

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Sonne (*1965) has been teaching the
He is married and lives in Dortmund with his wife and their three children Clara (*2001), Katharina (*2004) and Joseph (*2008).



Source:
private

The anti father father

In front of Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Sonne's office hangs a large bulletin board filled with numerous newspaper articles. None of them is more than a year old, and all of them address the work of Wolfgang Sonne and his team. The trained art historian is obviously very committed as chair of the history and theory of architecture. Therefore, I am very glad that he has taken the time to talk about private matters....

Not a father of the 19th century

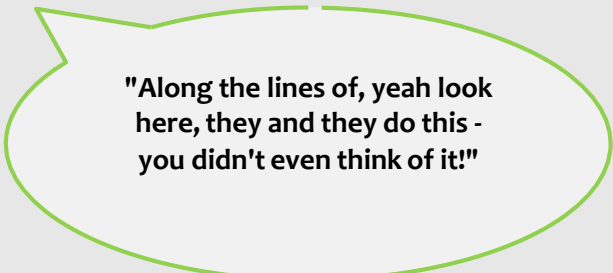
Wolfgang Sonne would currently define himself as the de facto breadwinner of the family; his choice from various types of fathers on offer is clear here. However, apart from the financial component, when it comes to e.g. es-
s, I have very little to report. "I get up in the morning and make breakfast for the kids. But otherwise I'm not allowed to cook - my wife does that better," he says with a laugh.

His wife, who is also an art historian, is currently working freelance on a book project, and during the week she mainly takes care of the children and the household. "With the children, my wife is the stricter one, the educator is then rather her. But we've learned that it takes two to do it and say the same thing." Since Professor Sonne spends a lot of time in the office on weekdays, he also takes care of shopping or helps out around the house, especially on weekends. "I'm not a 19th-century father who says hello in the morning and 'goodbye' in the evening. That's certainly not me."

On the contrary, he also tries to spend time with his children, for which he has strictly limited his working hours, for example. "Which wasn't the case before, when I also liked to work happily into the evening."

Parental leave was never an issue

However, taking parental leave was never a serious issue for him, as the family had moved several times in recent years and Wolfgang Sonne frequently took on new jobs. With a smile, he confesses: "My excuse at the first child is that in Switzerland, where we were still living at the time, there was no parental leave. In the UK, with the second child, it might have been possible, but I had just started a new job, and here with the third child it was similar, I had also started a job and thought to myself, you can't take half a year off right after half a year. That is, I never seriously considered it, which my wife is not always entirely happy about, even in retrospect."



"Along the lines of, yeah look here, they and they do this - you didn't even think of it!"

Advantages and disadvantages outweigh

Wolfgang Sonne admits that his wife's career has been delayed under these conditions, because she is

more stayed at home, could not develop as he did. But he doesn't see himself as career-fixated either. "Career in the sense

"I absolutely have to become something great" has never really had any meaning for me. Somehow I probably always assumed that I would become something decent. But in my studies, I didn't even think about what kind of profession I wanted to take up."


Only shortly before the end of his studies did he realize that he would like to continue working scientifically, and fortunately everything worked out in his favor. "But then it was important for me to be able to continue working in the subject, which means that the content has a high priority. But it's not the career that should take me to any position. That's where I've always been relatively naive."

Mr. Sonne also does not believe that the children have had any negative impact on his career. Although he has had less time since then, the time he does have is used and allocated much more effectively. And last but not least, there is also the other aspect:

"that having children makes you more socially integrated. This gives you a different kind of stability as a person, which also helps you in your work. That's more of a plus. I think the advantages and disadvantages balance each other out."

The 'worst' is over

The scientist particularly appreciates the new social contacts. All of the children in Scotland started kindergarten at the age of five or six months and thus always had relatively much contact with their peers. The eldest in Scotland went even another year at school. This has also always resulted in quick contacts for the parents.



"That has been a basic experience at all with the Children that you can go to extra-university circles gets immediate contact."

"Both in Glasgow and in Dortmund. A lot of contacts have actually been built up through the children and some friendships have also developed from this, with whom we now go on vacation because the children get along well." However, the two older ones - Clara and Katharina - now already have their own hobbies and circles of friends, where the father is gradually becoming superfluous. "So with the older one, there's no way I'm allowed to go along now," says Wolfgang Sonne, amused. He only takes his youngest, Joseph, to daycare himself in the morning.

In the afternoon, his wife picks him up there. The other girls are at school or even taking care of themselves.

So the worst is over: "As far as the organizational side is concerned and having to take care of things, that's getting easier and less. Puberty will come now, we don't know what will happen - we'll have to see, but basically it will be easier. I hope that something will change in the family when my wife returns to work. Then I'll see to it that I, too, get more involved in organizing the children."

The interview was conducted by Debora Rahma in ~~en~~ 2013.

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Sonne (*1965)



Source:
private

The update interview 2017

I meet Wolfgang Sonne - how appropriate! - on a sunny spring day in his office on the South Campus. Not only is the first really warm day celebrating its premiere today, but I'm also riding the H-Bahn for the first time. Exciting! The professor then tells me that his children are most likely to be enticed to visit his workplace by a ride on the H-Bahn - they now find his office boring. I, on the other hand, actually like the premises of the chair.

Everything as always

There are no major changes to report in his familiar division of labor, says Professor Sonne, leaning relaxed in his chair.

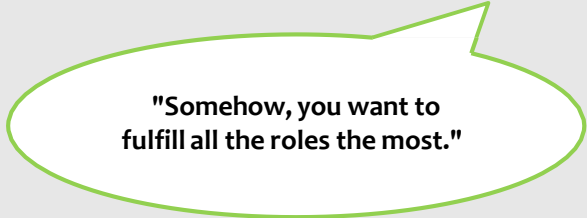
When he was interviewed in 2013, his wife was working from home on a book and doing most of the household chores. In 2017, she still works mostly from a home office, but now as a private lecturer.

The three children are now at an age when they need different levels of intensive care, he said. The couple's eldest daughter, Clara, will be 16 this year and "would say thank you" if

If they wanted to take care of her, Sonne laughs heartily and shakes his head. The middle daughter, Katharina, at 12 years old, already cooks her own lunch after school and is very independent, but is sometimes still happy that her mother is not far away in the home office. Son Joseph, the youngest child at 9, can be left alone for a few hours, but he is not yet really independent. For the youngest, it is especially important that his wife is available for the children. Sonne openly admits that his time with the children is mainly in the evenings and at weekends. That's why it's important to him not to schedule any appointments after 6 p.m. in the calendar. The family then comes first.

But not an anti- father

Asked about the father type he chose in 2013, Wolfgang Sonne is critical. At the time, he described himself as an anti-father type, as the opposite of the father of the 19th century, But the longer he thinks about it, the more skeptical he becomes. Actually, he is a pretty classic father type who works full time during the week, he smiles. The only thing that really separates him from a traditional role model is the way he organizes his evenings and weekends. He is a family man, he says, and in his free time he concentrates entirely on his children and his wife.



**"Somehow, you want to
fulfill all the roles the most."**

A traditional father would probably spend the week- end pursuing his hobbies instead of doing something with the children, laughs Sonne. But he doesn't really agree with any of the other father models that are thrown into the conversation as examples: at least one aspect of each role doesn't suit him. He shrugs his shoulders. Somehow, one would like to fulfill all roles, but that is not possible.

possible. For example, he is simply not an adventurous father. The most adventurous thing about being a father is by far playing soccer with his son, he laughs self-ironically.

Cuddling in the evening is part of being a father, but he personally finds it a bit strange to call himself a cuddly bear. If he were to mutate into a decision-maker, there would certainly be a small uproar at home. Amused, he pushes these considerations away.


More 'chutzpah' for parental leave

Wolfgang Sonne quickly comes up with an answer to the question of whether he would do anything differently if he were to become a father again: Take parenting time. In 2013, he reported: "Parental leave was never a serious issue". Obviously, he has definitely thought about this differently in recent years. He does not feel that he has missed out on anything with his children and has no regrets, he clarifies. In the event of a new start, however, he would stay at home at least and for at least a few months.

He recalls that at the time he became a father, there was no parental leave. In addition, when the first child was born, the family was in a the children were still abroad. When his youngest was born, they had just returned to Germany because he had accepted a professorship at the TU.

He thought at the time that the time was not right for parental leave, he adds almost apologetically. Today, he would perhaps decide differently. But he also sees positive role models: There are some professors who have gone on parental leave for some time directly after being appointed, he explains, visibly impressed. Probably you just have to take the

Develop "chutzpah" to push something like this through, he adds emphatically. Perhaps something like this should be demanded more as a matter of course. His words resonate with admiration.



"Parental leave was never a serious issue."

Childcare places as the be-all and end-all

In general, universities are family-friendly employers, emphasizes Sonne, and nowhere else are working hours as flexible as here. From his perspective, this is also true for the TU Dortmund in particular.

Besides the "high work pressure" and the "uncertain future prospects" for co-workers/ However, according to his observations, the main problem for female mid-level faculty is the lack of supervision.

"The fact that there is a daycare center where you can get a place quickly is the be-all and end-all," adds the professor. He knows this relevance from his own experience and is aware of the advantages of a universi

He also appreciates the daycare centers that were available during his stays in Switzerland as well as in Great Britain. He often hears from his colleagues that it can be quite difficult to get a place in a daycare center that is close to the university.

Perhaps the university should do more to support young academics in their family planning.

■ The interview was conducted by Stefanie Raible on 07.04.2017.