

Note: All men living in a common household with a partner. ++ < 0.15. + p<.10. * p<.05. ** p<.01. *** p<.001. Weight: w_mob_equal.

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007.

The effects of teleworking on family development are also unclear, as, on one side, mobile men who can work at least sometimes at home are less likely to be childless, but

those who have no children attribute it to their career in the same proportion as those who cannot telework. On the other side, when they have children, it is much more likely that they are postponing the decision to have another one than those who have no possibility of working at home. Therefore, teleworking does not facilitate the family development of mobile men, nor does it for non-mobile men, which again does not imply that it does not help in balancing working and family lives. Although it does not reduce work overload, it increases satisfaction (Meil/Ayuso/Mahía 2010).

Despite the fact that flexitime and teleworking do not facilitate the family development of men, the perception of being supported by the employer facilitates the decision to have children: Mobiles who feel supported state less frequently that they are postponing having more children because of their career, and, if we accept significance levels higher than 5%, they are also less often childless and state less frequently that it is due to their career. However, the results do not appear as strong as could be expected. Even policies designed by employers to support mobile men or an understanding work climate do not appear clearly to facilitate the parenthood decisions of mobile men, that does not mean that they do not help men to balance their working and family lives and that they do not reduce overload and increase satisfaction.

The implication of men in housework does not seem to facilitate family development among mobile men. On the contrary, it seems to hinder having children, as mobile men highly involved in housework are more often childless and state more frequently that it is because of their career; and, if they have children, they also state more often that they are postponing having more children. Egalitarian men seem to be overburdened by the workload derived from long working hours (working time plus the time invested in mobility) and the time invested in housework. However, most egalitarian men have children (65%, as compared to 86% of non-egalitarians, $p=.000$). This negative effect of gender equality on family development seems to be a specific characteristic of mobile men because, among all working men, there are no statistically significant differences among the estimated odds ratios for any of the variables.

For the family development of mobile men, the working conditions of their partner are much more relevant than theirs. For mobile men whose partner has paid work, the more time she invests in paid work, the more likely it is that they are childless. However, mobile men whose partner is a homemaker do not more often have children than those whose partner works full time. If the partner is also mobile, the likelihood of being childless is also much higher, as the odds ratio is twice when she is not mobile. Compared to non-mobiles, the effects on the degree of involvement of the partner in paid work is more intense among mobiles than non-mobiles (cp. columns 1 and 4 in *Table 9*). The subjective evaluation of parenthood decisions is not relevant in this case because it refers to the working conditions of the interviewed, not of the partner.

Summarising, it can be said that the amount of time invested in paid work has no clear impact on the family development of mobile men, while the time invested in unpaid housework deter them from having children or induce them to postpone the decision. Egalitarian men are more often childless because of their career and are more likely to postpone having more children. Although flexitime and teleworking have ambiguous effects, a supportive work environment seems to facilitate their family life projects, though not in an unquestionable way. However, the factor that appears to be more relevant for the family development

of partnerships where the man is mobile is the working time and mobility status of the partner, who usually has to assume more housework and childcare (Meil 2010).

Women's working conditions and fertility decisions

In the case of mobile women, the time they invest in paid work has much more impact on their family development than among men, and it appears as one the most relevant dimensions when mobile women decide on motherhood. The less time they devote to paid work, the lower the risk ratio of being childless and the less likely it is due to their career. The same could be expected in relation with postponing having one more child among those with children, but the significance level is too high to state it.

As has been discussed before, while, among men, the type of mobility is not relevant for its impact on family development, women in other forms of mobility than long-distance commuting have a greater likelihood of remaining childless, but not of postponing have more children due to their career.

Resources for improving the balance between work, mobility, and family do not seem to play an important role in facilitating family development. The possibility of having some flexibility in organising the workday is not associated with a lower risk ratio of being childless, rather the contrary, and it is neither associated with being childless or postponing having more children due to career. The possibility of doing some work at home is neither associated clearly with less childlessness nor reduces the probability of postponing having more children or not having any at all because of the career. In other terms, neither flexitime nor teleworking seems to facilitate mobile women's decisions on motherhood, which does not imply that these working conditions can contribute to feeling less frequently overloaded and/or more often satisfied, as they do (Meil/Ayuso/Mahía 2010). The incapacity of these kind of measures to facilitate motherhood is not derived from the specific working conditions of mobile women, but can also be found when working women are non-mobile, as can be observed in *Table 10* (columns 4 to 6).

Despite these unsatisfactory results, the feeling of being supported by the employer does not seem to be completely irrelevant for the family development of mobile women. When they feel supported by their employer, it is less likely that they are childless and, if we broaden the significance level, also less likely to postpone having more children because of their career. Therefore, employers who have developed family-friendly policies for their mobile employees reduce not only the stress levels of their employees and increase their satisfaction with work (Meil/Ayuso/Mahía 2010) but also facilitate their family development, both of men as well as of women. If we compare the estimators for mobile men and women, we can observe that the impact is clearer in the case of women.

To have a collaborative partner at home does not seem to play any significant role in the fertility decisions of mobile women, as it is neither associated with lower risk ratios of being childless due to career nor of postponing having more children. The same result appears for all working women, which implies that men's involvement in housework does not facilitate the fertility decisions of women, and, as we have seen, it can even hamper them when men are mobile. With the emergence of the "negotiating family" (Nave-Herz 2003; Meil 2006), it seems that in the "negotiation" between partners when they decide to have a child, the involvement of men in housework does not play any significant role. Women, therefore, seem

to decide on motherhood mostly without considering the predisposition of their partner to be actively involved in childcare, irrespective of whether they are mobile (cp. *Table 10*).

Table 10: Odds ratios of the multivariate logistic regression analysis on fertility decisions of women

	Mobile women			All working women		
	Has no children	No child because job career	Postponing because job career	Has no children	No child because job career	Postponing because job career
Age	0.90***	0.96+	1.06	0.88***	0.99	0.94
Educational level						
Ref.: Less than tertiary	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tertiary	1.92**	1.04	0.88	1.72***	1.04	1.59
Nr. Children						
Ref.: 1 child			1			1
2 or more			0.23**			0.51*
Work time						
Part-time (34 or less)	0.51*	0.57	1.34	2.21***	0.36*	1.08
Ref.: Full-time (35-42)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Exceeding (43+)	1.71+	1.90+	1.15	3.60***	1.19	1.18
Mobility status						
Ref.: Non-mobile				1	1	1
LDC				1.73+	1.70	2.81*
Overnighter				3.86**	1.80	1.30
Recent Relocator				1.90++	1.92	1.90
Multi-mobile				5.23**	2.42++	5.42
Mobility status						
Ref.: LDC	1	1	1			
Overnighter	1.89*	0.91	0.60			
Recent Relocator	1.15	0.87	1.07			
Multi-mobile	3.24**	1.51	1.57			
Flexi-time						
Ref.: no possibility	1	1	1	1	1	1
At least some	1.51+	0.88	0.61	1.29+	0.73	0.67
Tele-working						
Ref.: no possibility	1	1	1	1	1	1
At least once a month	0.79	2.23*	1.59	0.67*	1.30	3.00**
Employer's support						
Ref. no support	1	1	1			
Supports mobility	1.07	0.41*	0.53++			
Housework division						
Ref. Woman does most	1	1	1	1	1	1
Both equal or man more	0.98	1.18	1.35	1.29+	0.77	1.02
Work time partner						
Not working for pay	0.47			1.93*	2.39+	0.13++
Part-time (34 or less)	1.02			0.83	1.84	3.02*
Full-time (35-42)	1			1	1	1
Exceeding (43+)	0.91			0.74+	2.23**	0.70
Partner mobile						
Ref. not mobile	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mobile	1.12	0.74	0.64	1.18	0.66	0.77
Number of cases	456	186	152	1372	187	527
Likelihood ratio	480.3	233.7	130.6	1107.5	228.1	277.5

Note: All men living in a common household with a partner. ++ < 0.15. + p<.10. * p<.05. ** p<.01. *** p<.001. Weight: w_mob_equal

Source: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe 2007.

This result is reinforced by the fact that the time invested by the partner in paid work has no significant effect on the fertility decisions of mobile women, neither on being childless, nor on postponing having more children. Even the fact that the partner is also mobile, that is both partners are mobile, seems not to have any relevant impact, which can be due to the fact that there are too few cases in this situation (15% of cohabiting couples are both job mobile). At first glance, these results seem contradictory with those we have obtained analysing men's evaluations, but we have to keep in mind that mobile women are not the partners of mobile men. If we consider the analysis for all women, we can observe that the results we have obtained are quite consistent and that women tend to take into account their partner's workload: If the partner works long hours, it is more likely that they are childless and that they postpone fertility, while, if he works part time, it is more likely that they postpone fertility. Even if the significance levels do not reach, in all cases, the conventional levels of acceptance, the estimators point in that direction.

Summarising, it can be said that, besides age, childlessness among mobile women living in a partnership is conditioned mainly by the time they invest in paid work and employers' policies for balancing working and family lives. The postponement of having children, after controlling by the number of children, is not so clearly influenced by the working conditions, but a family-friendly policy in the workplace facilitates the realisation of maternity aspirations.

Conclusion

In the context of the family planning norm prevailing in developed societies, working conditions have emerged as one of the relevant circumstances that people take into account when pondering having children and deciding on the number of children they will have. Demographic literature on the topic has focused mainly on analysing the impact of work stability and flexibility of the labour market on the timing and quantum of fertility, paying attention also to the role of the institutional framework introduced to facilitate balancing working and family lives. This article has focused on the effects that high job mobility have on timing and quantum of parenthood of people with partnership experience, both men and women, as well as the possible impact of measures introduced by the employer to facilitate the balancing of mobility, work, and family have on the parenthood behaviour of mobile people living in a partnership.

The impact of high job mobility on the timing and quantum of parenthood is important, both for men and women, but stronger for the latter. Besides gender, the strength of the impact depends on the duration of job mobility and when it takes place in the lifecycle.

For men, job mobility implies an important postponement of the transition into fatherhood of about 2 years when mobility takes place before fathering a child, both for the first child as well as for a second child. When the parenthood decision was made before becoming job mobile, mobility, as could be expected, has no impact on the timing. The postponement of parenthood does not translate into a higher probability to be childless, so job mobile men have the same probability of being childless as never-mobiles and past-mobiles, but it can affect final family size. When high job mobility is not a more or less

extended experience in the life course, but an enduring experience that began before deciding on parenthood and holds over the family building period, it tends to translate into a smaller family size. On the contrary, when job mobility becomes part of the working conditions after the transition into fatherhood, it does not appear to be at the cost of a smaller family size. Mobile men as a whole, however, do not have a smaller family size than never-mobiles, as is the case also with past-mobiles. The impact of mobility presents the same patterns for all educational levels, so highly educated men are neither more nor less affected by postponement and reduction of family size as less-educated men.

For women, who are much less involved in job mobility than men, job mobility has a much greater impact in their family life project than for men. The fact that mobility experiences decrease sharply with age among women but not among men suggests that there is a self-selection process whereby many women give up mobility during their reproductive period in order to accomplish their family life project. Mobility implies, for women, a higher risk of remaining childless; in fact, childlessness among mobile women whose reproductive period has ended is 2.5 higher than among never-mobiles and 1.7 higher than among men. Mobility implies also a postponement of the transition into motherhood when mobility occurs prior to the parenthood decision of about 2.4 years for the first child and 3.2 for the second, much more than among men, but not when mobility becomes a working condition after the transition into motherhood. When mobility is an enduring process over the reproductive period, it also translates into a smaller family size. Unlike for men, the family life project of women with higher levels of education are much more affected by mobility than those with no university degree, as they remain much more often childless and have fewer children.

The subjective evaluation of the impact of career on their family projects and their statements about their parenthood decisions confirm the results obtained analysing the timing and quantum of parenthood, both for women and men.

Mobility can take different forms. We have distinguished four broad types: Long-distance commuting, Overnighting, Relocation and Multi-mobility. None of these mobility types is irrelevant for family development, but none appears to be particularly family friendly. As stated before, its impact depends on the duration and timing, as well as on gender. For men, no mobility type has a greater or lesser impact on their family life projects for none of the analysed dimensions. For women, on the contrary, LDC appears as the one with the smallest impact in terms of childlessness and family size.

The impact of mobility on family development is conditioned not only by gender, age and when mobility occurs in the lifecycle, but also by the resources at hand for balancing working and mobility lives. As working conditions and availability of this kind of resources change over time, we have analysed its impact on the subjective perceptions of being childless and postponing having children for job-related reasons.

The results show that, for men, the time invested in paid work and in mobility does not appear to be relevant for their family development. Mobility implies a postponement in parenthood decisions, but the form it takes is not relevant. Active involvement of men in housework, on the contrary, deters them from having children and induces postponement of the decision. Greater time availability of the partner for family life has the opposite effect. The working conditions of the partner are much more relevant, as the amount of time invested in paid work and the mobility requirements of the partner are strongly

related to childlessness, but not so clearly to postponement. This can be due to the lack of enough cases where both partners are mobile because men whose partner is job mobile are much more often childless and are postponing parenthood decisions (columns 4 to 6 in *Table 8*). Measures that usually are associated with promoting a better balance between working and family lives, such as flexitime and teleworking, do not seem to facilitate the transition into parenthood. However, a supporting employer seems to facilitate this transition, but not so strongly as could be expected, which does not mean that it is irrelevant for other dimensions of family life.

For women, on the contrary, the time they invest in paid work has much more impact on their family development than among men, and it appears as one the most relevant dimensions when mobile women decide on motherhood. Active involvement of the partner does not appear to facilitate their decisions as do neither flexitime nor teleworking. However, having a supportive employer facilitates the realisation of maternity aspirations.

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Beate Collet & Estelle Bonnet

Decisions concerning job-related spatial mobility and their impact on family careers in France and Germany¹

Entscheidungen zu berufsbedingter räumlicher Mobilität und ihre Auswirkungen auf Familienkarrieren in Frankreich und Deutschland

Abstract:

Job-related spatial mobility raises questions about women's and men's professional life. It does not always accompany a specific job or a promotion; it may also arise as the consequence of being in a dual-career couple. We will study how the decision is handled by bi-active couples, compared to couples who live according to the more classical 'male breadwinner model', and how other socio-demographic factors, especially the presence of children, influence the decision in favour of mobility. We will compare data on France and Germany drawn from the European Survey *Job Mobilities and Family Lives* (2007) realised in six European countries. Women's employment rates and family policies are not the same in the two countries. While France has for several years provided solutions to help women remain in the labour force while raising children, Germany only recently abandoned a mother-centred family policy which pushed women to stay at home while raising their children. Statistical data will be completed by results from two qualitative studies to see more precisely how job mobility is experienced concretely. One study was realised in France in 2006. Results from the other study in Germany in 2001 will be reported. Both place the accent on mobile people who spend several days a week away from home. A typology of 'family careers', developed in the French study and ap-

Zusammenfassung:

Beruflich bedingte räumliche Mobilität stellt die Frage nach der Erwerbsarbeit von Männern und Frauen. Es geht dabei aber nicht nur um die Entscheidung für einen bestimmten Beruf oder für einen Karriereschritt. Mobilität kann auch eine Folge von Doppelerwerbstätigkeit eines Paares sein. Wir gehen der Frage nach, wie die Entscheidung bei bi-aktiven Paaren im Verhältnis zu mono-aktiven Paaren getroffen wird und inwieweit andere soziodemographische Faktoren, besonders die Anwesenheit von Kindern in der Familie, Mobilitätsentscheidungen beeinflussen. Wir vergleichen deutsche und französische Daten, die in einer europäischen in sechs Ländern durchgeführten Studie *Job Mobilities and Family Lives* (2007) erhoben wurden. Die Erwerbstätigkeit von Frauen und die Familienpolitik sind in beiden Ländern relativ unterschiedlich. Während Frankreich schon seit Jahren Mütter mit konkreten Maßnahmen unterstützt, die es ermöglichen einer Erwerbstätigkeit nachzugehen, ist die Familienpolitik in Deutschland erst kürzlich von dem mutterzentrierten Modell abgekommen, dass Frauen darin unterstützte zuhause zu bleiben und die Kinder zu erziehen. Die statistische Auswertung wird vervollständigt durch Ergebnisse aus zwei qualitativen Studien. Die eine wurde 2006 in Frankreich durchgeführt. Die Ergebnisse der zweiten 2001 in Deutschland durchgeführten Studie

1 We express our thanks to Marilyne Goutagny, statistician (ISH Lyon), for her statistical support and Gabrielle Varro, sociologist, for the English translation.

plied to the French and German data shows that couples differ with regard to the decision-making processes on mobility, which reveal different underlying partnership patterns.

Key words: job mobility, spatial mobility. France-Germany comparison, family career, mobility decision process, conjugal negotiation

werden berichtet. Beide Studien interessieren sich für Mobilitätsformen, die mehrere Tage Abwesenheit von zuhause verlangen. Eine Typologie unterschiedlicher „Familienkarrieren“, die im Rahmen der französischen Studie ausgearbeitet worden ist, wird hier zur Analyse des deutschen und französischen Materials herangezogen. Die Paare unterscheiden sich in Bezug auf den Entscheidungsprozess bezüglich der Mobilität und dieser wiederum hat unterschiedliche Partnerschaftskonzepte als Grundlage.

Schlagwörter: berufliche Mobilität, räumliche Mobilität, Familienbiographie, Entscheidung zur Mobilität, partnerschaftliche Aushandlungsprozesse

Introduction

For several years now, research has questioned the new forms of mobility connected to professional activity (Wagner 1989; Boltanski/Chiapello 1999; Schneider et al. 2002; Kaufmann 2002; Bonnet/Aubertel 2006). Whether in the form of long commutes, lengthy absences from home (several nights a week), professional travelling, international missions or moving to a new place of residence, mobility is likely to have effects on the equilibrium between the professional and private spheres (the couple, the family). Mobility also affects gender relations. Being more present today in the labour market, women may be mobile for professional reasons, and perhaps they are less inclined than in the past to follow their partner's career.

This article analyses the mobility decision process on the basis of the work-family balance among men and women living as couples and faced with a situation of geographic mobility demands. Its originality resides in the fact that we study the realities of job mobility not only from the individual standpoint but also from the couple's point of view. We assume that job related spatial mobility may be a decision which depends on how couples handle mobility demands. Since many are dual-earner couples, the question arises as to how they meet the demands of mobility, decide between the mobility of one or the other, and between professional and family consequences. Does the situation of mobility of one of the partners influence the other's activity? Is the career of one given priority to the detriment of the other's?

Mobility decisions of course involve structural constraints, mainly labour market and infrastructure, but they also require decisions on a more micro-sociological level in the interactional processes of the couple concerning family life. Though mobility may be an opportunity to access employment or to better one's professional situation, it may also be a solution that allows both partners to sustain an acceptable professional position. According to each partner's employment situation and activity, but also depending on their family situation and whether or not there are children involved, mobility leaves room for various forms of arbitration and for negotiations within the couple. The way the mobility

decision is integrated in the “family career” may also depend on the conjugal conception the partners share.

Methodological design

Three studies carried out on the subject over the past years provide the quantitative and qualitative material which will permit us to answer these questions. We seize the opportunity here to buttress quantitative data from the European research programme *Job Mobilities and Family Lives* by life experiences collected while carrying out qualitative research among persons confronted by mobility in the course of their professional activity. In so doing, this article backs up the statistical data that permits us to grasp the breadth of the phenomena, with qualitative data that enhances the comprehensive dimension of our thinking on the issue by examining the couple’s conjugal conceptions and negotiations in the light of mobility. The comparison between Germany and France will supplement our analysis by confronting the effects of the work-family balance in two different national contexts.

The analyses in this article are based on two sources of data and three sources of information. Some preliminary precisions are necessary because these studies do not have the same status and were conducted among different populations. The first source is *Job Mobilities and Family Lives* (JobMob, for short; <http://www.jobmob-and-famlives.eu>), a quantitative, representative survey carried out in 2007 in six European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, Spain and Switzerland). It focused on different types of job-related mobility experiences and their consequences on family life. More than 7,000 Europeans in the employable age span (25-54 years old) were interviewed, based on a standard questionnaire. The French survey reached 1,223 individuals, the survey in Germany 1,663 persons. The figures respect a certain regional distribution and were pondered according to sex, age and education level, referring to representative samples in both countries.

The survey distinguished four main types of mobility having a specific impact on family life: *LDC (Long-distance commuters)* who must regularly make a return trip of more than two hours every working day; *Recent Relocators* who moved house for professional reasons (during the three years preceding the survey); *Overnighters* whose job calls for them to spend at least 60 nights a year away from home;² and *Multi-mobiles*, who combine various types of mobility – they may, for instance, have recently moved house, while still shuttling back and forth two hours every day.

Persons not geographically mobile for professional reasons at the time of the survey were also placed into three categories: non-mobiles who had experienced mobility in the past but then stopped (*Experienced*); non-mobiles who explicitly rejected a mobility offer in the course of their career (*Rejectors*), and lastly, individuals who had never been confronted by a professional mobility demand or offer (*Unchallenged*).

2 Sixty nights a year is an average. Sometimes the person is away 2-3 nights a week on a regular basis except during holidays, or several months in a row as in the case of seasonal labourers. It was felt that 60 nights of absence were sufficient to affect family life.

The second source of data is a qualitative study, *Professional geographic mobility and family careers*, which was carried out in France in 2005-2006 by Estelle Bonnet, Beate Collet and Béatrice Maurines, among a population who was mobile for professional reasons (Bonnet et al. 2006a). Individuals lived or had lived in couples, with or without children. One of the partners was away from home at least two nights a week. Forty-five persons (21 men and 24 women) were interviewed by way of semi-directive, biographical interviews. There were 13 couples, of whom both partners participated in the study. Interviewees were between 35 and 55 years old. Those who were mobile were mainly high-level or mid-level executives. They occupied positions in the private sector (IT, consulting, commerce, banking) and the public sector (local or national civil service, teaching or nation-wide services such as the Postal Service or the utility company (Électricité de France). Being the authors of this study, we had access to all interview material. The typology proposed in the second part of this article has been elaborated on the basis of this material.³

As a third source of information, not as a source of analysis, results from the qualitative German study *Berufsmobilität und Lebensform* (Professional mobility and living arrangements) are reviewed and compared to the French data. The study was carried out in 2000/2001 by Norbert F. Schneider, Kerstin Hartmann and Ruth Limmer (Schneider et al. 2001). It consisted of a considerable number of standardized interviews (786) and in-depth interviews (309) with persons experiencing different types of mobility, and with a control group of non-mobile persons. The group of *Shuttles*, comparable to the form of mobility studied in the French study, included 40 mobile persons, of whom 27 were in couples in which both partners were interviewed. The present article attempts a comparison with French job mobility reality by using results presented in the final research report produced by the authors (Schneider/Limmer/Ruckdeschel 2002).

Explicitly comparing two countries, neighbours in Europe and fundamental partners in the EU, seems particularly valuable. Close as to their economic choices, standard of living and infrastructures, these countries' family traditions and child-care systems are nevertheless quite different. In Germany, children's education is considered much more a family affair than a state institution (Ostner, 1994), collective child care (crèches, leisure centres) and school organization (full-time school schedules starting at the age of 3) are not as customary as in France (Martin 2010).⁴ These family factors, as well as the differences concerning French and German women's labour market involvement,⁵ may directly influence the job mobility realities in the two countries.

3 For a first presentation of the typology in French, cf. Bonnet/Collet 2009.

4 The considerable drop of the fertility rate (average number of children for a woman) in Germany (1.32; in France 1.98 in the same year, 2006, Eurostat) incited Germany to change its family policy, but recent reforms (increased family allowances, diversification of child-care for infants and longer days for school children) have as yet not shown their effects in the face of deeply ingrained cultural traditions (Klammer/Letablier 2008).

5 French and German women's rates of activity are practically identical, approx. 78% in each country (field: 25-54 age group). The negligible difference between France and Germany is confirmed by Eurostat for 2006: 59% in France and 62% in Germany for the 15-64 age group. On the other hand, the JobMob survey, as well as Eurostat, show that French women work full time more often than German women (53% vs. 43%).

In a first section, this article will account for the different configurations of mobility among couples in Germany and in France, and analyse the social characteristics of couples in situations of mobility (age, diplomas, activity, family situations with or without the presence of children, etc.) and the types of mobility which are theirs. In a second section, to carry out our comprehensive analysis, we will present a typology of conjugal conceptions that makes the couple's negotiations over mobility for professional reasons explicit.

1. Couples in France and Germany facing job-related geographic mobility

The quantitative survey *Job Mobilities and Family Lives* shows the level attained by job-related geographic mobility in Germany and France. First statistical analyses will concentrate on comparing the different forms of mobility in Germany and France on the basis of job involvement. In so doing, the first national differences in mobility reality that will appear may help us to interpret further differences in the decision-making process.

Job-related geographic mobility can be interpreted according to individual or conjugal rationales, for the mobility of one combines with the professional activity and mobility or non-mobility of the other. We will first account for the different types of mobility in both countries and the potential differences related to gender. We will then go on to "read" mobility from the standpoint of the conjugal entity, separating dual-career from mono-active couples and comparing mobile and non-mobile couples.

1.1 Types of job-related geographic mobility, gender differences and family situations

We open up the analysis with some of the facts we need to circumscribe the general situation (cf. *Table 1*). Job-related geographic mobility is more prevalent in Germany than in France: when total population is considered, it is superior by three points, by four when considering only the employed. The gap widens again (by five points) when considering solely persons working full-time. Germany stands out by a greater number of *LDCs* (*Long-distance commuters*), *Overnighters* and *Multi-mobiles*. *Recent Relocators* are the only type of mobiles more numerous in France. In Germany people have more often recurrent forms of mobility, they live in fixed places and cover long distances to reach their working place. In France, where the mobility rate of the younger age-group is higher than the rate of the older people, we assume that many young employees relocate to live near their place of work. This fact is also confirmed by the higher rate of *Experienced* among the non-mobiles in France than in Germany.

There are several structural reasons for these basic national differences (labour market and distribution of the population in the country) but more individual reasons, depending on how people in the specific national context relate to their job, also come into play.⁶

6 To develop the reasons for these differences would be too much of a digression; for more general results, cf. Schneider/Meil 2008.

Table 1: Types of mobility in Germany and in France according to the employment situation

	Germany			France		
	% of the total sample	% employed persons	% persons working full time	% of the total sample	% employed persons	% persons working full time
Mobiles (total)	17	19	22	14	15	17
Long-distance commuters	6	7	8	4	5	5
Overnighters	5	5	7	4	5	5
Recent Relocators	4	4	4	5	4	5
Multi-mobiles	2	3	3	1	1	2
Non-mobiles (total)	83	81	78	86	85	83
Experienced ^A	32	31	32	35	36	38
Rejectors	6	6	7	6	6	5
Unchallenged	45	44	39	45	43	40
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

^A including persons who rejected mobility demands

Weight nation; total sample: N=1496 for Germany and N=949 for France: $V = .061$; $p = .175$.

Employed population: N= 1261 for Germany and N=803 for France: $V = .079$; $p = .046$.

Population working full time: N= 925 for Germany and N= 648 for France: $V = .098$; $p = .019$.

Full time employment = working at least 35 hours weekly

Source: From the European survey “Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe”.

However, the two countries do not differ much if one takes into account both past and present mobility. Mobility in both countries is far from being a marginal phenomenon, since it concerns more than one out of two individuals.

Job-related mobility is distributed differently according to gender. Both in Germany and in France and in very similar proportions, it is principally masculine.⁷ But comparing the two countries reveals a gender distribution that is different with respect to the choice of form of mobility. In France, mobile women are more readily *LDCs*. Mobility requiring regular absences from home – especially nights – (*Multi-mobiles* or *Overnighters*) is more of a masculine phenomenon. Men are also more frequent among *Recent Relocators*. Moving the entire family seems more probable when it is the man who is professionally mobile. Women’s professional careers do not seem to give way to changing the family’s place of residence, thus *ipso facto* causing these women’s mobility (Bonnet *et al.* 2008). Contrary to France, the situation in Germany does not show any specific form of mobility for women compared to men. This difference concerning chosen forms of mobility may be due to the fact that mobile French women have children more often than mobile German women do (56% vs. 38%). When we consider cohabiting children, the gap is even wider, only 22% of mobile German women have cohabiting children against 49% of mobile French women. We can suppose that many French women choose a form of mobility which allows them to come home every day to look after the children. In Germany, women seem to drop out of the labour market when they become mothers and *ipso facto* are less often job mobile.

7 Among mobiles, 54% are men and 46% women in Germany, 53% men and 47% women in France.

As to *Overnighters*, a group that the second, qualitative part of the article will concentrate on more specifically, it is a type of mobility that is clearly more masculine in both countries (80% in Germany; 78% in France).

Men and women's job-related mobility also takes on different meanings depending on their partner's participation in the labour market. The Franco-German comparison reveals contrasting realities on that point. First, a general fact should be mentioned: German men (whether they are mobile or not) live with partners employed full-time (37%) less often than French men do (67%). Such are the consequences of differing cultural traditions sustained by different social and family policies in the two countries. Education of children is more family-centred in Germany than it is in France; as a consequence, mothers in Germany less often have paid work. Family policies and social institutions did not really encourage mothers' participation in the labour market until recent years. The male breadwinner model still seems to be more common in Germany than in France.⁸

This "general fact" changes radically, however, if we take into consideration men's or women's mobility status. In Germany, mobile men live more often with partners employed full-time than non-mobile men (45% vs. 35%) and they live less often with unemployed women than non-mobile men (31% vs. 38%). This result goes against the general tendency in Germany. But we may suppose – a fact that we will come across again in the qualitative part of the article – that these couples have children less often than others (they may not have children as they are in the younger age categories). In France, the opposite tendency is the case. Although female partners' full-time activity by far exceeds what is observed in Germany, mobile French men live more often with unemployed women than non-mobile men do (22% vs. 15%) and less often with full-time employed women (60% vs. 69%).⁹ Men's mobility in France thus seems more often accompanied by women's pulling out of the labour market. It seems that a more traditional model of conjugal roles takes over when men are mobile (Collet 2010).

Concerning female mobility, results are again not in conformity with the "general facts". Like mobile men, mobile German women more often have partners who occupy full-time jobs (92% vs. 88%) and less often an unemployed partner than non-mobile women (4% vs. 8%). On the contrary, in France, although mobile women are also for the most part in couples where the man has full-time employment, they are fewer compared with non-mobile women (85% vs. 90%). They live more often with unemployed or part-time employed partners than non-mobile women (9% and 6% compared to 7% and 3%) and also than mobile women in Germany do (4%).

These statistical results are the first signs that job-related spatial mobility interacts with couples' lives in interesting ways. The latter surface in the German-French comparison: Couples with mobile partners are not the same in France and in Germany. Whereas the male breadwinner model is generally more widespread in Germany than in France, mobility seems to reverse the situation. In Germany, couples in which one partner is mobile seem more involved in professional life, whether the mobile is the man or the woman. In France, however, mobility seems to either diminish the partner's involvement

8 Researchers analysing gender and family politics with regard to the welfare state do not classify Germany and France in the same category (cf. Ostner 1998).

9 Distinctions as to part-time employment point in the same direction, but differences between mobiles and non-mobiles are very small and therefore not very significant in either country.

in professional life or be chosen more often by single earner couples, even when it is the woman who is working for pay and being mobile. The male breadwinner model appears when men's mobility is concerned. We will pursue that line of thought by examining more closely how mobility can be interpreted from the couple's point of view.

1.2 Job-related mobility concerns the couple as a whole

Our first results make us think that mobility should not only be considered an individual matter, but a concern for the couple as a whole. As soon as individuals set themselves up in a couple or family, the mobility of one partner affects the professional and private life of the other one. It is however possible to imagine that the mobility of one partner may be the *consequence* of the other's professional activity, and thus somehow be produced by it. It therefore makes sense to consider the experience of mobility according to whether one of the partners, or both, is/are gainfully employed, and whether the mobile partner (man or woman) is living with a person who is (or not) employed (cf. *Table 2*).

Among persons living in stable, conjugal relationships,¹⁰ if we consider both bi-active and mono-active couples, mobility concerns approximately one-fourth of all couples in Germany (25.7%) and one-fifth of them in France (19.2%).¹¹ Mobility occurs more frequently among German couples than among French ones.

Table 2: Mobility in the couple in Germany and in France

	Germany		France	
	Number	%	Number	%
Bi-active / Dual mobiles	41	3.6	21	2.7
Bi-active / Woman mobile	45	4.0	29	3.8
Bi-active / Man mobile	134	11.8	75	9.9
Bi-active / Non-mobile	575	50.8	456	60.3
Woman mono active & mobile	3	0.3	4	0.5
Man mono-active & mobile	68	6	17	2.3
Woman mono-active non-mobile	38	3.4	31	4.2
Man mono active non-mobile	229	20.2	123	16.3
Total	1.133	100	756	100

Source: From the European survey "Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe".

There are generally more bi-active than mono-active couples in both countries. Accordingly there are more bi-active than mono-active couples with at least one partner mobile (19.4% vs. 6.3% in Germany and 16.4% vs. 2.7% in France). Germany has higher scores for each category. Couples who are both bi-active and dual-mobiles are rare in both countries (2.8%). The proportion of bi-active couples without mobility is higher in France

10 The question put to the surveyed population was worded as follows: "Do you currently have a stable relationship?" In Germany 79% of persons between the age of 25 and 54 live in stable relationships and 81% in France.

11 Couples in which inactive persons are mobile (e.g. *Recent Relocator* in the last three years) were not included in the table.

than in Germany (60.3% vs. 54.4%). This disparity is not only due to the different mobility features of bi-active couples but attests also to the higher proportion of mono-active couples, with or without mobility, in Germany than in France (29.9% vs. 23.3%).

In order to know whether bi-activity produces more mobility than mono-activity, we must consider mobility scores among these two specific populations. Bi-activity increases job-related mobility. In Germany, 27.7% of the bi-active couples are mobile, whereas only 21% of the couples with at least one active partner are. In France, the difference is even more pronounced, 21.5% and 12% respectively, due to a greater rate of bi-activity,

Do gender differences surface when mobility concerns only one partner? To answer that question, we will look at the various types of couples and consider mainly the gendered characteristics of dual-career as well as mono-active couples in which one of the partners is mobile. Visibly, when mobility enters a couple's life, it is in most cases masculine, among bi-active as well as mono-active couples. Among the latter, and in both countries, there are hardly any mobile women – which largely reflects the fact that in single-earner couples the breadwinner is usually male, independently from mobility requirements. There are more than twice as many bi-active couples with mobile men than with mobile women in Germany and twice as many in France. As mobility requires longer absences from home or intense job involvement, it confirms in a sense that men still seem to be more job-orientated than women. Of course, the latter have been integrated in the job market as much as their partners: 70.2% of the couples in Germany and 76.8% in France are bi-active, but family work still seems to be a female affair. It seems easier for men to leave family obligations to their female partners than the other way round, and family policy still contributes to the idea that the work-family balance is a female affair (Lewis 2009). The dominant model seems to be one of couples whose strategy it is to achieve a social standing defined by a better income and a better professional situation for the husband, who benefits from the input and backing of his wife (de Singly 1987). Differences in men and women's educational and professional careers contribute to maintain these more traditional features even when both are equally involved in the labour market. A study of engineers' careers according to their marital status and number of children in France tends to confirm that model (Gadéa/Marry 2000). In Germany, this may be the case in the managerial professions (*leitende Angestellte*) and even in other professions too. Since parents do not receive much help with their child-rearing obligations from the state (availability of child-care and school schedules) in Germany, the children's education implies that women pull out of the labour market. In order to refine our analysis, we will consider the types of couples in relation to the presence/absence of cohabiting children in the family (cf. Table 3).

Among dual-earner couples in which only one of the partners is mobile, distinctions surface according to gender. Female mobility, which is more frequent in the youngest age group, in both countries, is very sensitive to the presence of children, in Germany particularly. Mobile German women have nearly half as many children as mobile French women. The table confirms once more that in Germany children represent a strong deterrent for female mobility and when they are grown and leave home, it doesn't encourage women to become mobile again – or for the first time – either. But the presence of children also has an effect on men's mobility. Mobile German men, whether they live in bi-active or mono-active couples, are less mobile when the children are still at home. In France, a large majority of mobile men have children living with them at home.

Table 3: Couples' mobility situation and presence of children in daily life

	Germany				France			
	No children	Children living with their parents	Children not living at home	Total	No children	Children living with their parents	Children not living at home.	Total
Bi-active dual mobile couples	46.3	29.3	24.4	100	47.6	33.3	19	100
<i>Bi-active woman mobile</i>	66.7	24.4	8.9	100	34.5	48.3	17.2	100
<i>Bi-active man mobile</i>	23.1	28.4	48.5	100	18.7	70.6	10.7	100
Mono-active couples one partner mobile (usually the man) *	15.5	29.6	54.9	100	9.5	81	9.5	100

W nation – For Germany N= 1132; V=.295; p=.000. For France N=754; V=.253; p=.000.

* The situations of mono-active couples where the woman is mobile are rare: They are only 9 cases out of 74 in Germany (65 mono-active couples with mobile men) and 8 cases out of 44 in France (36 mono-active couples with mobile men) (unweighted numbers).

Source: From the European survey “Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe”.

Reading job-related professional mobility according to conjugal considerations revealed unmistakably dominant profiles. In both countries, bi-active couples where the men are mobile are the most frequent configuration. Mono-active couples where men are mobile are much less frequent, but when that is the case, there is a visible difference between the two countries: such couples are more than twice as numerous in Germany.

In Germany, women and men's mobility is noticeably more common when they are childless; their rate of mobility drops drastically when they live in a couple with children. In France, compared to Germany, the presence of children seems to have much less influence on female and male mobility and apparently does not put a halt to mobility. French women tend to be mobile when they have children, though to a lesser extent than those who don't. German women are more mobile than French women, but they have fewer children. However, as we shall see in the following section, beyond the reality of numbers, job-related mobility leads to other marital arbitrations, that only a finer, qualitative analysis is able to uncover.

2. The conjugal management of mobility: An approach in terms of “family career”

The following results based on the qualitative, French and German studies concentrate on a specific type of geographic professional mobility, namely the *Overnighters*. These studies give us the possibility to explore this mobility type further, by analysing how it enters into a couple's and a family's plans.

From the outset, it was our assumption that decisions that are to be taken in professional life – including mobility and being away from home – are not made individually,

but take into account the insertion of the individual into his/her larger family circle. In particular, these decisions are negotiated by the couple. These decisions imply the family dimension as much as the professional dimension. For this reason, we suggest analysing them in terms of “family careers” by adapting the concept of ‘career’ as conveyed by E. C. Hughes.

The notion of “family career” adopts a resolutely biographical approach. It refers to the various stages of family life and intervening changes, the conjugal events – falling in love, setting up house together, birth or absence of children, separation, death ... – and the various activities surrounding them, particularly both partners’ professional activities. Family careers, apprehended from the point of view of both the individual and the couple, are also determined by a family’s specific problems, such as those concerning potential conflicts between the couple’s family life and their professional careers. What is more, each partner’s professional career may itself be marked by the stages that punctuate their family life, and by the negotiations and adjustments between partners concerning the way family life and their respective professional lives should proceed. That perspective means questioning – without forgetting gender relations – the more or less strong connection between each partner’s definition of family “success” and their professional achievements, e.g., the priorities given to the family and/or the professional sphere by each partner individually or jointly by both partners (for a more detailed presentation, see Bonnet et al. 2006b).

The second part of this article will thus give us the opportunity to present the different ways these family careers have been constructed, especially by looking at the manner geographic mobility is negotiated with relation to their plans for their family or their couple. Job-related mobility makes it possible to observe work-life balance more intensively. Different ways of dealing with mobility in relation to commitment to the job are the main explanatory factor. We distinguish two typical configurations of family career, which are handled here as ideal types. The couples’ empirical behaviour corresponds more or less to one of the two types. The first type integrates mobility in the family project, whereas in the second, mobility is imposed on the couple by one of the partners.¹² Each type is analysed in accordance with to the man’s or the woman’s mobility and to the couple’s bi- or mono-activity.

In terms of family careers, we developed this typology based on data from the qualitative French study and have attempted to reconsider the results of the qualitative German survey in light of the former study. Obviously, the results of the German qualitative study were not produced with the same perspective. The German results placed more emphasis on differences, such as between *Shutters* vs. other forms of mobility (*Long-distance commuters*, *Relocators*, etc.), than on conjugal negotiations.¹³ We nevertheless assumed that the two types of family careers (mobility integrated in the family plan vs. mobility imposed by one of the partners) existed in both countries. They are not expressed in the same way, depending on whether one considers men’s or women’s mobility, especially considering that *Over-*

12 These two configurations do not cover all possible conjugal arrangements due to mobility.

13 In the German survey, *shuttles* stood out compared to the other mobility types (*LDCs*, *Relocators*, etc.) and to non-mobiles, due to the fact there were many women among them, to both partners’ high education levels (more than the *Abitur*), and to a relatively small number of children (Schneider et al. 2001: 123).

nights in Germany usually have no children, whereas those interviewed in France do.¹⁴ The comparison introduces a more qualitative aspect into the analysis of mobility, however, therefore allowing us to reflect more thoroughly on the situation as a whole.

2.1 Geographic mobility integrated in the family plans

For the couples corresponding to this first type of family career, the mobility of one of the partners, or even of both, is a project that was jointly negotiated by them. The partners are usually part of a dual-career couple and the evolution of both their careers is viewed in a relatively egalitarian manner, as is the sharing of their domestic and educational obligations. Their negotiations are explicit, favouring adjustments between the family and professional spheres of each partner. Communication is omnipresent, including when the mobile person is far away from home (*e.g.* frequent use of the telephone). Decisions and management are thought out by the couple as one, and negotiations take on the appearance of an exchange in which the satisfaction of each partner is uppermost.

The two studies reveal that the couples are strongly involved in their professions. It is almost inconceivable for them to make professional concessions in view of conjugal and family choices. The couples whose experience corresponds to this configuration are relatively homogamous, with both partners having gone through higher education and occupying positions of intermediate or upper management and executive rank. Mobile men are very much into their work, although they do take their partners' professional ambitions into consideration. The bi-localisation of the partners during part of the week was made necessary because the women cannot or do not wish to leave their job. Mobile women had also gone to university and were to the same extent as the men, very involved in their professions.

“Then I was offered the position at B. (...). But at the same time, we decided to live together in E., we had made up our minds for E. (...). It was obvious we wanted to live together, but it also went without saying that neither of us would leave our job or accept a less interesting position. In theory, we wanted it all.” (German study, Schneider et al. 2001: 128)

For these mobile men and women, the obligation to become mobile was accepted out of respect for the other's profession. This is a far cry from the classical, sexual domination in the professional sphere. The couples make do with the mobility situation by trying to make it as free as possible (adapting their schedules), and by appreciating its advantages, which allow each one to express their individuality better.

“The reasons were as the following: I have a special profession that doesn't allow me to work where I want (...), if I decided to settle there, it's because I had the opportunity to have a regular job. I only had a limited, part-time job here, so when I had the chance to get that stable position, I left for Bavaria. (German study, Schneider et al. 2001: 132)

But in other cases, the geographic mobility of one is plainly experienced as a constraint that disturbs the family equilibrium and which they wish would end as soon as possible

14 The comparison cannot be carried out exactly in the same terms because we do not have the original material used in the German study at our disposal. Thus, we have compared results drawn from the research report.

(e.g., by a transfer), although when it does end, it is often to the detriment of the quality of life (e.g., in France, being forced to return to the Paris region)

“(...) we didn’t think too much about distance because as months without work piled up, we told ourselves that there would be more job offers in and around Paris so little by little we grew used to the idea of his returning to Paris, and when we threw in the balance the fact he couldn’t stand being inactive any longer, we decided it was better to put up with distance. I told myself I preferred seeing my husband only weekends if he felt better, etc. than to see every evening a husband who doesn’t feel well, who’s depressed.” (French study, Bonnet et al. 2006a: 145)

The idea of “give-and-take”, of “it’s only fair”, is sometimes also present when people manage their professional careers. The professional careers of both partners as well as domestic and/or educational obligations are alternately given priority (i.e., the partners take turns). In order to make mobility easier, the temporary retreat of one of the partners from the labour market could be taken into consideration. This period in life could offer the opportunity for training or continuing education, for taking a vacation or for dedicating oneself to more artistic or manual activities. Sharing domestic chores remains egalitarian. In these specific cases, their professional careers are not given priority simultaneously but consecutively. In absolute terms, it signified that it would eventually be the most work-involved partner’s turn to cease working. In an American study, that attitude was called “scaling back” (Becker/Moen 1999).

“So, well it’s true that there is an aspect... I think it’s necessary to be structured as a couple and to have an autonomous way of looking at the couple from the start, which was the case with us. When I went back to school, we practically had a contract, because when we had started living together, he was a conscientious objector, after that he created an association, he worked half-time for a minimum wage and I had the real job, and it had always been agreed that the day you want to do something else, we swap. I realize it’s also because we had a sort of contract of that sort that I was able to do all that”. (French study, Bonnet et al. 2006a: 128)

The family career in this configuration is built on the basis of a strong commitment to the job. Both partners are absorbed in their professions and seek professional self-fulfilment both for themselves and for their spouse. Decisions are made together and aim for an overall balance between the professional and the familial.

This sort of conjugal negotiation is present in both countries. A difference between the two national contexts, however, resides in the fact that the couples in France have one, or even two children, whereas in Germany, the couples in this first configuration of mobility seem rather not to have any, especially when the mobile partner is the woman.

This state of things can be found in the quantitative results presented in the first part of our article and seem to indicate that bi-active couples facing a mobility situation in Germany obviously have fewer children than in France (see Table 3). It is as if the German women in this configuration chose their professional career over having a family.

“I don’t know how to reconcile having a child and working. Right now, it wouldn’t be possible, since I’m constantly on the road and I don’t know how that could change right now. We’d have to cut down on things and right now it’s clear for me my job is the most important. If I have to stay home and be a housewife to have a child, if that’s the condition, I don’t want to have kids!” (German study, Schneider et al. 2001: 170).

Mobile women in France have children in greater proportions; they do however mention the difficulties they have to reduce their primary role in the home and with the children, despite the relatively equal sharing of domestic and family obligations they have set up with their partners. We will see below how people experience these situations when one of the partners asserts his/her mobility more persistently.

2.2 Mobility imposed by one of the partners

In this second configuration of family career, a more individualistic option seems to take precedence and the professional concerns of one of the partners predominate in the couple. In this case, mobility is in fact imposed, to the extent that negotiation about that professional choice was practically non-existent. The professional involvement of one of the partners is so strong that the conjugal and family project is pushed into second place. But the impact on the couple's relationship is quite different, depending on whether the mobility is masculine or feminine.

2.2.1 When the masculine choice is imposed...

The masculine career is here at an advantage. The men concerned are the principal breadwinners and have invested the role of family provider. They are very caught up in the professional world and occupy functions that include considerable responsibility. They enter geographic mobility on a national, and sometimes international, scale (missions abroad). Geographic professional mobility gradually sets in as their career advances and their responsibilities multiply.

Wives largely back up their husbands' careers by taking upon themselves the domestic organisation of the household and the children's education. That responsibility "goes without saying"; it seems to be barely discussed by the couple. Certain spouses gave up their professional activity at the birth of the first child, or of the second or third child, and took responsibility for running home and family on a daily basis. Putting an end to their professional career goes along with their husband's ascending mobility. For the couple, relatively asymmetrical realities emerge. The man sees to the economic needs of the family, which justifies his many absences from home. For certain women, their partner's sometimes considerable income allows for a very comfortable way of life and appreciable financial advantages. These are regarded as a just reward for having accepted to be responsible for running the family.

"After the birth of our third child, my wife did not go back to work at the end of her maternity leave. And since then, she never went back. She felt that with three kids and a very absent husband ... Today, we've more or less found the right balance, it's fragile, but ... I think there are times she found it very difficult. Three small children, and I was gone four whole days, it was really a difficult time. Today, I'm away for shorter periods, but I'm very busy here between the mayor's office and the region. (...) Since we moved, we have a beautiful house with a large garden, my wife takes care of the garden." (French study, Bonnet et al. 2006a: 115)

Mobility situations such as this one develop gradually, while the couples are already living together and the children already born. Mobility and male careers are jointly dealt with over many years. The wives often feel it is their destiny. Less well-educated than

their husbands, less committed to their job, they have fewer arguments to negotiate more consideration for their professional commitment. Some of them conform to predominant gender roles and deliberately invest the family and domestic sphere. When the woman has not managed to come to terms with that harsh sexual division between each partner's field of commitment (often unforeseen at the beginning of the couple's relationship), they separate.

"I still think that the fact I wasn't home – it's clear that was what they reproached me most for during the divorce – so I well know that I shouldn't make the same mistakes again. But you must also understand that when you're away the whole week, you don't necessarily want to make an effort on week-ends, you tend to want to rest a little, now I do really try to be a bit more available during the weekend" (French study, divorced, mobile man living in a couple again, Bonnet et al. 2006a: 116).

The *Shuttles* interviewed in the German study do not seem to correspond to that sort of imposition of male mobility. Living more often in dual-earner and childless couples,¹⁵ they are, on the whole, described as acting according to their conjugal ideal – *i.e.* a greater independence for both – they correspond more to the first configuration. The main-breadwinner model, noted in the statistical analysis, is not present – or more rarely – among *Shuttles*, it is found more readily among *Relocators* or *LDCs* (*Long-distance commuters*). The statistical analysis also revealed that French women apparently choose this sort of mobility less than men do, perhaps precisely because they have children. German women and men, when they are *Overnighters*, do not (or much more rarely) have children and thus are not in this conjugal configuration, even though the model is virtually just as possible in Germany as in France.

2.2.2 Women's choice: A form of compensation

Contrary to the situation described above, in this specific configuration of the family career, the woman's professional career is given priority. She imposes it on her partner, just as she imposes it on the family unit. Contrary to couples in which it is the man who is mobile (2.2.1), the partners of mobile women are not in an inferior position professionally, they are as committed as the women. Women's unilateral decision in favour of mobility has no direct consequence on their partner's professional involvement.

It is as if these women were compensating for a situation experienced as an imposition. In Germany, this "revenge" resembles a refusal of the maternal role, as mothers are traditionally more often committed to family involvement and jobless. Female *Overnighters* declare the same professional commitment as the men, they are liable to "do their thing" without really negotiating their decision in favour of mobility with their partner. They have no children to take care of.

"She had a limited contract, she was supposed to work eleven months, for me it wasn't a problem, I was open and I made do with her being away. Then they offered her another one for a year, I said OK, it's good to have as much experience as you can in that profession. But my wife didn't tell me, or only when she was on the verge of signing, that they had offered her a permanent contract. It was

15 Socio-demographic data of the German survey reveal that only 32% of the *Shuttles* have children. All the other categories present in that survey have children in higher proportions: 69% for the *Inactives*, 58% of the *LDCs*, and 67% of the *Relocators*. (Schneider et al., 2001: 123).

a bit hard to take, when I understood that it was going to be like that for a long time ...” (German study, female *shuttle*’s partner. Schneider et al. 2001: 132).

A decision in favour of mobility not backed up by a negotiation between the partners may alter the quality of their relationship. The mobile partner described the situation differently:

“At first, I had to work in the West for two years, but now I’ve been there for three years, it wasn’t supposed to be like that at the beginning. My partner has problems with that all the time, he has the feeling that his ‘girlfriend’ is coming to see him for the weekend, whereas I’m coming home to my husband. I’m not a visitor, it’s the other pole in my life”. (German study, female *shuttle*, Schneider et al. 2001: 132).

Female *Overnighters* in France do not have the same profile. It is rather as if they were getting their own back with respect to some previous family situation. Being in their forties for the most part, they have teenage or nearly grown-up children. The children’s age is a decisive element in a career strategy deemed possible only because the children are big. These women are in an age group in which they judge a professional change or development to still be possible, but only if they wait no longer.

Disposing of good intellectual aptitudes and a strong involvement in their work, mobility becomes the sign that they are asserting themselves in the professional sphere. The male partners accept the changes this mobility brings about in the couple; all the easier to accept when the children are raised and managing the domestic sphere is no longer a major preoccupation. Some of them nevertheless mention feeling frustrated that their wife is doing less in the home and that they must juggle with her lesser availability.

Another important characteristic concerning these women: they all, at one time or another, had seconded their husband in his career and followed him when necessary. We discovered in their testimonies the idea, when making up their minds about becoming mobile themselves, that it was “only fair”. But their statements also underlined the fatigue and the burden they experience due to the spatial mobility to which they had consented. The possibility of moving the whole family was seen as inconceivable for both the couple and their partner. It was even less thinkable when the couple had lived in the same place for several years,

It should also be noted that mobile women see the swap that took place in the couple as unbalanced from the perspective of the concessions each partner had to make. They not only had to face the need to prove their decision was legitimate – which men do not always have to do when it is them who are mobile – but they also mentioned the permanent stress and arbitrations they must endure between their professional activity and their life with their partner. The efforts to reconcile the two spheres, sometimes accompanied by a form of guilt related to the choices they made, seem to weigh more heavily on the women than on the men.

“Well, when I’m not there my husband gets along fine, our daughter comes home from time to time, she’s studying in M., so my husband and our son heat up the food I left in the freezer. My husband sometimes turns on a machine, but to tell the truth (she hesitates...), they don’t get along... Sometimes, when I come home, there’s a bad atmosphere, I can feel nothing is right, they can’t communicate, or worse, they fight, my son has terrible problems in school, we don’t know what to do anymore, and my husband is beside himself” (French study, Bonnet et al. 2006a: 125).

This second configuration of family career is built on strong commitment to the job by one of the partners. It casts more light on typical gender divisions. Mobility imposed by the man does not give way to the same sorts of conjugal negotiations as mobility imposed by the woman. Male mobility is imposed *de facto*, it may even impose professional choices on the partner; female mobility is more careful. If female mobility is not negotiated, it is because women do not feel it is legitimate. They know they will not obtain their partner's approval, or they are looking to re-establish a personal equilibrium with respect to a previous conjugal or family situation. The positioning of mobile women in the German study appears more radical because they seem to be choosing between a professional career or investing in having a family.

Job-related spatial mobility made it possible to observe the effects of different family careers. When the latter are based on cooperation and respect of each one's job, one partner's mobility is not due to gender role distribution in the couple. But in the opposite case, when mobility is more an individual feature, we observe a rather classical role distribution in case of men's mobility and a kind of inversed role distribution in case of women's mobility. Female mobility is closely associated with family development, mobile women tend to have few or no children, especially in Germany. In general, it was interesting to see that job-related spatial mobility very clearly exacerbates negotiations on gender divisions and men's and women's different commitment to job or family.

3. In lieu of a conclusion: Reconciling professional and family life

Overall, looking at the different types of job-related mobility points to more frequent mobility in Germany than in France. German mobiles, more frequently than French mobiles, tend to be in recurrent forms of mobility (returning to the same place), especially *LDCs*. This difference may be due to the federalist organisation on the one side and centralized organisation on the other; distances between the working place and residence are less important in Germany than in France.

As to gender distribution, men are more mobile than women in both countries, but French women do not give priority to the same types of mobility that German women do. This difference clearly relates to the different family situations in both countries. Mobile French women have children more often than mobile German women do, so they tend to choose those forms of mobility allowing them to reconcile work and family more easily.

Our analysis according to conjugal logics shows that bi-active couples in both countries were more often confronted with mobility than mono-active couples. We may thus deduce that bi-activity increases, at least in part, spatial mobility for professional reasons. It also seems, particularly in Germany, to modify the way one relates to family projects.

It was interesting to observe that mobility in the couple radically changes general features in Germany and France with regard to couples' mono- or bi-activity. In general, German families still tend to choose more often a man's mono-active job involvement than families in France do. On the other hand, one observes mobility in Germany in bi-active couples without children more often than in France. There, due to the presence of children, one observes a real "traditionalising" effect produced by job-related mobility: In case of men's mobility, French women work part-time or not at all. Job-related spatial

mobility makes couples' arrangements visible and influences both: job involvement and the decision to have or not to have children.

The Franco-German comparison especially revealed that the mobility of one or the other partner seems to have a bearing on the choice to embark (or not to embark) on life as a family. Mobile interviewees, men and women, have children more readily in France than in Germany. While German couples confronted by mobility seem, more than in France, to choose between a professional and a family commitment, as if it was difficult to reconcile the two.

The qualitative studies allowed us to delve into the ways couples actually experience mobility. Choosing a situation of mobility goes together with a certain number of adjustments between family and professional life, and with the quest for a sometimes delicate balance between each partner's professional and family objectives. The work-family balance appears all the more fragile when there are children on the scene. The solution then may consist in not having any. While the French study reveals the difficulties of reconciling the two spheres in daily life, the German study illustrates another facet of compromise: making up one's mind for or against founding a family. The structural conditions and different family and maternal conceptions¹⁶ in the two countries lead to different consequences in situations of mobility.

While the quantitative survey allowed us to circumscribe the reality of job-related geographic mobility for men and women, the qualitative studies were able to make sense of the noted gender differences by showing, in particular, that male-female relations are underpinned by different conjugal conceptions and adjustments. Nevertheless, the two methodological approaches, thanks to their complementary nature, allowed us to refine the analysis of gender relations by showing that behind male-female differences, more or less egalitarian ways of perceiving the couple and different family options for achieving mobility may be concealed.

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16 A recent study comparing France emphasises the specific family norms which are different in these two countries: in France for instance childless couples are less accepted socially, whereas in Germany gender roles are more clearly cut out and the decision to have a child depends more on the husband's job position and his ability to be the main "breadwinner" (Brachet et al. 2010).

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Detlev Lück

Walking the tightrope

Combining family life, career and job mobility¹

Drahtseilakte

Vereinbarkeit von Familie, Beruf und beruflicher Mobilität

Abstract:

The article examines the ways in which job mobility affects the relationship between dual careers and parenthood and the ability of couples to realise both. Based on survey data from the project *Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe* for six countries (Germany, France, Spain, Poland, Switzerland, Belgium), bivariate analyses compare ratios of couples with children and/or one or two careers between couples confronted with job mobility in the husband's or wife's job and those who have no such mobility. Multivariate analyses test the influence of job mobility and other relevant circumstances on female employment as well as on having children. Indicators measuring respondents' subjective evaluation of the influences are reviewed to confirm the results. The results suggest that couples tend to be childless rather than give up one partner's job if the two goals are incompatible. Job mobility, as with other unfavourable circumstances, reduces the ability of couples to combine both, and this ability is much more reduced if the woman is job mobile than if the man is. In addition, national context matters for level of compatibility and for strength of effects.

Zusammenfassung:

Der Artikel untersucht den Einfluss beruflich bedingter Mobilität auf das Verhältnis von Doppelverdienern und Elternschaft und auf die Fähigkeit von Paaren, beides zu realisieren. Anhand von Umfragedaten des Projektes *Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe* für sechs Länder (Deutschland, Frankreich, Spanien, Polen, Schweiz, Belgien) vergleichen bivariate Analysen Paare, die entweder durch den Beruf des Mannes oder den der Frau mit Mobilität konfrontiert sind, mit Paaren, die nicht davon betroffen sind, hinsichtlich der Anteile von Eltern, von Ein- und von Doppelverdiener-Paaren. Multivariate Analysen testen den Einfluss von beruflicher Mobilität und anderen relevanten Bedingungen auf die Erwerbstätigkeit von Frauen sowie auf Elternschaft. Indikatoren werden gesichtet, die die Beurteilung der Befragten erfassen, um die Befunde zu erhärten. Der Artikel kommt zu dem Schluss, dass Paare eher kinderlos bleiben als eine der beiden Erwerbstätigkeiten aufzugeben, wenn beides nicht miteinander vereinbar ist. Ähnlich wie andere nachteilige Umstände vermindert berufliche Mobilität die Fähigkeit von Paaren, beides zu vereinbaren. Wenn die Frau beruflich mobil ist, ist der Effekt weitaus stärker, als wenn der Mann mobil ist. Auch der nationale Kontext macht einen Unterschied: sowohl für den Grad der Vereinbarkeit im Allgemeinen wie auch für die Stärke der Effekte.

1 I would like to thank Silvia Ruppenthal for helpful comments!

Key words: job mobility, spatial mobility, female employment, parenthood, balancing work and family lives

Schlagwörter: berufliche Mobilität, räumliche Mobilität, Frauenerwerbstätigkeit, Elternschaft, Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf

Combining paid work with family life or a job career with a family career is, in general, a challenge. This difficult relationship is being studied under the broad headline of work-life or, more precise, work-family issues. Challenges can be studied on two levels, which I want to refer to as *compatibility* and *work-family balance*. The focus on *compatibility* asks whether or not people who wish to have children and a job are capable of realising both. This question, formulated from an individual perspective, is a challenge in contemporary societies, predominantly for women. From a couple's perspective, the question is whether or not a two-career household and parenthood can be realised, assuming that both partners hope to do so. The focus on the *work-family balance* assumes that people have a job and a family and asks whether or not people are able to invest enough time and energy into both spheres to meet the respective goals and role expectations in a satisfying way. Both kinds of challenges shall be subsumed by the term *work-family conflicts*. The normative concern that motivates this kind of research is that career jobs are demanding more resources than people are able to invest without neglecting their family lives.

Empirical results often confirm this concern. However, effects vary, of course, according to diverse circumstances, such as the work situation, national context, or gender (Schieman et al. 2003; Schieman/Glavin 2008; Voydanoff 2004; Gareis et al. 2003; Crompton/Lyonette 2006; Hill et al. 2004).² There may be various consequences: If parents feel unable to invest enough time and energy into their families, they will perceive role conflicts. They may also suffer from stress and their partnership quality, as well as the relationship with their children, may sustain damage. If childless couples perceive the two spheres as being incompatible, they may postpone their family plans or remain childless. Alternatively, if people refuse to cut back on their family investments, they may run into conflicts at work or even feel the need to reduce or interrupt their job career. This is a prioritisation that mostly women make (Maume 2006; Schieman/Glavin 2008; Reynolds 2005; Gareis et al. 2003). On the macro level, low and decreasing fertility rates and increasing rates of separation and divorce, as well as low employment rates among mothers, may be the consequences. In many European countries, there are low birth rates and high and increasing numbers of couples that remain childless, especially among dual-income couples and among highly educated individuals (Huinink 2009; Frejka/Sobotka 2008; Dorbritz 2000). Divorce rates have also been increasing (Andersson 2003; Höpflinger/Fux 2007). In some countries more than in others, women still tend to leave the labour market after the first child is born (Lück 2009; Schulz/Blossfeld 2006). These observations could be interpreted as the effects of low or even decreasing compatibility.

There are several explanations why compatibility, in fact, could be decreasing. One reason is the increasing labour market participation of women. Between the early 1960s and today, the standard female life course has been transformed from that of a full-time mother and housewife concept to the pattern of steady employment, even with varying

2 It is also noted that people may feel overcharged by their family's demands and escape from stress at home by working extra hours (Hochschild 1997).

speed and timing in various European societies (Lück 2009). This change is a main reason why work-family conflicts occur in their contemporary form at all (cp. following section). A second reason is attributed to a change in the social construction of parenthood. In some European societies, such as West Germany, expectations regarding what parents need to offer their children in order to be good parents have become much more demanding, while public support for parenting remains scant (Schneider 2002). A third reason is a change in the organisation of paid work. As third- and fourth-sector jobs (i.e., service and knowledge-based positions) are being held by more and more people, work contracts are often time-limited and bound to project funding (Blossfeld et al. 2008) and work time is typically organised flexibly, in the sense that work requirements cause unforeseen overtime. Work time expands (for those who have work, as long as they have work) and becomes less predictable (Hielscher 2003).

All of these processes and others have the consequence that men and especially women are required to invest more time and energy into parenting as well as into a successful job career. At the same time, structural support for parenting in many European countries has not increased in a comparable way. Public childcare is not available for all children, especially those who are very young, in all countries. The hours that children are cared for in kindergartens or schools are often inflexible and too short for both parents to maintain a full-time job. The work hours are often inflexible in a way that the employee cannot adjust them according to his or her needs; instead they are rather flexible in a way that the employer or the customer can do that. There are hardly institutionalised solutions for taking care of children during school vacations. There is also a lack of role models for successfully combining a job and a family career.

One aspect that may also be an important reason for decreasing compatibility has been overlooked for most of the time: professional career-related spatial mobility requirements. The labour markets in contemporary economies do not only demand flexibility in terms of time, but often also in terms of space. A large share of employees in Europe is affected by mobility, and their share has been increasing (Lück/Schneider in this issue; Lück/Ruppenthal 2010). Partly it is the occupation itself that involves travel, more often it is a large distance between home and the workplace that is caused, for example, by a job change or by two distant workplaces of two employed partners. Workers who are spatially mobile for the job invest extra time and energy into this mobility. These resources are lost for both the job and family life. Therefore, mobility should intensify work-family conflicts.

Does job-related spatial mobility decrease compatibility? In what way does it affect the relationship between career jobs and family lives? Does it foster childlessness or, instead, does it lead to more discontinuous career jobs? These questions are discussed in the following. The focus is rather on (in)compatibility – the more fundamental category of work-family conflicts about whether or not career ambitions and family plans can be realised at all – than on “balancing” problems, such as how parents manage a career and children in everyday life. Before searching for answers to these questions, a short historical-theoretical reflection shall clarify where and how to look for them.

Reflection about the history of work-family relationships, concluding in a methodological remark

The relationship between professional work and family life has always presented a challenge. However, the conflict was not always a topic, partly because priorities were clear and partly because the distinction between the two spheres was not made. In the following, this history is outlined by describing three ideal type stages of work-family relationships. They rather represent normative concepts, not necessarily solutions that were put into practice by most people. They correspond to three ideal type stages of societal development: the agricultural, the industrial, and the post-industrial society.

In pre-modern *agricultural societies*, at least for a large majority of people, the family and other non-related household members were a community in which not only household duties and reproduction, but also production, took place. If it is possible to use these terms in this context at all, “professional work” – mainly farming or craft – was done within the household. It was not perceived as competing with “family life;” instead, it was a main part of it. A distinction between the two spheres was not made, and work-family conflicts were not addressed as such.

Conflicts were also not visible because the expectations were very uneven and priorities were clear. The economic survival of the household was insecure, so that the requirements of the kind of work that provided the economic survival had a much higher priority than the education of the children, the quality of family relationships, or anything that today would be regarded as “family life.” “Work life” had the first priority, in terms of compatibility and in terms of work-family balance. Priorities in terms of compatibility were visible in the restrictions for marriage and parenthood: Those who did not have the means to provide for a family were not allowed to have one. Parenthood was allowed only within marriage, and the allowance for marriage was given to farmers with their own land or craftsmen with their own business. Priorities, in terms of work-family balance, were visible in social expectations and norms. In the Middle Ages, childhood was not perceived as a life course phase that contained its own needs. Most expectations towards parenthood that seem to be self-evident today were not existent. Children were not so much demanding their parents’ time and energy, competing with economic needs for resources, but rather an additional resource that was invested into the economic survival of the household. Everybody who was able had to participate in “professional work.” Also, children were often sent away by their parents to work as maids or farm labourers in a different household where they were more needed.

By today’s standards, one could say that the work-family balance was quite out of balance in pre-industrial societies, with “work life” demanding a maximum share of all available resources. Compatibility was solved in a similarly one-sided manner, with parenthood being restricted to those heads of a household who owned a farm or a crafts business and who had use for children as labour. However, people did not perceive this imbalance as such because professional work and family life were not separated and because the expectations regarding a family life beyond these professional activities were low (Mitterauer/Sieder 1984; Gestrich 2003).

The separation of “work life” and “family life” developed within the *industrial society*. With industrial production replacing craft and farming as the way of making a living, for the

larger part of societies, the work place changed from an individual's own household to the factory. The household members were not all involved as a group in the same process or place of production. This way work life and family life became distinguishable and their relationship antagonistic. A division of work between family members became the new normative concept of organising the compatibility of the two spheres, with the male breadwinner and female homemaker model as a normative ideal. (The ideal was, however, realised by the bourgeoisie rather than by the working class, where women needed to contribute to the household income. Only in roughly two decades after World War II were most couples able to put this ideal into practice.) The spatial separation of home and work place – an early form of introducing job mobility to large parts of the work force – made a division of responsibilities seem necessary. What occasionally made it possible was the fact that, in industrial production, a single household member was – sometimes – able to provide a household income. As a consequence, the expectation arose that the woman should be exempted from industrial work so that she can take care of household requirements.

It has to be emphasised once more that this was, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, only a normative concept – a postulated idea of how work-family conflicts could and should be solved. And it has to be emphasised that factual solutions to work-family conflicts in practice highly differentiated between social classes. Working class couples in the 19th century have, for example, hardly been able to exempt women from industrial work. Often they have given children away. As in pre-modern societies, the economic survival still had a much higher priority than the fulfilment of family plans or the investment into family needs. Nevertheless, with the idea of “modern” gender roles, as Durkheim or Parsons would call them, serving as a solution to work-family conflicts, ideas and normative expectations regarding “good” parenthood (or, rather, motherhood) were also formulated. Again as a normative concept, family life became more challenging in the early modern society. The 1950s and early 1960s era was the exceptional time span in which all these expectations were actually met. The fact that one generation had finally managed to meet the expectations is probably important in order to understand why norms regarding good parenthood are quite stable today and have increased in recent decades, although the division of gender roles that enabled this generation to do so is losing its suitability (Gestrich 2008; Gestrich 2003; Mitterauer/Sieder 1984; Lück 2009).

In late modernity, in *post-industrial societies*, the solution that Europe had finally found in the 1950s is questioned by the reorganisation of gender roles. Women are successfully claiming equal rights and delegitimising the “modern” gender roles of early modernity that forced women into economic dependency and that now are called “traditional.” Processes of value change and a second wave of individualisation encouraged women to take the freedom of making career choices of their own and to follow their own interests. Partly as a means for independency, partly as a means for self-fulfilment, women decided to achieve advanced educational degrees and seek professional careers of their own. The process is fostered by the transition into post-industrial societies: New jobs in the third and fourth sector and a more flexible organisation of work simplify women's entry into the labour market. At the same time, after the deceleration of the economic expansion in the 1970s, more households are again dependent on a second household income. As a consequence, there is an increasing number of couples in which two partners have a general interest in their own professional careers. With paid work still happening outside of the household, the

challenge of how to combine the job with a family life is reintroduced into societies. The delegitimisation of patriarchy makes a new solution necessary. What makes it sometimes possible are varying circumstances: in some countries, generous parental leave; in others, generous public childcare facilities or affordable, privately offered childcare services; in the Netherlands, state support for part-time jobs (Lück 2009; Lück/Hofäcker 2008; Gerhards/Hölscher 2003; Lengerer 2004; Pfau-Effinger 1998).

What has not been established yet again is a standard solution. Not only the mentioned national policies or welfare regimes create a variety of solutions. There are also cultural differences that mainly concern the degree by which the former gender role division has disappeared or is still persisting. This creates not only cross-national differences in the solutions to compatibility, but also between social groups within societies. The cultural change from early to late modernity, in many societies, is still in the flow, as is the reorganisation of family policies and welfare regimes, offering various solutions for parents who try to maintain two professional careers. At the same time, economic change creates differing circumstances. Some jobs are offering flexible working times or the option to work at home so that combining job and family becomes easier. More often, jobs demand flexibility in terms of time and place on the employees' side, so that it becomes more difficult for the employee to navigate successfully. As a consequence, the question whether and how work-family conflicts can be solved varies from couple to couple by a set of conditions on the micro, meso, and macro levels, including the hours and the organisation of the work of both partners' jobs, the individual gender role attitudes of the partners, the predominant gender role culture within the society or social environment, and the family policies within the nation or community (Lück 2009).

One can summarise that work-family conflicts are a challenge for contemporary societies because they appear in a new context – in times of post-industrial work life and the postulation of gender equality. In this context, past solutions no longer work and, so far, a juxtaposition of old and various new solutions is visible. New solutions cannot be found by couples alone, but societies as a whole have to establish cultural orientations and infrastructure support. A set of individual and societal, of cultural and structural conditions, has to be coordinated. What could be a timeless pattern is that the necessity to organise economic survival is given a higher priority than realising family plans or living up to expectations within the family context. If this is true, then increasing demands for job mobility, as any increase in the demands of work life, should have visible effects on compatibility, work-family balance, and family life. However, even this rule could change in late modernity as societies could guarantee economic survival through systems of social security.

How to study work-family conflicts in contemporary societies – a sketch for a methodological programme

The current situation is a challenge for both theory and research. The description and explanation of whether and how work-family conflicts can be solved has to take into account the collection of conditions and solutions mentioned above. Due to a lack of adequate data, this article will not be able to put into practice this postulation in all of its con-

sequences. However, as a sketch for a methodological programme that may reach beyond the empirical analyses presented here, it shall formulate what ideally would be necessary to control for in an empirical analysis – and to reflect in a theoretical explanation.

For explaining the success in combining job and family in contemporary Europe, at least three fields of circumstances are of major importance:

- Research has to take into account the requirements of both partners' jobs, inasmuch as they limit the ability to take on responsibilities in family work: for example, the work hours, the flexibility in terms of the work hours and work places which the jobs demand, as well as the flexibility that the jobs offer.
- Research has to include gender role attitudes as moderating variables. The orientation towards a male breadwinner model means that the solution of a full-time mother is available and likely to be taken. An undiluted ideal of gender equality implies that two partners share the burden of combining paid work and parenting. A typical contemporary set of gender role orientations means that it is mostly the woman who has to combine these two spheres.
- Research has to reflect the available support for childcare, such as available childcare facilities or extended family networks.

Taking these observations to a higher level of abstraction, three theses can be formulated:

- Explanations have to take into account the *micro* and *macro level* (and, ideally, also the meso level). Adequate methods to do this are, for example, context analysis and multi-level analysis. A suitable theory should be a theory of action that includes a micro-macro link, for example, such as Coleman (1986) suggests it.
- Explanations have to take into account *structural constraints and opportunities* as well as *cultural normative constructions*. Neither a strict rational choice theory nor a strict theory of social construction is able to capture all probable influences (Lück/Hofäcker 2008).
- Explanations have to take a *couple perspective*. In societies in which the gender division is still strong, the men's focus on paid work may be prevalent enough so that analyses could also define women, instead of couples, as units of action. But even then, the male partner's work situation is an important context that needs to be considered.

An additional postulation can be made. It is, however, not specific for this research topic but concerns all research topics in which the direction of causal relationships can be thought reciprocally or in more than one way (i.e., "Is parenthood postponed because of job mobility or is job mobility refused because of parenthood?"): To control the direction of causal effects, longitudinal research design is necessary.

Theory and method

As previously mentioned, the following analyses are not able to put into practice all of the aforementioned postulations. Given the limitations in available data as well as in space, a slightly simplified model will be used. Analyses do take a couple perspective. They include structural constraints and opportunities, as well as cultural normative constructions. How-

ever, a longitudinal research design is not possible, and the macro level can only be included arbitrarily.

The analyses are based on survey data of the project “Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe” (cp. Lück/Schneider in this issue; Huynen et al. 2008; Huynen et al. 2010). It contains representative data for six European countries (Germany, France, Spain, Switzerland, Poland, and Belgium). Since these are too few countries and because they are not randomly selected, a multi-level analysis is not an option. Instead, country differences will be measured by differentiating descriptive analyses and by inserting country dummy variables into the regression analyses. Given that the survey has individual level data, the couple perspective is constructed by filtering out respondents who have a stable relationship and by using variables that were collected for the respondent as well as for his or her partner analogously. For example, respondents were not only asked whether they were working for pay, but also whether their partner was, so that, depending on the sex of the respondent, the variables “man is working for pay” and “woman is working for pay” can be constructed. A second criterion for selecting respondents is an age within the range of 25 to 39, assuming that this is the age span in which work-family conflicts typically occur and in which family planning, family formation and family life with young children takes place. All in all, 2077 couples are analysed.

Theoretically, the analyses assume that the couple makes common decisions based on rational reflections of the relevant circumstances. Relevant circumstances are those that affect the couple’s available resources in terms of time and energy to invest in two job careers and/or parenthood. They include the micro and macro level. For simplification, it is further assumed that the couple has common goals regarding one or two professional careers, as well as towards family plans that it is trying to realise. Work-family conflicts are likely to occur if the couple’s goals include two professional careers and children. These goals are, again, shaped by macro- and meso-level cultural contexts through processes such as socialisation and value change.

Methodologically speaking, two indicators for attitudes are available that come close to measuring the couple’s orientation towards a dual career or towards a male breadwinner concept, as well as towards the decision to remain childless or become parents. The respondent was asked whether or not he or she agrees that “it is usually better for the children if the man is the main provider and the woman takes care of the home and the family.” This variable is used as a proxy for the woman’s career orientation: Those couples in which the respondent fully agrees (as one optional answer on a four point scale) will be excluded from analyses, assuming that the couple follows a male breadwinner role model and, therefore, does not perceive many work-family conflicts. The respondent was also asked whether or not he or she “intends to have a(nother) child within the next three years.” This indicator measures the couples’ *immediate* family plan. It might work as an interaction effect, intensifying the work-family conflict; however, it might even reflect a selection effect by selecting those whose situation is untroubled enough that concrete family planning is realistic. In any case, it is not a decent indicator for measuring whether or not a couple generally wishes to have children in the long run. So, it will not be used for a further limitation of the sample. Instead, it will be arbitrarily assumed that *all* couples have at least a latent wish to become parents.

Given the reciprocal complex causal relationships, analyses will not operationalise the successful combination of two professional careers and family life in one indicator. Instead, two separate causal analyses will take the female partner's full-time employment as the dependent variable in a first step. In a second step, the explained variable will be whether or not the couple has children. This allows the ability to determine which of the two goals is more likely to suffer from which unfavourable circumstances. It also allows for the use of female employment and children as explanatory variables in the other model.

The explanatory variables in the models operationalise the aforementioned circumstances that the couple reflects in making a decision. They include both partners' job situations as well as support for childcare. The job situation is operationalised by including work hours, flexibility of working time, the limitation of the work contract, and, of course, by being mobile for the job. Job mobility here is conceptualised as ongoing recurring mobility. It includes daily long-distance commuting, frequent overnight travel, and living in a long-distance relationship, due to job-related reasons (cp. Lück/Schneider in this issue). Residential mobility is not included. The support for childcare may consist of public childcare, grandparents, friends, or paid private support. Aside from public childcare that partly reflects family policies, macro-level conditions are modelled undifferentiated by measuring country differences.

Although work-family conflicts may have many outcomes – for example, the reduction in work hours, a less prestigious job, or an older age at first birth – the analyses here can only focus on a few. Therefore, with the selection of explained variables – the woman's full-time employment and parenthood – the focus is made on the aspect of compatibility. Before approaching the multi-variate models, binary analyses that have a more descriptive character will be presented.

Are mobile couples less successful in solving work-family conflicts?

The range of combinations of two partners' professional situations, as well as their family circumstances, is complex. A quantitative analysis has to narrow down this range by reducing the complexity to a small set of ideal type forms that, nevertheless, describe a large share of empirical reality. This is accomplished in the following *Figure 1* by distinguishing four groups. Dual-earner parents represent those who have managed to combine two full-time jobs and children. If one partner only works part-time (i.e., less than 35 hours per week), the couple is classified as a 1.5 earner. If one partner does not work at all, then the couple is classified as single-earner parents. Under the (again idealised) assumption that the couple would prefer two full jobs, these two categories present one way of cutting back and failing the aspired ideal.³ The second way to cut back is by not having children. This solution is represented by the category of childless couples. The small group of couples without any full-time employed partner is excluded from the comparison

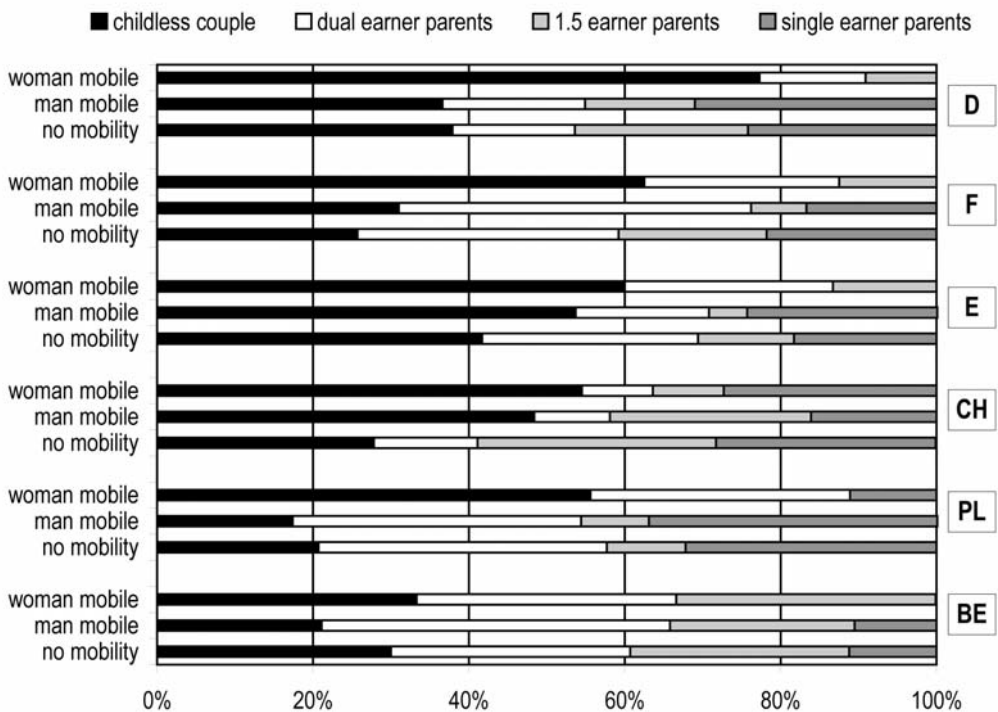
3 One could, of course, also assume that couples would rather combine two *part-time* jobs with parenthood. This, however, will only be true if attractive part-time jobs are available. For these analyses, a simplified general assumption was necessary and, for the studied countries, the assumption of couples that prefer full-time jobs seemed closer to reality.

as a “residual category” because their situation presumably does not reflect a decision of how to react to incompatibility.

The distribution of couples over these four categories is differentiated according to whether the woman, the man, or neither of the two partners is recurrently mobile for job-related reasons. Again, a few cases are excluded from the analyses: Those couples in which both partners are mobile are not enough to calculate a fourth distribution and there is no good reason to merge them with any of the other three.

Comparing the three distributions allows a first, bi-variate impression of the ways in which mobility affects a couple’s ability to realise two professional careers and become parents. The larger the white bar, the more couples are successful. The larger the black bar, the more couples have not (yet) managed to have children. The longer the grey bars, the more couples have at least temporarily cut back on one of the professional careers.

Figure 1: Couples’ childlessness and number of jobs by job mobility



Data: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe. Couples with respondent aged 25 to 39, not fully agreeing that “it is usually better for the children if the man is the main provider and the woman takes care of the home and the family.” Comparison of couples in which neither partner, the man, or the woman is recurrently mobile for job-related reasons. Residual categories (e.g., both partners not employed, both partners part-time employed, both partners recurrently mobile) have been excluded from the analysis. Case numbers for couples with a mobile woman are low (n between 30 and 54). Weighted data (w-nation⁴).

4 For a documentation of the weights, see Huynen et al. 2010.

The figure reveals several insights. The most notable result is that couples are seldom single-earner couples if the woman is recurrently mobile. This may seem like a methodological artefact: Anyone who is mobile for job reasons can hardly not be working for pay. So, if one partner is mobile, the statistical likelihood decreases that one partner is not working for pay.

The finding is, however, also an empirical, albeit well-known, result. It becomes visible when we compare couples with mobile women and couples with mobile men. The fact that the man is mobile does not generally decrease the chance that the couple is a single-earner couple. In some countries, the chance even rises. These gender-specific reactions to recurring mobility document the principally persisting (although weakened) gender roles. Men mostly have a strong professional career orientation and might try to integrate a family into their lives as a second priority; women still tend to take on the full responsibility for the children and try, in addition, to have a professional career. In situations of work-family conflicts, men will almost always cut in their family engagement, whereas women, in comparison, will more often cut back in their engagement on the labour market. As a consequence, men do not react to their female partner's job mobility with reducing or interrupting paid work. The couple will be a dual-earner couple and postpone or give up family plans if necessary. Women *partly* react to their male partner's job mobility by reducing or interrupting paid work, so that the ratio of single-earner couples remains similar to those in which neither partner is mobile.

A second, more surprising, result is that job mobility does not necessarily have visible consequences in terms of a failure in combining two professional careers and children. The white bars, indicating success in that respect, is seldom shorter for couples who experience mobility. They only tend to be shifted to the right side. Job mobility increases the risk of being childless, but not at the cost of dual-earner parent couples; rather, it is at the cost of single-earner couples. The smaller ratio of single-earner couples among mobiles seems, again, self-evident: One partner being mobile for the job implies that this partner is working for pay; this leaves only one (instead of two) partners who might not be in the labour market. Therefore, the couple's likelihood to be a single-earner couple is reduced. And indeed, this result, at least partly, reflects a selection effect. It is caused by the fact that mobility is more likely to occur among dual-earner couples (cp. Collet/Bonnet in this issue; Lück/Ruppenthal 2010). And yet, this is not a methodological artefact. It implies that people who experience job-related mobility make different priorities. They are typically recruited among those who are more job-oriented and would rather postpone or give up family plans. If a couple with different priorities would be confronted with the demand to become mobile, perhaps they would look for a different job – and not appear in the statistics as mobile.

A third result is that the national context matters. The aforementioned patterns are true for all six countries included in the survey. However, the general spread of childlessness and of single-earner couples varies, as does the degree of gender difference in the reaction to mobility. In the figure, France, Belgium, and Poland show a large share of couples who have succeeded in combining two professional careers and parenthood. In Germany and Switzerland, these shares are rather small. This indicates high compatibility in the first group of countries and low compatibility in the latter, which is consistent with known cultural and structural patterns: Germany and Switzerland have a relatively strong expectation regarding the role of the mother as the primary caregiver and little institutional childcare support. France, Poland, and Belgium have culturally established role

models of mothers working for pay. In France and Belgium, this role model is based on the idea of gender equality and accompanied by good childcare support. In Poland, it is based on the economic need of a second household income (Lück 2009; Lück/Hofäcker 2008). The share of childless couples is generally relatively high in Germany. It is very low in Belgium and Poland. These differences are also consistent with known country-specific patterns (OECD Family Database 2009). Also they mainly reflect (in)compatibility, perhaps with a stronger emphasis on structural support and flexibilisation of paid work.

The effects of recurring mobility on compatibility are especially strong in Germany, France, and Poland. In the same countries, these effects are, at the same time, much more gender-specific than in Spain, Switzerland, or Belgium. In fact, the strong effects are visible, almost only if women are recurrently mobile, yet hardly if men are. This pattern is somewhat surprising and does not conform to most typologies known from the literature. It partly serves as a reminder of the spread of “traditional” versus “modern” gender roles with Germany and, in some ways, also Poland, emphasising differences that are stronger than they are in other countries. This correspondence would be plausible in the sense that effects should be gender-specific, especially where the different responsibilities of men as income providers and women as homemakers are emphasised. However, the numbers for France, Spain, and Switzerland do not neatly fit into this scheme (Lück 2009). A second correspondence may be the spread of mobility forms. In Germany, France, and, in some ways, also in Poland, job-related overnight travel is relatively frequent, whereas the other countries are predominantly characterised by daily long-distance commuting (Lück/Ruppenthal 2010). This may explain the different strengths of effects of recurring mobility on compatibility: In Germany, France, and Poland, recurring mobility stands for overnight absences much more often than in Spain, Switzerland, or Belgium. And it is plausible that overnight travel burdens the compatibility more than daily commutes.

Does mobility have similar effects as other potential causes of work-family conflicts?

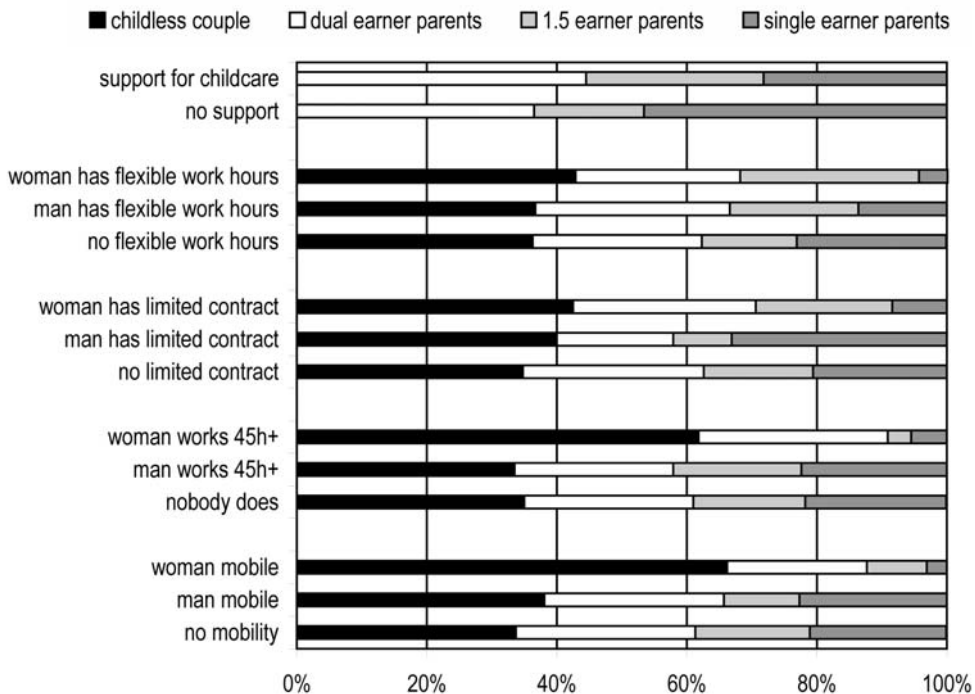
The following *Figure 2* shows the effect of recurring mobility of the male or the female partner for the population of all six countries as a whole. The main patterns, which are described above, are visible. This effect is compared to the effects of other circumstances that are likely to affect compatibility: the question of whether or not one of the partners regularly works more than 45 hours per week; has a time-limited work contract (or no contract at all); is “totally or mainly free to choose his or her work hours;” and whether the couple receives any form of external help for childcare or housework. This includes having children at a kindergarten or other childcare facility, having grandparents or friends occasionally providing childcare, as well as private professional help for childcare or for household chores. Again, the bars indicate how many couples, under these circumstances, have one, 1.5, or two jobs and how many are childless. Only for the comparison of whether or not the couple receives childcare support, childless couples are excluded from the comparison.

Results show that these other circumstances have somewhat similar influences as those of recurring job mobility. The effect of having long work hours is practically identical. This

could be read as a confirmation that a major burden of being mobile for the job is that the travel takes away further couple or family time – just the same as overtime does.

A limited work contract could indicate an insecure economic situation that does not allow long-term binding commitments, such as having children, at least as a statistical tendency. In theory only, from this condition a postponement of parenthood would be a plausible consequence. The analysis confirms such an effect – if it is the man who has the time-limited contract. However, the ratio of childless couples is only marginally higher and the ratio of single-earner couples is higher as well. If the woman’s job is uncertain, as previously described, only a selection effect is visible: In that case, the couple is very likely not a single-earner couple, since the woman at least has a work contract. The gender difference is plausible, given that men typically hold the position of the main provider of the household income so that only in their job career does insecurity matter. What is surprising is that the effect is generally rather weak. It seems as if either a limited contract is not perceived as insecurity very often or that the economic situation is considered somewhat insecure anyway, with or without an unlimited work contract.

Figure 2: Couples’ childlessness and number of jobs by other circumstances



Data: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe. Couples with respondent aged 25 to 39, not fully agreeing that “it is usually better for the children if the man is the main provider and the woman takes care of the home and the family.” Comparison of couples in which neither partner, the man, or the woman is recurringly mobile for job-related reasons. Residual categories (e.g., both partners not employed, both partners part-time employed, both partners recurringly mobile) have been excluded from the analysis. The comparison regarding childcare support excludes childless couples. Weighted data (w-proportion).

The circumstance that partners are able to choose their work hours more or less freely should increase compatibility and support parenthood and family planning. A reciprocal effect would also be plausible with parents negotiating for more freedom in organising their work hours according to their needs. For both reasons, it would be expectable that at least one partner who has this freedom should correlate with the couple that has children. However, this is not the case. There may be a more complex causal relation – perhaps flexible work hours reduce stress for employed parents. A general effect on compatibility and family formation is not visible.

What is plausible is the effect of childcare support. If a couple receives help to care for the children, be it by relatives, friends, privately paid, or public institutions, the partners in this couple have a clearly higher chance of realising two full-time professional careers. The ratio of single-earner parents is significantly lower. However, here again, a causal influence in the opposite direction is also likely: Dual-earner parents organise external support rather than single-earner parents do.

Multivariate analysis, part I: Consequences for family formation

After describing the distribution of couples regarding parenthood and number of employed partners, as a first bi-variate approach to a causal explanation, a multi-variate analysis shall give answers with more reliable empirical evidence. As previously described, this analysis will be divided into two steps. In the first step, the dependent variable is the question of whether or not the couple has children. In the second step, the dependent variable is whether or not the female partner is working full-time or part-time for pay. This division allows for the inclusion of the woman's job situation (i.e., work hours, flexibility etc.) as explanatory variables in the first step and the family situation in the second step without introducing major biases through selection effects. The two dependent variables are only the two most crucial indicators for the success or failure of combining a job career and a family, indicating that circumstances are supportive in terms of compatibility. Other aspects, such as whether or not the male partner is employed full-time or the woman is satisfied with her job, will be left for future research.

The model that is presented in *Table 1* includes the aforementioned explanatory variables. Additionally, it takes into account whether or not the partners are working for pay at all, whether they work full-time and whether or not they have university degrees. The university degree is a proxy for a support for equal gender roles as well as for job orientation on the woman's side. It is known that women with advanced education are more likely to be in the labour market and to remain childless for a longer amount of time, partly because advanced education implies a high investment in human capital that offers more opportunities on the labour market. It also suggests an increased opportunity cost for interrupting a job career, partly because the academic social milieu transports corresponding values and role models. Age is controlled for in the model because it naturally explains variance, also within the restricted sample of respondents aged 25 to 39.

The overall explanatory power of the model is satisfying (Nagelkerkes $R^2=.401$). The standardised regression coefficients confirm several results that were already visible in the bi-variate analyses.

Table 1: Circumstances fostering couples' family foundation (logistic regression)

	Exp(B)	Sig.
man: is working for pay	1.338	.314
woman: is working for pay	.709	.033
man: is working full-time (35h or more)	.950	.775
woman: is working full-time (35h or more)	.508	.000
man: is working overtime (45h or more)	1.224	.108
woman: is working overtime (45h or more)	.608	.005
man: is recurrently mobile for the job	.723	.010
woman: is recurrently mobile for the job	.598	.001
man: can choose work hours freely	1.085	.563
woman: can choose work hours freely	1.231	.234
man: has time-limited work contract	.816	.222
woman: has time-limited work contract	1.075	.636
man: has university degree	.646	.000
woman: has university degree	.566	.000
Age	1.293	.000
Germany	(ref.)	(ref.)
France	3.718	.000
Spain	1.369	.066
Switzerland	.946	.764
Poland	5.523	.000
Belgium	4.349	.000
Constant	.000	.000
Nagelkerkes R²	.401	

Data: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe. Couples with respondent aged 25 to 39, not fully agreeing that "it is usually better for the children if the man is the main provider and the woman takes care of the home and the family." Dependent variable: Couple has children (in our outside the household). Unweighted data.

The limitation of work contracts does not affect the family foundation in a significant statistical way, although the coefficients point to expectable directions and a man's limited contract may have a weak influence. This result is surprising. As argued before, it probably has to be stated that limited work contracts are only one way among others that indicate how jobs can be insecure today, and they may even not always be perceived as insecure if the employee has good reason to expect to receive a new work contract without interruption. In some branches that have limited contracts as a standard, there already may also be an effect of getting used to insecurity and ignoring it in family planning. The flexibility of work hours does not significantly affect the family foundation either. The reasons may be that the flexibility is not always only on the employee's side, although the question was formulated this way, but because it is partly demanded by employers or job responsibilities, or that some employees only have the freedom of choosing which "23 out of 24 hours" they prefer to work.

Work hours do have a strong and significant effect. However, this is only true in the female partner's job. The man's work hours do not show effects at all. This may reflect

that the deviation from the standard of a full-time professional career is simply too rare among men to have any statistical explaining power. It certainly also reflects “traditional” gender roles that define that childcare needs a mother, rather than the father, to reduce work. For the same reason, the circumstances in which the female partner has a job or works full-time or even overtime reduces the chance that the couple has children clearly.

Remarkably, job mobility shows clear effects, not only if it occurs in the woman’s jobs, but also if it occurs in the man’s job. If any of the partners must commute long distances or attend to overnight business travel frequently, then the chance that the couple has children is significantly reduced. For the reasons mentioned above, women’s mobility has a stronger effect than the mobility of men. As the effects of other indicators, it can be assumed that a part of this statistical effect is due to a selection effect and indicates a reversed causal relation: Couples with children – or with concrete family plans – will try to avoid job mobility and jobs with many work hours more often and more rigorously than childless couples will. However, the effect, as designed in the regression model, is similarly plausible and certainly also true: Once a couple is confronted with job mobility, it is less likely that they will make or realise family plans soon. Compared to other characteristics of the work situation, job mobility has a strong impact on the compatibility of professional careers and family life. Unlike other aspects, it is perceived as an obstacle for realising parenthood, even for the less challenging father role.

The educational degree works as it was hypothesised and as it is known from the literature: People with academic degrees are less likely to be parents than those without. Additionally to the explanation that rational choice theories give, interpreting education as human capital that increases the opportunity costs for interrupting or reducing professional work, (Becker 1993) it can be assumed that the academic social milieu is more accepting of childlessness than others and socialises women and men to seek self-fulfilment in a professional career.

The dummy variables that measure national differences show highly significant and highly relevant effects. With Germany as a reference, France, Belgium, and especially Poland have a multiplied likelihood that couples have children. Only Spain has a slightly higher likelihood that barely fails to be significant. Switzerland does not deviate from the German pattern. These effects correspond to different overall levels in fertility.⁵ The only clear exception in this comparison is Poland: It shows a higher likelihood of being a parent in the regression analysis although it, meanwhile, has a low total fertility rate. The reason is that couples in Poland, as in most other East European countries, have children at a younger age (OECD Family Database 2008). Therefore, within the cross-sectionally studied age span (with respondents being 25 to 39), there are more parents although the overall fertility is not higher.

There are several macro-level circumstances that cause the national differences. Research has emphasised cultural differences as well as different family policies (Gerhards/Hölscher 2003; van Oorschot/Opielka/Pfau-Effinger 2008; Weiss 2000; Kaufmann 2002; Lewis/Ostner 1994; Lengerer 2004). West Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Southern Europe are known to cherish strong social expectations towards the mother role and offer

5 The 2007 total fertility rates are for Germany: 1.37; France: 1.98; Spain: 1.40; Switzerland: 1.46; Poland: 1.31; Belgium: 1.81 (Eurostat 2009).

little support for parents in terms of public childcare. Scandinavia, France, and Belgium are examples for a more generous support, partly motivated by a strong cultural belief in gender equality; in the French case, it is also motivated by defining higher birth rates as a political goal (Veil 2004). In socialist times, countries in Eastern Europe also had the goal of enhancing birth rates as well as of supporting female labour market participation. This pattern has also been culturally established and partly persists until the present (Hofäcker 2006). The female labour market participation remains high, while births have severely dropped and/or have been postponed to a slightly older age. Both culture and policies are closely linked by reciprocal influences that generally are hard to untangle empirically. Pfau-Effinger has suggested conceptualising the sets of gender culture and gender structure as gender arrangement (Pfau-Effinger 1998). (The age effect is trivial and controlled for in the model only to avoid third variable effects.)

Multivariate analysis, part II: Consequences for women's job careers

After the first step in multi-variate analyses of compatibility of job careers and family life, the second step follows. This time, the dependent variable is the question of whether or not the female partner is working for pay. This question allows for different explanatory variables. Attributes of the female partner's job are, of course, only existent under the condition that she has a job at all. They are, in other words, extremely correlated to the dependent variable and therefore cannot be taken into account in the model. Instead, the family situation, which was not part of the previous model for analogue reasons, can now be taken into account. The analysis shows the strength of the resources of time and energy that parenthood requires and the fact that the male partner's job requires the burden of the realisation of a professional career for the woman. Job mobility, as experienced by the male partner, is again tested and compared to the other circumstances' effects.

The overall explanatory power of the model is rather dissatisfying (Nagelkerkes $R^2=.151$). This means that the fact of whether or not a female partner in a couple is working for pay is either not strongly affected by any external circumstances, or it is more affected by circumstances that are not included in the model or, likely, the data. However, convincing theoretical arguments about which other circumstances these should be and why are missing. A plausible interpretation, therefore, is that female employment is indeed less affected by the family situation than the family situation is affected by female employment. (Age, which had a very strong impact in the previous model, has no additional explanatory power on this dependent variable and is left out of the model.) Nevertheless, even if more variance remains unexplained, there are effects that are documented in the standardised regression coefficients. Some of them are surprising in their direction.

Table 2: Circumstances fostering partnered women's paid work (logistic regression)

	Exp(B)	Sig.
man: is working for pay	1.960	.013
man: is working full-time (35h or more)	1.113	.554
man: is working overtime (45h or more)	.724	.012
man: is recurringly mobile for the job	1.005	.967
man: can choose work hours freely	1.275	.111
man: has time-limited work contract	.541	.000
man: has university degree	.817	.125
woman: has university degree	2.388	.000
couple has children	.670	.092
number of children	.802	.003
couple has children under age 6	.411	.000
couple receives support for childcare or housework	2.491	.000
Germany (ref.)	—	—
France	1.471	.036
Spain	1.154	.403
Switzerland	1.278	.188
Poland	1.260	.207
Belgium	2.317	.000
Constant	1.692	.023
Nagelkerkes R²		.151

Data: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe. Couples with respondent aged 25 to 39, not fully agreeing that "it is usually better for the children if the man is the main provider and the woman takes care of the home and the family." Dependent variable: Woman is working for pay (full-time or part-time). Unweighted data.

If the male partner is working for pay, the chance rises that the female partner has a job. But if he works more than 44 hours a week, the chance decreases. It is plausible that a man can invest work hours beyond a common 40 hours per week in his professional job more easily if he has a housewife who frees him from any household or childcare responsibilities. So, it is plausible that there are reciprocal causal influences between a man working overtime and his female partner working at all and that both may be negotiated by the couple together. In the rare event that the man is not working for pay at all, it would be plausible that the woman compensates his missing contribution to the household income with paid work. Statistically, the opposite is true: If he doesn't have a job, she tends not to have a job either. This correlation may be due to a selection effect, for example, based on student couples in which both partners are not yet in the labour market. It may also reflect the known tendency of homogamy that couples are less stable if partners have different socio-economic backgrounds, especially if the female partner has a higher social position than the man (Lenz 2009).

It is also surprising that the woman's likelihood to have a job decreases if the male partner's job is based on a time-limited contract. Again, one could assume that an insecure income on the man's side should be a reason why the woman should also provide an income. And, again, similar selection effects might explain why this is, at least in a statistically measurable way, not the case. The question of whether or not the man can choose his work hours freely does not have an effect at all – just like in the previous model.

The influence of the family situation appears to be quite plausible. Whether or not the couple has children as such does not significantly reduce the woman's likelihood to have a job. But the effect is close to being significant. And, for the presence of young children up to the age of five, the effect is highly significant and highly relevant. Also, with a higher number of children it becomes less probable that the female partner is working for pay. Summarising, these numbers can be interpreted in a way that the more time and energy that have to be invested by a couple into childcare, which is typically provided by women, the less likely it is that the female partner still has enough time and energy left to also pursue a professional career of her own. The fourth number also fits into this picture: If the couple receives external support by sending children to a kindergarten, by having a housekeeper or a nanny, by receiving childcare from friends or grandparents, then the woman's chance to work for pay multiplies. This support, as mentioned earlier, may also be the consequence, rather than the cause, of the woman's engagement in the labour market.

What is surprising, but consistent with the bi-variate analyses, is the fact that a male partner's job mobility does not affect the employment of his female partner. For the same reason why a man working 45 hours or more a week decreases his partner's chance of being engaged in the labour market, it would also be plausible that a job-mobile man is more likely to have a housewife without a professional career than a man who returns home from work within a couple of minutes each evening. This is not the case. Again, one explanation is a selection effect: As mentioned before, dual-earner couples have a higher chance to be confronted with job mobility than single-earner couples (cp. Collet/Bonnet in this issue). But, nevertheless, it is remarkable that there is not also an effect in terms of reducing women's engagement on the labour market that would outweigh this selection effect.

Highly significant and plausible is the effect of women's education. Those with an academic degree have a multiplied chance of having a job. Again, there is one interpretation, based on human capital, that has already been mentioned and one based on milieu-specific socialisation: It can be assumed that the academic social milieu socialises women to be more demanding in terms of economic independency and self-fulfilment in their own professional careers. Analogously it would be plausible to assume that men with university degrees are socialised to be more sensitive and supportive for women's interests. The fact that the male partner's educational degree does not have an effect at all on the woman's engagement in the labour market questions this theoretical perspective.

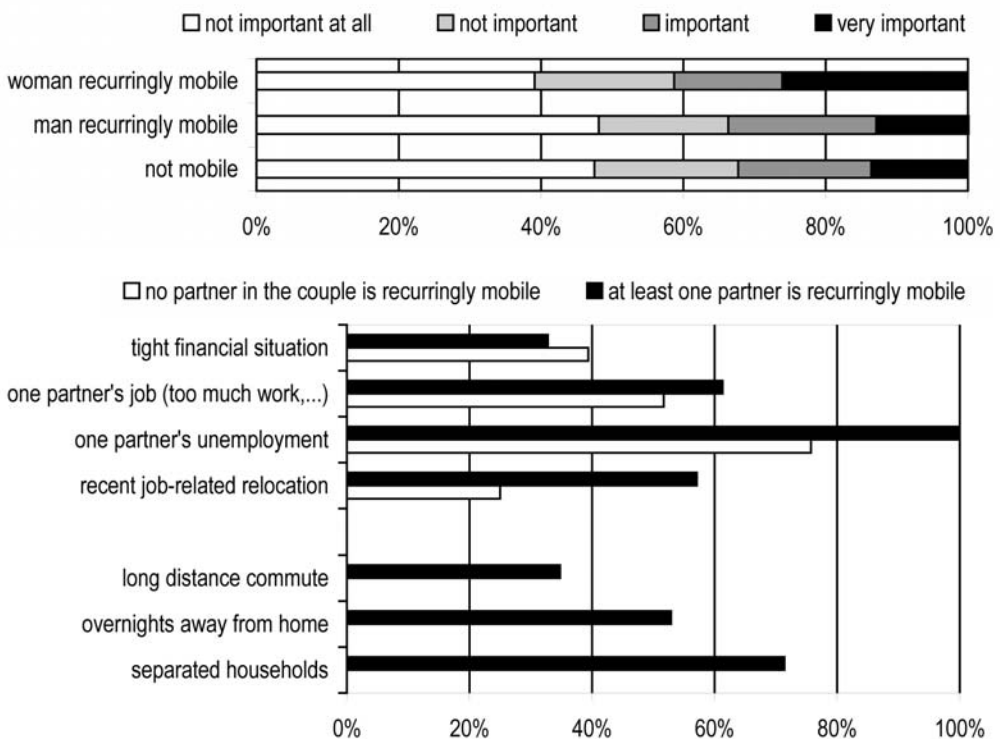
Finally, we see country effects. They become evident in directions that are consistent with the previous model, with France and Belgium fostering female employment more than Germany, Switzerland, or Spain. However, the strength of the effects is much weaker than it was in the previous model. All in all, it seems that couples react to external circumstances and incompatibility, rather with compromises in family planning and family foundation, than with compromises in the female partner's labour market engagement.

Support from the respondents' subjective evaluation

The data also allow measurement of the reciprocal interrelations between family and professional work that are captured by the aforementioned regression analyses in another way. The survey includes several questions that ask the respondent to subjectively evalu-

ate these influences. Respondents without children were asked about several potential job-related reasons for their childlessness, including various forms of being job mobile (*Figure 3*). All respondents were asked whether their duties for childcare and housework burdened the success of their professional careers (*Figure 4*). These evaluations contain all of the advantages and disadvantages that subjective indicators always have: On the one hand, they may be biased by the subjective perception of the respondent and by reactivity; on the other hand, they are free of third variable effects that may not be controlled for in a regression analysis. The subjective indicators may not be a good alternative to multivariate analyses of objective indicators; however, they are a very valuable supplement. If they confirm the results of the regression analyses above, then they crucially increase the reliability of these results.

Figure 3: Subjective evaluation of the reasons for childlessness



Data: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe. Upper figure: Childless couples with respondent aged 25 to 39. Comparison of couples in which neither partner, the man, or the woman is recurringly mobile for job-related reasons. The residual category (i.e., both partners are recurringly mobile) has been excluded from the analysis. Lower figure: Childless couples with respondent aged 25 to 39 who states that the job-related reasons were “not important at all” for the reason why they don’t have children. Weighted data (w-proportion).

The first indicator in *Figure 3* confirms the gender difference in the effects of job requirements on family foundation. Job-mobile men and women with mobile partners do

not have a higher tendency to perceive job-related reasons as important for the fact that they do not have children. Mobile women and men with a mobile partner do. The share of those who evaluate this influence as “very important” almost doubles from 14% to 26%. This supports the interpretation that, under the condition of persisting gender roles, the hours that are taken away from the female partner by job requirements have more severe consequences for the realisation of family plans than the hours that the male partner invests in his job career.

The set of further indicators in *Figure 3*, which measure the evaluation of specific characteristics of the job situation, confirms two additional results. The indicator “one partner’s job” is actually the aggregation of two indicators in the data set, transferring answers to the couple level. The variable indicates that the respondent has either said “yes” to the question “Is your job a reason – for example, too much work, stress, or responsibility?” or to the equivalent question “Is your partner’s job a reason?” Thereby it measures consequences of a high work load of any of the two partners within a couple. More than half of the respondents evaluate the work load as being important. This is consistent with the result from *Table 1* that shows that many work hours decrease the chance to become a parent.

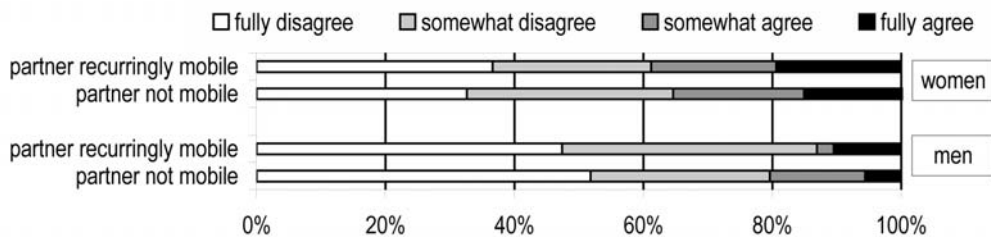
Figure 3 also confirms the influence of job mobility. Not only is the work load considered to be more important by people who are personally or through their partners confronted with job mobility than by those who are not. Job mobility itself is also mentioned as being an important cause. The indicators are differentiated by the type of mobility. Living in a long-distance relationship for job-related reasons is most often seen as a reason for not having children. Frequent job-related overnight travel is the second most important cause. Daily long-distance commuting is still relevant but less important. One can summarise that the longer the phases in which job mobility separates the partners spatially, the greater the perception that its consequences for the couple’s lack of children are important.

There are some additional insights from the subjective indicators. They reveal that unemployment and financially tight situations can also be reasons not to have children. And they show that a job-related relocation is also sometimes perceived as a reason why the couple has not (yet) founded a family – especially if the relocation experience is in addition to a recurring mobility that the couple also is confronted with.

Figure 4 also confirms a previous result: The professional career seems to be less affected by aggravations of the work-family conflict than the family career. People who have a recurringly mobile partner do not clearly agree more often than others that “Your job career could have been more successful if you had had fewer responsibilities for housework and care-giving.” Men disagree with this statement more often than women, which reflects the well-known gender role patterns. A somewhat higher agreement for men with a mobile partner could be concluded from the ratios of full agreement and full disagreement. However, if the variable was dichotomised by putting agreement against disagreement, the opposite tendency would be measured. So these differences need to be interpreted as “white noise” instead of as a correlation. The same is true for the differences in agreement between women with a mobile partner and women with a non-mobile partner. This means that if one partner in a couple becomes recurringly mobile for job-related reasons, it does not lead to a cutback in the other partner’s professional career, at

least not in the other partner's subjective perception. Instead, it probably leads to cutting back family plans.

Figure 4: Subjective evaluation of the consequences of childcare duties for one's own professional career



Data: Job Mobilities and Family Lives in Europe. Respondents aged 25 to 39 with a partner. Weighted data (w-proportion).

In summary, it can be stated that the subjective indicators do confirm the main results of the regression analyses: Women's career orientation is not significantly affected by the family situation. The family biography, however, does suffer if the partners' job situations are demanding. Given the persisting gender role patterns, the woman's job situation is crucial in this respect.

Discussion

It has been argued that, in late modernity and with women's increasing career orientation and refusal of a male breadwinner concept, couples run into increasing challenges of compatibility of professional work and family life. Since both spheres compete for a limited amount of resources in terms of time and energy, it is possible that individuals and couples are unable to invest enough in each sphere to meet all role expectations. This is especially true for the life course phase of early adulthood, in which not only family plans are usually made, but also professional careers are typically established and job mobility is frequent. The consequences may be the failure in realising all goals, in terms of both partners having professional careers and being parents, as analysed in this article. They may also be more subtle, such as having conflicts with the partner or with colleagues. The degree of compatibility is improved or worsened by a variety of circumstances, such as the flexibility of work hours or the availability of childcare support. Among these circumstances, the necessity to be recurringly spatially mobile for the job, such as via long-distance commuting or by taking frequent business trips, etc., is an important issue that has been overlooked in social science research. If it proves to severely aggravate work-family conflicts, such will be an increasing social problem in the future because job mobility has increased in European societies throughout recent decades.

First of all, the results show that, in general, the relationship between work life and family life is not symmetrical: Family planning and family foundation are more affected

by the woman's job situation than vice versa. Given that the analyses focus on couples, this observation very likely reflects priorities that the couples make rather than constraints: If two professional careers and parenthood seem to be incompatible, then for most young couples, the two jobs come first. As far as this main priority seems to be achievable at all, the partners probably tend to invest whatever it requires without rational reflection on a daily basis. Whether or not the secondary goal, mostly the family plans, can be achieved in addition is the remaining question that couples perceive as a challenge. Its answer depends on how many resources are left to invest after the primary goal is satisfingly realised.

There are a number of explanations why couples may define two professional careers as their primary goal instead of becoming parents. Individuals have probably defined this priority before finding a partner and making common plans as a couple. In this situation, a professional career can be pursued through personal effort, whereas realising family plans is dependent on the fortune of finding the "right" partner in time and is, therefore, a risky goal. Certainly, the concern about economic existence is also more fundamental than the wish to have children. And a personal income is a much safer way to secure one's economic existence than relying on finding and keeping a partner who could provide one. A third explanation is the wish to be economically independent within a stable partnership because the (in)dependency affects the relation of power and the gender roles in the couple. Finally, a professional career may seem, to many women and men, to be a more promising way of achieving self-fulfilment and identification than being a full-time mother or father. All in all, rising insecurity in the labour market, rising instability of couple relationships, and processes of value change and individualisation may explain why job orientation today outweighs family orientation – after a historically exceptional phase in the 1950s and 1960s in which this may have been somewhat different (especially for women).

Nevertheless, today there also may be different priorities that define which goal is pursued if several seem to be incompatible. In the analyses, this fact is more reflected in circumstances that are likely to shape these preferences than in the preferences themselves. The educational attainment, for example, affects the likelihood whether the couple has children or whether the woman has a job, partly because people with an academic degree tend to have preferences different from those without. There are other circumstances that influence the preference structure. In any case, knowing the preferences means knowing which goal will be realised if both spheres would require more resources than the couple feels able to invest.

Under the condition that couples do have a principle interest in having two jobs and a family life, several circumstances become relevant that make it more or less likely that these goals can all be reached. Surprisingly, there is no empirical evidence that the freedom of choosing work hours or the limitation of work contracts are among them. Also, the male partner's work hours have no significant influence, whereas the question of whether and how many hours the female partner works for pay is crucial. This means that cultural aspects and subjective preferences come into play as interaction effects another time. As long as men are not thought of as being equally responsible for childcare, their professional situation is not (as) relevant for the couples' perception of being able to realise family plans.

Compared to other aspects of the job situation, recurring job mobility has strong effects on the work-family conflict. However, as for other aspects, it cannot be stated that it necessarily aggravates it in all cases. It clearly reduces the statistical chance of having a family, but job mobility of one partner does not decrease the chance that the other partner is working for pay. This probably partly reflects a selection effect that job mobiles tend to recruit themselves among rather job-oriented people. Mobile couples will, therefore, rather cut back on the family investment than the career investment if two goals are incompatible – just as other job oriented people would do. In other words, if they have to make choices, they tend to make career-oriented choices more often than non-mobile couples, but they do not necessarily have to make more choices. Another influence comes into play: Couples may become mobile because they want to combine two professional careers and parenthood. For example, a parent may take on a job with a distant workplace and a very long daily commute, and not relocate, so that the children do not lose their friends and do not need to change schools.

The analyses here have concentrated on only two major aspects of combining professional careers with family life. As argued before, there are several more that merit attention by further research. One of them is analysed by Viry, Widmer, and Kaufmann (in this issue): Under certain circumstances regarding the process of how a couple becomes mobile, mobility may burden the partnership quality. Job mobility as such does not have this effect. Therefore, there is little evidence that the lack of time of a mobile partner as such and his inability to invest more into couple or family life provokes partner conflicts or separations. Also, Gerardo Meil's results on this issue are relevant to the question that is raised here: They show that job mobility not only prevents family formation, but it may also reduce the number of children. And, more often, it only postpones births.

The analyses presented here are limited by data and space. The causal influences that lie behind the country effects deserve more attention in the future. Also, the direction and mechanisms of causal influences on the couple level could be studied in a better way as soon as suitable data are available. The analyses in this article are a cross-sectional attempt to capture complex reciprocal causal relationships. They could be studied more adequately with longitudinal data within a couple career perspective.

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Forschungsbeiträge

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Entwicklung eines neuen multidimensionalen Fragebogens zur Erfassung der Partnerschaftsqualität (FPQ)

Development of a new multidimensional questionnaire for the assessment of relationship quality (FPQ)

Zusammenfassung:

Hintergrund: Im deutschen Sprachraum kommt der Partnerschaftsforschung zusehends mehr Gewicht zu. Zwar gibt es im deutschsprachigen Raum einige Fragebögen zur Messung der Partnerschaftsqualität, diese erfassen aber nicht alle relevanten Dimensionen. Deshalb wird in der vorliegenden Studie als Ergänzung zu den bisherigen Fragebögen ein neues Instrument zur Messung der Partnerschaftsqualität (FPQ) vorgestellt. *Methodik:* Der Fragebogen wurde an einer Stichprobe von 244 Personen getestet, die sich zum Zeitpunkt der Erhebung in einer Partnerschaft befanden. Die dimensionale Struktur wurde mittels explorativer und konfirmatorischer Faktorenanalysen geprüft. *Ergebnisse:* Die faktorielle Validitätsprüfung ergab einen Fragebogen bestehend aus sechs Subskalen (Faszination, Engagement für die Beziehung, Sexualität in der Beziehung, Zukunftsperspektive der Beziehung, Misstrauen gegenüber dem Partner und Einschränkung der Freiheit/Unabhängigkeit). Die interne Konsistenz der sechs Subskalen liegt zwischen .75 und .94. Zusätzlich liess sich ein übergeordneter Faktor Partnerschaftsqualität konstruieren. Die diskriminative Validität wurde durch einen Gruppenvergleich (zufriedene und unzufriedene Personen) bestätigt. Die moderaten bis hohen Korrelationen des neuen Fragebogens mit dem Partnerschaftsfragebogen PFB zur Messung der Partnerschaftsqualität und anderen relevanten Konzepten unterstützen die konvergente Validität.

Abstract:

Background: Research on couples is receiving increased attention. There are some questionnaires assessing relationship quality available in German. However, they are not assessing all relevant dimensions of relationship quality. Therefore, an alternative questionnaire to measure relationship quality (FPQ) is presented in this study. *Methods:* The measure was tested with a total of 244 adults, who were all in a close relationship at that time. The dimensional structure was tested with exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. *Results:* Scale analyses revealed a questionnaire consisting of six subscales (fascination, commitment, sexuality, future of the partnership, mistrust, and constraint autonomy). The internal scale consistencies vary between .78 and .92. Additionally, by using structural equation modeling, a superior factor relationship quality was found. The discriminative validity was confirmed by a group comparison (satisfied and unsatisfied people). Moderate to high correlations with a traditional questionnaire measuring relationship quality and other relevant constructs indicate satisfying convergent validity.

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Schlagworte: Partnerschaftsqualität, Ehequalität, Partnerschaft, Messinstrument, Fragebogenentwicklung

Keywords: relationship quality, marital quality, couple, measurement instrument, questionnaire development

Eine lebenslange glückliche Ehe zu führen, ist ein großer Wunsch vieler Menschen. Trotzdem werden heutzutage in der Schweiz fast 50% aller Ehen geschieden (Bundesamt für Statistik 2009). Um den Verlauf und speziell die Veränderungen innerhalb einer Partnerschaft genau dokumentieren zu können, ist eine reliable, valide und ökonomische Erfassung der Qualität einer Partnerschaft sowohl im Forschungs- wie auch im Interventionskontext sehr wichtig. Bezüglich des Konzepts der Partnerschaftsqualität herrschte lange Zeit keine einheitliche Handhabung. So wurde Partnerschaftsqualität oft mit Partnerschaftszufriedenheit gleichgesetzt (z.B. Karney/Bradbury 1995). In letzter Zeit zeigt sich jedoch zunehmend (vor allem durch faktorenanalytische Auswertungen), dass Partnerschaftsqualität ein mehrdimensionales Konstrukt ist und Partnerschaftszufriedenheit eine Dimension davon darstellt. So extrahierten Fletcher, Simpson und Thomas (2000) aus ihren Daten die sechs Dimensionen Zufriedenheit, Commitment, Intimität, Vertrauen, Leidenschaft und Liebe. Hassebrauck und Fehr (2002) dagegen fanden vier grundlegende Dimensionen: Übereinstimmung, Intimität, Unabhängigkeit und Sexualität.

Bisher gibt es im deutschen Sprachraum nur wenige Fragebögen, welche diesen neuerdings in der Paarforschung diskutierten Aspekten der Partnerschaftsqualität angemessen Rechnung tragen. Der Partnerschaftsfragebogen (PFB) von Hahlweg (1996), der sowohl in der Forschung wie auch in der Praxis am häufigsten zum Einsatz kommt, bildet mit 30 Items drei wichtige Dimensionen ab: Die Partnerschaftsqualität als Ganzes und mit jeweils zehn Items die drei Subskalen Kommunikation, Streitverhalten und Zärtlichkeit. Oft wird auch die deutsche Übersetzung der Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976; deutsche Übersetzung von Klann/Hahlweg/Heinrichs 2003) verwendet, die sich aus den vier Subskalen Erfüllung, Zusammenhalt, Ausdruck von Gefühlen und dyadische Übereinstimmung zusammensetzt. Ein weiterer Fragebogen, der zur Messung von Partnerschaftsqualität eingesetzt wird, ist die Paarklimaskala von Schneewind und Kruse (2002), welche die drei Skalen Verbundenheit, Unabhängigkeit und Anregung/Aktivität beinhaltet. Seit ein paar Jahren steht dem deutschen Sprachraum auch die deutsche Übersetzung des Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI; Snyder 1979; deutsche Übersetzung von Klann/Hahlweg/Limbird/Snyder 2006) zur Verfügung, das sich aus den folgenden 11 Subskalen zusammensetzt: Globale Zufriedenheit mit der Partnerschaft, Affektive Kommunikation, Problemlösung, Gemeinsame Freizeitgestaltung, Finanzplanung, Sexuelle Zufriedenheit, Rollenorientierung, Elterliche Ehezufriedenheit, Zufriedenheit mit den Kindern, Kindererziehung und eine Validitätsskala. Zur Messung der Partnerschaftszufriedenheit wird oft die deutsche Übersetzung der eindimensionalen Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick 1988; deutsche Übersetzung von Sander/Böcker, 1993) eingesetzt, die aus 7 Items besteht.

Obgleich sich diese Fragebögen in der bisherigen Forschung bewährt haben, rechtfertigen folgende Gründe die Entwicklung eines neuen Fragebogens zur Erfassung der Partnerschaftsqualität: (1) die bisherigen Fragebögen zur Erfassung der Partnerschaftsqualität erfassen gewisse Dimensionen nicht, welche mehrheitlich in der neueren Literatur im Zusammenhang mit Partnerschaftsqualität diskutiert werden, so zum Beispiel die folgenden

Bereiche: Gegenseitige Faszination (z.B. Johnson/Caughlin/Huston, 1999), Engagement für die Beziehung (Commitment) (z.B. Fletcher/Simpson/Thomas 2000), Dauerhaftigkeit und Zukunftsperspektive der Beziehung (ist z.B. als Instabilität in der englischen Nebraska Scale of Marital Happiness von Johnson, White, Edwards und Booth (1986) enthalten), Vertrauen gegenüber dem Partner (z.B. Cutrona, 1996), gegenseitige Unterstützung und Verlass aufeinander (z.B. Bodenmann 2000; Cutrona 1996), Ähnlichkeit zwischen den Partnern (z.B. Karney/Bradbury 1995) und Fairness und Ausgewogenheit zwischen den Partnern (z.B. Forry/Leslie/Letiecq 2007); (2) bisherige Fragebögen, welche mehrere Dimensionen der Partnerschaftsqualität erfassen (z.B. MSI) sind sehr lang, zeitaufwändig für die Paare und erweisen sich daher für Forschungszwecke als zu wenig ökonomisch; (3) bei Studien besteht häufig eine Konfundierung zwischen Variablen wie Kommunikation, als einem der wichtigsten Prädiktoren für Partnerschaftsqualität und -zufriedenheit (siehe Karney/Bradbury 1995) und den Partnerschaftsqualitätsfragebögen, welche diesen Aspekt bereits integriert haben (z.B. PFB), weshalb im FPQ auf die Erfassung von Kommunikation und Problemlösung verzichtet wurde. In vielen Untersuchungen werden diese Aspekte mit zusätzlichen Fragebögen erfasst.

Zur Prüfung der Konstruktvalidität unseres neuen Partnerschaftsqualitätsfragebogens wurde der FPQ mit einem Fragebogen zur Partnerschaftszufriedenheit (Relationship Assessment Scale RAS), zur Partnerschaftsqualität (Partnerschaftsfragebogen PFB) sowie zur selbsteingeschätzten Partnerschaftsstabilität (Marital Status Inventory MSI) korreliert. Da sich gezeigt hat, dass Partnerschaftszufriedenheit eine Dimension von Partnerschaftsqualität darstellt (Fletcher et al. 2000), sollten die Subskalen des vorliegenden Fragebogens positiv mit der Partnerschaftszufriedenheit, der Partnerschaftsqualität (mit dem PFB gemessen) und der Partnerschaftsstabilität zusammenhängen, was unter anderem auch der Review-Artikel von Karney und Bradbury (1995) nahelegt. Zur Prüfung der Kriteriumsvalidität des FPQ wurden Befindlichkeitsmaße (Wohlbefinden, Depressivität) herangezogen, da sich in der Forschung die Partnerschaftsqualität als einer der zentralen Prädiktoren für das Befinden erwiesen hat, wie die Metaanalyse von Proulx, Helms und Buehler (2007) mit einer Effektstärke von .37 zeigt. Es zeigte sich auch, dass Partnerschaftsqualität negativ mit der depressiven Verstimmung zusammenhängt (Review-Artikel von Kiecolt-Glaser/Newton 2001). Zum Beispiel berechnete Whisman (2001) anhand 26 Studien, die den Zusammenhang zwischen depressiver Verstimmung und Partnerschaftsqualität untersuchten, eine Effektstärke von -.42 für Frauen und -.37 für Männer. Aufgrund dieser Forschungsergebnisse gehen wir davon aus, dass die einzelnen Dimensionen wie auch der allgemeine Faktor Partnerschaftsqualität positiv mit dem Wohlbefinden und negativ mit der depressiven Verstimmung zusammenhängen.

Vor diesem Hintergrund wird im vorliegenden Artikel die Konstruktion eines neuen multidimensionalen Messmodells zur Partnerschaftsqualität (FPQ) vorgestellt, das die bisher vorliegenden Fragebögen zur Messung der Partnerschaftsqualität ergänzen soll.

Methoden

Fragebogenkonstruktion

Der neue Fragebogen zur Messung der Partnerschaftsqualität wurde in zwei Schritten entwickelt. Zuerst wurden aufgrund von Literaturrecherchen 10 Bereiche (Determinanten) der Partnerschaftsqualität ermittelt, die mit Ausnahme der beiden Bereiche Sexualität und Unabhängigkeit/Freiheit in den bestehenden Fragebögen zur Messung der Partnerschaftsqualität nicht enthalten sind. Diese beiden Bereiche wurden aber als Ergänzung trotzdem in den Fragebogen aufgenommen. Die 10 Bereiche sind: (1) gegenseitige Faszination füreinander, (2) Engagement für die Beziehung, (3) Sexualität in der Beziehung, (4) Dauerhaftigkeit und Zukunftsperspektive der Beziehung, (5) Vertrauen gegenüber dem Partner, (6) Freiheit/Unabhängigkeit, (7) gegenseitige Unterstützung und Verlass aufeinander, (8) Nähe und Geborgenheit in der Beziehung, (9) Ähnlichkeit zwischen mir und meinem Partner, (10) Fairness und Ausgewogenheit zwischen uns. In einem zweiten Schritt wurden innerhalb des Teams zu jedem der 10 Bereiche mindestens 5 Items konstruiert.

Die vorläufige Endfassung des Fragebogens umfasste 70 Items. Die 5-stufige Antwortskala variierte von 1 = *stimme nicht zu* bis 5 = *stimme sehr stark zu*.

Stichprobe

An der Fragebogenuntersuchung nahmen 244 Personen teil, die an zwei verschiedenen Standorten rekrutiert wurden. Ein kleinerer Teil der Personen ($n = 75$) wurde im Jahre 2006 an der Universität Fribourg erhoben. Davon waren 66 Studierende der Universität Fribourg und 9 Personen aus dem Bekanntenkreis (externe Personen). Der zweite Teil der Stichprobe ($n = 169$) wurde 2008/2009 an der Universität Basel im Rahmen eines Projektseminars rekrutiert, wobei 72 Personen Studierende der Universität Basel waren und 97 Personen über den Bekanntenkreis der Seminarteilnehmer per Schneeballsystem erhoben wurden. Die einzige Bedingung für die Teilnahme an der Studie war, dass die Personen aktuell in einer Partnerschaft sein mussten. Den Teilnehmenden wurde ein Fragebogen ausgeteilt, das sie anonym zurückschicken konnten. Die Teilnehmenden erhielten keine Entschädigung für ihre Teilnahme.

Insgesamt nahmen 179 Frauen und 65 Männer an der Befragung teil, die zwischen 19 und 70 Jahre alt waren ($M = 28.25$, $SD = 11.83$). Die Dauer der Partnerschaft lag im Durchschnitt bei 5.52 Jahren ($SD = 8.07$ Jahre, Range = $\frac{1}{2}$ Monat bis 42 Jahre). 13.2% der Personen ($n = 32$) waren zum Zeitpunkt der Befragung verheiratet, 82.4% ledig ($n = 201$) und 3.7% geschieden, aber in einer neuen Partnerschaft ($n = 9$). Als höchste abgeschlossene Ausbildung haben 4 Personen (1.6%) die obligatorische Schule abgeschlossen, 51 Personen (20.9%) eine Berufsausbildung absolviert, 153 Personen (62.7%) die Mittelschule besucht und 35 Personen (14.3%) ein Universitäts- oder Hochschulstudium abgeschlossen. Die meisten der Teilnehmer waren Schweizer Bürger/innen (88.11%; $n = 215$).

Im Vergleich zu der studentischen Stichprobe waren die Teilnehmer/innen der externen Stichprobe ($n = 106$) älter ($F(1, N = 243) = 78.7$, $p < .01$), schon länger mit ihrem Partner zusammen ($F(1, N = 240) = 37.23$, $p < .01$), waren eher verheiratet oder geschie-

den ($\chi^2(2, N = 242) = 45.45, p < .01$), hatten eine niedrigere Ausbildung absolviert ($\chi^2(3, N = 243) = 126.26, p < .01$) und gaben eine niedrigere Beziehungsqualität an ($F(1, N = 242) = 13.59, p < .01$).

Messinstrumente

Neben dem neuen Fragebogen enthielt das Fragebogenset fünf weitere Fragebögen. Die Partnerschaftsstabilität und das Wohlbefinden wurden nur an der Teilstichprobe von Basel ($n = 169$) erhoben.

Partnerschaftsqualität. Der Partnerschaftsfragebogen (PFB; Hahlweg, 1996) setzt sich aus den drei Subskalen Streitverhalten (Bspw.: „Er/Sie bricht über eine Kleinigkeit einen Streit vom Zaun.“), Zärtlichkeit (Bspw.: „Vor dem Einschlafen schmiegen wir uns im Bett aneinander.“) und Gemeinsamkeit/Kommunikation (Bspw.: „Er/Sie teilt mir seine/ihre Gedanken offen mit.“) mit je 10 Items zusammen, welche auf einer vierstufigen Antwortskala (0 = *nie* bis 3 = *sehr oft*) eingeschätzt wurden. In der vorliegenden Studie zeigte sich eine gute interne Konsistenz der Subskalen (α (Streitverhalten) = .90, α (Zärtlichkeit) = .91 und α (Gemeinsamkeit/Kommunikation) = .82) wie auch der Gesamtskala mit $\alpha = .93$.

Partnerschaftszufriedenheit. Als Messinstrument zur Erfassung der Partnerschaftszufriedenheit wurde die deutsche Übersetzung der Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988; deutsche Übersetzung von Sander/Böcker 1993) eingesetzt. Die RAS besitzt eine einfaktorielle Struktur mit 7 Items (Bspw.: „Wie gut kommt Ihr Partner Ihren Bedürfnissen entgegen?“), die auf einer fünfstufigen Antwortskala eingeschätzt werden. Die interne Konsistenz lag mit $\alpha = .90$ in dieser Studie über dem Wert von $\alpha = .86$ von Hendrick (1988).

Partnerschaftsstabilität. Um die Beziehungsstabilität zu messen, wurde die deutsche Version des Marital Status Inventory (MSI; Weiss/Cerreto 1980; deutsche Übersetzung von Scholz 1987) verwendet. Der MSI besteht aus 14 Items (Bspw.: „Ich habe gelegentlich, insbesondere nach einem Streit oder einem anderen Zwischenfall, an Scheidung gedacht oder gewünscht, wir würden getrennt leben oder geschieden sein.“), die auf einer zweistufigen Antwortskala (1 = *stimmt* und 0 = *stimmt nicht*) eingeschätzt werden. In der vorliegenden Studie wurden nur 8 der 14 Items verwendet, da sich die restlichen Items auf verheiratete Paare beziehen und deshalb für unverheiratete Paar ungeeignet sind. Die 8 verwendeten Items waren intern konsistent ($\alpha = .71$).

Depressive Verstimmung. Als Messinstrument zur Erfassung der depressiven Verstimmung wurde die Allgemeine Depressionsskala (ADS; Hautzinger/Bailer 1992) eingesetzt, die sich aus 20 Items (Bspw.: „Während der letzten Woche... hatte ich Mühe mich zu konzentrieren.“) zusammensetzt, deren Antwort auf einer vierstufigen Antwortskala (0 = *selten oder überhaupt nicht* bis 3 = *meistens*) in Bezug auf die letzte Woche angekreuzt wird. In der vorliegenden Studie zeigte sich eine hohe interne Konsistenz von $\alpha = .90$.

Wohlbefinden. Zur Messung des Wohlbefindens wurden zwei Subskalen des Berner Fragebogens zum Wohlbefinden (BFW; Grob 1993) eingesetzt. Die Subskala Lebensin-

stellung besteht aus 8 Items (Bspw.: „Meine Zukunft sieht gut aus.“), die auf einer sechsstufigen Antwortskala eingeschätzt werden (1 = *ist total falsch* bis 6 = *ist total richtig*). Die Subskala Lebensfreude setzt sich aus 5 Items zusammen (Bspw.: „Kam es in den letzten paar Wochen vor, dass... Sie sich freuten, weil Ihnen etwas gelang?“; 1 = *häufig* bis 4 = *nein*). Beide Subskalen waren in unserer Studie intern konsistent (α (Lebenseinstellung) = .87 und α (Lebensfreude) = .73).

Ergebnisse

Prüfung der Faktorenstruktur des neuen Fragebogens

Zur Ermittlung der relevanten Faktoren des neuen Fragebogens wurde eine explorative Faktorenanalyse gerechnet. Da die 70 Items 10 verschiedenen Bereichen angehören, hat die explorative Faktorenanalyse das Ziel, aus dem Itempool homogene Faktoren zu ermitteln. Als Methode wurde die Hauptkomponentenanalyse mit anschließender Varimax-Rotation angewendet. Abbruchkriterium für die Faktorenextraktion war ein Eigenwert kleiner „1“. Zur Interpretation der „Varimax“-rotierten Faktoren wurden alle Items einbezogen, welche auf dem eigenen Faktor dem Betrag nach grösser als .50 und auf keinem anderen Faktor luden. Es ergaben sich 6 interpretierbare Faktoren mit insgesamt 32 Items. 6 Items wurden zur weiteren Analyse ausgeschlossen, weil sie inhaltlich nicht eindeutig dem Faktor zugeordnet werden konnten. Die explorative Faktorenanalyse der restlichen 26 Items ist in der Tabelle 1 dargestellt. Die 6 Faktoren klären zwischen 8 und 16% der Varianz auf (insgesamt aufgeklärte Varianz = 74.72%). Die Trennschärfen der Items liegen alle über .50 und sind somit als hoch einzuschätzen. Alle Faktorladungen liegen über .60 und kein Item weist eine zusätzliche Ladung auf einem anderen Faktor auf. Dieselbe Faktorenstruktur zeigte sich auch, wenn nur die externe Stichprobe in die Analyse einging, wobei jedoch bei vier Items Doppelladungen auftraten, die aber nicht über dem Wert von .50 lagen.

Um die Faktorenstruktur eingehender zu überprüfen, wurde in einem nächsten Schritt eine konfirmatorische Faktorenanalyse anhand des Statistikprogramms AMOS 6.0 (Analysis of Moment Structures; Arbuckle 2007) durchgeführt. Die Parameterschätzung erfolgte nach der Maximum-Likelihood-(ML)-Methode, wobei fehlende Werte durch die Methode direkt geschätzt wurden. Um die Modellanpassung zu erhöhen, wurden drei Korrelationen zwischen den Fehlertermen der Items zugelassen. Die Messfehler der Items 18 und 19 innerhalb der Subskala Dauerhaftigkeit und Zukunftsperspektive der Beziehung korrelierten mit .56 ($p < .001$), die Items 15 und 26 des Faktors Sexualität in der Beziehung hingen mit .55 ($p < .001$) zusammen und die Items 16 und 25 des Faktors Einschränkung der Unabhängigkeit/Freiheit korrelierten mit .52 ($p < .001$). Allen Items ist gemeinsam, dass sie innerhalb des jeweiligen Faktors im Vergleich zu den anderen Items negativ formuliert sind. Das sechsdimensionale Messmodell zeigte eine gute Anpassung (χ^2 (281, $N = 244$) = 575.57, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 2.05$; CFI = .93; RMSEA = .066 (90%-CI: .058 - .073)). Die Kovarianzen der einzelnen Faktoren sind in *Tabelle 2* dargestellt.

Die sechs resultierenden Subskalen weisen folgende inhaltliche Charakteristika auf (zu den Itemformulierungen siehe *Tabelle 1*):

Subskala 1, „Faszination“, setzt sich aus drei Items zusammen, die alle positiv formuliert sind. Es wird dadurch die Bewunderung erfasst, die die befragte Person ihrem Partner entgegenbringt. Ausserdem wird die Anziehung und Faszination erhoben, die der Partner auf die befragte Person ausübt.

Subskala 2, „Engagement für die Beziehung“, erfasst das Engagement, die Investition und den Einsatz der befragten Person für die Partnerschaft. Die Subskala setzt sich aus fünf Items zusammen, von denen zwei negativ formuliert sind.

Subskala 3, „Sexualität in der Beziehung“, misst die sexuelle Erfüllung in der Partnerschaft und den Genuss der Sexualität mit dem Partner. Die Subskala setzt sich aus fünf Indikatoren zusammen, wobei wiederum zwei der Items negativ formuliert sind.

Subskala 4, „Zukunftsperspektive der Beziehung“, wird durch fünf Items gemessen, von denen wiederum zwei negativ formuliert sind. Mit der Subskala wird erfasst, wie die befragte Person die Dauer und das Potential der Beziehung einschätzt.

Subskala 5, „Misstrauen gegenüber dem Partner“, setzt sich aus drei negativ formulierten Items zusammen und wurde deshalb von „Vertrauen gegenüber dem Partner“ in „Misstrauen gegenüber dem Partner“ umbenannt. Dieser Faktor erfasst das nicht vorhandene Vertrauen und Misstrauen, das die befragte Person ihrem Partner entgegen bringt.

Subskala 6, „Einschränkung der Freiheit/Unabhängigkeit“, beschreibt die Einschränkung des Freiraums der befragten Person durch die Beziehung. Dies wird durch fünf Items erfasst, von denen zwei positiv formuliert sind. Da die negativ formulierten Items überwiegen, wurde die Subskala von „Freiheit/Unabhängigkeit“ in „Einschränkung der Freiheit/Unabhängigkeit“ umformuliert.

Relative Autonomie der sechs Subskalen

Um die relative Autonomie der sechs Faktoren zu untersuchen, wurden als erstes die Interkorrelationen der sechs Faktoren berechnet (siehe *Tabelle 2*). Da die Interkorrelationen auf manifester Ebene alle unter .60 liegen, ist mehr als 60% der Varianz unabhängig und folglich jede Skala relativ autonom.

Ein methodisch präziserer Test der relativen Autonomie wird realisiert, wenn durch konfirmatorische Faktorenanalysen konkurrierende theoretische Modelle getestet werden. Dabei wird ein eindimensionales Modell, bei dem alle manifesten Variablen auf einem latenten Faktor laden, mit dem sechsdimensionalen Modell verglichen. Das eindimensionale Modell zeigte mit $\chi^2(296, N = 244) = 2196.87, p < .001; \chi^2/df = 7.42; CFI = .58; RMSEA = .16$ (90%-CI: .16 - .17) eine inakzeptable Anpassung. Alle Fitindizes wiesen dabei in dieselbe Richtung und bestätigten die Überlegenheit des sechsdimensionalen Modells gegenüber dem eindimensionalen Modell. Das zeigt zusätzlich, dass die sechs Ausdrucksformen der Partnerschaftsqualität relative Autonomie beanspruchen.

Reliabilität

Die Reliabilität des Fragebogens wurde über die Schätzung der internen Konsistenz (Cronbachs Alpha) ermittelt. Der Gesamtfragebogen Partnerschaftsqualität erreichte eine interne Konsistenz von $\alpha = .78$. Die Reliabilitäten der sieben Subskalen variierten von .75 bis .94 (siehe *Tabelle 1*). Daraus lässt sich auf eine akzeptabel hohe Reliabilität des Fragebogens schließen.

Übergeordneter Faktor Partnerschaftsqualität

Von Wichtigkeit für einen neuen Fragebogen ist der Zusammenschluss der sechs Faktoren zu einer Gesamtskala Partnerschaftsqualität. Dies kann auch anhand linearer Strukturgleichungsmodellen getestet werden. Das sechsdimensionale Modell lässt sich in ein Sekundärfaktormodell überführen, welches in *Abbildung 1* dargestellt ist. Auf der ersten Ebene befinden sich die sechs Faktoren. Diese werden auf einer höheren zweiten Ebene durch einen Sekundärfaktor determiniert, der theoretisch die Partnerschaftsqualität darstellt. Die Fit-Indizes des Sekundärfaktormodells verweisen auf eine gute Modellanpassung (siehe *Abbildung 1*). Im Vergleich zwischen dem Sekundärfaktormodell und dem sechsdimensionalen Modell wiesen beide Modelle fast identische Werte auf. Alle sechs Faktoren hingen signifikant ($p < .001$) mit dem allgemeinen Faktor Partnerschaftsqualität zusammen. Die sechs Unterskalen des Fragebogens können folglich durch eine allgemeine Skala Partnerschaftsqualität ergänzt werden. Jedoch ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass die Zusammenhänge der sechs Subskalen mit dem übergeordneten Faktor Partnerschaftsqualität unterschiedlich ausfielen. Während die beiden Subskalen Zukunft und Engagement mit .83 bzw. .81 mit der Partnerschaftsqualität zusammenhingen, korrelierte Misstrauen nur mit -.40 mit der Partnerschaftsqualität (siehe *Abbildung 1*).

Diskriminative Validität

Um die diskriminative Validität der FPQ-Skalen zu überprüfen, wurde die Stichprobe anhand der Summenwerte des PFB (≤ 53 / > 53) in eine unzufriedene und eine zufriedene Gruppe eingeteilt. Dabei wurden 33 Personen als unzufrieden und 210 als zufrieden mit ihrer Partnerschaft eingestuft. Die beiden Gruppen unterschieden sich in allen sechs FPQ-Subskalen signifikant (siehe *Tabelle 3*). Dies verweist auf eine gute diskriminative Validität des neuen Fragebogens FPQ.

Geschlechtsunterschiede in den FPQ-Skalen

Beim Gesamtwert des FPQ wie auch in den Subskalen Faszination, Engagement, Zukunftsperspektive und Misstrauen zeigten sich keine Geschlechtsunterschiede. Jedoch wiesen Frauen in ihrer Einschätzung der Zufriedenheit mit der Sexualität höhere Werte auf ($t(97.21) = -2.11$; $M_{\text{Frauen}} = 20.21$; $M_{\text{Männer}} = 18.50$), während sich Männer durch die Beziehung stärker in ihrer Freiheit eingeschränkt fühlten ($t(242) = 2.65$; $M_{\text{Frauen}} = 8.12$; $M_{\text{Männer}} = 9.45$).

Zusammenhänge des FPQ mit soziodemographischen Variablen

Um die Zusammenhänge des FPQ mit soziodemographischen Angaben der Stichprobe zu untersuchen, wurden die sechs Subskalen wie auch die Gesamtskala des FPQ mit dem Alter, der Schulbildung und der Partnerschaftsdauer korreliert. Die Gesamtskala des FPQ wie auch die Subskalen wiesen keine signifikanten Korrelationen mit der Schulbildung auf. Mit dem Alter der Personen korrelierte nur die Subskala Sexualität signifikant ($r = -.23, p < .001$). Je älter die Personen, desto weniger zufrieden waren sie mit ihrer Sexualität. Zusätzlich hing die Partnerschaftsdauer signifikant mit den Subskalen Sexualität ($r = -.14, p < .05$) und Zukunftsperspektive ($r = .14, p < .05$) zusammen. Je länger eine Partnerschaft andauert, desto weniger zufrieden sind die Personen mit ihrer Sexualität, jedoch wird das Potential der Beziehung für die Zukunft als positiver eingeschätzt.

Konvergente Validität

Partnerschaftsqualität. Um die konvergente Validität des FPQ zu überprüfen, wurde zuerst der Zusammenhang des FPQ mit dem PFB untersucht. Alle drei Subskalen des PFB korrelierten signifikant mit den sechs Subskalen des FPQ (siehe *Tabelle 4*). Die höchste Korrelation kam zwischen den beiden Skalen Sexualität und Zärtlichkeit zustande, was sich durch die konzeptuelle Ähnlichkeit der beiden Skalen erklärt. Die beiden Gesamtskalen korrelierten mit $.78 (p < .01)$ ausreichend hoch.

Partnerschaftszufriedenheit und -stabilität. Auch mit der RAS zur Messung der Partnerschaftszufriedenheit korrelierten alle sechs FPQ-Subskalen signifikant (siehe *Tabelle 4*). Die Gesamtskala des FPQ wies eine knapp höhere Korrelation mit der RAS als mit der Gesamtskala des PFB auf ($r = .84, p < .01$). Die Zusammenhänge der sechs Subskalen des FPQ mit dem MSI zur Messung der Beziehungsstabilität wiesen in die vermutete Richtung. Alle sechs Subskalen (außer Misstrauen) korrelierten signifikant mit dem MSI und auch die Gesamtskala des FPQ zeigte einen signifikanten Zusammenhang mit dem MSI ($r = .33, p < .01$).

Depressive Verstimmung und Wohlbefinden. Die ADS zur Messung der depressiven Verstimmung korrelierte wie erwartet signifikant negativ mit allen sechs FPQ-Subskalen wie auch mit der Gesamtskala des FPQ (siehe *Tabelle 4*). Dasselbe Bild zeigt sich für die Lebenseinstellung. Mit der Lebensfreude korrelierten alle sechs Subskalen ausser Sexualität signifikant positiv.

Diskussion

Die erste psychometrische Überprüfung des neuen Fragebogens FPQ zur Messung der Partnerschaftsqualität weist auf ein brauchbares Testinstrument hin. Durch explorative und konfirmatorische Faktorenanalysen konnte eine valide Skala mit sechs Faktoren gebildet werden. Vier der sechs Subskalen werden unseres Erachtens in keinem der bisherigen Fragebögen im deutschsprachigen Raum erfasst. Zusätzlich ließ sich durch die kon-

firmatorische Faktorenanalyse ein übergeordneter Faktor Partnerschaftsqualität bestätigen. Der Fragebogen erwies sich angesichts der guten internen Konsistenzen der sechs Faktoren als reliabel. Zusätzlich wies der Fragebogen hohe Zusammenhänge mit dem PFB zur Messung der Partnerschaftsqualität auf. Die diskriminative Validität der FPQ-Subskalen konnte bestätigt werden, denn in allen Subskalen unterschieden sich die Mittelwerte der Gruppe der zufriedenen von der Gruppe der unzufriedenen Personen signifikant voneinander. Es zeigten sich darüber hinaus Zusammenhänge mit der Partnerschaftszufriedenheit und -stabilität, der depressiven Verstimmung und dem Wohlbefinden, die in die erwartete Richtung wiesen. Dies verweist auf eine gute konvergente Validität des Fragebogens.

Als Einschränkung der vorliegenden Studie ist die verwendete Stichprobe anzumerken. Da viele Studierende in die Untersuchung gingen, ist die Repräsentativität der Stichprobe nicht gegeben. Die Ergebnisse können folglich nicht ohne Einschränkung auf die gesamte Bevölkerung übertragen werden. In einem weiteren Schritt ist deshalb die Überprüfung des Fragebogens an einer repräsentativen Stichprobe vorgesehen. Ein weiterer erwähnenswerter Punkt ist, dass zwei der Subskalen (Faszination und Misstrauen) aus nur je drei Items bestehen. Da jedoch kurze Skalen ökonomischer sind und die Reliabilität der Skalen hoch ist, ist es sinnvoll, die zwei Skalen als Ergänzung im Fragebogen drin zu lassen.

Insgesamt kann die erste Überprüfung des FPQ aufgrund seiner theoretischen Fundierung und seiner psychometrischen Eigenschaften in der vorliegenden Pilotstudie als gelungen angesehen werden. Der FPQ kann deshalb als alternatives Instrument in der Forschung zur Erfassung weiterer Bereiche der Partnerschaftsqualität angewendet werden. Damit der Fragebogen auch in der Praxis eingesetzt werden kann, sind weitere Studien zur Messung der Änderungssensitivität notwendig. Zusätzlich ist eine Normierung des Fragebogens sinnvoll.

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Anhang

Tabelle 1 Itemstatistiken der sechs Subskalen

Nr. Wortlaut	M	SD	r_{it}	Faktorladung
Faszination ($\alpha = .78$)				
2 Ich bewundere vieles an meinem Partner.	4.05	0.83	.66	.75
4 Ich finde meinen Partner anziehend und begehrenswert.	3.69	1.02	.57	.74
6 Vieles an meinem Partner fasziniert mich.	3.95	0.86	.65	.71
Engagement für die Beziehung ($\alpha = .87$)				
1 Ich investiere in unsere Beziehung.	4.25	0.75	.74	.79
9 Ich bin bereit, mich für unsere Partnerschaft einzusetzen.	4.39	0.65	.71	.71
11 Ich setze mich für unsere Partnerschaft ein.	4.30	0.77	.74	.76
14 Ich engagiere mich nicht mehr als nötig für unsere Beziehung. (invers)	1.68	0.77	.55	-.67
17 Ich engagiere mich für das Wohl unserer Partnerschaft.	4.23	0.69	.80	.81
Sexualität in der Beziehung ($\alpha = .94$)				
7 Unsere Partnerschaft ist für mich sexuell zufrieden stellend.	3.93	1.05	.88	.88
13 Mein Partner und ich haben guten Sex miteinander.	3.98	1.13	.87	.88
15 Ich könnte mir erfüllenderen Sex vorstellen, als den, den ich mit meinem Partner habe. (invers)	2.14	1.20	.81	-.81
20 Ich genieße den Sex mit meinem Partner.	4.23	1.01	.80	.82
26 Die Sexualität mit meinem Partner könnte besser sein. (invers)	2.11	1.27	.84	-.87
Zukunftsperspektive der Beziehung ($\alpha = .93$)				
5 Ich sehe das Potential unserer Partnerschaft auch längerfristig.	4.20	0.93	.81	.79
8 Ich denke, dass unsere Partnerschaft Zukunft hat.	4.11	0.90	.85	.74
18 Ich gebe unserer Beziehung längerfristig kaum eine Chance. (invers)	1.51	0.88	.80	-.83
19 Ich zweifle an der Langlebigkeit unserer Beziehung. (invers)	1.65	0.92	.78	-.76
22 Ich bin überzeugt davon, dass unsere Partnerschaft noch lange dauern wird.	4.04	0.97	.84	.76
Misstrauen gegenüber dem Partner ($\alpha = .75$)				
21 Ich habe Mühe, meinem Partner voll vertrauen zu können.	1.55	0.99	.51	.73
23 Ich frage mich, ob mein Partner mir treu ist.	1.44	0.76	.60	.85
24 Manchmal misstraue ich meinem Partner.	1.46	0.76	.68	.83
Einschränkung der Freiheit/Unabhängigkeit ($\alpha = .88$)				
3 Ich fühle mich in unserer Partnerschaft eingeschränkt.	1.80	0.88	.71	.78
10 Mein Partner kommt mir zu nahe, lässt mir zu wenig Freiraum und Unabhängigkeit.	1.45	0.78	.68	.80
12 Ich fühle mich durch unsere Partnerschaft eingeschränkt und beengt.	1.58	0.83	.74	.79
16 Unsere Beziehung gibt mir genügend Raum für mich und für meine Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten. (invers)	4.13	0.92	.65	-.62
25 Ich habe in unserer Partnerschaft ausreichend Freiraum und Entfaltungsmöglichkeiten. (invers)	4.23	0.86	.77	-.77

Tabelle 2 Interkorrelationen, Mittelwerte und Standardabweichungen der sechs Subskalen (in Klammer die Korrelationen der latenten Variablen des Messmodells)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Faszination	–					
2 Engagement	.52 (.67)	–				
3 Sexualität	.43 (.52)	.34 (.39)	–			
4 Zukunftsperspektive	.46 (.62)	.59 (.70)	.36 (.41)	–		
5 Misstrauen	-.17 (-.24)	-.28 (-.36)	-.10 (-.20)	-.26 (-.32)	–	
6 Freiheitseinschr.	-.33 (-.41)	-.37 (-.37)	-.45 (-.44)	-.55 (-.53)	.28 (.31)	–
M^a	11.65	21.47	19.76	21.19	4.45	8.47
SD^a	2.33	2.98	5.19	4.06	2.07	3.50
M^b	11.38	21.26	18.61	21.59	4.51	8.40
SD^b	2.63	3.24	5.78	3.84	2.14	3.52

Anmerkung. $N = 244$. Alle Korrelationen sind signifikant ($p < .05$; einseitig). ^aGesamtstichprobe; ^bexterne Stichprobe.

Tabelle 3 Mittelwerte (M) und Standardabweichungen (SD) der FPQ-Skalen für die Gruppe der zufriedenen und unzufriedenen Personen

Skala	Anzahl Items ^a	Zufriedene Personen ($N = 210$)		Unzufriedene Personen ($N = 33$)		t-Wert
		M	SD	M	SD	
Faszination	3	12.01	2.13	9.36	2.30	-6.56***
Engagement	5	21.84	2.70	19.03	3.49	-5.32***
Sexualität	5	20.83	4.35	12.85	4.82	-9.65***
Zukunftsperspektive	5	21.78	3.67	17.42	4.55	-5.24***
Misstrauen	3	4.32	2.00	5.30	2.36	-2.27*
Freiheitseinschränkung	5	7.90	2.91	12.18	4.61	5.18***
Gesamtwert FPQ	26	104.14	11.65	81.18	13.35	-10.31***

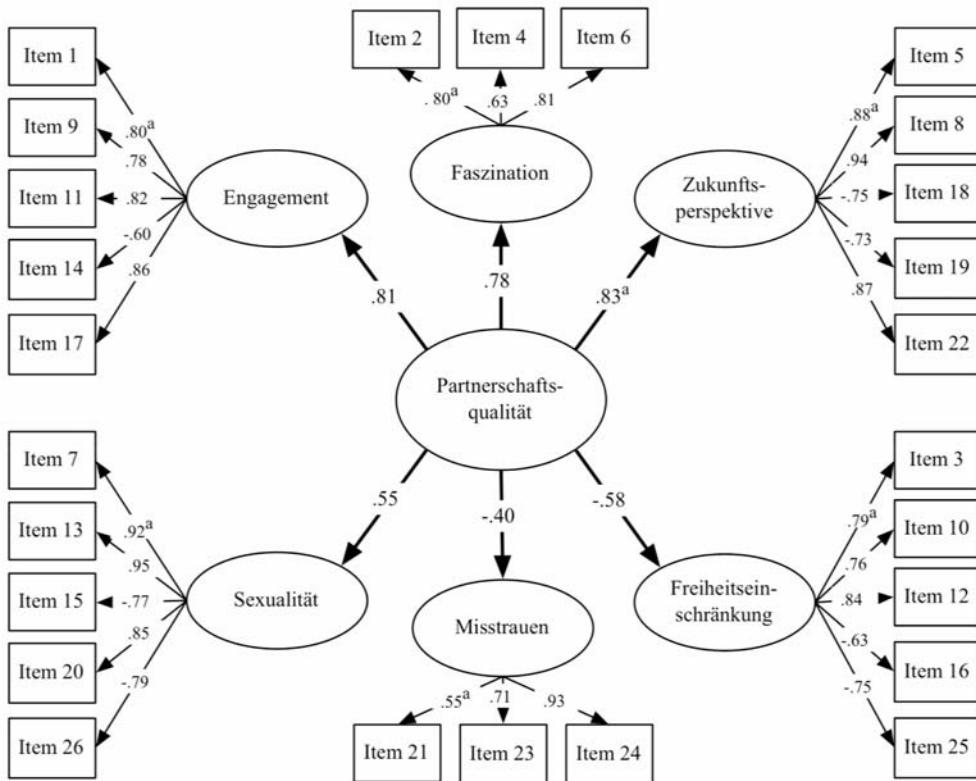
Anmerkung. ^a Die Antwortkategorien variierten von 1 bis 5. * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$.

Tabelle 4 Interkorrelationen der sechs Subskalen mit den übrigen Fragebögen

	Faszination	Engagement	Sexualität	Zukunft	Misstrauen	Freiheits-Einschr.	Gesamtskala ^a
Partnerschaftsqualität (PFB)							
Streitverhalten	-.32**	-.34**	-.38**	-.46**	.23**	.66**	-.59**
Zärtlichkeit	.46**	.40**	.75**	.32**	-.21**	-.41**	.66**
Gemeinsamkeit	.50**	.46**	.50**	.50**	-.33**	-.48**	.67**
Gesamtskala PFB	.52**	.48**	.67**	.51**	-.31**	-.63**	.78**
Partnerschaftszufriedenheit							
RAS	.54**	.56**	.58**	.76**	-.35**	-.65**	.84**
Partnerschaftsstabilität							
MSI	.23**	.21**	.25**	.35**	-.13	-.30**	.35**
Depressive Verstimmung							
ADS	-.22**	-.22**	-.18**	-.36**	.30**	.34**	-.37**
Wohlbefinden (BFW)							
Lebenseinstellung	.30**	.30**	.21**	.36**	-.30**	-.40**	.44**
Lebensfreude	.27**	.20**	.13	.27**	-.26**	-.31**	.31*

Anmerkung. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (einseitig); ^a Die Gesamtskala wurde folgendermassen gebildet: Faszination + Engagement + Sexualität + Zukunft + (15 - Misstrauen) + (25 - Einschränkung der Freiheit/Unabhängigkeit).

Abbildung 1: Sekundärfaktormodell mit standardisierten Regressionsgewichten.



$\chi^2 = 609.12$; $p < .001$; $df = 290$; $\chi^2/df = 2.10$; RMSEA = .067; RMSEA 90%CI = .060 - .075; CFI = .930

^a kennzeichnet die Pfade, die im unstandardisierten Modell auf 1 fixiert wurden.

Das Staatsinstitut für Familienforschung an der Universität Bamberg (***ifb***) berichtet an dieser Stelle in loser Folge über aktuelle Forschungsprojekte, neue Forschungsvorhaben, Tagungen und Veröffentlichungen.

MAJA. Hebammen helfen Eltern

Bei dem Modellprojekt handelt es sich um die Entwicklung und Umsetzung einer familienpädagogischen Weiterbildung für Hebammen. Die Grundidee ist, dass diese Berufsgruppe einen sehr guten Zugang zu allen Familien hat und bei den (werdenden) Eltern hohes Ansehen und Vertrauen genießt. In der Regel pflegen Hebammen auch eine zugehende Betreuung, indem sie nach der Geburt die jungen Familien besuchen. Dabei erhalten sie Einblick in die Alltagswelt der Familien und in eventuelle Umstellungs- oder Anpassungsprobleme nach der Geburt eines Kindes. Hebammen gelten somit als sehr wertvolle „Türöffner“ für die Familienbildung. Um dieses Potenzial nutzen zu können, schien es zielführend, die Hebammen für evtl. familienbildende Bedarfe zu sensibilisieren und sie mit dem familienbildenden Angebot vor Ort zu vernetzen. Hierzu wurde MAJA in Kooperation mit dem Bayerischen Landeshebammenverband entwickelt. Das Weiterbildungsprogramm umfasst vier Arbeitseinheiten, die jeweils zwei Kurstage in Anspruch nehmen. Inhalte sind Partnerschaft, Rollenkonzepte, Veränderungen durch die Elternschaft, Kommunikation, Bindung, Unterstützungsleistungen, Vernetzungsarbeit – unter anderem Kontaktaufbau zum örtlichen Jugendamt – sowie Grenzen der eigenen Zuständigkeit und Vermittlung an andere Stellen.

Die wissenschaftliche Begleitung durch das ***ifb*** diente zum einen der (Weiter-)Entwicklung und Verbesserung der Konzeption und zum anderen der Dokumentation und Beurteilung des Programmes. Erhoben wurden diese durch differenzierte Beurteilungsbögen, die sowohl von den Kursleitungen als auch von den teilnehmenden Hebammen zu den verschiedenen Zeitpunkten modul-bezogen ausgefüllt wurden und durch eine ab-

schließende Einschätzung des Praxisnutzens sechs Monate nach Abschluss der Fortbildung ergänzt wurden. Zusätzlich fanden mehrfach Gruppendiskussionen mit den Kursleitungen statt. Nachdem die Auswertungen dieser Informationen nun vorliegen, kann ein abschließendes Resümee gezogen werden.

Beachtlich ist dabei die hohe Vorbildung der Teilnehmerinnen, die ganz überwiegend ein fundiertes fachliches Kompetenzniveau mitbringen. Obgleich dieses eher gegen hohe Profite aus zusätzlichen Bildungsmaßnahmen spricht, wird MAJA insgesamt betrachtet ausgesprochen gut bewertet: Rund zwei Drittel der Teilnehmerinnen ist mit dem, was sie aus der Schulung mitnehmen, voll zufrieden. Details kann man einer vor kurzem erschienenen Broschüre entnehmen (s.u. Mengel 2010) bzw. dem umfassenden Projektbericht, der demnächst veröffentlicht wird.

Fachtagung zur Pränataldiagnostik

Zum Abschluss der Projekte „Psychosoziale Beratung bei Pränataldiagnostik“ und „Unter anderen Umständen schwanger“ hat Dipl.-Heilpäd. (FH) Birgit Mayer-Lewis von **ifb** einen Fachtag organisiert, der sehr gut angenommen wurde – rund 120 Fachkräfte aus verschiedenen Disziplinen nahmen teil. Nach Vorstellung der beiden Projekte und den Ergebnissen der wissenschaftlichen Begleitung wurden Erfahrungen aus der Praxis berichtet, wobei Beratungsfachkräfte, Mediziner(innen) und Expert(inn)en aus der Behindertenarbeit zu Wort kamen. Dabei wurde von allen Seiten betont, dass für das Gelingen der Beratungsarbeit in diesem Themenbereich neben der fachlichen Qualität eine gute Vernetzungs- und Kooperationsstruktur unabdingbar ist.

Die Ergebnisse der wissenschaftlichen Begleitung wurden in einem „Best-Practice-Leitfaden“ dokumentiert (s.u.); ausführliche Befunde können demnächst auf der Homepage des **ifb** nachgelesen werden.

Aktuelle Veröffentlichungen:

Birgit Mayer-Lewis: Best Practice-Leitfaden „Psychosoziale Beratung bei pränataler Diagnostik“. **ifb**-Materialien 3-2010, Bamberg

Melanie Mengel: Kurzbericht MAJA. Hebammen helfen Eltern. Zentrale Ergebnisse der wissenschaftlichen Begleitung. **ifb**-Materialien 4-2010, Bamberg

Vorschau

Marina Rupp (Hrsg.): Gleichgeschlechtliche Lebenspartnerschaften mit und ohne Kinder. Sonderheft der Zeitschrift für Familienforschung/Journal of Family Research (im Erscheinen).



Ausschreibung für den wissenschaftlichen Förderpreis der Systemischen Gesellschaft 2011

Die **Systemische Gesellschaft** (SG), Deutscher Verband für Systemische Forschung, Therapie, Supervision und Beratung e.V., schreibt im Wechsel mit der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Systemische Therapie und Familientherapie (DGST) einen wissenschaftlichen Förderpreis aus.

Die Ausschreibung verfolgt das Ziel, die Relevanz Systemischen Denkens für die therapeutische und beratende Praxis zu verdeutlichen und die Forschung in diesem Bereich anzuregen.

Ausgezeichnet wird die beste Arbeit, die empirische Forschungsdesigns entwickelt, die eine mit Systemischen Modellen kompatible und innovative Methodik aufweist und die sich auf praxisrelevante Bereiche aus der Therapie, Gesundheitsversorgung, Supervision, Beratung und auf institutionelle Innovationsprozesse bezieht.

Der Förderpreis ist mit **3.000,- Euro** dotiert (Vergabe: 5. Mai 2011, Berlin).

Der Preis ist bewusst als Förderpreis konzipiert. Vor allem jüngere Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler sind angesprochen, die sich mit Diplomarbeiten, Dissertationen, Habilitationen oder anderen Projekten qualifizieren.

Die Arbeiten reichen Sie bitte bis **15. Dezember 2010** in **dreifacher Ausführung** an:

Systemische Gesellschaft e.V.
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Der Förderpreis im Internet: <http://www.systemische-gesellschaft.de/>