

Modes of Life Organization

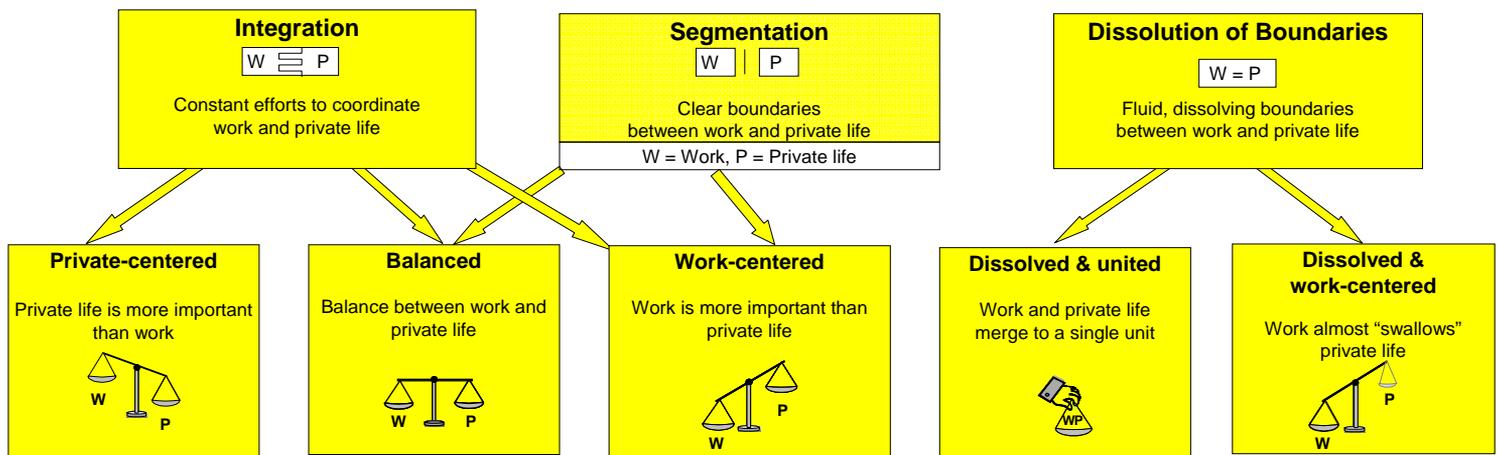
Empirical Studies Conducted by the Division for Work, Occupational, and Organizational Psychology

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Introduction

Our research focuses on the career development of working women, men, and couples. A DFG-funded project (1998–2004) traced career trajectories in two graduate professions, namely medicine and psychology, over several years. Findings showed that the different career paths taken by men and women (and their respective career successes) are associated with different modes of life organization. Ways of configuring the relationships between work and leisure time, career and family, and the occupational and private biography as a whole were also the focus of a BMBF-funded project (2001–2006) on young entrepreneurs and employees in small IT companies. In addition to forms of organizational cooperation and conflict, the project focused on the work-driven lifestyles of people for whom boundaries between working and private life have almost ceased to exist. These research topics are to be examined further in future projects.

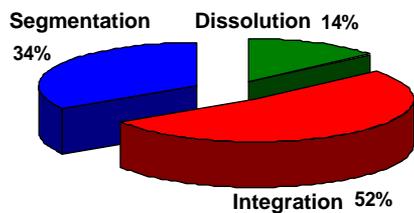
Modes of Life Organization



Empirical Studies on Modes of Life Organization

Psychology

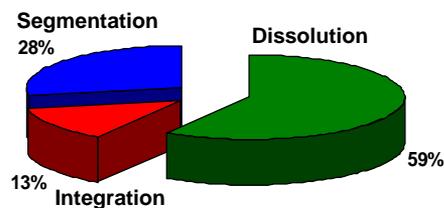
62 psychologists (21 men, 41 women) were interviewed on their mode of life organization as part of the DFG project. The most common pattern in this occupational group was "integration," especially among women with children.



"Segmentation" was more common among men with children and psychologists with no children. "Dissolution of boundaries" was found primarily among couples who work and live together.

IT Start-Ups 2001

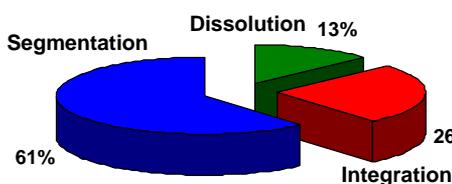
Young professionals in IT start-ups were surveyed longitudinally in the BMBF-funded project. At the first point of assessment in 2001, 85 (54 men, 31 women) respondents were interviewed on their mode of life organization. The most common pattern was "dissolution of boundaries," especially among entrepreneurs and software developers.



"Segmentation" was typical for employees in subordinate positions. "Integration" was only observed among women with children.

Medicine

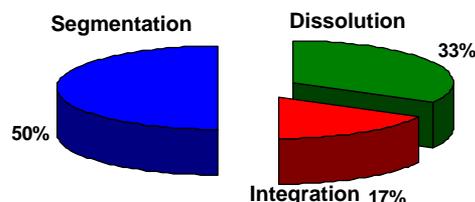
39 members of the medical profession (15 men, 24 women) were interviewed on their mode of life organization as part of the DFG project. The most common pattern in this occupational group was "segmentation," especially among men high in the occupational hierarchy. "Integration" was more common among women with children.



An extremely work-centered form of "dissolution of boundaries" was found among childless physicians in top management positions.

IT Start-Ups 2005

At the second point of assessment in 2005, 53 (33 men, 20 women) of the 85 original respondents were again interviewed on their modes of life organization. The most common mode was now "segmentation," especially among men who now had children.



Most of those whose lives were characterized by "dissolution of boundaries" were entrepreneurs who did not want to distinguish between work and private life. Women with children were again assigned to the "integration" category.