WALTER SCHMIDT

RUSH HOUR OF LIFE

MANAGING THE CLASH BETWEEN FAMILY AND CAREER

*Enjoyment of life
is not related to the satisfaction
that a career and family provide,
but to the strength
with which they are pursued!*

Walter Schmidt, 2016

This book can offer you help in self-help. Almost 250 billion euros, which the state spends directly or indirectly on family support every year, are sufficient. It is time for people like us to learn to lead a good family life with our own strength. This book shows you a possible way.

The economy and the church have discovered how important this way is in balancing family and career. The author wishes to thank the Vereinigung der Bayerischen Wirtschaft *(Bavarian Business Association, VBW)* and the Archdiocese of Munich for the support of the German book publication.

Preface

The topic of this book is a key issue of our time. Combining work and family life is a practical challenge which many people find to be very nerve-consuming every day. Women in particular are often torn between the demands imposed on them as professionals and managers in business life and as mothers, wives and daughters who have parents to care for.

To a significant extent, people label the options which remain available to them in this tense relationship with negative terms. Those who apply the qualifications that they state not only in their workplace, but also want to develop further accordingly, quickly get a reputation as a "bad mother". On the other hand, those who want to spend several years dedicated to the upbringing of their children, are quickly labelled with the term "cricket on the hearth".

Behind these labels are standards which society as a whole applies to individual couples in the "rush hour of life". These standards are undergoing a new kind of sharpening, caused by demographic change. After all, our ageing society requires women to be both professionals and mothers to the young in order to remain sustainable. With this demographic dilemma, we require good solutions and new ideas, and are also developing these at the Bavarian Business Association (vbw).

In his book, Dr Walter Schmidt touches on an aspect which has (surprisingly) hitherto remained fully underexposed in discussion of the question of reconciling work and family. While, according to the State, accompanying financial or structural measures are quickly called for, it is rarer for one

to ask how Dr Schmidt is doing, which individual options affected parties actually have and could develop. In this domain, as well, it is worth assessing the logic of the social market economy in a subsidiary fashion i.e. from the smallest unit.

This is proven by the results that are contained in this book, which shows not only feasible methods in the tense arena of work and family life. Major chances and development potentials (both for individual couples and for companies) are also worked out here – assuming the reconciliation of work and family life actually succeeds.

I hope that this extremely exciting book will be read by many, and that many people who play a part in our economy will apply the suggestions in this book in practice.

Professor Randolf Rodenstock

Honorary president of vbw – Bavarian Business Association
Managing partner of Optische Werke
G. Rodenstock GmbH & Co. KG

Inhalt

1 Prologue

"A view of societies in other cultures offers no model at all for the struggle for equality of opportunity of men and women in our society. Our model of marriage is actually not the standard for the world. This means that types of life together in other societies can look fundamentally different from here – that is to say, less focused on couples. Our type of relationship, as we know them, is a special case and not the general reality around the world. It's an exception."[1]

Our couple-focused society includes about 800 million people in Europe and North America. The struggle between men and women in particular takes place here. What determines the behaviour of these people, and how do they pass on their behaviour to the next generation?

"There are inevitabilities of cooperation and conflicts, both generally between individuals, genders and generations, but also between genes and cultural behavioural programs. Programs are not only saved and reproduced in the genes, but also in brains. They succeed not only through gametes, but also through tradition in new carrier individuals; these do not expand through reproduction, but through convincing; which also requires a completely different behaviour of individuals than what is required by genetic programs for their expansion. So it's no surprise that culture does not always favour reproduction. Every incorrect behaviour, i.e. one that does not serve the expansion of the program, is automatically eliminated. In evolution, this

happens if the successful program can be passed on to future generations and there develops behaviour that promises corresponding success under certain environmental conditions. In principle, it does not matter how the program reaches the next generation. We will have to get used to the image that the individual person displays as an executive body for several behavioural programs that often work against each other, which are still here today because their carriers successfully programmed them in the past. These programs sometimes go against ancient genetic programs. They are "unnatural" like contraception and birth control. The welfare state is also unnatural, which is unstable in its evolution because it almost essentially exploited and undermined by egoistical tendencies of individuals."[2]

The behaviour of the couple-focused society, which we address here, is also passed on through procreation and convincing. We build on the genetic circumstances of humans today and try to find out how we can change the behaviour of people in the relationship between men and women through convincing, training and mutual influence. We are searching for the secret that successful people are influenced by a different behaviour than that of less successful people.

"The biographies of successful people often strikingly show that the goal was not career in itself, but that tasks given to somebody were able to be successfully completed. The successful people had a pervasive, lasting, but dynamic feeling of trust that their internal and external environment can be predicted and that there is a high probability that things will develop as you can reasonably expect them to."[3]

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[1] Laubscher, M., Frau und Mann – Geschlechterdifferenzierung in Natur und Menschenwelt, in Schubert, V (Publisher), Eos Verlag Erzabtei St. Ottilien, pp.

   93–94.

2   Wickler, W., extract from the preface to the German edition of "Das egoistische Gen" by Dawkins R., Spektrum Akademischer Verlag, Heidelberg, 2008, pp. 20–21.

3   Antonovsky, A., Health, Stress and Coping, New Perspectives on Mental and Physical Well-Being, Jossey-Bass Publisher, San Francisco, 1985.

2 A Complex Net of Conflicts

Nowadays, there are two points of orientation in the cohabitation between men and women, which are felt today as equal value: career and family, or, as said in Bründel's words: profession and relationship. Both of these items lead to happiness and satisfaction, provided that they are in a well-balanced correlation to each other. However, social reality reveals an imbalance, since men and women approach these points of orientation very differently. While men primarily tend to think and act job-related, women tend to primarily feel responsible for family and partnership. The number of women working in leading positions is still significantly smaller in comparison to men. In Germany, it varies between 7 and 14 % and in the United States, between 22 and 26 %, depending on the branch, age and level of position.[4] However, women's perception of their role in society is changing. Thus, men's role, which seems to be well-balanced, no longer exists as such. A change in men and women's understanding of their social roles has led to these roles interfering with each other. This trend is partially amplified and accelerated by exogenous transformations in economy and work, i.e. in the fields that men have dominated up until now. Unemployment destabilizes the traditionally organized employment system, in which men work on a regular basis outside of their homes. One's life story and one's organization of individual phases of life have become uncertain. Consequently, a diversity of goal conflicts has arisen. This is no longer a mere one-dimensional conflict between career and family orientation,

but a complex multidimensional net of conflicts. During different stages of life, this net of conflicts will change its characteristics and coerce men and women to re-structure their relationships.

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4 Only in the below-30 age class, there is a similar number of men and women in leading positions. On the contrary, women between 30 and 45 years old only make a 14 % share in leading positions. Scientific works are known for verifying more or less abstract theories through empirical investigation and conclusion. Federal Statistical Office, focus on: Frauen in Deutschland, 2006, p. 28.

3 Men and Women in the Rush Hour of Life

Scientific works commonly have a more or less abstract theory that is verified by empirical investigations and conclusions. In the present lecture, we use a reversed approach: first, empiricism and then, the theory. The author is an international executive search consultant. He and his team interviewed over 15,000 young executives from 1981 to 2009, i.e., a period of 28 years. In such structured interviews, not only the conflict between family and career planning was researched but also, the reasons, characteristics, possible solutions and approaches were discussed and recorded.

Through the transference of three scientifically based theorems, i.e.

- "Salutogenesis" (A. Antonovsky)
- "Servant Leadership" (R. Greenleaf)
- "Co-evolution" (J. Willi)

to the empirical findings, practically usable and secured solutions and approaches were developed. Based on the changes in the behaviour of working and married partners, these approaches may lead to a partnership that is free of conflicts.

Occupation is defined as any type of employment conducing to income and earning money. In this context, there is no

difference between being employed and a freelancer. However, earning money does not exclude expressive goals. Being interested in work contents and social contacts are also important in one's occupation, besides the basic instrumental goal of gaining income. Unofficial and gratuitous employment is not considered in this context.

In the sense of Lüscher[5], we do without the nominative use of the family-sociological concept. We consider a broader definition of family, which includes all types of cohabitation in a household comprising adults and children. Thus, it is not limited to a specific type of family, for example, the traditional one (father, mother and child). However, we essentially limit our consideration to the most common and socially focused way of life, which includes two adults and at least one child to care for. The definition of career that this study is based on has a broader sense than a mere employment-related term. The different stages in one's life are the matter of discussion here. Luhmann's[6] definition of career which is used here, allows for the coequal recognition of family careers, in particular, parenthood and employment careers. The focal point of this discussion is "agreement career". This term means the stage in one's career in which gainful employment and parenthood – in particular, the responsibility for children who are not yet independent – overlap and should be matched.

The following sections will address the behaviour of men and women within their families and jobs, and will be geared towards young executives with five to ten years of work experience and children at pre-school and primary school age (core target group). In our context, "executives" means both employees and self-employed people, whose responsibilities exceed project- and issue-related tasks. They are in charge of motivation, targeting, further training, continual education and the control of results of a collective

of employees, i.e., of a team. Executives make use of their professional expertise and social competence in order to accomplish the super-ordinate goals of a department, a business sector or a company, as well as to utilize their potential and to maintain their power. Competition inside a peer group, paired with the expectations of the superior, causes an employee to feel pressure to succeed like a young businessman competing with other companies.

In a family, due to the obligation to provide care, education and support for a child, both parents feel an emotional and material pressure. This reaches its peak between the third and fourteenth year in a child's life. This "double load" by work and family in the emotional respect is nowadays still borne by the woman to the greater extent. The financial load is borne by both parents together or primarily by the man. Both men and women are in the middle of the rush hour of life.

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5 Lüscher, K., Die postmoderne Familie: familiale Strategien und Familienpolitik in einer Übergangszeit, Konstanz, 1988, pp. 15–38.

6 Luhmann, N., Copierte Existenz und Karriere zur Herstellung von Individualität, Frankfurt, 1994, pp. 199–200.

4 The Conflict of Objectives: Professional Success and Creating a Harmonious Family Life

Upheaval of Values and Living Conditions

Conflicts are part of our human identity.[7] They arise between all people who are in regular interaction with each other, disregarding legal conflicts. There are vocational conflicts with bosses, employees or colleagues and, in particular, people who you actually love and appreciate the most such as a spouse, children and friends. All conflicts have one thing in common: they arise when our expectations cannot be met, regardless of whether we expect something from ourselves or from others. Non-compliance with expectations is called frustration (futile expectations).

To a large extent, expectations and goals determine the way that people act. It is in men's nature that a person is not viable without goals – one gets depressive and prone to suicide. An accomplished goal leads to a feeling of success. Successes make humans active and actional beings. Activity may take place on a purely intellectual level, a quasi activity of thoughts. Therefore, a person always strives for success, i.e. for accomplishment of his/her goals. The stronger the person's identification with his personal goals and the more

unrestricted his acceptance of these goals is – seeing them as meaningful and necessary – the greater his likelihood is to achieve these goals. Corell discovered that 82 % of employees in Germany do not really "match" with their professional ambitions but rather, have built up a "cognitive dissonance" between objective target and identification.[8] They pursue their profession without a "primary" motivation but with a "work-to-rule" attitude. These professionals strive to fulfil their tasks, not because they expect to accomplish their goals, but because of secondary benefits, for example, money and occupational advancement.

The latter seems to be problematic since they have no primary motivation. It should be pointed out that the employer often does not clearly see their primary and secondary motivation, since an increasing number of employed people "learned to camouflage" their lack of primary motivation by hustling and bustling.

We have to realize that, among members of many occupational groups, actual goals of life relocate into non-occupational fields, i.e., leisure, hobbies and travelling. This implies that the majority of people develop expectations in fields that are irrelevant to their careers. Hence, successes are experienced more and more outside of one's job. At the same time, experiences of frustration at their workplaces grow and grow. As such, occupation is increasingly seen as a means to an end.

This negative trend in the development of the attitude of most German employees becomes stronger due to the linkage to other human behavioural patterns. People's expectations in one field grow as much as their expectations in other fields have been met. The wealthier a person, the more he expects. One would think that the more expectations fulfilled, the happier and more expectation-free people would be. However, in reality, this is not the case. Frustration grows to the same extent as the standard of

living increases. Moreover, according to Corell[9], not merely the improving standards of living but the entire mental/intellectual development causes us to continuously expect more. For instance, due to progressive emancipation from all kinds of paternalism, we are becoming more self-reliant, mature and responsible. Thus, we boisterously demand for more self-realization by making others take a step back to allow us to take a step forward. The mindset of previous generations – that blows of fate must be endured and taken as an ordeal – is no longer familiar to us. It conforms to today's concept of humankind to live in the notion that we shape our own destiny, i.e., we can "make" our life. While people continue to expect more, clashes between our fellow citizens and us are becoming inevitable, as they are also focused on their individual expansion. The more people live in a tightening space, the bigger the rubbing surface. The means of communication that are available in the modern world allow us to enter close relationships with lots of people. Consequently, the level of frustration we are exposed rises.

   Additionally, as we are obviously becoming more this-worldly in our attitude and have swamped out most of our relation to transcendence, the tolerance of frustration decreases incessantly, whereas the risk of frustration increases. As a result, we are getting involved in an increasing number of conflicts that we cannot manage without difficulties because we are no longer willing to accept them.

Society's solution to divide the work between spouses according to traditional gender-specific roles is becoming less and less effective. A growing number of young executives that are available to the "West-oriented" industrial and service society consists of men and women, who take responsibility for both, the financial wealth of the

family and looking after the children, either as individuals or dual-career couples.[10]

With respect to quality of life (material comfort, opportunities for individual development and disposal of their own time), today's society, in principle, broadly accepts gender equality as equal opportunities for men and women. Finally, however, this cannot be achieved without adequate social structuring of the relations between employment and parenthood. In market-based societies, opportunities in life primarily come from accessing gainful employment. As long as motherhood prevents or, at least, massively hinders women from gaining this access, gender equality cannot be achieved.[11] Hence, another area of conflict opens up between family as a private matter and the collective public interest in the family. However, this conflict will not be the focus of the present research.

Based on economic, social and cultural indicators, the following analysis will discuss why the relationship between gainful employment and family is considered not only as an individual and familial area of conflict but also, as an organizational one. The starting point of this reasoning is based on an unbroken male and a rising female employment orientation, in particular among women with qualified education.[12]

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7 Conflict [lat., confligere "beat, smash"], antagonism, quarrel, fight [between persons, countries, or others]; also inner antagonism of motives, desires or intentions. Social conflict: clash of interests and disputes of various intensity and violence between persons, groups, organizations, societies, countries or groups of states resulting from that. Conflict contents are controversies on values, goals of life, status, power or distribution fights. About the origination of conflicts, there are different theories: The biologically-oriented behaviour research often assumes human biological basic instincts, which do not vary. This theory postulates a general potential of aggression and sees conflicts as a "natural" social fact. In the view of social psychology and sociology, conflicts are caused by contrariness between a person's mental drives/motivations and standards/requirements of the society order. Alternatively, the reason of conflicts can be contradictions in the structure of

obligatory behavioural standards itself (socially structured conflict). Meyer, 1992, Vol. 12, p. 89 f.

8 Corell, W., Psychologie für Beruf und Familie, 18th edition, mvg Verlag, Heidelberg, 2007, p. 13.

9 Corell, W., p. 14.

10 Ornstein, S., Making Sense of Careers, in: Journal of Management, Los Angeles, 1993, pp. 243–267.

11 Auer, M., Vereinbarungskarrieren, Eine karrieretheoretische Analyse des Verhältnisses von Erwerbsarbeit und Elternschaft, Die Deutsche Bibliothek, Hampp, Munich, 2000, p. 44.

12 Bosch, G., Zukunft der Erwerbsarbeit, Frankfurt, New York, 1998, pp. 13–55.

The Area of Tension between Career and Family

Despite a general decrease in employed people's working-motivation, making a career is still a life goal for most people. Especially for ambitious young executives, it is a self-purpose that is not questioned. Successful people (men and women) gain recognition, satisfaction in work, higher-than-average income and power over other people and resources. On the one hand, at work, an executive is expected to constantly produce new ideas and be resilient, unsentimental and tough. On the other hand, in his private life, the same person should be tender, loving and sensitive, and should have enough time for the family. In addition, he is expected to reduce his emotional needs because the emotional care and tenderness of his female partner is mostly focused on the children.

The executives should generate peak performance in the two worlds, despite the fact that, in many fields, these worlds have different rules. For example, the important criteria of one world could have a negative effect in the other one.[13]

The tension between career and family is strengthened by the need for occupational labour mobility. Globalisation, in the sense of Beck's[14] "Enträumlichung" (deterritorialization) of social relationships, and the fact that entrepreneurial activities are no longer tied to a certain location, have led to an increasing need for mobility in occupations. One asks: how much mobility can family life cope with? The investigations of Schneider, Limmer and Ruckdeschel[15] point to people's pursuit of a balance between longevity and

change, and between reliability and renewal. On the one hand, a decreed longevity has a paralysing effect. However, if longevity does not exist and if there is no way to establish longevity, disorientation will be the result. Most people want to live in a relationship and not alone. For many people, the partner relationship is the essential supporting pillar of life. Life satisfaction, which is shown in all relevant sociological studies, is primarily determined by satisfaction in a partnership and with family, not by success at work. According to Thadden[16], in today's world, there is a remarkable movement against the availability of executives in the labour market. Even if you believe that the entire coordinate system of the conflict areas changes, it remains clear that it does not reduce the potential for conflicts between profession and family. These conflicts are only deferred. As long as the financial protection of the family is guaranteed by earning money at work and not largely provided by the state, the potential for conflicts persists. Even in the utopian case – if the state will fund the family entirely in the future – the area of maintaining power outside the family remains the driving force for a professional career.

Other issues, like power and social recognition, will be discussed later.

Finally, we can say that mobility, professional career and family development are closely related in terms of interdependence. A high willingness to be professionally mobile promotes one's professional career. However, a high intensity occupational mobility prevents the family-orientation. Family ties reduce the willingness to be professionally mobile and, consequently, the chance to reach a higher level in the professional hierarchy.

13 Czwalina, J., Walker, A., Karriere ohne Sinn, Gräfelfing, 1998, p. 18.

14 Beck, U., Was ist Globalisierung?, Frankfurt, 1997, p. 97.

15 Schneider, N., Limmer, R., Ruckdeschel, K., Familie und Beruf in der mobilen Gesellschaft, Frankfurt, 2002, p. 205.

16 Thadden, E., Gesucht: Fachkraft mit Familiensinn, in: Die Zeit, 45, Dossier, 2008.

The Conflict of Objectives, its Characteristics, Consequences and Possible Escape Routes

The conflict of objectives between the professional advancement of an executive and their family orientation is distinguished by the high requirements of both sides. One side causes pressure to perform and the other side causes emotional pressure. All of the attributes that distinguish a great executive will make private living together more and more complicated. Often, the executive cannot escape from the requirements of both areas, hence they feel unable to cope with the double burden. The non-employed spouse usually knows nothing or too little about the partner's professional burdens. The executive's advancement comes along with the decline in family life. The more success he/she has in his profession, the more he uses his home as a "family hotel" that is managed by his partner.

The concentration on professional success renounces the development of one's personality and causes a fear of abandonment. The executive's fear of abandonment and his/her vulnerability is clearly higher than an employee without leadership responsibility. The further advances the executive makes at work, the more his quality of family life declines. In the family context, this not only means being deprived of love by the partner but also, sexual failure. Ernst Bornemann explains: "All investigations made by my colleagues and me have the same result: people who are primary focused on money, power and authority, fared badly in sexual life. Men, who can really satisfy a woman, have a type of character that totally differs from men who

mainly aspire to professional success. In the higher, eventually also in the lower management levels, there are often fights to the finish. Consequently, men do the same even in bed. The switch between the particular professional requirements, like the daily pressure to always be the best during the daytime, and the ability to be capable of loving without any competition in the night-time is not always easy for men. This is a really big problem for people of the higher social class.“[17]

Young executives are increasingly trying to get out of the double burden of family life and professional success by making priorities. They either make family life the priority by giving up their next career step or they have a career without any happiness in their family life. To express this in a negative sense: some people accept the disruption of family, the separation and the divorce because they have professional success. Others accept professional stagnation, being sneered at and even unemployment, because they take responsibility for their family.[18] If you access this escape-route over one's whole career, you notice that some forward-looking executives try to escape from the area of conflict by concentrating on their career for one period of life and by tending to more family-orientation in the following period of life. In our investigated target audience (young executives with children of preschool or primary school age), this route of escape mainly exists as "the light at the end of the tunnel" and not as the current way of escaping. In our target audience, the area of tension increases from day to day (or, as Bornemann says, from day to night). Neither partner tries to bring one world in-line with the other. So, the distance between them grows. The wife, who is not in employment, begins to understand the vocational world of the husband less and less. The husband underestimates the duties of his wife and hardly understands her needs and preferences.

For many people, to focus on one side (job or family) means to fall out of the model of success of the other. As a result, both worlds break down. This breakdown is accelerated by the search for a compensation of losses on both sides. The man tries to compensate for the lack of affection, or becomes a "workaholic". The female partner seeks refuge in other relationships and tries to seek affirmation in hobbies or by concentrating on the household and children. The consequences are foreseeable. Due to the increasing requirements of executives, managers' fears and crises of identity will also increase. As such, the women become isolated and alone, become a single parent and divorce, unless they find their self-fulfilment in the world of work. In the best case, we find some superficial and non-binding relationships between two "social-partners".[19]

Today, we call the consequences of the increasing requirements on executives the "burnout syndrome". In 1996, the University Hospital in Geneva carried out a study with male heart-attack-patients aged between 32 and 45 years. They did not have congenital tendencies to heart attacks but suffered from tensions in their profession and private lives. The study shows that it is not only ambitious careerists in their mid-40s and mid-50s who are especially endangered to "burnout" in their work. None of them were capable of taking leisure and being calm and relaxed – they tried to escape into their professional hyperactivities.

According to Burisch[20], we distinguish three types of "burnout". The first type is a real burnout of the people that self-made their stress – "self-burning people". Such people do not want to say "no" to their own restlessness. The second type is "wear-out-people". These are victims of pressure from the outside and cannot say "no" to others. In the USA, there is also an ironic expression, known as the "rust-out". This is a type of person who wants to be