

Solutions of the two-body problem as an Astronomer

Dorottya Szécsi

Humboldt Fellow (Uni Köln)

soon: assistant prof. at

Nicolaus Kopernicus Uni. (Poland)

**23 Sept. 2020 – Healthy Careers in Astronomy
Virtual Meeting of the German Astronomical Society**

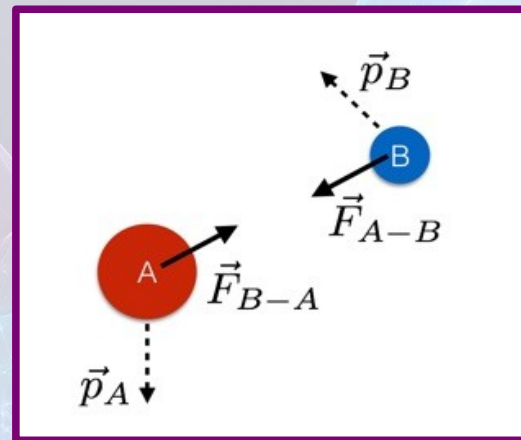


*“Two body problem” –
A romantic relationship where
the partners are both building their
careers in science.*

Why talk about it?

Statistics & gender ratio study:
Dual-Career Academic Couples
by the Michelle R. Clayman Institute
for Gender Research, Stanford University

http://gender.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj5961/f/publications/dualcareerfinal_0.pdf



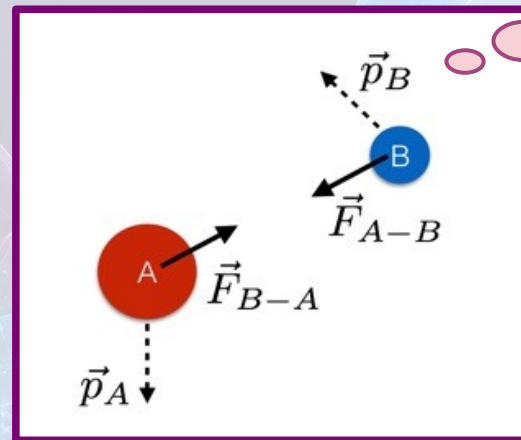
Why talk about it?

Personal
experience

Tipps
and tricks

Systemic
change

“Emancipation”
of alternative
lifestyles

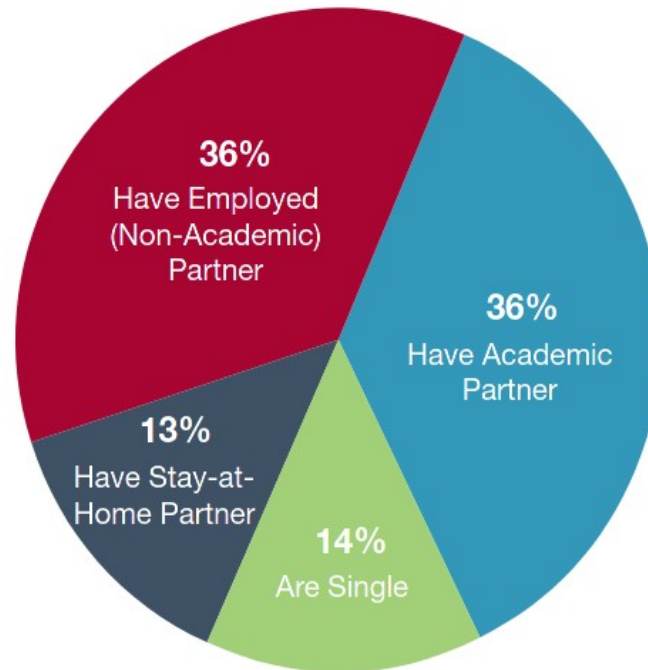


Statistics & gender ratio study:
Dual-Career Academic Couples
by the Michelle R. Clayman Institute
for Gender Research, Stanford University

http://gender.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj5961/f/publications/dualcareerfinal_0.pdf

Why talk about it?

9,043 Full-Time Faculty from 13 Leading Research Universities



Seventy-two percent of full-time faculty in this study have employed partners. Thirty-six percent have academic partners.

[^] All data derive from the Clayman Institute's Managing Academic Careers Survey unless otherwise noted.

^{*} Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

[‡] See Appendix D for methods notes.

Statistics & gender ratio study:
Dual-Career Academic Couples
by the Michelle R. Clayman Institute
for Gender Research, Stanford University

http://gender.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj5961/f/publications/dualcareerfinal_0.pdf

The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship



The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship

- flexibility



The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship

- flexibility
- planning in advance / logistics



The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship

- flexibility
- planning in advance / logistics
- teamwork



The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship

- flexibility
 - planning in advance / logistics
 - teamwork
- laptop (ssh)



The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship

- flexibility
 - planning in advance / logistics
 - teamwork
-
- laptop (ssh)
 - earplugs and/or headphones



The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship

- flexibility
 - planning in advance / logistics
 - teamwork
-
- laptop (ssh)
 - earplugs and/or headphones
 - shared calendar (?)



The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship

- flexibility
 - planning in advance / logistics
 - teamwork
-
- laptop (ssh)
 - earplugs and/or headphones
 - shared calendar (?)
 - BahnCard25/50



The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship

- flexibility
 - planning in advance / logistics
 - teamwork
-
- laptop (ssh)
 - earplugs and/or headphones
 - shared calendar (?)
 - BahnCard25/50
 - passion for science



The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship

- flexibility
- planning in advance / logistics
- teamwork

Covid ??

- laptop (ssh)
- earplugs and/or headphones
- shared calendar (?)
- BahnCard25/50
- passion for science



The most common solution: LDR

Long Distance Relationship

- flexibility
- planning in advance / logistics
- teamwork

Covid ??

- laptop (ssh)
- earplugs and/or headphones
- shared calendar (?)
- BahnCard25/50
- passion for science
- a cool boss...



About that cool boss...

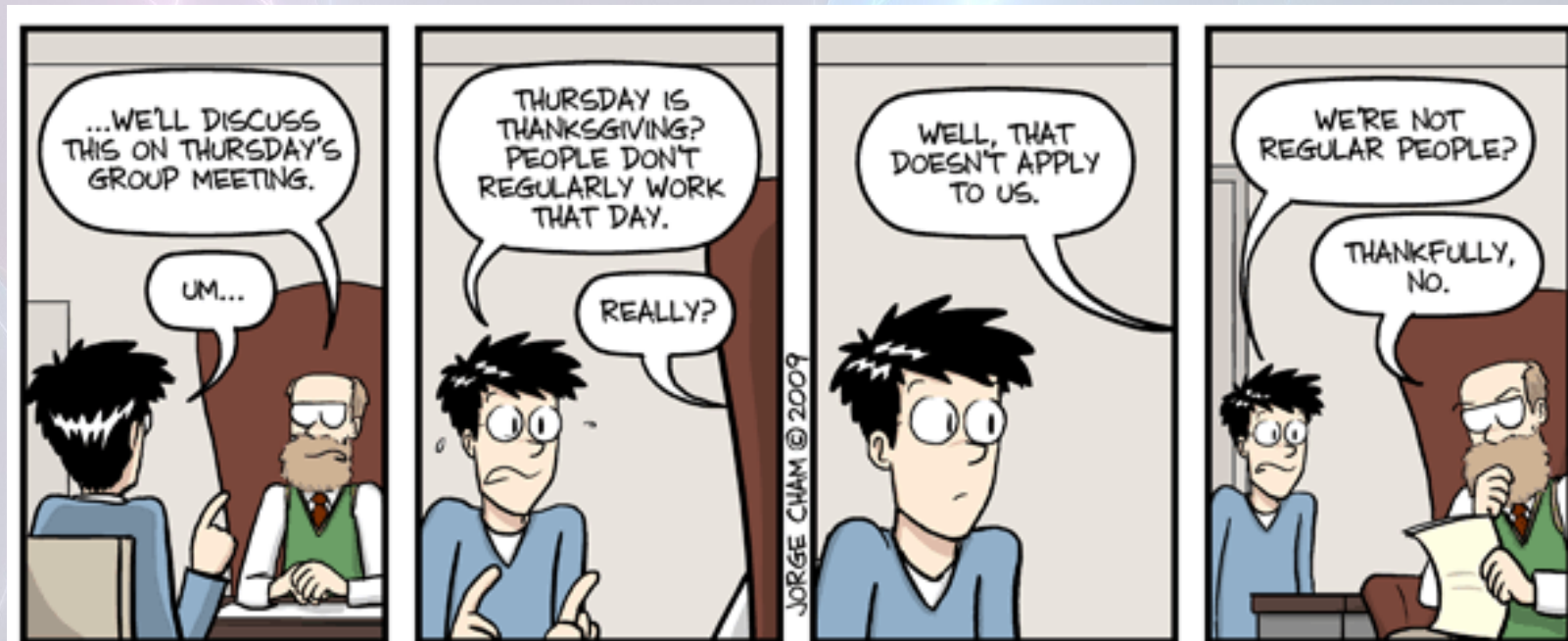
About that cool boss...

- Systemic change – academic culture
 - the post-grad workforce is working for their own gains
 - enforcing office hours may be counter productive
 - Germany: PhD students get 1/2 – 2/3 salary anyway



About that cool boss...

- Systemic change – academic culture
 - the post-grad workforce is working for their own gains
 - enforcing office hours may be counter productive
 - Germany: PhD students get 1/2 – 2/3 salary anyway




Why flexible work hours?

Why flexible work hours?

- Creativity / Inventive mind
 - rested
 - “recharged” regularly
 - work-life balance

Why flexible work hours?

- Creativity / Inventive mind
 - rested
 - “recharged” regularly
 - work-life balance



How much do you sleep?

Why flexible work hours?

- Creativity / Inventive mind
 - rested
 - “recharged” regularly
 - work-life balance

Radical proposition:

work-life balance* is necessary for **good research**

*including having a loving partner

Solution nr.2: Double hire

e.g. Dual Career
Network Germany

- Promising but ambiguous
 - What is *excellence* anyway?
 - the “Two Body Bonus”
 - needs university-level cooperation
 - impostor syndrome?
 - *Alternative*: visitor status for partner?



Further reading:
Love and the Two-Body Problem
by Valerie Jamieson
(on ScienceMag.org)

[http://www.sciencemag.org/
Careers/2003/03/
love-and-two-body-problem](http://www.sciencemag.org/Careers/2003/03/love-and-two-body-problem)

Solution nr.2: Double hire

e.g. Dual Career
Network Germany

- Promising but ambiguous
 - What is *excellence* anyway?
 - the “Two Body Bonus”
 - needs university-level cooperation
 - impostor syndrome?
 - *Alternative*: visitor status for partner?



Further reading:
Love and the Two-Body Problem
by Valerie Jamieson
(on ScienceMag.org)

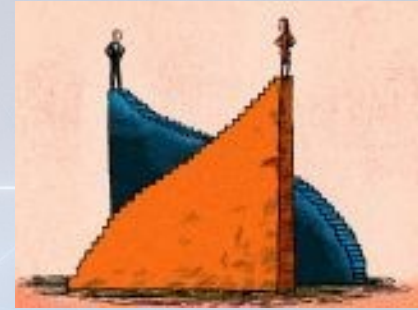
[http://www.sciencemag.org/
Careers/2003/03/
love-and-two-body-problem](http://www.sciencemag.org/Careers/2003/03/love-and-two-body-problem)

The non-solutions

Solution nr.2: Double hire

e.g. Dual Career
Network Germany

- Promising but ambiguous
 - What is *excellence* anyway?
 - the “Two Body Bonus”
 - needs university-level cooperation
 - impostor syndrome?
 - *Alternative*: visitor status for partner?



Further reading:
Love and the Two-Body Problem
by Valerie Jamieson
(on ScienceMag.org)

[http://www.sciencemag.org/
Careers/2003/03/
love-and-two-body-problem](http://www.sciencemag.org/Careers/2003/03/love-and-two-body-problem)

The non-solutions

- the “let’s do nothing”

Solution nr.2: Double hire

e.g. Dual Career
Network Germany

- Promising but ambiguous
 - What is *excellence* anyway?
 - the “Two Body Bonus”
 - needs university-level cooperation
 - impostor syndrome?
 - *Alternative*: visitor status for partner?



Further reading:
Love and the Two-Body Problem
by Valerie Jamieson
(on ScienceMag.org)

[http://www.sciencemag.org/
Careers/2003/03/
love-and-two-body-problem](http://www.sciencemag.org/Careers/2003/03/love-and-two-body-problem)

The non-solutions

- the “let’s do nothing”
- the “don’t date another academic”

Solution nr.2: Double hire

e.g. Dual Career
Network Germany

- Promising but ambiguous
 - What is *excellence* anyway?
 - the “Two Body Bonus”
 - needs university-level cooperation
 - impostor syndrome?
 - *Alternative*: visitor status for partner?



Further reading:
Love and the Two-Body Problem
by Valerie Jamieson
(on ScienceMag.org)

[http://www.sciencemag.org/
Careers/2003/03/
love-and-two-body-problem](http://www.sciencemag.org/Careers/2003/03/love-and-two-body-problem)

The non-solutions

- the “let’s do nothing”
- the “don’t date another academic”
- the “do whatever you want but make sure your personal life doesn’t affect your work” attitude

“Emancipation” of alternative lifestyles



“Emancipation” of alternative lifestyles

- *Is a long-distance relationship worse than a living-together relationship?*



“Emancipation” of alternative lifestyles

- *Is a long-distance relationship worse than a living-together relationship?*
 - Why?



“Emancipation” of alternative lifestyles

- *Is a long-distance relationship worse than a living-together relationship?*
 - Why?
 - the hegemony of the “nuclear family” style life



“Emancipation” of alternative lifestyles

- *Is a long-distance relationship worse than a living-together relationship?*
 - Why?
 - the hegemony of the “nuclear family” style life
 - Advantages!! *E.g. We don't get bored ;)*



“Emancipation” of alternative lifestyles

- *Is a long-distance relationship worse than a living-together relationship?*
 - Why?
 - the hegemony of the “nuclear family” style life
 - Advantages!! *E.g. We don't get bored ;)*
 - becoming a team via shared logistics



“Emancipation” of alternative lifestyles

- *Is a long-distance relationship worse than a living-together relationship?*
 - Why?
 - the hegemony of the “nuclear family” style life
 - Advantages!! *E.g. We don't get bored ;)*
 - becoming a team via shared logistics
 - different but equal ...outdated social norms | white privilege



“Emancipation” of alternative lifestyles

- *Is a long-distance relationship worse than a living-together relationship?*
 - Why?
 - the hegemony of the “nuclear family” style life
 - Advantages!! *E.g. We don't get bored ;)*
 - becoming a team via shared logistics
 - different but equal ...outdated social norms | white privilege
 - inclusion & diversity,
women's emancipation,
the queer two-body problem etc.





Further reading:
On the two body problem
by John Johnson
(on Women in Astronomy Blog)

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2013/02/figure-1-two-body-problem.html>

Broader systemic change:

Investing into trains in Europe. *Night trains!*

Further reading:

On the two body problem

by John Johnson

(on Women in Astronomy Blog)

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2013/02/figure-1-two-body-problem.html>

Broader systemic change:

Investing into trains in Europe. *Night trains!*

Environmental / sustainability considerations...

Further reading:

On the two body problem

by John Johnson

(on Women in Astronomy Blog)

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2013/02/figure-1-two-body-problem.html>

Broader systemic change:

Investing into trains in Europe. *Night trains!*

Environmental / sustainability considerations...

There's more than one way to do romantic relationships.

Further reading:

On the two body problem

by John Johnson

(on Women in Astronomy Blog)

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2013/02/figure-1-two-body-problem.html>

Broader systemic change:

Investing into trains in Europe. *Night trains!*

Environmental / sustainability considerations...

There's more than one way to do romantic relationships.

THANK YOU!

Let's discuss...

Further reading:

On the two body problem

by John Johnson

(on Women in Astronomy Blog)

<http://womeninastronomy.blogspot.com/2013/02/figure-1-two-body-problem.html>