

# Some experiences about family, physics and the little rest of our lives

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20. Nov. 2012

- 1 Our CV's
- 2 My experience with handling family and physics
- 3 Some experiences with the rest of life

1 Our CV's

2 My experience with handling family and physics

3 Some experiences with the rest of life

	my wife	me
2001	Univ. Dortmund Diploma Chemical Engineering	DESY & Univ. Hamburg PhD studies
2003	GKSS Teltow PhD Biotechnology	
2005	ETH Zürich PhD Chemical Engineering	SLAC Postdoc
2007		DESY & Univ. Hamburg YIG Leader
2009 Birth of Child1	Looking for a job in Hamburg	
2010	Bayer Technology Services Leverkusen	
2011		Akademischer Rat Univ. Bonn
2012 Birth of Child2		



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# Work itself

- If you're *not* a single parent: Pretty unproblematic – compared to R&D in industry for sure. We work at the most unusual times anyway.
  - As far as I can say, in physics there is a very good acceptance of all the little normal distractions of life (leaving earlier, changing diapers in the office, having to walk the lantern with the kids at the Kindergarten instead of having a phone meeting, etc.)
  - The important thing is: if you are confident that you still work more than enough, then nobody will notice. *Well, whether that's a good sign, that's another question. See later.*

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- If you *are* a single parent: You have to ask my former students. Well, better don't.
  - Supervision is very tricky during parental leave, to a certain extend also when working part-time. I thought it would be possible, but there are so many bits and pieces which you miss, such that one longer phone call per week per student just can't solve all the little problems.



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- Abundance of fixed-term contracts is probably the biggest problem – only the scientific community as a whole, represented by leaders in our field, can try to change that!
- **In total, I think DESY is doing exceptionally well in supporting family and equality of chances. Given the conditions we face in science. But still, no reason to rest . . .**

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No names . . . almost!

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Now changed due to the efforts of S. Faverot-Spengler

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- Lesson: Having other obligations (family) can be regarded as negative by itself, independent of the actual work being accomplished!
- The frightening aspect: The person in question was and is **really** very supportive and understanding regarding my situation, and similar ones. How is that going to be if the boss does not understand, which unfortunately still happens? (see next slide)

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- I asked the responsible person whether I could be sent to the partner University of my YIG, namely Bonn, for 3 days per week, and only be here in Hamburg for 2 days per week (one night). He requested that I'd be here "3 full days" per week, and for at most 1 year, which wouldn't have made our situation significantly better.
- I made it clear that this was no option for me, but possible consequences (the work and the funding of my group, co-coordination of a SFB project, about 5 PhD students, two master students) were of no interest in this discussion.
- Embarrassingly, it required intervention from outside to get that solved.

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- Conclusion: Be careful, plan your moves!

# Don't Panic!

OK, try to plan ahead, but: **don't fear!**

- I am convinced that a large portion of the inequality of chances between women and men is caused by **men** being fearful
  - I am only on fixed term contract – need a new position soon!
  - Papers to be finished soon, what happens to my career if not?
  - Also outside of our strange world: What will my boss think if I leave at 5pm? I must show that I am 200% committed to my job, otherwise someone else will be advanced before me! My career will then be ruined forever!
  - If I take parental leave once, I will be sidelined forever!
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- . . . or, where justified, they show a catastrophic state of our society, and they can only be changed if many people act and speak against them! **Only if children of *men* are also a “threat” for employers, *women* will be free from the prejudices against them!**

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- . . . or, where justified, they show a catastrophic state of our society, and they can only be changed if many people act and speak against them! **Only if children of men are also a “threat” for employers, women will be free from the prejudices against them!**
- Maybe a good sign: For us it worked . . .

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Just one anecdote:

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Which, if you think about it, is a really bad insult in their view.  
An answer which works really well is:  
*"Yes, I know, it is a really great privilege for me that I have a position where I can easily afford to let the others wait for me"*