



Is career a male thing?

H. Huebener

Institute for Meteorology, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany
(huebener@met.fu-berlin.de / Fax: +49/30/83871160 / Phone: +49/30/83871218)

Several decades have now seen female actions against gender discrimination. Several measures are proposed, some of them are now widely applied (e.g. women's representatives in Universities, at least in Germany), some not. However, there is still a peculiar lack of women in high positions, not only in the natural sciences, but also in economics. How comes?

Women all over the world struggle to live up to male expectations to get the really good top jobs. But the price one (mostly) has to pay for a career is spending 60 or more hours a week at work, spending weekends at meetings, weeks at conferences, etc.

Is this really the one and only way to make a career? Is it desirable?

The reasons for the small number of women in high positions are at least twofold:

- 1) Still women are expected to earn only an additional income ('Her husband has a job too, hasn't he? So we better give the job to a man who has to feed his family.')
- 2) Women often are not willing to pay the price of 'social deprivation' (no friends, no time for family or hobbies) to make a career.

On the other hand, men often pay the price of 'social deprivation' (with the help of their wives, who keep the house and family running and follow the men when their carer calls for a move). They sometimes find out they do not know their children at all. Can it be the aim of a female career to copy this? Or shouldn't the question be: 'How can men and women combine career with social life?' It is about time not only for further female emancipation, but for a male emancipation, too!

When we stop seeing career as something only a real workaholic can achieve, when we start seeing work and life no longer as separate parts, when we stop laughing about the idea of making career in a part time job, we have managed a large step forward.