

Chapter 10

Dual-Career Couples: Specific Challenges for Work-Life Integration

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10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 Overview: The Development of Dual-Career Couples

Over the past 40 years, industrialized nations have experienced major changes in their labor market characteristics. Of special importance is the steady increase of women's participation in the paid workforce. In the United States (US), 72.3% of all women aged between 25 and 54 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009) were in employment, and 59.1% of women aged between 15 and 64 in the European Union (EU) (EUROSTAT, 2009). Due to women nowadays having educational attainments equal to men's (representing, for example, 59% of university graduates in the EU (Rusconi and Solga, 2008)) and due to changed values on women's and men's roles in society, traditional family models have been steadily replaced by more egalitarian partnership constellations. Women's roles are no longer confined to family and home-keeper roles, and men are no longer the sole breadwinners in the family.

A relatively new partnership constellation is one where both partners are highly educated, have a high upward career orientation, and work full time in a demanding job. This particular partnership arrangement has been termed dual-career couple (DCC)¹ and it has existed for about 40 years in noteworthy numbers. The traditional career was a "male" one in which the husband was a successful professional and the wife supported her husband, either without employment or with employment that was clearly subordinated to the husband's career. The central concern of DCCs, in contrast, is to arrange both partners' careers and upward career aspirations with a happy family life.

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¹Whereas dual-earner couples have been observed for a longer time, the novelty of DCCs pertains to the fact that both partners not only work full time but additionally they have highly demanding professional positions and both partners have high career aspirations.

Since the 1960s, research has paid increasing attention to DCCs. In their seminal work, Rapoport and Rapoport (1969) defined DCCs as families where both partners pursue a professional career. Other definitions emphasize a high career orientation together with a high partnership orientation for DCCs. Boehnke (2007) defines DCCs as couples with or without children where both partners are highly educated (university degree or comparable), work full-time in a challenging position, and live together in one household for at least 5 years. Behnke and Meuser (2003a, b) describe DCCs as partnerships wherein both pursue a professional career, without necessarily working full time. Although each of these definitions includes slightly different criteria, all concur that DCCs are well educated couples who are highly committed to their jobs and show respect for and interest in their partner's career. DCCs are considered to be "avant-garde" (Walther and Lukoschat, 2008) as they influence societal images of a modern family and strive towards gender and value equality (Apostol and Helland, 1993).

10.1.2 Aim and Structure of the Chapter

The aim of this chapter is to give a comprehensive overview of the topic of DCCs. We will first provide information on the frequency of DCCs in Europe and the US. We will then discuss the potential advantages and disadvantages of this partnership arrangement; and we will review findings on DCCs in the area of stress and well-being; career and mobility issues; partnership and parenthood issues; as well as gender related questions. We will then turn to strategies for facilitating the work-life integration of DCCs on the individual level, on the level of couples, and on the level of organizations.

10.2 Dual-Career Couple Arrangements in Professionals: Frequency

Because scholars use different definitions of DCC, it is difficult to estimate the frequency of such arrangements. Rusconi and Solga (2008) estimate that about 30% of couples live in dual-career arrangements and that this number is similar in different countries (e.g., Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and the US). For example, they report a study showing that 28% of North American middle-class couples live in dual-career constellations (Williams and Han, 2003). For Germany, estimates for DCC households range from 1 to 8% for all education levels (Boehnke, 2007) to approximately 30% for academically educated couples (Rusconi and Solga, 2008) and up to 80% for scientists (Abele, 2009; Rusconi, 2003). DCC might be stable or a temporary partnership constellation, being altered into a more traditional partnership constellation like a one-and-a-half-earner constellation after the birth of a child (e.g., Gerhard et al., 2003).

10.3 Theoretical Models

The research basically draws on three theoretical models when explaining why couples choose to live in DCCs. First, the economic theory of the family (e.g., Becker, 1981; Blossfeld and Drobnic, 2001) argues that partners bring together their individual resources with the aim of maximizing their joint economic utility (Bernadi, 1999). According to this view, households maximize their shared unitary utility when both partners engage in and specialize in activities in which they are highly qualified. Partners can engage in paid work and/or housework. When both partners are highly educated, the highest joint economic utility will be achieved when both partners work full time in career-oriented jobs. From a society's point of view, it is also wise to transform the money invested in both partners' education into full-time paid work. Choosing the dual-career path also increases flexibility in times of economic insecurity and can be regarded as a highly adaptive strategy (Oppenheimer, 1997). If one of the partners (temporarily) loses his/her job, there is still some family income.

Second, social-exchange theory (Emerson, 1976) argues that partners not only rely on economic exchange but also on social exchanges. Partners invest social behavior into the relationship. They reciprocate this investment which ensures the long-term nature of relationships. According to social exchange theory, partners who make more investments also have more power in the relationship. When both partners are highly educated, similar investments can be expected and, hence, similar power will result.

Third, gender approaches argue that gender equality is highly valued – especially by women – in modern Western societies and that in DCC arrangements there is a good chance that the roles of men and women in such partnerships are characterized by gender equality (Abele, 2009; Apostol and Helland, 1993; Behnke and Meuser, 2003a, b; Boehnke, 2007; Walther and Lukoschat, 2008). Gender approaches build on value shifts that accompanied societal changes from the pre-industrial to the post-industrial era. In the industrial era, the work and family domains were strictly separated with a sharp role differentiation between men and women. In the post-industrial era, partnership, equality between partners, and shared responsibilities have become more important. Since then, the number of working women increased steadily together with the number of couples in which both partners pursued a career. Increasing equality in partnership was followed by changing family structures with a concentration on the nuclear family, role negotiations in partnerships, and more egalitarian relationships. The distinction between “sex” and “gender” is crucial in respective theorizing. Whereas “sex” is related to mainly biological and socio-demographic aspects, gender is related to both psychological aspects (gender identity, gender self-concept) and to social aspects, notably the social construction of gender (such as gender roles, gender roles expectations; e.g., Abele, 2000; Deaux and LaFrance, 1998; Eagly, 1987). Egalitarian conceptualizations of gender roles emphasize that men and women should be free to choose the roles they want to

perform and that there should be no power gap between men's and women's roles. Working full-time increases both partners' autonomy, offers opportunities for recognition and contribution to society, and shows acknowledgment and appreciation of each partner's profession.

To summarize, the DCC is a relatively new form of partnership arrangement that has emerged as a consequence of women's increasingly better education and higher workforce participation in the last few decades. It reflects considerations of joint economic utility but it particularly reflects value shifts towards more equality in gender roles.

10.4 Work-Life Integration in DCCs: Specific Challenges

10.4.1 *The Pioneer Research of Rapoport and Rapoport*

Pioneer research on work-life integration of DCCs was conducted by Rapoport and Rapoport (1969). They conducted an interview study with 16 dual-career families to investigate whether these families experience specific challenges and dilemmas from their lifestyle and how they cope with them. The authors found five major forms of dilemma: overload dilemma, personal norm dilemma, dilemma of identity, social network dilemma, and role cycling dilemma. The couples interviewed reported that recognition of joint interests and pursuing the goal of optimizing career versus family decisions was most important to deal with these dilemmas.

- *Overload dilemmas* refer to the issue that full-time working couples have less time and fewer resources for housework. Study participants reported that they delegate some responsibilities to other people in order to deal with overload dilemmas.
- *Normative dilemmas* arose from discrepancies between personal and social norms. Working mothers were particularly confronted with the social norm expecting mothers to stay at home and take care of their children and considering working-full time as being egoistic and at the expense of children's well-being. To resolve normative dilemmas, interviewees reported that they try to separate themselves from such social norms whenever possible.
- *Identity dilemmas* concerned the switch between different role requirements. For example, women reported that they would switch roles by showing aggressive behavior when necessary at work and caring behavior when required at home.
- *Social network dilemmas* were also reported. Time constraints kept DCCs from frequent interactions with relatives and friends. Moreover, friendships with couples with different role arrangements became difficult because they triggered the normative dilemma. Participants reported choosing friendships very carefully and with couples who shared their values and life style and engaging in couple-based friendships.
- Finally, DCCs were confronted with two types of *role-cycling conflicts*, specifically the career-family dilemmas and the dual-career cycling dilemmas. The first

type of role-cycling conflict refers to a decision whether to curtail career engagement in favor of family commitment. The latter refers to decisions regarding job offers and the difficulty of accommodating the demands of two careers.

Rapoport and Rapoport's (1969) study on dual-career families was a guideline for further research. All the dilemmas reported by these authors can still be observed in DCC arrangements. Moreover, the results from their interview study show that whether couples are successful and feel comfortable with this partnership constellation or not largely depends on their joint interests and on their optimism and skills in coping with the challenges arising from the DCC arrangement.

10.4.2 Later Research

Researchers have pointed out that making the choice to live in a dual-career arrangement offers numerous advantages but at the same time creates several sources of conflict and stress (e.g., Green and Zenisek, 1983). The advantages of DCCs include, for example, the optimization of family income (see above, joint utility), similar power and influence between partners (see above, social exchange), gender equality, personal growth, high autonomy, and mutual respect (Abele, 2009; Behnke and Meuser, 2003a, b; Boehnke, 2007). The potential disadvantages concern first of all the above mentioned "overload" dilemma (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1969), e.g., high stress levels. They further concern difficulties in arranging two careers, and possibly reduced career progress for both partners. Finally, the partnership itself could suffer under the "overload dilemma" and/or DCCs could refrain from becoming parents. All these aspects can be discussed with respect to possibly different effects on men and women. In the following, we will review empirical findings on these topics. Although a detailed consideration of country-specific employment and family structures is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to mention that cultural differences can also shape women's and men's experiences in dual-career constellations (Esping-Andersen, 1999).

10.5 Empirical Findings on the Specific Challenges of DCCs

10.5.1 Stress and Well-Being

Dual-career couples have to fulfill multiple roles and are confronted with demands and stressors from the work *and* private life domains (Domsch and Ladwig, 2007). They are highly committed to their job, respect their partner's career, and strive towards a satisfactory partnership and private life (family, leisure, friends, etc.). Yet, the weekly time budget is limited and much of this time budget is already dedicated to the work domain, leaving only a limited amount of remaining time. Researchers have considered role strain and role conflict, work-family conflict, and mediating variables (e.g., social support) and its effects on DCCs' stress versus well-being.

Many studies have shown that dual careers frequently provide couples with several benefits and compensations but that quantitative and qualitative overload may cause stress. Elloy and Smith (2003), for instance, found that DCCs experienced more stress, work-family conflict, family conflict, role ambiguity, role conflict and overload than single-career couples. Parasuraman et al. (1992) differentiated between work and family role stressors and job and family satisfaction, and found that the effects of the within-domain stressors on well-being were stronger than between-domain relationships. Job stressors had a negative impact only on job satisfaction and family stressors decreased only family satisfaction. However, stressors from different life domains added to overall life stress. Parasuraman et al. (1992) further found that work support was associated with increased job satisfaction, while spouse support was associated with more family satisfaction. A study on DCCs by Aryee and Luk (1996) showed that women experienced higher levels of work-family conflict than men. Crossfield et al. (2005) found a strong positive association between women's work stressors and the anxiety and depression reported by their male partners, but they found only modest crossover from men's work stressors to women. To summarize, most of the studies have supported the view of DCCs being stressed and overloaded. Study findings show that the effects of within-domain stressors are stronger than between-domain stressors.

A different line of research, however, emphasizes the positive effects the engagement in two domains can have and suggests that experiences from both domains can be mutually rewarding (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). For example, individuals with high job autonomy and a strong network have been found to be more satisfied with childcare and have healthier children. Vice versa, positive family experiences and partner support were shown to be positively related to work success (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000). Future research is warranted to determine under which conditions positive or negative effects of living in a DCC arrangement on stress and well-being occur.

10.5.2 Career and Mobility Issues

Geographical mobility is an important precondition for career development, especially for high potentials (Ackers, 2004; Challiol and Mignonac, 2005; Robert and Bukodi, 2002). Early studies on mobility issues showed that people relocate for mainly two reasons; for career enhancement or to stay employed (Bielby and Bielby, 1992). Some research revealed that women were less willing to accept job transfers than men (Landau et al., 1992). Men's careers were often given priority and therefore women decided not to relocate (Abele, 1996; Behnke and Meuser, 2003a, b). Relocation decisions in DCCs are especially complicated as compatibility issues have to be considered (e.g., Challiol and Mignonac, 2005). Even DCCs often give priority to the man's career, suggesting that traditional gender roles still exist (Valcour and Tolbert, 2003). Ackers (2004) investigated the mobility of EU DCCs working in science. They found that not only parenthood but even partnering had a strong impact on career decision making. Specifically, the results of that study

show that living in a dual scientist partner constellation had a detrimental effect on a female's career success. Women more often than men made compromises in favor of their partner's career. Robert and Bukodi (2002) investigated the effects of spouse's resources on career success in the former communist Hungary. Their findings demonstrated that the spouse's occupational and informational resources exerted a positive impact on the other partner's upward career moves, supporting advantage accumulation (i.e., education and profession) and status similarity frameworks. Working in the same discipline (Burkett et al., 1999) or with the same employer (Moen, 2002) can also be advantageous for career progression.

10.5.3 Marital Satisfaction and Partnership Stability

Green and Zenisek (1983) reviewed DCC literature with respect to marital satisfaction. They found negative effects in older studies (e.g., Axelson, 1963). Partners were less satisfied with their dual-career partnership in the early days of this form of relationship. This may be due to the above reported "normative dilemma", perhaps also to the "identity dilemma" and "social network dilemma". Later studies revealed no effects or even positive effects of DCC on marital satisfaction (e.g., Yogeve, 1981). Green and Zenisek (1983) term this trend "an evolution of adjustment" (p. 174). We guess that the normative dilemma became smaller, and the identity dilemma also became less pronounced when DCC was not "exotic" any more but became "normal" in the sense of more frequent. Parasuraman et al. (1992) found that spouse support (i.e., informational and emotional support) predicts family satisfaction of DCCs, and that this effect is more pronounced for women than for men. Burley (1995) found a negative effect of work-family conflict on marital adjustment, whereas respondents had higher marital adjustment levels when they experienced career social support from their partners and felt that household duties were distributed equally. In our own research we found that DCCs were less satisfied with how much leisure time they could spend together with their partner than other couples. However, DCCs were more satisfied with their partnership than other couples (Weerda, 2003).

To summarize, we assume that partnership satisfaction of DCCs is not per se higher or lower than partnership satisfaction in non-dual-career couples, but that there are rather chances and risks in both forms of partnership as we have outlined above. DCCs may suffer from time constraints in several respects (partner, family, friends, leisure, etc.) but they also gain from more money, shared values and interests, autonomy, and gender and power equality.

10.5.4 Parenthood

Rounding out the above "dilemma" list provided by Rapoport and Rapoport (1969) one could add the important "parenthood dilemma" for DCC couples. The high time constraints under which DCCs live, the difficulties in arranging two careers,

and the detrimental effects discontinuity has on a person's career success, make it extremely difficult to combine DCC with parenthood. DCCs practice different strategies for dealing with this "parenthood dilemma". First, one member of the DCC, usually the woman, interrupts her career or at least reduces her work-load when a child was born. Research on career patterns revealed that women more often than men interrupt their careers (Abele and Spurk, in press; Gattiker and Larwood, 1990; Melamed, 1995, 1996; Tharenou et al., 1994; Williams and Han, 2003). This arrangement was described as a return to more traditional gender roles (Abele, 2009; Künzler, 1994). Lower career success of the partner staying home is the consequence (Abele and Spurk, in press). Second, the decision to become parents is postponed until a later age (Swiss and Walker, 1993). Partners assume that their careers will be more settled than at career entry and having a child will be less "detrimental" for the mother's (or the father's) career. The effect is that professionals are becoming older and older when they have their first child (Abele, 2009). In some cases postponing parenthood also results in involuntary childlessness due to medical reasons. Third, the dual-career partners often decide to stay childless. Several findings suggest that the general decrease in birth-rates in Western countries is especially pronounced for highly educated women living in DCC arrangements (Blossfeld and Drobnic, 2001; Blossfeld and Timm, 2003). When childlessness is due to pragmatic considerations of compatibility of careers and family, people experience these decisions as painful (Solga and Wimbauer, 2005).

10.5.5 Gender and Dual-Career Couples

Women more often live in DCC arrangements than men. This is due to gender differences in partner selection. Highly educated women almost always live with partners who are as educated as they are and who almost always work full time, which is called assortative mating. Highly educated men also often practice assortative mating, but they also live with partners who are less highly educated than they are and who do not work full-time (e.g., Blossfeld and Timm, 2003). Gender roles have also changed more with respect to women than with respect to men (Abele, 2000, 2003; Diekmann and Eagly, 2000). Finally, value shifts regarding gender equality primarily concern women, as women's status had to be made equal to men's status.

As has been outlined above, DCC arrangements often reflect – among others – such a gender-equality concern of both partners. However, even in DCC arrangements, gender differences in, for instance, the distribution of labor in the household as to the time spent for child care or elderly care are such that women engage in these activities more than men (e.g., Burley, 1995). Also so-called "compatibility management" is performed more by women than by men (Ackers, 2004; Behnke and Meuser, 2003a). Women are more concerned than men with coordinating their careers with those of their partners and more often than men (temporarily) reduce their career commitment to place priority on the partner's career. For example, women represent 74% of "second hires" (the second partner hired in a couple recruitment) at universities (Schiebinger et al., 2008). Thus, although dual-career

partnership arrangements are highly gender-equalized women are still the ones who perform more family duties, show more social investment in compatibility management, and are more willing to prioritize the partner's career over their own (see also Rusconi and Solga, 2008; Solga and Wimbauer, 2005). The dilemma created by norms expecting women to take care of the family and the housework could still be more salient for women than for men and these gender role expectations might lead women to more engagement in compatibility management, household activities, and the decision to place priority on their partner's career. Recent studies on gender stereotypes have shown that societal changes have led to changes in gender role concepts (Spence and Buckner, 2000; Twenge, 2001), suggesting that partnerships could become more gender-equalized in the future.

10.6 How to Facilitate the Work-Life Integration of DCC

Discussing DCC arrangements, Moen (2003) talks of "linked lives" which means that dual-career partners' lives are embedded with and influenced by each other and that the achievement or failure of dual career arrangements is dependent on a social-relational process in which the interdependence of both partners' lives has to be coordinated and negotiated. Processes that lead to better or worse work-life integration of DCCs and – more generally – to success or failure of this partnership arrangement have to be analyzed on three levels; the individual level, the couple level, and the external level (Rusconi and Solga, 2008). We discuss issues on the individual level (time and stress management, goals etc.), the couple level (negotiation, communication, etc.) and the external level which we conceptualize as organizational human resource management regarding DCCs.

10.6.1 *Individual Level*

As the partnership arrangement of a DCC is often associated with overload dilemmas, individuals should strive towards effective time management. Time management strategies include planning one's short-term and long-term activities, setting goals, assessing the time used for specific tasks, making to-do lists, and monitoring one's behavior. Time management strategies increase the awareness of time use, show limits of time capabilities, give feedback loops, and guide the investment of effort. Meta-analytical research has demonstrated that time management behaviors relate positively to perceived control of time, job satisfaction, and health, and negatively to stress (Claessens et al., 2007). Training is available for people in order to improve their time management skills (Claessens et al., 2007; Green and Skinner, 2005).

Of course, not all overload dilemmas can be solved by means of time management. However, when individuals are nonetheless stressed and under time pressure, stress management training is recommended. Stress management training can be classified as primary (e.g., job redesign, autonomy change), secondary

(e.g., progressive muscle relaxation, cognitive reframing), or tertiary (e.g., recovery interventions, burn-out assistance programs). Especially cognitive-behavioral programs that belong to secondary interventions have been shown to be effective in reducing stress (Richardson and Rothstein, 2008). Cognitive-behavioral programs teach people to change their cognitions about challenging situations from pessimistic and distorted to more optimistic and realistic thoughts. Reframing techniques are effective for both the work and family domain.

We further propose that goals are crucial in facilitating the work-life integration of DCCs. Goal setting theory (Locke and Latham, 1990) suggests that people should set specific and difficult goals for themselves. Thus, especially for DCCs with the demand of balancing two careers, it is important to reflect at an early stage upon one's goals and priorities in work and private life. Selecting goals and implementing them will lead to optimal outcomes. Self-management in the form of self-set goals and goal-pursuing behavior has been shown to be positively associated with career and life satisfaction (Abele and Wiese, 2008; Riediger et al., 2005). Sometimes, however, when one cannot implement self-set goals, adaptation of goals will be the best strategy. Adapting one's goals – for example, by means of goal disengagement – was shown to have positive effects on well-being and a variety of other outcomes (Brandstätter and Renner, 1990; Heckhausen et al., 2001; Wrosch et al., 2007).

10.6.2 Couple Level

Often the partnership arrangement of a DCC has not been planned out ahead, but has rather developed. Often, the future partners come to know each other while they are at university and quite often they have even graduated in the same field (Blossfeld and Timm, 2003). Such a partnership arrangement requires time management and a distribution of duties which is perceived as fair by both partners. The “dilemmas” (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1969) arising from such an arrangement are still manageable. If the partners appreciate each other and their DCC arrangement, when they have enough joint interests and are generally optimistic, then they will be able to negotiate the reciprocal duties and especially to talk about the mutual expectations.

Things become more complicated when relocation decisions have to be made and/or when the DCC wants to have a child. Rapoport and Rapoport (1969) termed these the dual-career cycling dilemma and the career-family dilemma. Again it is of utmost importance that the couple communicates intensely about each other's goals and wishes and that the process of “compatibility management” takes place such that each partner experiences it as adequate and fair. It may be helpful to frame this compatibility management in terms of a negotiation. Social psychological research has provided a number of tools for successful negotiations (e.g., Fisher et al., 1981; Thompson, 2005) like, for instance, a “win-win” orientation, optimal preparation, overcoming a fixed-pie bias, expanding the pie, etc. The aim of such a negotiation is to create as many options as possible and then to come to the best solution for both partners. This best solution is specific to the respective couple and there are no predetermined best outcomes.

Looking at the other dilemmas outlined above, some of them seem more easily manageable than others. The overload dilemma, for instance, can be reduced by “outsourcing” quite a few housekeeping tasks. The economic situation of DCCs is often such that the couple can afford this help and they should not hesitate to do so. Practical skills in time management are also helpful (see above). The overload dilemma could also be reduced when partners experience each other as supporting, not only on the practical level of concrete help, but also on the level of emotional support (see above, Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000; Parasuraman et al., 1992).

Normative dilemmas and identity dilemmas have become less during the last 40 years, but they have not disappeared. Seeking social support from the partner and from similar others, together with clearly knowing one’s own goals and values, is helpful for coping with these dilemmas.

Finally, social network dilemmas are still as significant as they were 40 years ago; perhaps these dilemmas have even become larger. Time constraints keeping DCCs from frequent interactions with relatives and friends still persist. Due to high mobility requirements and frequent relocation decisions, DCCs not only have too little time to cultivate their friendships but also they are often far apart from their friends and relatives and thus there are also geographical restrictions on the cultivation of social relationships. We regard these social network dilemmas as highly important; more research should be devoted to this issue.

10.6.3 Organizational Level

Organizations have to strive for their goals in a competitive market. In order to be successful organizations have – among other factors – to manage their human resources which means recruiting candidates who are best suited for the position in question as well as developing people working already in the organization. Organizations are not per se interested in managing their human resources such that they will provide tools to help DCCs to arrange their “linked lives” successfully. Rather, organizations will react to the specific needs of DCCs when this group provides a competitive advantage (Kölbl, 2008). There are several advantages conceivable for organizations to invest in human resource management of DCCs. People living in DCC arrangements are highly motivated and want to perform especially well. Furthermore, those people are highly committed to the organization, as one of the most important obstacles to a successful DCC arrangement is finding appointments at the same place or at least nearby.

On the recruiting level, dual-career policies begin with the realization that in order to attract the best candidates employers cannot regard candidates as single people without social ties, but that it is important to consider the candidate’s social ties very early in the recruitment process because otherwise the candidate might not accept the job offer. In Germany, for instance, several universities have installed specific dual-career services, because they have acknowledged that “recruiting the best” often means “recruiting the best couple” (e.g., Corpina, 1996; Domsch and Krüger-Basener, 2003; Harvey and Buckley, 1998; Pierce and Delahaye, 1996;

Wolf-Wendel et al., 2003). Specific legal prescriptions have been developed in recent years for increasing the flexibility in hiring couples. One of the most important strategies is twin assignment or dual hiring. Given that women's career decisions are more strongly influenced by partner employment decisions than men's career decisions, twin assignment and dual hires can be considered as enabling a more egalitarian and diverse workforce (Schiebinger et al., 2008). Further strategies are, for instance, support of the partner's job search, flexible work arrangements (e.g., virtual collaboration, flexible working hours, sabbaticals, year wise working hours accounts, etc.), support for child care (e.g., company-run day care for children of different age levels) and support for domestic duties (Domsch and Krüger-Basener, 1999). Universities are becoming more and more aware of the emerging number of academics living in DCCs and the necessity to support them. Having a competitive dual-career program that meets applicants' needs and expectations influences whether qualified candidates can be attracted, since career decisions are strongly influenced by employment opportunities for partners. In the US, dual hires at university faculties have significantly increased from 3% in the 1970s to 13% in the 2000s (Schiebinger et al., 2008). Providing effective dual-career programs can strengthen international competitiveness and prevent "brain-drain" (Backhaus et al., 2002).

Networking is central for dual-career support and includes networks within and between universities and to external institutions (Funk and Gramespacher, 2008). In Germany, for example, some dual-career services have built regional networks of several universities wherein each university has a dual-career service and offers consulting and career advice for scientists (Funk and Gramespacher, 2008).

On the level of retaining and developing staff with high potential, dual-career policies aim at helping the couples both to improve their professional skills further and to arrange their work and private lives. Strategies are again flexible work arrangements (e.g., virtual collaboration, e-learning, flexible working hours and family-friendly meeting hours, shared appointments), and support for childcare and domestic duties (Domsch and Krüger-Basener, 1999). Some best practice examples illustrate how organizations facilitate the arrangement of work and private life. For example, a well-known European furniture company offers part-time and job-sharing models for executives, gives diversity seminars for executives with an emphasis on the acknowledgement of employees' different needs and requirements, holds yearly feedback sessions on work and private situation, offers re-employment advice after parental leave, etc. Some other companies also provide best practice examples like flexible working hours, job-splitting, leadership in part-time employment, web-access, work-life balance seminars, parent network meetings, intranet information on respective issues, etc. Most of these initiatives address women, and organizations place emphasis on topics such as part-time employment, re-employment after parental leave, and childcare.

No doubt, these respective initiatives are helpful for balancing work and family life. However, human resource management with respect to DCCs must be broader, because DCCs' necessities are not confined to work-life balance issues. The partnership arrangement of DCCs can be regarded as a new and alternative

career model that challenges the traditional thinking and acting patterns of decision makers. Consequently, organizations have to develop new management concepts that allow employees to combine their high career orientation with a high partnership orientation. Flexible work arrangements have to be changed from mere employment concepts to career-oriented concepts and traditional career concepts have to be adapted such that they fit to modern partnership constellations.

Generally, the management of DCCs on the level of organizations requires flexibility on the part of human resource managers as well as on the part of the couples. Dual career management as a specific component of human resource management will only be successful if two preconditions are met. First, the chief executive officers have to be convinced that dual career management really helps to attain the organizational goals. Second, the organizational culture has to be such that gender equality in career and family is highly valued (Kölbl, 2008). It is important to mention that dual-career programs facilitate dual hires at the same organization or institution (or at least nearby) but that the understanding of these programs is that the final decision of hiring the applicant's partner has to depend on his or her expertise (Schiebinger et al., 2008). Excellence is the criterion for deciding upon hiring the partner, and dual-career programs should be a "win-win" situation for both the employer and the employee.

10.7 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have been concerned with dual career couples as if these were a homogeneous group. This is, of course, not the case. Even if we deal with highly educated professionals, DCCs differ with respect to their field of employment and in some of these fields it may be easier to arrange both partners' careers than in others. The upward career orientation may also differ between DCCs. Some may strive to the "top" of career development achievable in their respective profession; some may be career-oriented up to a certain limit. Some couples may perceive their "linked lives" as a unit; other couples may perceive each other as autonomous individuals. One may even think of DCCs as a continuum with – always high educated – dual-earner couples with a clear priority of one partner's career at one end of the continuum and highly upward oriented dual career couples with equal priority of both careers at the other end of the continuum. Compatibility management strategies on the level of the couple are always necessary. Societal support (child care, parental leave, DCC-friendly tax systems, etc.) and societal appreciation of respective ways of living are also always necessary. Organizational strategies of dual career management help a lot and are the more necessary the more the respective DCC belongs to the highly upward oriented couples with equal priority of both careers.

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