1.   INTRODUCTION

The focus of the present study is on interpersonal contributions to the pursuit of work- and family-related goals in middle adulthood. Researchers agree that work and family play a central role in middle adulthood (Havighurst, 1952; Settersten, 1999). Traditionally there has been a specialization of responsibilities within marriage, with the man having the role of the breadwinner and the woman taking care of the family (Gottschall, 1995). Due to the fact that today both parents with minor children usually work (German Bureau of Statistics, 2000), an investigation of the simultaneous pursuit of work and family goals becomes quite important.

Drawing on a sample of employed parents with preschool children, I investigate the goals mothers and fathers set for themselves and how their work and family goals are interrelated to ensure successful development. Whereas most research on the relationship between multiple goals has focused on the individual, the combination of work and family goals might require a coordination of goals between the partners. This study will therefore expand existing research beyond the individual and investigate the impact of differences in the organization of work and family goals at the level of the couple on individual development. Additionally, it will examine whether, in the present sample, the availability of social resources from the wider family network, such as grandparental childcare provision, helps employed parents to meet personally important objectives.

How Can Differences in the Relationship Among Work- and Family-Related Goals Be Conceptualized?

People can be seen as active agents who shape their own development through a dynamic interaction with characteristics of the changing context within which they are embedded (Brandtstaedter & Lerner, 1999; Lerner, 2002). While goals are relatively stable objectives that guide behavior over time, they are also dynamic as they change in response to different developmental contexts (Brandtstaedter & Rothermund, 2002; Brunstein, Schultheiss, & Maier, 1999; Oerter, 1986). Life-span psychology claims that each age period has its own developmental agenda which is subject to change due to the dynamic interplay of age-graded influences such as developmental tasks, history-graded influences like societal expectations, and non-normative influences (P. B. Baltes, Reese, & Lipsitt, 1980; P. B. Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 1998). Research conducted with individuals of different ages shows both that these age-related projects are reflected within the personal goal system and

that work and family play a central role in middle adulthood (J. Heckhausen, 1999; Lachman, 2004; Nurmi, 1992).

Because a simultaneous combination of multiple tasks is often perceived to be difficult (Cantor, Acker, & Cook-Flannagan, 1992) this study will investigate differences in the management of multiple goals by working parents. Due to the fact that the relationship between work and family has the potential for both conflict as well as enhancement (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Klumb & Lampert, 2004), the question becomes how work- and family-related goals can be interrelated to ensure successful development.

The model of selective optimization with compensation states that people ought to be selective in the setting of their goals and points to the developmental benefits of having an integrated goal system (Freund & P. B. Baltes, 2000). Riediger (2001; Riediger & Freund, 2004) investigated the impact of interference and facilitation within intraindividual goal systems and showed that intraindividual goal facilitation is positively associated with success in the pursuit of multiple goals while intraindividual goal interference is negatively related to well-being.

So far, most research on the relationship between multiple goals has focused on the individual (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Palys & Little, 1983; Riediger, 2001). However, many goals are not pursued in isolation but require the coordination of efforts of different individuals (Hoff & Ewers, 2003; Smith, 1996). Due to the fact that employed parents' attempts to successfully combine their work and family goals might not be restricted to the individual, this study aims at expanding existing research beyond the individual and investigates how differences in the organization of work and family goals between the partners influence individual goal pursuit and whether employed parents benefit from the availability of social resources that might serve compensatory means when encountering difficulties in the coordination of goals within the partnership.

Which Interpersonal Factors Contribute to Differences in the Ability to Combine Work- and Family-Related Goals?

It can be assumed that within the broader family network the partner plays a central role for the management of work and family goals. However, research investigating intergenerational relations also provides evidence that the endeavor to combine work and family in middle adulthood often involves kin beyond the nuclear family (e.g. Herlyn, Kistner, Langer-Schulz, Lehmann, & Wächter, 1998). It is therefore important not only to consider the mutual influences between the partners but to also bear grandparents in mind.

With respect to the partner, it is expected that personal goals can be hampered as well as facilitated within different partnership contexts. Yet, in the existing literature, little attention has been given to the ways in which the relations among partners' personal goals affect individual goal pursuit. This study will investigate the quality of interpersonal goal relations at the level of the couple, which refers to differences in the dyadic organization of work and family goals within the partnership, and it will ask to which extent it hinders or enhances individual goal pursuit in both husbands and wives.

The conceptualization of different qualities of interpersonal goal relations draws on work by Deutsch (2000) and Wilensky (1983). According to these authors a positive relationship among the goals of two individuals (interpersonal goal convergence) occurs if one individual's actions simultaneously further the other person's goal attainment as well and / or if two individuals pool their resources, thus expanding what could be done alone. Negative interpersonal goal relations (interpersonal goal conflict), in contrast, exist if one individual's actions simultaneously hinder the other person from attaining his or her goal and / or if joint resources do not suffice for both persons' goal achievements (Deutsch, 2000; Wilensky, 1983). It is expected that a convergence of work and family goals within the partnership optimizes goal-relevant means and contributes to the successful combination of multiple goals in both husbands and wives. Interpersonal goal conflict in contrast, is expected to provide a poor basis for individual goal pursuit and should therefore hamper the successful pursuit of work and family goals in employed parents.

This leads to the question which factors might be underlying differences in the quality of interpersonal goal relations. Many studies indicate that time-scarcity is an important issue in parents who are still at the beginning of their career (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Bittman & Wajcman, 2000). Hence, two time-related goal characteristics are investigated in this study for their contribution to interpersonal goal conflict and convergence, namely the time-intensity of work and family goals and their temporal flexibility. It is proposed that partners who select very time-intensive work and family goals that can only be pursued at fixed points in time report higher levels of interpersonal goal conflict than partners whose work and family goals are low in time-intensity and not bound to specific time-points.

Currently most research on the balance between work and family in employed parents focuses on the nuclear family. However, an endeavor to combine work and family goals in middle adulthood need not be restricted to the couple but might include kin from the wider family network. Two lines of research suggest that grandparental contributions to the pursuit of multiple goals in young parents might be a promising arena for further investigations. First,

research by Ryff and colleagues (Ryff, Lee, Essex, & Schmutte, 1994) underlines the centrality of adult children's attainments and achievements for the well-being of their parents and demonstrates that parents with adult children have many hopes concerning the happiness, career success, and family of their adult offspring. And second, grandparents seem to play an important role in the care of their grandchildren especially if both parents are employed (e.g., Alt, 1994). Taking up these observations, this study will investigate whether grandparental support in the form of childcare facilitates the pursuit of work and family goals in employed parents. Because such external sources of support might be of particular importance if partners are having problems in organizing their work and family goals at the level of the couple, it will further be examined whether grandparental support buffers interpersonal goal conflict between the partners and thus serves as a compensatory means for the successful management of work and family goals within the present sample.

How Can Successful Management of Work- and Family-Related Goals Be Identified?

From a developmental psychological point of view it is important not only to describe different developmental pathways but also to evaluate them with respect to their success. Successful development has been defined as the maximization of gains and the minimization of losses (P. B. Baltes et al., 1998). Because no standard set of criteria exists to evaluate developmental success, researchers suggest taking a broad perspective and using multiple criteria covering different time ranges (M. M. Baltes & Carstensen, 1996; P. B. Baltes et al., 1998; Frankenhaeuser, 1994; Schwarz & Strack, 1999). Accordingly, this study draws on behavioral, experiential, and physiological indicators of successful development and combines a microanalysis of daily life using time-sampling methods with a general assessment of long-term outcomes in order to examine the operation of developmental processes at different levels of abstraction. At the micro level everyday pursuit of work and family goals will be used as a behavioral indicator, reported mood during the course of a day will be investigated as an experiential criterion, and different levels of salivary cortisol will serve as a physiological estimate of developmental success. At the macro level progress on work and family goals is taken as a behavioral indicator and subjective well-being serves as an experiential indicator of successful development.

These considerations lead to the following broad research questions:

1. Do conflict and convergence in interpersonal goal relations at the level of the couple affect the management of work and family goals in employed mothers and fathers?
   Does interpersonal goal convergence optimize goal-relevant means, thus providing employed parents with a context that facilitates the pursuit of multiple goals?
   Are partners with conflicting goals less successful in combining the pursuit of their work and family goals?

2. How are the time-intensity of individual work and family goals and their temporal flexibility related to the quality of interpersonal goal relations at the level of the couple?
   Is the selection of time-intensive goals that can only be pursued at fixed points in time associated with interpersonal goal conflict?

3. Is the availability of grandparental childcare positively related to the successful combination of work and family goals in employed parents?
   Does grandparental childcare facilitate the pursuit of work and family goals in the present sample?
   Can access to grandparental support in the form of childcare act as a buffer for interpersonal goal conflict between the partners?

4. How can differences in developmental success be identified?
   Is the successful pursuit of work and family goals reflected by high levels of both psychological as well as physiological well-being?
   Do indicators of successful development at the behavioral, experiential, and physiological level converge?

The following chapter describes the theoretical background for the investigation of interpersonal contributions to the pursuit of work and family goals in employed parents. In the first section the theoretical framework will be introduced. The second section serves a description of the central predictors, namely conflict and convergence in interpersonal goal relations and access to grandparental childcare. And in the final section multiple criteria of developmental success will be introduced.