

FAMILY CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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EUROPEAN
PERSPECTIVES

EDITED BY

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Vida Česnuitytė • Detlev Lück • Eric D. Widmer
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Family Continuity and Change

Contemporary European Perspectives

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Preface

This edited collection, *Family Continuity and Change: Contemporary Perspectives and Findings on Family Lives in Europe*, is based on papers presented at the interim meeting ‘Family: Continuity and Change’, held by the European Sociological Association’s Research Network, ‘Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives’ (RN13) on 25–27 September 2014 in Vilnius (Lithuania). The editors selected the most promising papers that best responded to the book’s general purpose—that is, to give an extended and integrated picture of the family across Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The book provides readers with fresh sociological research on family formation and practices in the perspective of continuities and changes, both across generations and during individual life courses. Authors from nine countries (i.e., Finland, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) originally investigated family by developing and applying innovative theoretical and methodical approaches for a deeper comprehension of European family lives. They looked for answers to questions, including: How much continuity do we observe in family life? Where do we observe changes? How can continuity and change be identified and

measured? How can the observed continuity and change in family life be explained on a cross-national, national, social group, or individual level?

The chapters were chosen using a double selection process—one for conference participation and one for book contribution. The book's editors express special gratitude to Dainius Bernotas, Anna-Maija Castrén, Esther Dermott, Francesco Giudici, Doris Hanappi, Dirk Hofäcker, Domantas Jasilionis, Kaisa Kuurne, Miranda Lubbers, Clementine Rossier, Heiko Rueger, Marlène Sapin, Rossana Trifiletti, and Gil Viry for valuable notes that facilitated the selection of high-quality contributions from leading family researchers in Europe and significantly improved the quality of the book's content.

The main advantages of the book are threefold: (1) its innovative approach to family research, (2) its international dimension in terms of countries represented and compared in the empirical analyses, and (3) the novelty of its findings. We hope that this edited collection will be interesting reading for scholars, teachers, students, professionals, and others who are interested in scientific knowledge on family.

Vilnius, Lithuania
Wiesbaden, Germany
Geneva, Switzerland

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Detlev Lück
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1

Introduction

Vida Česnuitytė, Eric D. Widmer, and Detlev Lück

Most cited sociological works on family in the last two decades insist that dramatic changes in structures and relationships of families have occurred since the late 1960s. Some authors interpret those changes in very pessimistic ways, stressing that families have diversified so much that the family as an institution – the one basic cell of society with constant structures and universal functions – has disappeared, and with it,

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the very meaning of the concept of family (Beck 1986; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Popenoe 1993). Others express strong beliefs that the changes experienced by families in Europe during the last decades have enabled individuals to experience positive individualism within the family realm, with an emphasis on gender equality and individual autonomy. Pure relationships and confluent love (Giddens 1992) are said to have fully transformed the ways in which individuals shape their family life. Interestingly, those general views about the faith of the family came for the most part from scholars positioned outside the field of family sociology. For a number of years, sociologists doing empirical work on family have been critical of those general interpretations of the consequences of individualization for family life.

Although many family sociologists came to the conclusion that it was necessary to go beyond gross generalizations about the fate of 'the' family in modernity, much of their efforts were constrained within national borders, making family sociology the victim of methodological nationalism. Indeed, for a long time, there was a British family sociology, a French family sociology, a German family sociology, a Scandinavian family sociology, and so on, all with their specific issues and their preferred publishing outlets. With the creation of the European Union (EU), and its resolve to bring the social policy models of its state members and the demographic behaviours of their people closer together, the comparability of family models across Europe is on the agenda. The task of bringing together ideas of family sociologists from various European countries has been taken over by the research network on families and intimate lives of the European Sociological Association.

The goal of this book is to present a variety of empirical research on family change and continuity within the European space, with respect to three dimensions: family understanding or theorizing, family transitions across the individual life course, and family practices. Researchers from nine European countries investigate families, their conceptualization, transitions, and practices between persisting needs and flowing circumstances, between holding on to traditional routines and adapting to a fast-changing socioeconomic environment, and between individual agency and social constraints.

The contributors of the chapters in Part I, Family Understandings, propose theoretical and methodological approaches that extend the comprehension of family continuity and change. In Chapter 2, Brannen discusses particularities of family analysis across historical time and in individual life course, and how both appear in the narratives. Chapter 3 by Widmer and Ganjour proposes the use of an innovative methodological approach and qualitative comparative analysis to understand better what type of macrosociological conditions enable the family to remain salient in a national context.

Meanwhile, Lück, Diabaté, and Ruckdeschel in Chapter 4 identify a deficit of theoretical explanations for understanding why people stick with rather conservative family practices by stressing the importance of framing mechanisms or social representations associated with family life. They suggest the concept of 'leitbilder' as an updated cultural–theoretical approach for understanding how existing behavioural patterns persist, and why family lives adjust to new conditions less completely and more slowly than various theories predict. The proposed concept assumes that individuals have internalized guiding models, such as the 'normal' composition of a family, a 'typical' number of children, the 'perfect' timing for having children, or the 'right' way to distribute paid and unpaid work within the framework of a couple. Chapter 5 by Mazzucchelli, Rossi, and Bosoni comes back to the classical issue of whether the family is an institution by simply asking the question of respondents living in Italy, then relating their answers to a series of social characteristics.

The chapters in Part II, concentrate on continuity and change across the life trajectories of individuals. Chapter 6 by Česnuitytė focuses on the influence of personal networks on family formation processes in Lithuania. The author hypothesizes that formation behaviours are shaped not so much by inner motives but predominantly by social norms, which implies a continuity of family formation behaviours despite the decreasing importance of marriage. In a similar way, Chapter 7 by Moscatelli and Bramanti explores the influences of social networks on family-building among young Italian couples. The authors focus on the role of networks for the well-being of individuals and families and for value transmission in young couples' life projects.

An analysis of family membership and relationships in post-separation situations in Finland was carried out and is described by Castrén in Chapter 8. The analysis is based on in-depth interviews, and it focuses on family belonging and the emotional closeness of family members after a divorce or a separation. Ramos, Gouveia, and Wall, in Chapter 9, study the interrelations that exist between co-residence trajectories and personal networks. The authors hypothesize that close relationships are shaped by the articulation of both old and new principles of relational proximity such as kinship primacy, generational proximity, affinity criteria, and co-residence history. In Chapter 10, the final one of the Part II, Aeby and colleagues comparatively investigate the same issue in three countries: Switzerland, Portugal, and Lithuania. They show that the prominence of family ties in personal networks varies according to life stages, life transitions, and life events. Life experiences, such as growing up in a single parent family, leaving the parental home, moving in with a new partner, becoming a parent, and divorcing, shape the composition of personal networks. Overall, in all the countries considered, life transitions are shaped by a variety of demographic and economic constraints that make the experiences of individuals highly comparable across Europe.

Finally, Part III, Family Practices, focuses on what family members do and how family is 'done'. It describes what family life is currently about in various national contexts. In Chapter 11, Meil, Romero-Balsas, and Rogero-García proceed with the question on the interaction of social policy with parenting, focusing on parental leave in Spain. It provides an interesting account about the impact of changes in policy on childcare and the careers of men and women in a Southern European country. Chapter 12 by Smyth draws on interview material with 40 middle-class mothers across two research sites in the United Kingdom, comparing results with the United States. The chapter develops a typology of maternal role performance with the diversity of motives associated with motherhood. Chapter 13 by Brandth focuses on fathering practices and their changes between two generations among Norwegian farmers. Overall, this part reveals that there is currently abundant diversity in family practices but also much continuity between the present and the past and across national contexts. Chapter 14, the Conclusion, summarizes the changes and continuities in European family lives.

Based on original empirical works, this book presents manifold views on a variety of family issues within national contexts throughout Europe. A relational perspective is present in all contributions, although in diverse shades. The hope is that the chapters here will provide readers with the feeling that family sociology has achieved significant commonalities across national borders in Europe, and that it will facilitate understanding of complex family realities away from highly affirmative statements lacking empirical evidence about the historical faith of 'THE' family.

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Part I

Family Understandings

2

Approaches to the Study of Family Life: Practices, Context, and Narrative

Julia Brannen

The focus of this book is on the study of change and continuity in families, issues that can be studied from many different perspectives, which in turn raise a variety of methodological challenges. Sometimes the emphasis of family life studies is at the microlevel: on the habitual and every day – the quotidian aspects of daily life. A particular challenge therefore is to understand how family practices change or stay the same. In other studies, or indeed in the same study, we also may need to make sense of microlevel contemporaneous data about family lives in the context of the specific times and places to which they refer. It is particularly important, for example, to analyze what may be assumed to be timeless social transitions – that is, the transition of young people from financial and emotional dependency on their families to greater independence – in relation to the opportunity structures available at a particular time and in relation to the social and geographical locations of young people and their families.

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The point here is to take into account how the wider social and historical context itself changes as well as the practices of the actors whose lives we study. Further, given that our understanding of family life and the ways it changes (and stays the same) are based to some considerable extent on our soliciting informants' accounts, it is important to interrogate these accounts in ways that address the gap between what people do and what people say they do, in particular by bringing into our analysis a sensitivity to how narratives of the past are shaped by present perspectives. For descriptions of past events are infused with hindsight and by current events and perspectives.

This chapter focuses on the challenges that the study of changes and continuities in family lives pose by concentrating on three particular approaches. First, it discusses social practice perspectives that address the habitual or taken for granted practices that constitute the everyday. Second, it suggests the importance of historicizing family lives, in particular setting them in the contexts in which lives unfold and to which informants may not refer but are necessary for analysts to bring to bear in sociological interpretations. These two approaches in turn suggest that as researchers we need to interrogate the stories that people tell about personal and family change 'in order to be able to disentangle different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other, and to understand more about individual and social change' (Squire et al. 2013: 2). The third approach therefore involves adopting a narrative perspective. Together it is suggested that these approaches help to expand the study of family change. The chapter also illustrates how in several empirical studies these approaches have been applied in practice, in particular the research methods adopted.

Habitual and Quotidian Aspects of Family Life: Social Practice Theory

Practice theory has come to the fore in the social sciences in recent years to examine the habitual aspects of human behaviour that are not easily open to reflexive engagement. The approach is marked by recognition of the taken-for-grantedness of many everyday practices, 'practices that

are often hidden from view; part of an everyday and mundane world frequently so taken for granted that their meaning becomes lost' (Punch et al. 2010: 227). Thus, the approach is particularly useful to family researchers. There are several methods to the study of practices, the most relevant of which is Morgan's approach (2011) that has suggested that family life is what people 'do' (Morgan 1996) with reference to other family members, in contrast to an emphasis on what families 'are'. As Morgan (2011) argues, family practices can be strongly or weakly bound so that, in the latter case, nonrelated persons may be treated as part of the family; family practices also may constitute concentrated and closely linked sets of practices or they may be diffuse – that is, are carried out individually and with small, short-lived configurations of family members.

There is also the conceptualization of practices employed and developed by Reckwitz (2002) and Shove et al. (2012) in which they rather than individuals and institutions are the primary units of enquiry, with the concern here being to understand how practices combine and change. This theory of practice is an ontological shift in which the elements are 'qualities of a practice in which the single individual participates, not qualities of the individual' (Reckwitz 2002: 250). In this posthumanist inflection people are reframed as 'carriers' of practices (Reckwitz 2002). This approach focuses on the smaller constitutive elements (e.g., cooking, eating meals, and washing up) and the sequencing of and the linkage between these different practices. Shove et al. (2012) see practices as comprised of three elements: *competency*, *materials*, and *meaning*.

Competency refers to skills and know-how; materiality encompasses the broad array of objects that are involved in or comprise a practice; and meaning refers to ideas, aspirations, norms, and symbolic meanings surrounding a practice (Shove et al. 2012: 14). Practices have historical trajectories that provide for the study of social change through generating insight into how particular practices recruit and lose practitioners. Shove et al. argue that 'practices emerge, persist, shift and disappear when *connections* between elements of [competency, materials and meanings] are made, sustained or broken' (2012: 14–15, emphasis in original).

Many family practices are interrelated. I will take as an example the concept of food practices because they constitute a central aspect of everyday family life. In the case of cooking a family meal, a parent may

engage in a number of other practices (e.g., keeping an eye on children, monitoring their games or TV watching). In this way food practices can be seen as part of the performance of parenthood. As constitutive of parenting, they have the three elements as suggested by the practice theory set out by Shove et al. (2012). With regard to eating practices, parents inculcate in their children competencies, notably teaching them how to eat (e.g., table manners and so forth). They teach them the values of conviviality associated with meal times and impart nutritional knowledge. Parents also determine a great deal of the materiality of what children eat. Typically, mothers decide which specific foods to buy and prepare. Parents convey food meanings symbolically (e.g., through suggesting to children notions of the ‘goodness’ and ‘badness’ of particular foods).

As was found in our studies of food practices, they are difficult to examine (Knight et al. 2015). First of all, this is because many food practices are mundane; they are embodied and embedded in everyday routines and relations and therefore tend to be taken for granted and not easily open to reflection (Knight et al. 2015). Thus, doubt about people’s ability to report behaviours has led to some questioning of the point of asking people why they do what they do (DeVault 1991). Second, food practices are moral; they are infused with issues of status and shame. Respondents may feel judged or ashamed or, for other reasons, they often may be reluctant to admit to behaviours or attitudes. Third, family food practices take place in the ‘private’ domain and are gendered – that is, reflect the continuing pattern of women’s responsibility for food work (e.g., see O’Connell and Brannen 2016). In this context, it has been argued that the discourse available to talk about food matters is muted and women’s food work is rendered invisible (DeVault 1991).

To understand family food practices a variety of methods are called for. Indeed, given the mundane, moral, and muted character of food, it may be preferable to use more than one method. Also, given that practice theory posits a link between structure and agency (i.e., the structural contexts that shape practices and the agency of the actors that perform them), it is desirable to employ methods that produce both intensive and extensive data. A mixed or multimethod research design may be called for. For example, we may use large-scale diary data that identifies which foods are eaten and how much per day (e.g., Townsend 1970) or diaries that quantify the time devoted to various activities (Gershuny 2001).

Diary data (e.g., the British rolling food survey, National Diet and Nutrition Survey) allow analyses of which foods children eat at particular ages during particular life stages. This survey offers one way of examining how the food practices of children change over time. Another way in which researchers can study food practices is by observation and use of devices to record behaviour. For example, Wendy Wills et al. (2015) investigated how kitchen practices influenced food safety and hygiene in the home. Using practice theory, they showed that what people did in the kitchen constituted a flow or sequence of 'small events' or routines that the interviews' respondents did not separately identify. The authors gave the example of cleaning practices that emerged as part of, or linked to, other practices that were not necessarily described by respondents as making an object or particular habit 'safe' or 'hygienic'.

Another source of data to examine food practices is historical archival material. Such data typically are not collected for the purposes of studying food. Here I provide an example from a recent methodological study conducted with my colleagues using the British Mass Observation (MO) Archive (see Knight et al. 2015, for the study's full description). Part of the MO Archive consists of diaries written by ordinary men and women between 1939 and the early 1950s (about 500). The MO diary data covered whichever aspects of people's lives the MO contributors chose to write about. In this project we studied family food practices based on a selection of diaries written in 1951 when rationing was still in force in Britain after World War II.

We found that food cropped up fairly frequently in the *women's* diary narratives of their everyday lives but often only in passing. Given the study's focus on the benefits and disadvantages of the data sources used, one of our conclusions was that diary writing is, like talk, limited by convention; writers may self-censor, consciously or unconsciously, seeking to represent a particular version of events or themselves. Some diarists certainly saw the MO diary as a place to reveal secrets and say things about their practices that were 'never mentioned to a soul', as one woman said, suggesting a certain sense of freedom from the pressure to meet social norms. Diaries, we suggest are methodologically useful in addressing what people do (practices), potentially avoiding some of the pitfalls of socially desirable responses that can be given in response to direct questioning in interviews.

Because of the limited material in the diaries, however, we also considered it important to contextualize it in a number of ways, including reading other accounts (e.g., news film footage of the period), as well as the campaigns launched by the Conservative Party against rationing as it sought to regain power from the Labour Government that had brought about the post-World War II reconstruction of Britain. We also supplemented the data with contemporaneous photographs of post-war Britain from other public archives and drew on other MO data – for example, menus from the period and a structured survey of working-class women’s time use (Mass Observation Bulletin 1951). The positioning of the researcher as an ‘outsider’ also can reveal the ‘taken for granted’ and be as much a ‘resource for listening’ as for a shared understanding (Brannen 1988). In this study we were outsiders in terms of not having lived through the early post-war period in Britain and therefore had not been responsible for the data collection.

As a result of the limitations of relying on one method or data source in the study of taken for granted aspects of family life, we have, as in other family studies, adopted a mixed method research design (Brannen and O’Connell 2015). In a study of working families and the ways in which food fit into their lives (O’Connell and Brannen 2016), however, we employed extensive data from a national survey and qualitative interviews drawn from a subsample of the survey. We sought in the later qualitative phase of the study (the survey was carried out by a survey organization) to limit the risk of a social desirability bias with the parents – for example, through using open-ended questions, sensitively worded questions, and deliberately loaded questions implying certain behaviours are commonplace, as well as self-completion formats. We also carried out interviews with the children (aged 2–14) in the families. In addition, we employed other methods with the children, including visual methods and photo elicitation techniques, in which children took photos of situations related to food consumption and were invited to talk about the photos in both the interviews (O’Connell 2013).

To examine changing practices in families, the fieldwork took place at two time points with a gap of two years. One insight into family change at a microlevel offered by the study concerned the scheduling of mealtimes, in particular the practice of families eating together (Brannen and

O'Connell 2016). From a practice theory perspective, it was clear that participation in 'family meals' – that is, who took part in the practice and its timing – was linked to other practices that related to parents' work schedules and to children's age and lives more generally, in particular children's extracurricular activities.

We saw, for example, how the trajectories of meal practices (i.e., the composition of meals and their scheduling) changed according to children's competencies and food tastes. As young children grew older, they began to eat with their parents and participate in the same meal. They also began to extend the range of foods they ate. The trajectory of the family meal also changed as the significance attached to its meaning changed. Parents who, when they were first interviewed, clearly subscribed to the norm of 'the whole family eating together' accommodated to the reality of not being able to eat together every night of the working week on account of the practical obstacles. Nevertheless, by still abiding with the practice on occasion, they clung to the norm.

Family Lives in an Historical and Generational Context

The second approach concerns adopting an historical contextual approach to the study of changing family lives. For some sociologists historical context where it figures into their work is often short term or taken for granted. In other sociological writing, history is referred to as grand epochs (e.g., The Modern Age or Postmodernity). Such sociological vocabularies are nonspecific and capture vast swathes of social change – with the result that they typically have rather short shelf lives and tend to be replaced by new vocabularies (Nilsen and Brannen 2014). However, families belong to historical generations. C. Wright Mills, a key exponent for making history central to sociology, gave three main reasons for doing so. The first concerns the importance of comparing diverse historical varieties of society (Mills 1980 [1967, 1959]). The second concerns the need to look beyond the short term and therefore the importance of understanding social change. The third reason is the need to avoid parochialism and provincialism. An historical perspective requires asking why some phenom-

ena have persisted, and what are the conditions that made this happen? Equally it requires looking for the conditions that have led to change or the disruption of a past practice or structure.

Historical generation has been a key concept in understanding social change. Karl Mannheim defined generations as ‘[i]ndividuals who belong to the same generation, who share the same year of birth, are endowed, to that extent, with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process’ (Mannheim 1952 [1928]: 290). According to Mannheim, a generational ‘unit’ is formed when peers are exposed not only to the same phenomenon but also when they respond in the same way as a collective. Some historical generations lack a clear generational identity because of being sandwiched between generations that have a strong identification (e.g., the Baby Boomers and the War generation). Such sandwich generations are therefore termed according to Edmunds and Turner (2002) ‘passive’ generations.

A focus on families as generational groups also is important because family members were born into and grew up at particular historical times and places. At the same time, they also are integrated in a cross-generational succession and relationship. A family intergenerational focus alerts us to what is transmitted across generations over time and the life course covering a variety of phenomena including assets, values and aspirations, political beliefs, social status, and so forth. This focus therefore allows us to understand both change and continuity. Transmission depends on the resources that particular historical generations have acquired at particular periods – for example, cultural capital such as education and assets (e.g., state pensions and home ownership).

Thus, on the one hand, solidarity between generations may be undermined when members of the younger generation in a society experience a diminishing welfare state potentially leading to intergenerational conflict. Alternatively, intergenerational solidarity may be strengthened as younger generations receive substantial material support and services from older better-off generations. For example, the study of social inequality suggests that for those at the bottom of the wealth and income pyramid there is little trickledown effect from older to younger generations (Hills 2014). In contrast, at the top of the income and wealth pyramid, assets cascade down the generational hierarchy.

In adopting an intergenerational lens at the family level, it is necessary also to analyze how social class, ethnicity, and gender play out in particular historical eras. Furthermore, an intergenerational, historical lens shows the nature of family processes – that is, the dynamism and openness of transmission in families and the ways in which what is passed only becomes a transmission when it is received (Bertaux-Wiame 2005 [1993]). It shows how younger generations make their own mark on what is passed on so that in some instances what the younger generation may perceive as change may have more to do with the interpretation they place on their situations. For example, a younger generation may claim their material success in adulthood as being largely because of their own efforts while playing down some the advantages passed on to them from parents and / or the state (Brannen et al. 2004).

The study of family life through an historical lens suggests a number of methodological strategies, either singly or in combination. Cohort studies are common ways of studying national samples both longitudinally and at particular moments in historical time. Their advantages include the fact that their samples are further selected on the basis that they have experienced the same life course events in the same period (e.g., date of birth, or becoming a parent). The cohort's family life trajectory may be mapped over time and in relation to historical periods.

A second methodological approach is a life history method defined by Elder as a lifetime chronology of events and activities that typically and variably combine data records on education, work life, family, and residence (Elder 1985). The methods commonly used to examine life histories involve retrospective interviews that may take the quantitative form of event histories of large samples, or they may have a qualitative character consisting of a smaller number of biographical cases. The latter is exemplified in the oral history approach (Bornat 2008), and the biographic – narrative approach that focuses not only on events but also on the narrative interpretations of life stories (Wengraf 2000).

A third method is an intergenerational family approach. Here we may draw on various types of methods and research designs. For example, it is possible to take a subsample from a cohort study and to track and study members of the younger and older generations relative to the cohort members. The type of method used will depend on a number of factors:

the number of members of the intergenerational chain selected and available, the project's resources, and the nature of the research question. The most commonly adopted method is a retrospective interview with a small number of intergenerational chains selected purposively to 'represent' different types of families specified according to birth cohort (i.e., one generation), gender, ethnic origin, and social class (e.g., see Brannen et al. 2004; Brannen 2015).

Now I am going to illustrate how historical context was taken into account by drawing on a study of fatherhood across three generations (Brannen 2015). We included Irish origin migrants, white British men, and Polish migrants because migrants have been studied very little from an intergenerational family perspective. The study included 30 chains of grandfathers, fathers, and sons. Using a biographic narrative – interpretative method, we asked the men to tell us their life stories; we followed these up with unstructured narrative questions, and then used a schedule of semistructured questions (Wengraf 2000). In the initial analysis we separated the life history or chronology of transitions and events in informants' lives from their life stories, thus mapping a life history for each individual. We then compared these life histories across each of the generations and across the three ethnic groups looking for similarities and differences at the same points in the life course. We next contextualized these analyses in the historical literature and statistical sources about the particular ethnic groups. In the subsequent analyses we reintegrated the life histories with the interpretive material (see discussed in the third approach in the following section).

Harry, an Irish migrant grandfather, and his son serve as an example of the comparative life history analysis, demonstrating how biographies are shaped by the societies and times in which they grew up (Brannen 2015; Brannen et al. 2016). Harry was born in Ireland in 1946, the third of four children. When he was six years old his father's business folded. This was a time of considerable economic depression and mass migration from Ireland. In 1952 Harry's father went to England to find work. He became a carpenter in the construction industry. In 1954 when Harry was eight, his mother and siblings went to join the father in London leaving Harry with his widowed maternal grandmother who ran the family farm. Harry helped on the farm but also

attended school. When he was 14, his granny sold up and left Ireland, and Harry went to live with his parents in England.

Because the compulsory school age in England was higher than in Ireland at that time he had to attend school. He was sent to the local secondary school that offered no opportunities to do the academic examination taken at the end of upper-secondary schooling. Then this exam could be taken only by pupils who had attended selective state secondary schools and who had passed the state entrance examination to get into these schools. However, Harry was keen to progress in education, and he gained entry to a local Further Education college. At age 19 after much perseverance he won a place at university and with it a maintenance grant (available at the time from local authorities). The grant covered all his outgoings, not only the small fees (university fees are now extremely high in Britain). Within a year Harry, aged 22–23 in 1968–1969, graduated, became a teacher, married, and was a father with a young son.

Looking at Harry's biography we can see how he bucks the trend of the other Irish male migrants around this time. First, the timing of Harry's arrival in London was an accident of history, coming as he did when he was just young enough to be obligated by law to attend school. Moreover, as a working-class boy in Britain, he was unusual in wanting to further his education, an aspiration he explained in terms of coming from a 'brainy family' – even though none of his family had been to university. But Harry was fortunate. Although his family lacked the resources to support him, in the 1960s there were still state-funded grants and state-funded further education courses that were free of charge. As a new science graduate, Harry found teaching jobs easily in Britain's labour market of the 1970s. Indeed, he did a Master's degree and rose quickly in the teaching profession.

On the other hand, Harry was subject to some of the considerable discrimination to which the Irish in Britain at that time were exposed and to which he referred. As Harry said, he was okay but only as long as he stayed teaching in the state sector and in the inner cities. He recalled how he once applied to teach in a private school in the 1980s, the time of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) bombing campaigns that took place on both the British mainland and in Northern Ireland (i.e., part of the UK). He noted: '*...but I could sense that I was a little bit almost like a black man*

there you know. I could sense there was definitely – these were the governors, these were blue Tories—bloke called (Irish name), bloody hell, you know' (Harry's interview). Looking back, he reflected that his teaching career was cut off at the school deputy head level because of his Irish accent and Irish surname.

It also was important in the analysis of these data to take account of the following historical aspects of Irish society at the time (i.e., the mid-twentieth century) when Harry and other Irishmen migrated. One historical fact concerned the very high celibacy rate (late marriage and never married) among Irishmen. This meant that those who married – for example, Harry's father was more fortunate than his unmarried counterparts in Britain in being able to earn enough money to marry and support a family. A second contextual factor was the lack of educational opportunities in Ireland at that time. Secondary education was only for the small minority able to pay; the great majority left school at 14 with no qualifications, and thus they came to Britain with few or no skills.

A third factor was that Ireland was recovering from a civil war and had relatively recently gained its independence from Britain. The state of the Irish economy was dire with limited employment opportunities mainly limited to agriculture, a situation that fuelled the heavy migration flow. Fourth, on their arrival in the UK, Irish male migrants went into the poorly regulated construction industry that depended on Irish labour during the post-war years of Britain's reconstruction. Most Irishmen spent their whole lives in the industry. Finally, as the main migrant group until the middle of the twentieth century, the Irish were severely discriminated against.

Contrast Harry's biography with that of his first son, Kyle, born in 1969 in Britain. Kyle's transition to adulthood was straightforward and scheduled differently – a series of life course transitions that were sequentially ordered over a longer period compared with the life course of his father. Moreover, it corresponded to the normative trajectory of middle-class educationally successful British young people. Kyle attended an all-boys Roman Catholic state school between the ages 11 and 18 where he gained excellent examination results at the end of upper-secondary schooling. He won a place at a medical school to train as a doctor. Following this standard pathway into higher education, he waited several

years after qualifying as a doctor before getting married at 30. In contrast to his father who not unusual for the 1960s got married, had a child, graduated, and started his first job all within a year, Kyle and his wife, like many young couples in the 2000s deferred marriage, the purchase of a house, and parenthood.

The two men's trajectories suggest the importance of the structures of opportunities within each historical period. Harry's trajectory was more heavily constrained by class and ethnicity. The effects of discrimination, while not fatal for his career, were however far-reaching. Harry's and Kyle's stories also suggest continuity – that is, how cultural capital was transmitted and reproduced across generations as father and son both pursued upwardly mobile trajectories. The resources available to each of them, however, were very different. Harry drew on his own internal resources to sustain himself, in particular a strong belief in his genetic inheritance. The first to go to university in his family, this was made possible by the British welfare state still in place during the 1960s. By contrast in the 1990s, his son depended on the cultural and material capital of his middle-class parents and took his occupational success somewhat for granted compared with his father.

Narrative Analysis of Family Lives

In much research about family life the data produced have a narrative or storied character. People embark on storytelling when they have 'stories to tell', stories that relate to family and personal change (Brannen 2013). Research that includes family members across generations tells us about the passing on, breaching, and transformation of social practices in families.

Typically, storytelling is motivated through interview methods. But however expert the interviewer or comprehensive the questions we nonetheless are reliant as researchers on what interviewees choose to relate. This is why it is important to pay attention not only to what respondents tell us but also to what they do not tell us, and the ways in which they recount their stories. This is a crucial part of the process of analyzing such data, for data are produced in context. They depend on the

life course phase to which respondents refer. They are shaped by the historical contexts in which respondents' lives unfold. Most important, they are shaped by the current situations in which they find themselves. Consequently, respondents construct the past with hindsight, taking into account how they think in the present. Finally, data are produced in the context of the research encounter and the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee.

As Reissman suggests, narrative analysis refers to a family of methods for interpreting texts that have in common a storied form (2008: 11). As Phoenix (2013, quoted in Bamberg 2006) suggests, many data take the form of 'small stories' told en passant that relate to everyday life and encounters with others. In the study of family lives, it is important therefore to pay attention to the kind of stories recounted and the ways they are told since these aspects of the data are integral to making sense of their meaning. Yet, at the same time, we have to be aware that all interpretation is partial, provisional, and anchored on shifting ground (Andrews 2013).

A story situates the self in particular ways some of which may be unintended or unconscious. In that sense what the narrator is saying is not so much consciously hidden but that needs decrease in the process of analysis (Josselson 2004). This does not mean that as researchers we should impose external interpretations on a story. Rather, it is about examining the whole interview – the jigsaw of material that the interviewee presents – paying attention to how it is presented and the sort of story the interviewee is seeking to tell. It also means paying attention to the silences in the account, some of which may have to do with the taken for granted historical and structural context of the period to which the story relates (Brannen 2013). We need to be attentive to the struggle in which a narrator is engaged in deciding what to relate and what not to relate. Moreover, how a story unfolds is a performance and is accomplished with audiences in mind (Reissman 2008) and in the presence of, and in collaboration with, an interviewer. Storytelling is a show that involves performing to and for audiences. The markers that go with speaking in a narrative voice include rhetorical devices used to persuade an audience; for example, direct quotations of speech as if the characters in the past were on a stage and recounting significant anecdotes.

Narrative analysis involves noticing what *motivates* research participants to tell a story and how they *represent* their identities through dialogue. It means being attentive to the *kind of story* they are telling; for example: Is it a personal story? Is it a story of survival, success, or redemption? It means looking for the *moral messages*. For narratives have a normative aspect; the stories people tell act as resources by which they set up a moral worldview and affirm their position in relation to that view. Yet, narrators do not discover the rules of narrative for themselves; they follow some kind of model suited to their aims – albeit, interviewees are not necessarily aware of the narrative frames they are using.

The Irish migrant fathers came to Britain during the 1950s and 1960s as young single men; at the time of the interviews they were in their 60s and 70s. At interview the men looked back over more than 50 years in the UK at a later point in the life course. Typically, they positioned themselves as survivors and in some cases as heroes in their own stories, as having struggled as migrants more or less successfully to overcome the obstacles in their paths. It is vital therefore to remember that the story was narrated from the vantage *point of present time*. Typical stories that the Irish told suggest a strong attachment to hard work, pride in never being unemployed (most never left the construction industry), pride in marriage given that many Irish of their generation did not marry, and pride in becoming a homeowner; many bought their council houses at a time – in 1980s Britain – when jobs in construction made it difficult to get a mortgage.

Above all the Irish migrant grandfathers expressed satisfaction in their children, many of whom as adults were upwardly mobile. Indeed, the UK Censuses shows that upward mobility among the second-generation Irish was greater compared with that of their white British working-class counterparts (Brannen et al. 2016). As fathers in the 1960s, the Irishmen regarded fatherhood as synonymous with being a good breadwinner and with the role model of being a hard worker. This latter quality they claimed to have inherited from their fathers, many of whom struggled to make a subsistence living in Ireland in the first half of the twentieth century – a very troubled time.

Although the interview approach we employed offered informants the opportunity to tell a life story, not all took up the offer. Indeed, the

way informants *began* their narratives was very significant. Some, but not all, informants quickly indicated in their opening words that they had a story to tell. Thus, storytelling was prefaced by the *interviewee* deciding to adopt the narrative format. Where this was the case, the interviewer acted as a prompt or catalyst. It has been argued that a life story with the markers of a narrative contains the experience of *a rupture or turning point*. As Martine Burgos wrote in the 1980s, following Paul Ricoeur (1992), the narrator is typically seeking to make ‘a coherent entity out of heterogeneous and often conflicting ideological positions, experiences, feelings, and events which create some kind of disjunction in the life’ (Burgos 1989). In that sense the narrator through the story is trying to ‘transcend’ the rupture and to make sense of it herself.

To illustrate the value of the life story and narrative approach in understanding social change and in generating analytic insights, next I refer to interviews with another Irish grandfather, Connor, and his son Sean; this is taken from the study of fathers across family generations referred to previously (Brannen 2014). As with all informants, Connor began his life story by referring to his family of origin; in Connor’s case how he came to lose both parents at a very young age. In the way both Connor and his son narrate their stories we can see how the self is constructed not only out of historical and biographical resources but also how they are performed in the context of the interview itself, as well as how these stories reveal both change and continuity between father and son.

Father and son are both exemplary raconteurs. They demonstrate how storytelling – that paramount feature of Irish literary and oral tradition – can live on in a family. Moreover, their opening narratives presage or prefigure what is to follow. Connor’s story is an emblematic heroic story about surviving an unhappy Irish childhood, the stuff of Irish fiction. Connor sets the scene for a number of denouements, beginning with a series of misfortunes as a child leading to a climax of adversity. From a current vantage point while recounting this adversity he also seems to minimize it, claiming it was not possible at so young an age to ‘miss’ his dead parents and a lack of knowledge for ‘years and years’ about the final tragedy that he recounted without emotion. This suggests that Connor has a further story to tell in which his fortunes change and he was able to turn his life around, which indeed he did.

And the dad [his dad] went to America and then came back from America ... – he was a plasterer. And then uh, what happened, they must have had me then like you know, cos I was the seventh son. ... I'm the last of them by the way. But anyway, father and mother died when I was only two, ... And the mother said like you know 'I won't be dead a year, and he'll be behind me' like you know. Which he was. ... Well anyway ... [pause] I didn't know them like you know what I mean, so I don't [pause] in fairness to everybody else like – I didn't miss my mum and dad because I didn't know them. So how can you miss your mum and dad, you know. ... After the father and mother died they took me away and put me into a hospital because they had to examine me and all that so that I hadn't got the TB, you know tuberculosis... It was rampant in those years, the 1930s. Anyway I didn't have it. ... But you know when you're a baby everybody likes to pick you up, don't they? ... **Well I'm getting to the story**, but everybody likes to pick you up. Well I didn't know this till years and years and years after – that what happened to me was [pause] one of the nurses picked me up and let me fall. ... Yeah, let me fall and broke my back. (From interview with Connor)

Just as Connor's opening narrative was a portent of what was to come later in the interview, so his son's story began with a similarly arresting opening that resonated throughout his interview. Sean began with his dramatic entry into the world. He then turned to his childhood during 1970s London; that is, growing up during a period of slum clearance when a new London was beginning to emerge. He recalled his childhood as 'an extended playground'. It was in a later reading of this interview that the beginning of the narrative struck me forcibly. As I read on, I came to see that the way Sean set the opening scene of his life story was a metaphor and metonym for his orientation towards life to which he returned later in the interview when talking about adulthood.

... Apparently the [pause] it was a funny old birth by all accounts from what my mum says. She said that the ambulance were waiting. And... [pause] what we had behind us was [pause] it was a derelict factory. So and that became [pause] that was **our playground for when I was growing up**. It was just a complete [pause] it was like a bomb site ... all the houses in the area were all being [pause] you know the council were taking them and

to be rebuilt. ... Then that became [pause]... it became **an extended playground** – ...I wouldn't let my kids go near them now. (From interview with Sean)

The son rejected his father's transmission of a strong work ethic that epitomized his father. Born in 1970, Sean, the youngest of Connor's three children, grew disinterested in school and failed the examinations taken at 16. At 14 he described experiencing an epiphany – a moment when he suddenly understood what he wanted to do – to go into the City (i.e., the financial centre in London): *'it has to be money'*. At 17 Sean found work as a clerk in a local insurance company that he described as *'one long jolly'*. Then through an informal contact he got a job on the trading floor in the City of London Stock Exchange at 19. There he quickly became financially successful. The job reflected the material ethos of the 1990s, a job his father did not consider to be 'proper work'. Initially hesitant in explaining what drew him to the City, Sean settled for the canonical narrative of the period – that is, to make money while still having a good time. *'...[I]t was the sort of people who were doing it – ...but they just seemed to be having a really good time and [pause] and of course Wall Street came out sort of you know about a year or so later. I thought "well I definitely [pause] definitely want to get into that."'* (From interview with Sean)

Later in his interview Sean returned to the motif with which he began his life story – the playground of childhood. This image is a central metaphor that describes Sean's working life in the world of finance. Though, its significance only emerged in the narrative analysis of the interview in paying attention to the language used. Talking about the trading floor of the London Stock Exchange he said:

... [W]e had like 300 guys, there was very few women down there, so the place was like a playground, you know it really was. So I'd literally [pause] you know my previous job was just messing around, I'd gone to another playground, you know, but just on a bigger scale. And all it was, was just grown men ... you know not the kids ... this was grown men who were doing all the silly things. ... *'[I]t was a big playground again, and that was where I was at home.'* (From interview with Sean)

On the other hand, this was only one part of Sean's story. It does not speak to the continuities – the echoes of the past that transcend the generations. Asked later in his interview about his father as a role model, Sean suggested a strong identification with his father as the archetypal sociable Irishman. '*I'm nothing without him.*' Sean emerges as the son who stayed geographically and socially close to his background while *contra* to his father he became upwardly mobile as a playboy of the financial world. Sean's identity is complex and multifaceted, which point to both change and continuity. He seeks to reconcile his present view and situation and his future with different aspects of his past – his Irish ancestry and his relationship with his father – as well as defending the choices he made in making his way in the financial world.

By attending to how Connor and Sean told their stories, I am suggesting the importance of paying attention to the form as well as the content of data; that is, to the beginnings of interviews, to the language, to the small stories and metaphors used to structure the stories (albeit chaotically presented), and to the moral lessons that are being claimed in the telling. Through the analysis of stories – life stories or the small stories of everyday life – many insights into how people's lives change can be gained.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out three different approaches to the study of family life: practice theory, historical contextualization, and narrative analysis. The choice of approach, of course, will depend on which aspects of family life are of interest – the everyday or whether the focus is over long stretches of a life's course or across family generations. In addition, time and place are important factors in any analysis. In relation to the micro routine or habitual aspects of family lives, I have pointed to social practice theories. It is obvious that the habitual aspects of people's lives alter and are modified over time. Yet such behaviours are not easily subject to recall or reflection by their practitioners and are therefore among the most difficult for researchers to study.

The second approach is to adopt an historical approach, which means locating family lives in particular times and locations. In this way, we can see how personal stories connect with the public world. This approach is especially important in intergenerational research where we are concerned about exploring family change. It also extends the boundaries of family life into many other human spheres. The journey of a son of a manual worker, a migrant in the 1960s, into the heady world of global finance in the 1990s represents a central motif of neoliberalism, while at the same time showing the continuing family identifications that remain between father and son.

The third approach discussed here concerned the form of data. Insofar as the study of social change involves methods that require those we study to reflect on change, then we have to interrogate the ways in which stories of change are told. A narrative approach requires attention to the communication of meaning (i.e., intention, structure, and language) that is grounded in the particular of the individual or group (Reissman 2008: 11). By paying attention to the form in which accounts are narrated in interviews, we are alerted to talk as cultural scripts, to the ways in which stories are made memorable and believable, and to the ways identities are constructed and transformed.

The intent here is to show the relevance of these approaches to family research and how they have been brought to bear in particular studies. In relation to these studies, I have addressed a number of research questions. One set of questions concerned food and its relation to family life: How food fits into family life, how food was a topic of concern in diaries written in times of food scarcity, and how food practices change in particular contexts and at particular times. Another set of research questions concerned changes in fatherhood. I have pointed to a number of different methods in studying changing family practices (e.g., parent and child interviews, diaries, biographical life stories, official data sources).

Such methods can be applied individually or in combination. Indeed, family research can benefit from the use of a variety of methodological strategies within the same study. Attention was drawn to the gap between talk and practice and therefore the dangers of an unproblematic reliance on methods that rely on retrospective reports alone. Nevertheless, this does not mean that multiple methods and multiple perspectives can be

added together unproblematically. Each produces different slants on the issue under study (Brannen 2005). In this discussion perhaps I have made a false distinction between ‘data’ and ‘context’ in referring to primary data and secondary sources. With increased emphasis on data reuse as primary data become more expensive to collect, however, this may need to change although funding requirements will have to change too. My hope is that I have suggested that there is much merit in exposing data on family lives to various approaches and types of research methods, albeit this is often challenging in practice.

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3

Family Salience Across Nations: Configurations of Morphological Conditions

Eric D. Widmer and Olga Ganjour

Family change across societies is a complex issue that raised considerable debates throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Particular attention was given at the time to the unequal pace of family change according to countries or regions in the world, with a hypothesized similar turn to the dominance of the nuclear family in all national contexts, Western or non-Western (e.g., Goode 1963). Since then, family sociology has rebuffed the nuclearization thesis and has, to the contrary, stressed historical trends of family pluralization away from the nuclear family that are present in all Western nations (Lesthaeghe 1995). Decreasing rates of marriage and fertility, and increasing rates of divorce, childlessness, and cohabitation outside marriage have

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enhanced the diversity of family structures present in any national contexts compared with the 1960s. It also has increased the likelihood of individuals experiencing life outside a nuclear family at least once in their lives. This pluralization was perceived by some as dooming the family as an institution (Beck 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Popenoe 1988), firing strong opposite understandings in family sociology (Stacey 1990).

Although a large quantity of empirical evidence points to the continuing importance of family relationships and commitments in private life (Attias-Donfut and Arber 2007; Bengtson 2001; Finch and Mason 1993; Kohli 1999; Smart 2007), the macrostructural conditions under which the family may remain a central social institution of late modernity are still not well understood. We term such centrality 'family salience'. We distinguish two levels of family salience: practical and normative. The practical level refers to sociability, which we operationalize by the frequency of contacts and visits between parents and adult children. The normative level of family salience is characterized by the presence of norms of family support, particularly norms of support between adult children and elderly parents.

Family salience varies from one country to another; it is high in some countries, where family solidarity and family sociability are functionally and normatively central, while it is low in others, where social norms and sociability practices give higher importance to other institutions (e.g., the state or the market). Which features of social development may account for cross-national differences of family salience in sociability practices and solidarity norms? This chapter explores family salience and its macrosocial conditions across countries. In this regard, Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare regimes (1990) is a heuristic that has proved useful by shedding light on the interrelationship between the organization of social policies in various countries and the importance given to family by their inhabitants (Ganjour and Widmer 2016). This typology, however, does not account for all variations with regard to families across nations.

The criteria of de commodification taken by Esping-Andersen as typologizing welfare regimes is just one dimension of social development (SD). Family salience is connected with other dimensions of SD that are not captured by the welfare-regime typology. Neither is it possible to understand why some countries have a high family salience in solidarity norms but a low family salience in sociability practices. Therefore,

additional dimensions of social development need to be considered. To contribute to the advancement of the understanding of unequal family salience across domains (i.e., norms and practices) and countries in late modernity, this chapter presents results from a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), a Boolean approach to empirical reality, that makes it possible to find configurations of sufficient conditions for the presence of an outcome (Ragin 1987; Rihoux and Ragin 2009).

Family Salience and Welfare State

In some societies family plays a key role for social integration (Murdock 1949). Social structures are based on family and kinship, and economic, social, and political decisions are in line with family relatedness. Social norms grant a high priority to family solidarity in comparison with other forms of survival units (e.g., the state or the labour market). In such societies, the social salience of family is high, as family plays a central role in sociability practices and solidarity norms. In other societies, the salience of family is lower, as other institutions (e.g. the market or the state) occupy a central position for developing sociability practices and solidarity norms. Sociability in such societies is not focused on family and kinship ties, and social norms dictate that other institutions take care of individuals in need.

In a previous publication (Ganjour and Widmer 2016), we stressed the heuristic importance of the typology of welfare states for understanding family salience. Welfare state regimes feature a set of social protection mechanisms that potentially promote defamilization (Esping-Andersen 1990) and therefore weaken family salience. One other study focused on some dimensions of family salience in various countries (e.g., composition of social networks, informal social support, and trust) found that family salience is less prominent in countries with a social-democratic regime than it is in other countries (Kääriäinen and Lehtonen 2006). Another study convincingly showed that welfare states were institutional contexts that unequally promoted family salience at the individual level (Van Oorschot and Finsveen 2009).

Our research, based on data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) of 2001 (Ganjour and Widmer 2016), confirmed the influence of welfare states on the variation of family salience in sociability

practices and solidarity norms. The results showed that individuals from Mediterranean regime countries more often developed family ties for solidarity practices. Indeed, individuals in such contexts are embedded in dense family networks to a larger degree than individuals in countries with other regimes. Though, for solidarity norms, on average individuals in such countries overstress the interplay between the state and the family, which was indicative of a weaker presence of family. Individuals from corporatist-conservative regime countries more often developed an interplay between kinship and associations for sociability practices. At the normative level, individuals in such countries more often prefer state support or an interplay between the family and the state. Individuals from liberal regime countries feature a low level of family salience for sociability practices by developing associational activities. For solidarity norms, there is a strong reliance on the self, complemented by family support. The state guarantees of countries with a social-democratic regime are associated with more diversified sociability practices; it included friends and associations as well as family members, especially parents, but also a lack of sociability. For solidarity norms, family solidarity is weak in such institutional contexts, as it is considered to be only a marginal complement to state support.

Overall, the results of this former study showed that there is a link between welfare state organization and the salience of family across national contexts. Nonetheless, it also showed that there is much variation in family salience within types of welfare regime depending on the country. Indeed, the use of the welfare state-regime typology (Esping-Andersen 1990) as a heuristic did not account for a variety of other morphological factors (Gurwitsch 1958) partially linked with defamilization and partially linked with other factors that have developed in a different way across countries (Castel 1995; Grandits 2010).

Social Development and Family Salience

The conditions underlying family salience may depend on a variety of dimensions of social development disregarded by the welfare state typology. Several macrostructural models of social change may be put to use

for understanding social development through time and space. The most convincing heuristic, in our view, relates to the work of German sociologist Norbert Elias (1978 [1970], 1991, 2009). According to Elias (1991), modernization has been linked with an individualization of society, in relation with the increasing complexity of the chains of interdependences between individuals and the lesser dependence of each of them on small, closed circles of sociability.

Social development, in Elias's work (1995), refers to the changes occurring in the networks of interdependences by which individuals respond to their various needs. In some societies, which one may call 'less socially developed', individuals are embedded in small and well-bounded networks are based on kinship ties and localism. In these social settings, the family plays an important role as a major mediator of social integration and social control. Individuals depend on family and kinship members for fulfilling their economic and social needs. Accordingly, they relate their identity with family and develop 'we' social identification in kinship-based groups (Elias and Scotson 1994). The family is the main, if not the only, provider of help and protection for individuals in the case of poverty or disability – the major institution responsible for taking care of their needs as well as normatively framing their behaviours.

In contrast, in 'more socially developed' societies – following Elias's definition of social development as an extension and greater articulation of the chains of interdependences among individuals – the protection of individuals is taken over by the state or the market. Individuals are integrated into society by state and market participation, without the mediation of their family or their kinship group. Social constraints and opportunities stem from welfare institutions or the market and directly engage the individual rather than being mediated by the family as a group (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Accordingly, the family loses its normative influence on individuals, and self-regulation is promoted as a means of social control (Elias 1994 [1939]). Social development therefore entails the transformation of family goals from mostly instrumental (i.e., social, economic, and demographic reproduction), with a high level of family control in 'less socially developed' countries, to more expressive or relational in 'more socially developed' societies, with a greater emphasis on individual autonomy and self-control (Burgess, Locke and Thomes

1963; Elias 1991, 1994 [1939]; Kohli 1999; Parsons and Bales 1956; De Singly 1996; Segalen 1981). Overall, this theoretical stance supports the view that social development (in Elias's perspective) leads to the decreasing importance of family salience in social norms and sociability.

The salience of family as a survival unit for fulfilling the economic and social needs of individuals has mainly been addressed at a macro-sociological level in relation with defamilization trends, which have been defined as the decreasing economic dependence of individuals on their family (Esping-Andersen 2009). Defamilization is a central dimension of modernization, making men and women, but also parents and children, economically less dependent on each other (Durkheim 1975 [1892]; Esping-Andersen 2009; Finch 1989; Ganjour and Widmer 2016; Giddens 1990). Defamilization, however, has not only an economic dimension but also demographic and social dimensions.

Pierre Bourdieu's seminal article (1972) on family reproduction strategies in the French area of Béarn provides some clues about how to operationalize the conditions of social development that decrease family salience. Bourdieu stresses the strategies that families as groups develop in order to achieve their survival. Inheritance practices, employment of family members, marital strategies (including divorce), fertility options, parenting, and control over the participation of children in the education system may be conceptualized as strategies that families use to meet the goals of social reproduction (Bourdieu 1972). Such strategies have an ambivalent relationship with the state (Durkheim 1975 [1892], 2003 [1922]; Bourdieu 1993).

In some instances, families accumulate their resources through high rates of labour market participation, homogamous marriage and high fertility rates, low rates of divorce, and the limited participation of children (especially girls) in governmental education systems. Controlling the access to such structural pathways of social development makes it possible for families to act as keepers and distributors of wealth and life chances. Indeed, the nonparticipation of children in governmental education systems increases the chances of the parents exerting control over their lives' trajectories and keeping them close. Exclusion from state education makes the economic dependence of children, mainly girls, on their parents higher, as it decreases their likelihood of social mobility and

their autonomy of thought and lifestyle (Bourdieu 1989; Bourdieu and Passeron 1965; Schultheis 1997). Heterogamy also is associated with a weaker influence of the family of origin because it creates social distance between parents and children (Kalmijn 1998; Blossfeld and Timm 2003; De Singly 1996).

In addition, institutional factors (e.g., laws organizing family interactions within each country) may promote or discourage family salience. Such factors include instrumental measures or incentives and regulations for active participation in social life (e.g., measures of conciliation between family and work) that make it easier for women to join the labour force. In addition, there are monetary and fiscal measures (e.g., expenditures and subsidies) to reduce social inequalities, allocations for children, retirement benefits, unemployment benefits, and fiscal heritage laws. The combination of structural and institutional factors produce specific configurations of morphological features (Gurwitsch 1958) that describe the social development achieved in each country. Morphological features refer to aggregated statistics and institutional features describing each national society as a whole, which are likely to frame the life chances and projects of individuals. These features may be considered as conditions that increase or decrease family salience.

This chapter focuses on inheritance patterns, labour market participation, the education system, and the centrality of fertility and divorce in society as dimensions of social development (SD). To classify countries in terms of states of social development favourable or unfavourable for family salience, we computed one indicator for the structural dimension of each morphological condition across countries. We also calculated one indicator for the institutional dimension of each morphological condition, based on laws and social policies existing in each country. We aggregated the structural and institutional dimension of each morphological condition of social development into seven binary variables (Ragin 1987, 1994). The binary score of these variables reflect the presence of both the structural and institutional dimensions of each condition of SD in each country. Table 3.1 shows the distribution of the morphological conditions across the countries that were considered in the analysis: Spain, Italy, and Cyprus (Mediterranean regime countries); Germany, France, and Austria (conservative regime countries); the United States (USA),

Table 3.1 Morphological issues related to social development

Selected countries	Austria	Canada	Cyprus	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany
Welfare regime	Conservative	Liberal	Mediterranean	Social-democratic	Social-democratic	Conservative	Conservative
Inheritance issue							
Free or limited by reserves	limited	free	limited	free	free	limited	limited
transmission of propriety							
Fiscal conditions for transmission of propriety	kin-dependent inheritance	kin-independent INHERITANCE	kin-dependent inheritance	kin-independent INHERITANCE	kin-independent INHERITANCE	kin-dependent inheritance	kin-dependent inheritance
generations							
Morphological condition of SD							
Employment issue							
Employment among women	high	low	high	high	high	high	high
Character of social policy in the case of retirement and							
unemployment	contributive	universal	contributive	universal	universal	contributive	contributive
Morphological condition of SD	employment	EMPLOYMENT	employment	EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT	employment	employment
Marital issue							
Rate of heterosexual marriages	high	high	low	high	high	high	low
Tendency of heterosexual marriages	decreasing	decreasing	increasing	increasing	increasing	increasing	decreasing

Morphological condition of SD	MARITAL	MARITAL	marital	MARITAL	MARITAL	MARITAL	marital
Fertility issue							
The rate of fertility	low	high	low	high	high	high	low
Measures of conciliation between family and work for women	developed	undeveloped	undeveloped	developed	developed	developed	developed
Character of social benefits for child	universal	limited	limited	universal	universal	limited	universal
Morphological condition of SD	fertility	fertility	fertility	FERTILITY	FERTILITY	FERTILITY	fertility
Divorce issue							
Rate of divorces	high	high	low	high	high	high	high
Character of social policy for single parents	limited	limited	limited	universal	universal	limited	limited
Morphological condition of SD	divorces	divorces	divorces	DIVORCES	DIVORCES	divorces	divorces
Educational issue							
Rate of participation in the governmental education and social policy favoured this participation	low	low	low	high	low	high	high

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Selected countries	Austria	Canada	Cyprus	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany
Welfare regime	Conservative	Liberal	Mediterranean	Social-democratic	Social-democratic	Conservative	Conservative
Morphological condition of SD	education	education	education	EDUCATION	education	EDUCATION	EDUCATION
Industrial and social environment							
The rate of industrial production in GDP (1969)	low	low	low	low	low	low	low
Character of social policy	contributive	universal	contributive	universal	universal	contributive	contributive
Morphological condition of SD	environment	environment	environment	environment	environment	environment	environment
Outcomes: Family salience in society							
Family salience in sociability	high	low	high	low	high	low	low
Family salience in solidarity norms	high	high	low	low	low	low	low
Selected countries	Great Britain	Italy	Norway	Spain	Switzerland	United States	
Welfare regime	Liberal	Mediterranean	Social-democratic	Mediterranean	Liberal	Liberal	
Inheritance issue							
Free or limited by reserves	free	limited	free	limited	limited	free	
transmission of propriety							

Fiscal conditions for transmission of propriety across generations	kin-independent	kin-dependent	kin-independent	kin-dependent	kin-independent	kin-dependent
Morphological condition of SD	INHERITANCE	inheritance	INHERITANCE	inheritance	INHERITANCE	inheritance
Employment issue						
Employment among women	high	low	high	high	high	high
Character of social policy in case of retirement and unemployment	contributive	contributive	universal	contributive	universal	universal
Morphological condition of SD	employment	employment	EMPLOYMENT	employment	EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT
Marital issue						
Rate of heterosexual marriages	low	low	high	low	high	high
Tendency of heterosexual marriages	increasing	increasing	increasing	increasing	increasing	decreasing
Morphological condition of SD	marital	marital	MARITAL	marital	MARITAL	MARITAL
Fertility issue						
The rate of fertility	high	low	high	low	high	high

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Selected countries	Great Britain	Italy	Norway	Spain	Switzerland	United States
Welfare regime	Liberal	Mediterranean	Social-democratic	Mediterranean	Liberal	Liberal
Measures of conciliation between family and work for women	undeveloped	undeveloped	developed	undeveloped	developed	undeveloped
Character of social benefits for child	universal	limited	universal	limited	universal	limited
Morphological condition of SD	FERTILITY	fertility	FERTILITY	fertility	fertility	fertility
Divorce issue	high	low	high	low	high	high
Character of social policy for single parents	limited	limited	universal	limited	limited	limited
Morphological condition of SD	divorces	divorces	DIVORCES	divorces	DIVORCES	divorces
Educational issue						
Rate of participation in the governmental education and social policy favoured this participation	high	high	high	high	low	low

Selected countries	Great Britain	Italy	Norway	Spain	Switzerland	United States
Welfare regime	Liberal	Mediterranean	Social-democratic	Mediterranean	Liberal	Liberal
Morphological condition of SD	EDUCATION	EDUCATION	EDUCATION	EDUCATION	education	education
Industrial and social environment						
The rate of industrial production in GDP (1969)	high	low	low	low	high	low
Character of social policy	universal	contributive	universal	contributive	universal	contributive
Morphological condition of SD	ENVIRONMENT	environment	environment	environment	ENVIRONMENT	environment
Outcomes: Family salience in society						
Family salience in sociability	low	high	low	high	high	low
Family salience in solidarity norms	low	low	low	high	high	high

Note: Each morphological condition is the product of its structural and institutional conditions (both its structural and institutional conditions must be fulfilled for the morphological condition to be fulfilled). Morphological conditions shown in UPPERCASE letters promote SD; Morphological conditions shown in lowercase letters do not promote SD

Canada, Great Britain, and Switzerland (liberal regime countries); and Denmark, Norway, and Finland (social-democratic regime countries).

A first morphological condition taps into inheritance issues. The structural dimension of this condition is related to free inheritance, or inheritance limited by reserves, while the institutional dimension of this condition is related to fiscal taxes and deductions on inheritance.¹ We see free inheritance as associated with a greater complexity of the chains of interdependence in society, as the focus on family is alleviated in inheritance in favour of individualization. To the contrary, limited inheritance favours family ties and interdependence inside the family.

A second morphological condition is associated with labour market participation. Its structural dimension is related to the rate of employment among women; the institutional dimension of this condition is associated with the allocation of retirement and unemployment benefits.² A high rate of participation of women in the labour market, as well as a universal allocation of retirement and unemployment benefits, makes individuals less dependent on their family and kinship groups and more dependent on the state or the market. In that case, the complexity and length of the chains of interdependence in which they are embedded is likely to be greater.

A third morphological condition concerns marriage. Its structural dimension is related to the rate of heterogamous marriages in a specific year, and the institutional dimension is linked to the increase of

¹The value of the structural dimension of this condition is encoded 'free' if inheritance patterns are free and not limited by reserves, and it is encoded 'limited' if the inheritance patterns are limited by reserves. The value of the institutional dimension of this condition related to fiscal tax is encoded 'kin independent' if the fiscal tax is lower than 30 % and the amount of deduction is higher than €100,000, and it is encoded 'kin-dependent' if the fiscal tax is higher than 30 % and the amount of deduction is lower than €100,000. Information on these issues was collected from the following links: <http://www.successions-europe.eu>; <http://www.notaires.fr> for Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Germany, France, Austria, Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, and Finland; <http://www.ge.ch/succession/> for Switzerland; <http://www.justice.gouv.ca> for Canada; <http://www.cleiss.fr> for the USA.

²The value of the structural dimension of this condition is encoded 'high' if the rate of employment among women is higher than the mean European rate, and it is encoded 'low' if the rate of employment is lower than the mean European rate (EU-27, Eurostat 2011). The value of the institutional dimension of this condition related to pensions and unemployment benefits is encoded 'universal' if pension and unemployment benefits are universal, and it is encoded 'contributive' if pension and unemployment benefits are limited for their amount and duration of the contributions.

heterogamous marriages across birth cohorts.³ Increasing heterogamy means a greater complexity of intimate ties across social groups in a society. It is important to note that heterogamy is promoted by women's participation in the educational system and in the labour market (Blossfeld and Timm 2003).

A fourth morphological feature of social development concerns fertility issues. Its structural dimension is linked to rates of fertility, and its institutional dimension is related to measures of conciliation between work and family as well as the character of attribution of child benefits.⁴ The greater the fertility rates the less complex the chains of interdependence are, as the society does not need to support immigration to maintain its population, and ties across generations have a solid familistic character; therefore the chains of interdependence in which individuals are embedded are shorter and less complex. Measures of conciliation between work and family and universal child benefits allow increasing rates of fertility. On the other hand, it makes chains of interdependence more complex, as individuals (especially women) become embedded in a greater diversity of social ties in their daily lives.

A fifth morphological condition concerns divorce issues. Its structural dimension is linked to the rate of divorce and its institutional condition is related to the universal attribution of benefits for single parents.⁵ Divorce

³The value of the structural dimension of this condition is encoded 'high' if the rate of heterogamous marriages is higher than 50 %, and it is encoded 'low' if the rate of heterogamous marriages is lower than 50 %. The value of its institutional dimension is encoded 'increasing' if the rate of heterogamous marriages increased among the young birth cohort, and it is encoded 'decreasing' if the rate of heterogamous marriages decreased among the young birth cohort. Information on these issues was collected from the results of respective analysis of Panel data in various countries (Blossfeld and Timm 2003).

⁴The value of the structural dimension of this condition is encoded 'high' if the rate of fertility is higher than the mean European rate, and it is encoded 'low' if the rate of fertility is lower than the mean European rate (EU-27, Eurostat 2011). The value of the institutional dimension of this condition is linked to conciliation between the family and work is encoded 'developed' if the measures of conciliation between the family and work are developed, and it is encoded 'undeveloped' if the measures of conciliation between the family and work for women are undeveloped. The value of the institutional condition related to the attribution of child benefits is encoded as 'universal' if the child benefits are universal, and it is encoded as 'limited' if the attribution of child benefits is limited by income and other family characteristics.

⁵The value of the structural dimension of this condition is encoded 'high' if the rate of divorce is higher than the mean European rate, and it is encoded 'low' if the rate of divorce is lower than the mean European rate (EU-27, Eurostat 2011). The value of the institutional dimension of this

is associated with an increasing complexity of family configurations, which have large consequences for interpersonal relationships as a whole (Widmer 2010). It also increases the dependence of women on the state and the market, and as such it increases the overall complexity and length of the chains of interdependence among individuals.

A sixth condition refers to education issues. Its structural dimension is related to the rate of participation of children in the governmental education system, and its institutional dimension is linked to the universal attribution of social measures that favour the participation of children in the educational system.⁶ The greater and the sooner the participation of children in the educational system, the weaker the interdependence of individuals to the family (Parsons and Bales 1956).

A final, seventh, morphological condition is related to the broad factor of a country's industrial and policy environment. Its structural dimension is related to the rate of industrial production in gross domestic product (GDP) of each country, while its institutional dimension is related to the character of its social policy – that is, whether it is universal or limited (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1996). The greater industrial production in GDP was, the further away the society was considered to be from its agricultural basis, and thus the more complex and large its chains of interdependence. The information for the year 1969 was selected in order to avoid giving too much importance to the consequences of the petrol crisis of 1970 (Cipolla 1976).⁷ The corresponding institutional

condition is encoded 'universal' if the attribution of single-parent benefits is universal, and it is encoded 'limited' if the attribution of single-parent benefits is nonuniversal and limited by family characteristics.

⁶The value of the structural dimension of this condition is encoded 'high' if the rate of participation of children in the educational system is higher than the mean European rate, and it is encoded 'low' if the rate of participation in the educational system is lower than the mean European rate (EU-27, Eurostat 2011). The value of the institutional dimension of this condition is encoded 'developed' if the social measures for participation of children in the educational system are developed, and it is encoded 'undeveloped' if the social measures for participation of children in the educational system are undeveloped.

⁷The value of the structural dimension of this condition is encoded 'high' if the rate of industrial production in GDP was higher than the mean rate of the selected countries in 1969, and it is encoded 'low' if the rate of industrial production in GDP was lower than the mean rate of the selected countries. The value of the institutional dimension of this condition is encoded 'universal' if the character of social policies is universal, and it is encoded 'limited' if the character of social policies is limited by contributions (Cipolla 1976).

dimension was seen as favourable for social development if the character of the country's social policy was deemed to be 'universal', strengthening individuals' interdependence beyond family or kinship solidarity (Elias 1991; Castel 1995).

Family salience in each country is the outcome considered in this study. The values of family salience presented in Table 3.1 are based on the empirical results of a former study related to sociability practices and solidarity norms in various countries (Ganjour and Widmer 2016). Based on the 2001 module of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), we stressed that some countries had a high family salience, whereas in other countries family salience was low. A crucial distinction was made between family salience in sociability practices and solidarity norms, with some countries presenting a high family salience on one dimension and a weak family salience on another. Following the results of this previous study, we encoded as countries with low family salience in sociability the USA, Canada, and Great Britain (liberal regime countries), Norway and Denmark (social-democratic regime countries), and France and Germany (conservative regime countries).⁸ Family salience in sociability was encoded as high in Spain, Italy, and Cyprus (Mediterranean regime countries), Austria (conservative regime country), Switzerland (liberal regime country), and Finland (social-democratic regime country).

According to previous results, the value of family salience in solidarity norms was considered low in Italy and Cyprus (Mediterranean regime countries); France and Germany (conservative regime countries); Great Britain (liberal regime country); and Norway, Denmark, and Finland (social-democratic regime countries).⁹ Note that Italy and Cyprus fall into low family salience in solidarity norms because they feature a mixed

⁸High family salience in sociability corresponds to a high probability for the clusters 'Parents' or 'Children' in the country, which involves frequent interactions with either of them. Low family salience in sociability corresponds to a high probability for the clusters 'Kinship', 'Associations', or 'Sparse contacts' in the country. Those clusters involve only few and nonregular interactions with family members (Ganjour and Widmer 2016).

⁹High family salience in solidarity norms corresponds to a high probability of the cluster 'Family support' for the country, which involves strong beliefs that adult children should take care of their elderly parents. Low family salience in solidarity norms corresponds to a high probability of the other clusters, which grant a higher priority to state support or self-reliance (Ganjour and Widmer 2016).

support between the state and the family rather than family support only. Indeed, in those countries, individuals believe that state and family should go hand in hand to support individuals, and that family should not be the only or even the main provider of support. In contrast, the value of family salience in solidarity norms is high in Spain (Mediterranean regime country); Austria (conservative regime country); and the USA, Canada, and Switzerland (liberal regime countries).

Results

We used Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) in order to uncover conditions of high and low family salience across the selected countries. Qualitative comparative analysis is widely used in political science (Epple et al. 2014; Varone et al. 2006; Thiem 2011) but seldom used in sociology (for exceptions, see health policy research – e.g., Glaesser and Cooper 2011; Schneider and Wagemann 2012), and never, to our knowledge, in family sociology. QCA makes it possible to relate family salience (i.e., the outcome) with a variety of configurations created by several morphological conditions of social development.

Developed by Charles Ragin in his book *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (1987), QCA is a research method that allows the transformation of complex configurations of conditions into simpler ones by using the procedure of Boolean minimization. Based on this method Ragin created a tool to ‘simplify complex data structures in a logical and holistic manner’ (1987: viii). Boolean minimization is the central function of the QCA-enhanced Quine-McCluskey algorithm (McCluskey 1996; Rihoux and Ragin 2009). The analysis is case-oriented; it shows the combinations of the conditions and the outcome variable for a specific set of countries. We used the QCA package of R (Thiem and Dusa 2012) for the minimization algorithm. To provide information in a simple way, we chose to visualize it using Venn diagrams (Chen 2012).

The first key stage in the realization of a QCA is the construction of a table of conditions created by family strategies, economic development, and character of social policy (see Table 3.1). These conditions, in a next

stage, need to be dichotomized.¹⁰ After estimating the initial morphological conditions through criteria of necessity and sufficiency for the outcome, the software produces the truth table. Truth tables present the combinations of sufficient conditions and the outcomes. We realized four truth tables, one for high family salience in sociability practices as the outcome, another for low family salience in such practices, a third one for high family salience in support norms, and a fourth one for low family salience in support norms. Finally, the special functions of Boolean minimization produce three distinct solutions: a complex solution, a parsimonious solution, and an intermediate solution. In this chapter we describe only the results of the parsimonious solution.¹¹

Figures 3.1 through 3.4 present the results of the parsimonious solution of QCA as Venn diagrams. Each ellipse represents a characteristic position of one combination of the sufficient conditions for the outcome. The overlaps between the ellipses mark the countries in which the combinations of sufficient conditions overlap. The *right* ellipse in each diagram represents the set of main sufficient conditions for the outcome. The *inside* ellipses present the set of supplementary conditions for the outcome. The overlaps with the *left* ellipses in each diagram are of particular interest because they reveal which combinations are the main or supplementary set of combinations for the outcomes.

Figure 3.1 shows the Venn diagram for high family salience in sociability. In that case a low presence of divorce, both at the structural and at the institutional level, is one main condition for the maintenance of high family salience in sociability. This condition is fulfilled in Spain, Italy, and Cyprus. In Cyprus the condition is complemented by limited inheritance and low participation of children in governmental education. In Austria and Switzerland, the supplementary conditions of low fertility and low

¹⁰Morphological conditions shown in uppercase letter promote social development (SD) and are recoded as 1. Morphological conditions shown in lowercase letters do not promote SD and are recoded as 0.

¹¹The parsimonious solution presents the case when all possible configurations of conditions are included in the analysis. The conditions are included in the parsimonious combination depending on their scores of inclusion. Conditions with a high score of inclusion are defined as ‘main conditions’, while conditions with a low score of inclusion are defined as ‘supplementary conditions’ (Rihoux and Ragin 2009).

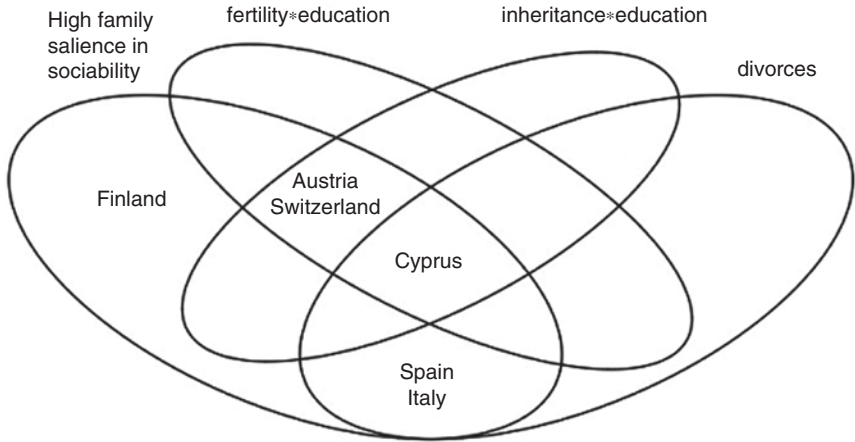


Fig. 3.1 Venn diagram of high family salience in sociability

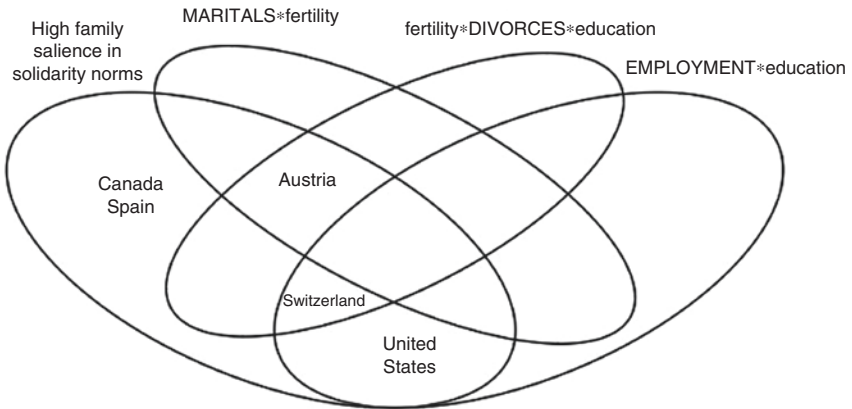


Fig. 3.2 Venn diagram of high family salience in solidarity norms

participation of children in governmental education are associated with limited inheritance.

Results for high family salience in solidarity norms are presented in Figure 3.2. High valuation of employment and low importance of the governmental educational system contribute to high family salience in solidarity norms. It is indeed the main set of sufficient conditions in

the USA and Switzerland. Low importance of fertility, high visibility of divorce, and low participation of children in governmental education are supplementary conditions for high family salience in solidarity norms. The configuration of these conditions is present in Switzerland and Austria. In Austria the configuration of heterogamous marriages and low fertility is another supplementary condition for high family salience in solidarity norms. Contrary to expectations, institutional factors associated with full access to employment and universal social policies, in the case of retirement and unemployment as well as heterogamous marriages, promote high family salience in solidarity norms. It is particularly striking that high family salience in solidarity norms is not conditioned by the presence of high fertility, both at the structural and institutional level.

Because accounting for low family salience by QCA is not the opposite of explaining it for high family salience but a distinct analytical process, we also analyzed the conditions for low family salience in sociability practices and solidarity norms. Results for low family salience in sociability practices are presented in Figure 3.3. A strong presence of divorce and high participation of children in the governmental education system is a main set of sufficient conditions for low family salience in sociability. These conditions account low family salience in Norway, Denmark, France, Germany, and Great Britain. Employment and heterogamous marriage also contrib-

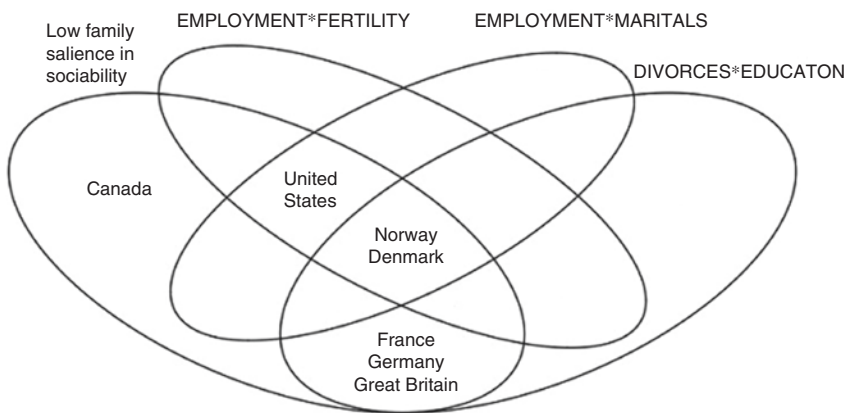


Fig. 3.3 Venn diagram of low family salience in sociability

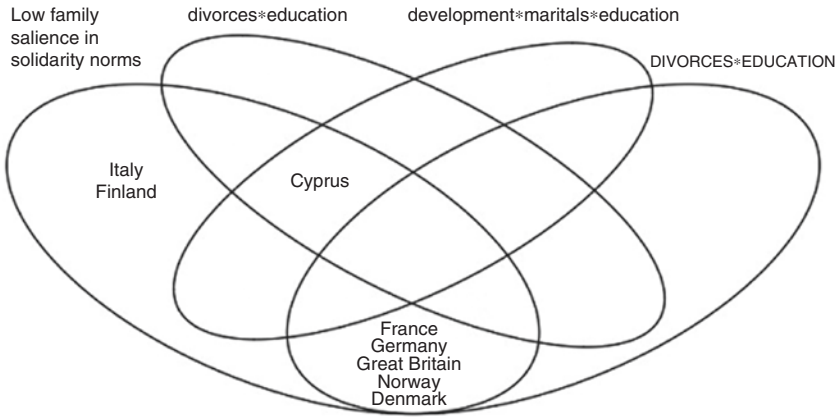


Fig. 3.4 Venn diagram of low family salience in solidarity norms

ute to low family salience in sociability as a supplementary condition in the USA, Norway, and Denmark. Another supplementary condition is the configuration between high rates of fertility and high employment. This condition is present in the USA, Norway, and Denmark.

Results for low family salience in solidarity norms are presented in Figure 3.4. According to the figure, a strong presence of divorce and the participation of children in the governmental educational system are also one main set of sufficient conditions for low family salience in solidarity norms. This configuration is present in France, Germany, Great Britain, Norway, and Denmark. Lack of economic development and homogenous marriage, and low participation in the governmental educational system, are supplementary conditions for low family salience in solidarity norms. Cyprus looks to be a special case where such variables do not play the same role.

Conclusion

The salience of family in sociability is conditional to a country’s level of social development (Elias 1991, 1994 [1939]). According to the results presented in this chapter, a low presence of divorce in the morphology of

countries is one main condition for the maintenance of family salience in sociability.¹² Countries with weak divorce and nonuniversalistic social policy for single parents promote family sociability, particularly the sociability between parents and adult children. These results confirm the results from previous microsociological studies about the role of divorce in extending chains of interdependence in which individuals participate in their private lives (Smart et al. 2001; Zartler 2011). Our results also show that a low divorce rate is the main condition for maintaining the salience of vertical family ties, between parents and adult children, in society.

These results shed some new light on the issue of family salience in late modernity. Contrary to our expectations, greater access to the labour market for women and universal retirement and unemployment benefits promote family salience in solidarity norms. Individuals turned out to value norms of family support, particularly towards elderly parents, in case of employment and universal social protection during retirement and unemployment. Thus, retirement and unemployment benefits favour the salience of family, especially parent–child solidarity, in social norms (see Figure 3.2). Welfare regimes, however, have a nonsystematic relationship with family salience in solidarity norms because they interact with unequal levels of social development in each national case. The importance of employment and of the public educational system proved decisive in that matter. The USA and Switzerland, for instance, have high family salience in solidarity norms not only because they belong to the liberal welfare regime but also because they have a low level of participation of children in the governmental education system, as well as a universal attribution of social benefits in case of unemployment and retirement.

The centrality of divorce and the participation of children in the educational system decrease the salience of family in solidarity norms, a situation which characterizes France, Germany, Great Britain, Norway, and Denmark (see Figure 3.4). However, the association between centrality of divorce and

¹²Note that the inclusion of other sets of conditions may produce distinct results. It is also likely that sociability practices and solidarity norms will have an effect of their own on the likelihood that divorce develops a high centrality in such or such society. Therefore, a reciprocal causation is also possible. It was not the purpose of this chapter to provide a deterministic analysis of the societal factors of family salience, but rather to increase awareness about the configurational dimension of such salience with regard to macrosociological dimensions.

low salience of family in solidarity norms remains ambiguous, as other countries present other ways of combining it with high family salience in solidarity norms. In Switzerland and Austria, for instance, the combination of the centrality of divorce, low participation in education, and low fertility is associated with high salience of family in solidarity norms.

Interestingly, conditions that are important for the maintenance of family salience in sociability practices differ from conditions that are important for the maintenance of family salience in social norms. Salience of family in sociability does not go hand in hand with the activation of family salience in solidarity norms across countries. Conversely, strong norms of family support do not mean that such society features are high family salience in sociability. Family salience in sociability is supported by a weak presence of divorce in the morphology of societies, as well as by a weaker presence of fertility, controlled inheritance practices, and a comparatively weak participation of children in governmental education (see Figure 3.1). In that respect, there is a high family salience in sociability in countries of the Mediterranean social regime not only because of their type of welfare state but also because of a comparatively weak presence of divorce in society.

Overall, although welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990) provide a useful heuristic for understanding family salience (Ganjour and Widmer 2016), other dimensions of social development (e.g. the social centrality of divorce and the importance of the public educational system) also play a critical role because they extend the chains of functional interdependence in which individuals are embedded. The case of employment should be further considered as it contradicts such a statement. Overall, conditions of social development obviously should be taken into account when thinking about ongoing and future family changes across nations, both for sociability practices and solidarity norms.

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4

Cultural Conceptions of Family as Inhibitors of Change in Family Lives: The ‘Leitbild’ Approach

Detlev Lück, Sabine Diabaté, and Kerstin Ruckdeschel

Introduction: Why Turn to Cultural Theories?

Looking at family lives in Europe over the past decades, we find both change and continuity. Change is visible, for instance, in declining birth rates, in a later age at marriage or at first birth, or in an increasing number of births out of wedlock (Eurostat 2015). At the same time we observe continuity, for example, in the desire to have children (Mayer and Trommsdorff 2010; Virtala et al. 2011), in the prioritizing of paid work by fathers and of childcare by mothers (Miller and Sassler 2010, Lewis et al. 2008; Fuwa 2004; Hakim 2003; Reher 1998, 2004), as well as in a structure of similarities among specific groups of countries – for example, the Scandinavian countries, the German-speaking countries, or Southern Europe (Sobotka 2008). The questions arises: *Why* do we find

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both? What makes some patterns of European family lives change? As well as: What stabilizes others?

There have been many theoretical explanations of change. The second demographic transition theory, for example, assumes that industrialization has led to stable economic wealth, which in turn has caused a change in values connected to a series of changes in the orientation in family lives (Van de Kaa 1987; Lesthaeghe 1995; Surkyn and Lesthaeghe 2004). The individualization theory (Beck 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1993) identifies a push towards individualization that encourages people to develop and pursue individual life plans, leading to a pluralization of living arrangements. The human capital approach (Becker 1993 [1981]) argues that in today's Europe women are achieving higher educational levels, which increases their opportunity costs when they leave the labour market to take care of children.

The value of children approach (Nauck 2005; Nauck and Klaus 2007) argues that in modern societies with improved systems of healthcare and care in old age, the economic-utitarian value of children has declined, leaving us with the psychological-emotional value of children, which is already attained with the first or second child, thus giving little incentive for large families. Other approaches do not assume a change in a specific direction but still make it seem likely that change of some kind occurs since they describe patterns of family lives either as a construct of social (inter-) action or of subjective definition. This is true, for example, for the approaches of family practice (Morgan 1996, 1999, 2011), of family dynamics (Jamieson 1998; Smart and Neale 1999), of 'doing family' (Jurczyk 2014; Jurczyk et al. 2014), or of the configurational approach (Widmer 2010; Widmer and Jallinoja 2008).

What is lacking is a convincing theoretical explanation for the continuity we nevertheless observe. Although the psychological-emotional value of children may be attained with the first child (Nauck 2005), in many European countries the most frequent parity is two children (Sobotka and Beaujouan 2014). Assuming utilitarian decision making, women's high human capital should have led either to a prevalence of childlessness or to equal sharing of paid and unpaid work by couples; yet, a majority of couples still express the desire to have children (Mayer and Trommsdorff 2010; Virtala et al. 2011) and men remain the principle earners in the clear majority of family households (Lewis et al. 2008; Fuwa 2004).

Despite the notion that ‘family is what families do’ (Morgan 1996), which should today allow for a large variety of types ‘beyond the nuclear family’ (Widmer and Jallinoja 2008), basic contours of the nuclear family are persistently identified (Huinink 2014; Charles et al. 2008; Brown 2005; de Singly 1991). Even cross-country differences within family lives in Europe appear quite robust over time (Duranton et al. 2009; Reher 2004). Cultural factors seem to be stabilizing them. Higher birth rates, for example, are found not only in those countries (e.g., Sweden or France) with above-average availability of public childcare, which reduces the opportunity costs of children, but also in countries (e.g., Great Britain, the USA, or Australia) where public childcare is hardly provided at all (Sardon 2006).

It seems obvious that, given the manifold changes in socio-economic structures, in value orientations, in social acceptance, in legal and institutional constraints and support, family lives in Europe could have changed much more than they actually have. So we assume that there must be a substantial influence holding change back and stabilizing given patterns. Further, we assume that this influence is cultural. Theories describing such a cultural stabilizing influence exist, for example, in Parsons’s structural functionalism (Parsons and Bales 1956), in role theory (Dahrendorf 1998 [1958]; Scanzoni and McMurry 1972), in the theory of gender arrangements (Pfau-Effinger 2004), or in various approaches emphasizing the importance of a country’s religious orientation (Voicu et al. 2009) or history (Kalmijn 2007; Reher 1998, 2004; Hakim 2003). Still, there are, in comparison, few that play a significant role in contemporary family research. Also, the ones being used contemporarily tend to be restricted to very specific research interests. In contemporary family research again, there are several theoretical approaches demanding a ‘cultural turn’ (Morgan 1996, 2011; Jamieson 1998; Smart et al. 2001; Jurczyk 2014), which is in line with our goal. These, however, are not grounded on methodological individualism and are intended to describe behaviour rather than to explain it.

Our purpose is to review, to reawaken, and to restructure the cultural theoretical explanations for the persistence of given behavioural patterns and to make them usable for contemporary family research. This may mean reformulating details or reorganizing and reframing arguments so that

they are in line with the current state of research and respond adequately to recent critiques. In this way, we aim to present a renewed cultural-theoretical concept that is able to explain persistent behavioural patterns in the family context and thereby supplement existing theories that explain why, to a certain degree, change occurs. The concept we want to introduce is called '*Leitbild*'. In the theoretical outline we also present a methodological approach of measuring '*Leitbilder*' as well as a summary of first descriptive results for Germany that support our theoretical assumptions.

The Term '*Leitbild*'

The German term '*Leitbild*' (plural: '*Leitbilder*') is difficult to translate. In English texts it therefore mostly remains untranslated and is used as a German-ism instead (e.g., Pfau-Effinger 2004; Haan 2002). We also decided to use the terms '*leitbild*' and '*leitbilder*' (plural). The verb '*leiten*' means 'to lead' or 'to guide'. The noun '*Bild*' means 'picture' or 'image'. A reasonable translation for the compound word '*Leitbild*' therefore could be 'mental picture' or 'guiding image' as suggested by Birgit Pfau-Effinger (2004: 382). It expresses an idea or a conception of how things in a certain context should be, work, or look like. It can have the character of a role model to emulate or of an ideal or a vision for which to strive. Companies, for example, will often have a corporate mission statement that describes their goals and how they ideally would like to operate ('*Unternehmensleitbild*'). In the eyes of their fans, celebrities may embody an ideal of how to live, behave, and dress. A political party or a religious group may share a vision of an ideal society that motivates their work. These are examples of what the term expresses in general.

The Theoretical Concept of *Leitbilder* in the Literature

Leitbilder are used occasionally as a theoretical concept in German-language social sciences, however not always in the same sense and rarely based on an explicit definition. The interpretations of the term have in common that they imply a normative concept that provides orientation.

Most publications address a cultural phenomenon, similar to attitudes, values, or social norms, but typically are somewhat more complex and holistic (e.g. Mühling et al. 2006; Kuhnhenne 2005; Klement and Rudolph 2003; Horvath 2000). Some publications address the political visions behind the policies of governments or individual politicians (e.g., Baas 1998; Meyer 1990). A few additionally or predominantly address the explicit corporate mission statements or implicit self-conceptions of companies or other organizations (e.g., Giesel 2001; Haan 2001, 2002).

The only work that gives a systematic overview of the various conceptions is the one by Katharina D. Giesel (2007). As a synthesis or a compromise between the existing explicit or implicit definitions, she suggests defining *leitbilder* in a way that they 'bundle socially shared (mental or verbalised) imaginations of a desired or desirable and principally achievable future, which are supposed to be realised by corresponding action' (Giesel 2007: 245, translated by chapter's authors). We consider this definition very inspiring, although not yet ideal for application in empirical family research. First, we find it important to leave the question open as to whether and when *leitbilder* are achievable and strived for through action. Second, we think that *leitbilder* may be, much more often than envisioning a *future*, imaginations of a (presumed) desirable *present* that seems important to maintain and reproduce.

The most prominent and elaborate application of the concept in family research is the work by Birgit Pfau-Effinger (1996, 2004). She uses *leitbilder* as an element in her theory of gender arrangements. Based on macrolevel research Pfau-Effinger distinguishes five *leitbilder* or 'cultural models' for arrangements of sharing paid work and care work between women and men and the state in Western Europe (Pfau-Effinger 2004: 383). This work seems pathbreaking to us because it combines structural and cultural influences in a theoretical model to explain cross-national differences as well as gradual social change. Pfau-Effinger defines *leitbilder* as 'typical societal ideal representations, norms and values regarding the family and the societal integration of women and men' (Pfau-Effinger 2004: 382). From our viewpoint this definition seems useful because it proves applicable in empirical research, even if it remains somewhat vague. We consider it desirable to provide a clearer definition and to develop the concept in a way that it also may be applied to other research topics on the macro- as well as on the microlevel.

An Elaboration of the Concept of Leitbilder

Our research takes up the conceptions of leitbild by K.D. Giesel (2007) and B. Pfau-Effinger (2004). Our purpose is to define the term 'leitbild' in a way that it is precise and applicable for a variety of family-related research topics. We suggest a definition according to which a leitbild is a bundle of collectively shared and visually imagined conceptions of normality – with 'normality' implying that something is personally desired, socially expected, and / or presumably very widespread (i.e., common and self-evident). For the original definition in German see Diabaté and Lück (2014: 56).

This concept assumes that people have pictures in mind of how the various spheres in their everyday lives should and usually do look like. This is true also for family life and its various aspects: partnership, parenthood, distribution of work between mothers and fathers, and so on. For instance, people may envision that a 'normal' family consists of three to five people, including a man and a woman, both being married to each other, with the man being two to four years older and around 10 cm taller than his wife. It is perceived also to include one to three children, all common biological children of the couple, all about 30 years younger than their parents, and about two years apart from each other. Each of these nine aspects is a conception of normality. Each of them may be either personally desired by an actor, or presumably expected by their social environment or taken for granted. Typically, they would be all of that at the same time. All of these aspects, as well as others, are associated with one another and thereby bundled to a comprehensive imagination that we call a 'family-related leitbild'.

Leitbilder can also refer to *processes* such as the 'normal' progress of a partnership career or of family formation. For example, people may envision that an adult should have found a steady partner between ages 25 and 30, after two to four years both move in together, after another year or two they marry, the first child comes along when the mother is about 30 years old, the second one about two years later. In that case, leitbilder correspond to what Dorte Berntsen and David C. Rubin describe as 'cultural life scripts' (Berntsen and Rubin 2002; Janssen and Rubin 2011) – that is, a 'normal' life course with ideal ages for specific biographical

events, in comparison to which people can be 'on time' or 'off time'. Similarly, Billari et al. (2011) describe 'social age deadlines' for childbearing, Settersten and Hägestad (1996) find that people perceive 'deadlines' for several life course transitions, and Riley (1987) describes an influence of age norms. So, leitbilder have two facets that are interrelated: They define states or structures in the sense of how things should be at any given point in time, and they define processes in the sense of when and in what order things happen.

Leitbilder Compared to Other Cultural Concepts

There are many cultural concepts that formulate similar assumptions and describe similar phenomena, most of all role theory and the frame-selection approach. So, the questions arise of what distinguishes the leitbild concept from others and in what way it can be considered renewed or more adequate.

Most cultural concepts draw on one mechanism of how and why they influence behaviour. An attitude, for example, expresses an actor's personal desire of how things should be and is put into action because of this personal interest. A social norm is put into action because actors fear social exclusion if they deviate from the way others expect them to behave. A frame activates a certain behavioural routine ('script'), which the actor has learned in a socialization process because of a cognitive mechanism that allows him to act without previous conscious decision making; thereby, it reduces the complexity of options to a manageable quantity. The *conceptions of normality* that are bundled in a leitbild could partially be addressed as attitudes, preferences, or values (i.e., if they are personally desired); partially as social expectations or norms (i.e., if they are socially expected); and partially as frames, scripts, or everyday knowledge (i.e., if they are taken as common and self-evident). Yet, the leitbild concept assumes that conceptions of normality mostly fulfill all three criteria at the same time and that these are interrelated. If a certain behaviour seems so common that we hardly reflect it in everyday life, we usually can assume that other people would disapprove if we behaved in a different way. And vice versa, if we learn that a certain behaviour is socially

expected by the people around us, we tend to conclude that this is what everybody else does. Both the impression that a way of behaving is common and the experience that it is socially expected are likely to shape our personal subjective evaluation of what is desirable. Our personal sense that something is desirable in turn may let us think that others should feel the same way, behave accordingly, and approve of us behaving this way. If these assumptions are true, it is sensible to use conceptions of normality and leitbilder as categories that may affect behaviour because all three described mechanisms tend to appear jointly (i.e., personal desire, social expectation, and nonreflective behavioural pattern).

As a second distinction, leitbilder are much more complex than most cultural concepts. An 'attitude', for example, consists of the subjective evaluation of one single issue. A 'norm' is the societal expectation regarding one rather closely defined way of behaving. Leitbilder bundle numerous conceptions of normality into one complex, consistent mental picture. The leitbild concept assumes that (as the examples in the previous section illustrate) many single ideas regarding how things are and should be done are typically associated with each other and shape comprehensive imaginations of an entire sphere of life. A leitbild describes a very complete mental picture of how everyday life in a family, in an office, or in another sphere of life 'works'. Only because this picture is quite complete does it effectively allow actors to escape the overwhelming torrent of decision-making situations in which choices with uncertain outcomes need to be made from an infinite number of options. At the same time, addressing the whole comprehensive imagination as one concept, rather than all its single elements, is useful because it also reduces complexity in interpretation and analysis. The leitbild concept can be applied quite flexibly because a matching leitbild can be identified for almost every social situation in which behaviour requires explanation.

Role theory corresponds well to the leitbild concept. Despite the number of theories that actually have used and shaped the term, there is a common sense that 'social roles represent society's demands on the incumbents of social positions' (Dahrendorf 1998 [1958]: 133). In analogy to our definition of leitbilder one could say that a role is a bundle of conceptions of what is expected by the social environment. One main criticism of role theory, especially its application to gender and family

issues, has been that roles should only exist in specific social contexts. We can identify the role of a mother or a father – if a person has children – so that specific duties towards those children can be defined and controlled by others. However, we hardly can interpret being a woman or a man as a role because it remains unclear who would be entitled to raise expectations towards a person based only on this person's gender (Hirschauer 2001: 215).

Accordingly, role theory may be suitable for explaining behaviour within families but seems unsuitable for interpreting behaviour before family foundation – for example, being more or less career-oriented, choosing a partner, or deciding (not) to have children. The leitbild concept overcomes this problem because it assumes that a leitbild is internalized by the actor. Therefore, a person can have ideas regarding how a woman or a man (without children) normally behaves and can maintain these ideas even if he or she moved to an uninhabited island for the rest of his or her life. Furthermore, the concept of roles is applied mostly to individuals in specific social contexts, whereas a leitbild may characterize individuals as well as societies sharing a common leitbild, making the leitbild concept seem better suited for a cross-cultural comparison on the macrolevel.

A second theoretical approach that is closely related to the leitbild concept is Hartmut Esser's model of frame selection (Esser 1991, 2002, 2009; Kroneberg 2006). It assumes that actors either make decisions based on rational reflection of costs and benefits or rely on nonreflective routines, called 'scripts'. The latter happens if the situation in which actors find themselves matches a culturally predefined category of situations, called a 'frame'. The better the situation matches, the more likely it is that the automatic–spontaneous mode of action is used instead of the reflecting–calculating mode. Each frame is linked to at least one script that is then activated. In analogy to leitbilder one could say that a frame and its script are a bundle of conceptions of what is common and self-evident in a certain type of situation.

One advantage of the leitbild concept in comparison to the frame-selection approach is that it allows gradual differences as well as combinations of the reflecting–calculating and the automatic–spontaneous modes of action. For example, an actor may rationally decide between

two options he or she perceives to have, both of which are culturally predefined by leitbilder. (Should I become a mother and do all the things mothers ‘normally do’ or should I remain childless and focus on my career as childless women ‘usually do’?) The leitbild concept also assumes that all leitbilder an actor has internalized are active simultaneously (e.g., the leitbild of motherhood, the leitbild of a childless woman, the leitbild of a job career, and so on), whereas the frame-selection approach only allows one frame to be active at a time.

Two other closely related theories are the Sociology of Knowledge by Peter L. Berger and Luckmann Thomas (1991 [1966]) as well as the concept of social representations in social psychology by S. Moscovici (1988). A social representation is similar to what is called ‘commonsense “knowledge”’ by Berger and Luckmann (1991 [1966]: 27): a universe of all socially learned convictions, rules, and habits that are shared within a society or social group and that enable us to successfully act and interact in society – including knowledge of how to turn on an electric light or how to dress appropriately for a funeral. Leitbilder are segments of this universe, bundling only the knowledge related to a specific topic or life sphere. The advantage of a leitbild, in comparison to the concept of commonsense knowledge, is that it is downsized to a level at which it is possible (or much easier) to operationalize it for empirical research.

Facets of Leitbilder

Like commonsense knowledge in general, leitbilder are learned early in the life course in a process of socialization and are steadily reproduced through personal experience, social interaction, as well as media perception. The similarity in socialization backgrounds of people within one society (e.g., same laws, same infrastructure, same media, same cultural patterns, and so on) means that leitbilder tend to be homogeneous within a given country or region. The higher chance of people in one social group of interacting with each other and the mutual influence of the interacting people’s leitbilder on each other additionally supports a convergence within any given social group.

As a consequence, leitbilder are located on both the macro- and the microlevel. They are microlevel phenomena, on the one hand, because every individual has leitbilder and these might differ from those of others. So differences in family-related behaviour can be explained on the microlevel, referring to *personal* or *individual* leitbilder. On the other hand, leitbilder tend to be shared by many individuals within a society or a social group (e.g., social milieus, regional populations, age groups, or generations). Therefore, they can be characteristic for certain societies or social groups and also explain differences in behaviour on the meso- and macrolevel, then referred to as *collective* or *cultural* leitbilder. We should expect somewhat more heterogeneous leitbilder within national societies and large collectives with weak social ties and rather homogeneous leitbilder within small social groups with strong social ties.

The similarity of leitbilder within social groups and societies reduces social conflicts, and it facilitates mutual communication, cooperation, and collective action. It furthermore supports social coherence and stability. The fewer contradictions exist regarding a leitbild in a given society the more it will direct collective action, policies, and legislation. It will be reflected by institutions and infrastructures. These again will make the underlying collective leitbild seem appropriate and stabilize it further.

Nevertheless, a variety of opposed leitbilder can exist regarding one sphere of life (e.g., regarding the distribution of paid and unpaid work within couples) and potentially cause conflicts. Such contrasts can be found when comparing societies or social groups as well as when comparing individuals. Opposing leitbilder may even exist simultaneously within an individual. One person can have internalized two or more leitbilder that contradict each other. Inner conflicts and a lack of orientation may be the consequence. Mechanisms for reducing cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957) will work towards resolving such inner conflicts.

Leitbilder may be clear-cut in core elements. Nevertheless, their edges will be mostly blurry. This means that among the various conceptions of normality bundled into a personal leitbild there usually will be some that a person visualizes clearly and some of which he or she has only a vague conception. Among the elements bundled into a collective leitbild, there usually will be some that are perceived identically by the vast majority of people and some that vary rather significantly. As a consequence

leitbilder, as cultural phenomena in general, exist only in gradations. The fact that there always will be a lack of precision in specifying a leitbild is only partially a methodological problem and partially a facet of the leitbild as such.

The Influence of Leitbilder on Behaviour

According to the character of the conceptions bundled into a leitbild, it can have an impact on individual behaviour in three ways (Figure 4.1): (1) by the actor's motivation to put personal desires into practice (similar to attitudes), (2) by the motivation to fulfill other people's social expectations and to avoid social exclusion (similar to norms), and (3) by the nonreflective following of routines or social practices in order to save time and cognitive effort (similar to frames and scripts). The actor's personal

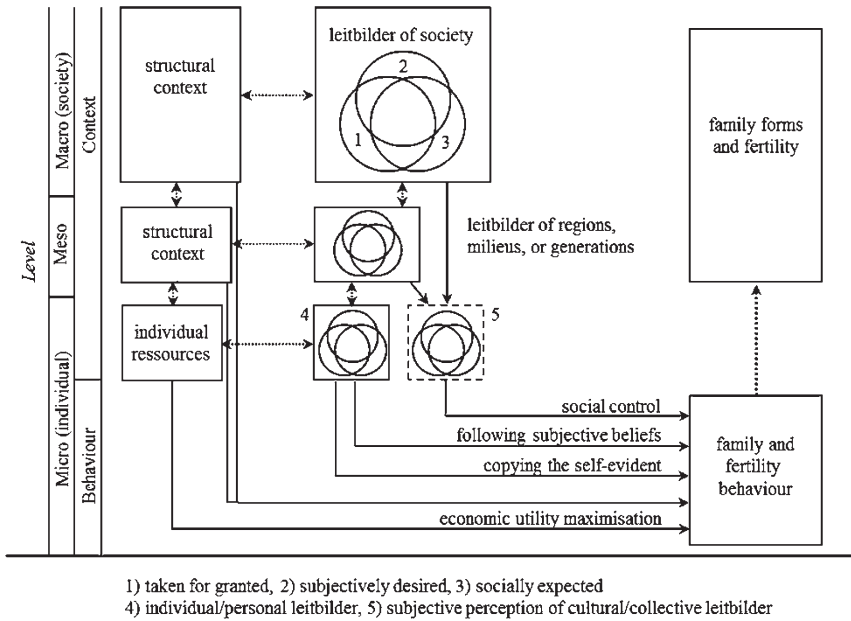


Fig. 4.1 Influence of leitbilder on behaviour
Source: Diabaté and Lück 2014: 60 (translated)

leitbilder are decisive for the first and third types of influence. For the second type of influence the cultural leitbilder are relevant that are predominant within the society and social groups to which the actor belongs.

Leitbilder influence behaviour simultaneously with rational reflection and decision making as well as in interactions with it. The influence of leitbilder reproduces and stabilizes the customary patterns of family life and decelerates social change (e.g., the convergence of gender roles). In this sense it is complementary to utilitarian rational decision making.

Leitbilder of the Family: An Operationalization

To describe how contemporary leitbilder of the family look like in Germany and their impact on decisions about childbirth and family life, we carried out a representative Family Leitbild Survey (FLB 2012)¹ between August and November, 2012. The study was funded by the Federal Institute for Population Research in Germany (BiB) and conducted by the polling institute TNS Infratest. The target population was German residents aged 20–39 because the survey's focus was on family formation and the relevant life course phase. Among them, a representative sample of $n = 5000$ was drawn. The sampling strategy followed the dual-frame approach (Gabler and Ayhan 2007) that combines landline and cell phone numbers and applies a design weight according to the number of landline and cell phone numbers to which respondents' have access. The response rate was 41.1 % in the landline sample and 56.5 % in the cell phone sample. Respondents were interviewed based on a standardized questionnaire using computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) technique. The questionnaire was developed based on a variety of qualitative preparatory studies, including guided interviews with individuals, focus group interviews, as well as a cognitive pretest. An interview took 32 minutes on average.

Aside from information regarding the respondents' sociodemographic and family situation, the survey aimed to operationalize the leitbild concept and to measure leitbilder regarding a number of issues in the

¹ For a detailed documentation in German, see Lück et al. (2013).

context of family lives. The questionnaire was divided into these sections: (1) partnership, (2) the meaning of family, (3) family foundation and extension, (3a) having children, (3b) the ideal age for having children, (3c) number of children, (3d) childlessness, (3e) parenthood, (3f) large families, (3g) preconditions for becoming a parent, (3h) siblings, (4) the parent–child relationship, (4a) the responsibility of parents, (4b) motherhood, (4c) fatherhood, (4d) intensity of parent–child contact.

In each section, first of all the respondent's *personal* leitbild was measured. This was done by asking about their (dis) agreement with a number of statements, based on a four-answer rating scale. Each statement represents a conception of normality according to the previously described theoretical concept. These are, to a large extent, attitudes in a strict sense (e.g., 'Fathers should spend less time at work for the sake of their children'). Some are worded rather as an assumption (e.g., 'It's not natural for a man to be a househusband'), although they are still linked to an underlying normative evaluation and could still be considered attitudes in a broader sense. Among the statements, sets of correlating items were identified by factor analyses. These sets then were interpreted as representing a leitbild. The respondents' (dis) agreements to the items within a set was summarized in an index measuring this leitbild. Among the three characters, a leitbild can have (see earlier), personal desirability is emphasized by the operationalization so that the measured personal leitbild comes close to a value or a complex of attitudes. This is practicable inasmuch as the personal leitbild is assumed to affect behaviour based on its characteristic of being desired by the actor himself (see Figure 4.1).

The identification of *cultural* leitbilder in Germany was *not* based on the aggregation of individual leitbilder for two reasons. First, the leitbild characterizing a society does not need to be the individual leitbild of a majority of people within this society; it may be the one being communicated the most or being the most visually reflected by institutions and infrastructures. Second, the sample only consisted of people aged 20–39, whereas the cultural leitbild of a society is shaped by people of all ages. Therefore, a different approach was used for capturing collective leitbilder.

Each interview measured the interviewee's perception of the cultural leitbild. This was done by asking the respondents to estimate how 'people in general' would evaluate the same statements. An index was then

generated accordingly. The concept of ‘people in general’ is supposed to be understood as an abstraction in the sense of ‘the generalized other’, according to G.H. Mead (1967 [1934]). It represents the cultural climate in which individuals live and by which their behaviour is influenced. It was explained to the respondents at the beginning of the interview – that is: ‘By that we mean the prevailing opinion in Germany, or what one might hear about most often in everyday life from the media or contact with other people.’ For a random subsample ($n = 537$), at the end of the interview respondents and interviewers evaluated how well the questions regarding ‘people in general’ worked, with positive results. Furthermore, the questions were tested for validity in a cognitive pretest, before the field work, by German Social Science Infrastructure Services (GESIS) (Porst et al. 2012). The operationalization of cultural leitbilder seems to emphasize their character of being socially expected, so that the measured leitbilder come close to a complex of social norms. This is practicable inasmuch as a cultural leitbild is assumed to affect behaviour based on its characteristic of being expected by others (see Figure 4.1).

Empirical Evidence for ‘Leitbilder’ and Their Impact on Family Lives

Initial analyses of the Family Leitbild Survey support the assumption that leitbilder exist – or at least that they are an applicable heuristic approach for empirical research – and that the survey is a suitable tool for measuring it (Schneider et al. 2015). We find significant differences between personal leitbilder and leitbilder perceived in society. This finding supports our argument that in addition to individual beliefs and attitudes there are independent cultural leitbilder in society that influence individual behaviour and that only a concept that encapsulates both can explain the phenomena in which we are interested. This feature makes the leitbild concept valuable for international comparison because individuals in diverse societies with similar personal leitbilder may nevertheless act in a different way because of the contrasting societal leitbilder. Some findings also support the thesis that leitbilder are a key for understanding why change in European family lives occurs slower than expected or not at

all. Because of limited space, we will not present actual empirical analyses in the following, but a summary of findings published so far (Schneider et al. 2015).

According to their personal *leitbild*, most Germans between 20 and 39 feel that it is a father's responsibility to be actively involved in childcare and to reduce his paid work time. According to the cultural *leitbild* they perceive in Germany, however, a father should be able to provide an income sufficient for the whole family to live on, whereas it is not in his nature to be a househusband (Lück 2015). Even if the personal (dis)agreement might be somewhat biased in reporting more gender equality than people actually believe in, this finding reveals a notable contradiction between personal and cultural *leitbilder*. It can be explained by the fact that the cultural *leitbild* in Germany also is shaped by Germans aged 40 and older who were not included in the sample and have more traditional mental pictures of family and fatherhood than the 20–39-year-olds (Junck and Lück 2015). Furthermore, the cultural *leitbild* is shaped by existing institutions (e.g., the German tax system) that still correspond to a degree to the father *leitbild* of a male breadwinner.

The coexistence of such opposed *leitbilder* presumably leads to inner conflicts and to a lack of orientation, potentially also to conflicts with significant others and to dissatisfaction. This is an analogy to role conflicts and to the concept of ambivalence, suggested by Lüscher for analyzing intergenerational relationships (Lüscher and Pillemer 1998; Lüscher 2004). Just as the contradiction between various role expectations an individual is confronted with or between needs for independency and mutual dependency, the contradiction between personal and cultural *leitbilder* also requires cognitive strategies for how to handle it. An individual's identity, orientation, subjective well-being, and social relationships depend on the success of this balancing act. We do not assume that either the cultural or the personal *leitbild* has 'master status' (Krüger and Levy 2000) in the sense that it superimposes other orientations. Rather cognitive mechanisms of reducing cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957) are required to resolve the inner conflict.

A relevant number of men, especially of childless men, even perceive it personally as a father's responsibility to do both: be actively involved in childcare and to provide the family income at the same time (Lück 2015).

This may indicate that the lack of orientation leads men to expect more of themselves than they are capable of. We find similar results for mothers. A majority of 20–39-year-old Germans feels that a mother should work for pay to be independent but also have time for her children in the afternoon. A similar result was found regarding the perceived cultural leitbild in Germany (Diabaté 2015), only here the traditional leitbild of a stay-at-home mother is more pronounced. Therefore, similar to fathers, mothers experience a conflict between their personal and the cultural leitbild in society. Additionally, however, their personal leitbilder alone are already highly demanding and may cause stress because they imply the (self)-expectation of combining intensive childcare with a career.

Looking at couples with children and their arrangement of paid and unpaid work, a minority of less than 10 % of the 20–39-year-olds have the leitbild of a male breadwinner and female caregiver arrangement. People sharing this personal leitbild have a significantly higher chance of actually living in a male breadwinner arrangement; people who deny it have a significantly higher chance of living in a dual-earner arrangement (Diabaté et al. 2015). This may reflect an impact of the leitbild on behaviour or an influence of everyday experience on the personal leitbild or reciprocal interdependence. Diabaté et al. (2015) also identify a group of people living in arrangements contrary to their personal leitbild, which reveals that other factors also influence behaviour including cultural, political, and economic ones. Such a contradiction is likely to create similar inner conflicts, the same as the incongruity between personal and cultural leitbilder described earlier.

The leitbild of a male breadwinner and female caregiver arrangement is linked to the idea that a mother looks after her children personally and goes without public childcare. The more prevalent leitbild of mothers and fathers both engaging in childcare (about 40 % of Germans aged 20–39) does not oppose public childcare, but this is combined with a very demanding idea of what childcare implies in terms of duties and responsibilities. It is combined, for example, with the idea of the parents putting their own needs last and always keeping up-to-date on proper child raising in order to not make mistakes (Diabaté et al. 2015). About 90 % of Germans aged 20–39 disagree with the statement that ‘Children will grow up no matter what, so it’s not necessary to put a lot of thought

into it'; about 40 % think, 'Children between one and three years suffer when they are cared for mostly in a day-care centre' (Ruckdeschel 2015).

Several leitbilder show a correlation with having children. One of them is the idea of what childcare should look like. Agreement with the statement that 'Parents can do a lot wrong in raising children, so they should become well informed' lowers the chance of being a parent to less than 50 % (Schiefer and Naderi 2015). This cross-sectional finding can be interpreted in different ways; one is that highly demanding imagined parental responsibilities discourages young adults from having children.

Our research does not identify an overall leitbild of the family in a sense that statements regarding all various aspects of family lives, from the appropriate age for leaving the parents' home to the ideal number of children, are correlated. Rather we find leitbilder in our data that are limited to a certain aspect of family life – for example, living together as a couple, necessary preconditions for having children, responsibilities of parents towards their children, how to be a good mother, how to be a good father, and so on. This does not necessarily mean that individuals do not have an overall mental picture of family life as a whole. If they do, however, these mental pictures vary too strongly between people to identify them by means of quantitative analyses.

Discussion

Our motivation to develop a theoretical concept starts out with sorting empirical findings and attempting to interpret them. We find ambivalences and contradictory concurrencies of fast change and continuity in European family lives. Yet, we lack convincing theoretical interpretations, especially for the persistence of basic contours of the nuclear family and of gender-specific orientations. As a consequence, we propose strengthening and renewing cultural approaches to explain behaviour in the family context – not as a countermodel, but to supplement other rather well-developed approaches that are highly suitable for explaining change in family lives. We assume that a combination of approaches is needed in order to understand ambivalent empirical reality. After a revision of existing cultural approaches, we consider the concept of leitbilder especially

promising and propose developing it further. Neither the concept of *leitbild* as such is new, nor are the key arguments we present about how culture influences behaviour. What is innovative is our elaboration of the *leitbild* concept presented here and the way it organizes the well-known arguments of cultural theories.

One of the advantages of the *leitbild* concept is that it can integrate the characteristics and arguments of other cultural–normative concepts, such as attitudes and values (which describe something personally desired by the actor), expectations and norms (which describe something that is socially expected), as well as frames, scripts, and everyday knowledge (which describe something perceived as common and self-evident). *Leitbilder* are complex constructs comprising several conceptions and ways of conceiving normality. The *leitbild* concept assumes that actors usually do not have single isolated perceptions but rather sets of inter-related views that are better understood as sets than separated into their elements. Thereby the concept sacrifices a certain degree of precision in revealing the exact mechanism behind a cultural–normative influence on behaviour; but it does so by arguing that the mechanism is actually too complex to be specified precisely.

The complexity of a *leitbild* is comparable to that of a role. In a sense, the *leitbild* concept attempts to reinvigorate role theory by avoiding weaknesses for which role theory has been criticized and largely replaced by more constructivist approaches. This is, above all, the dependency of a role on a position and on significant others being entitled to raise expectations towards the holder of this position. By assuming that actors are influenced not only by the expectations of others but just as well by their own evaluations and perceptions, the *leitbild* concept offers a more flexible and maybe also more plausible theoretical basis than role theory. Compared to constructivist approaches, it offers a cultural–normative view based on methodological individualism that therefore can more easily be connected with economic approaches and linked to quantitative research. In this way it fills a gap in understanding the concurrencies of change and continuity in European family lives and in instructing empirical research on contemporary European family lives.

A *leitbild* can have a retardant impact on change in family lives in several ways. Germans' understandings of the responsibilities of mothers

and fathers regarding paid and unpaid work demonstrate how various leitbilder can coexist simultaneously and lead people into inner conflicts and disorientation. This may be the contradiction between a person's personal leitbild and the cultural leitbild of the society in which she or he lives (as in the case of father leitbilder). This may be the coexistence of two contradictory leitbilder that one person perceives at the same time (as in the case of mother leitbilder). The highly demanding idea of parenting in Germany is an example that a leitbild as such can make a certain step in a family career seem so challenging that it leads to postponement of this step or even discourages people from pursuing it. The influence of leitbilder may interact with rational decision making by leading the actor to a different estimation of benefits and costs (e.g., the benefits and costs of becoming a parent). Also, it may interact with the available economic resources (e.g., public childcare) by making their availability seem more or less relevant. On an international level, comparative research on leitbilder has a high potential to explain cross-national differences and diverging processes of change in family lives.

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5

The Importance of the Family as an Institution: Findings from an Italian Survey

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Introduction

Institutions are the focal points of social organizations that are common to all societies; they address the basic problems of an ordered social life, to which the differentiation of the major institutional spheres or activities corresponds: family and kinship, education, economy, politics, cultural institutions, and social stratification. The concept of institution, a main issue in the social

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sciences, has been developed in a number of anthropological, economic, juridical, political, and sociological institutional theories (Bumpass 1990).

There is no overarching theory, however, to explain what institutions are for, how they are formed, and why they change¹ (Colozzi 2009; Maccarini and Bortolini 2005). Lanzalaco (1995), considering institutions as a multidimensional phenomenon, sums up the major theories about them in four approaches:

1. The *Formal–Legal Approach* intends institutions as constraints to action (Commons 1957; North 1990; Ostrom 1991).
2. The *Cognitive Approach* considers the institutions as constitutive elements of social reality (Berger and Luckmann 1991 [1966]; Douglas 1986; Zucker 1977), thus emphasizing the cognitive component.
3. The *Structural Approach* considers them as valid and persistent role models (Weber 1949 [1904]; Selznick 1949; Blau 1964).
4. The *Prescriptive Approach* sees institutions as regulative principles of actions (Parsons 1990 [1934]; Eisenstadt et al. 1990; Alford and Friedland 1985).

These approaches are alternatives to each other and, though all emphasize important aspects, do not grasp the unit of the phenomenon considered.

The *Relational Sociology* – the perspective that we adopt here – proposes an institution, according to Donati (2006b), as a social relationship developing both as constraints to actions or normative behavior (structural axis) and as conventions or regulative norms of behavior in terms of conformity with some values (cultural axis). Each institutional sphere develops its own symbolic means of exchange and resources; so institutions do not identify themselves with either organizations or generic groups, but all society have groups and defined roles which are mainly involved in each of the institutional areas. Here we take into

¹ Maccarini (1998) examines institutions as connected to the social order; in particular, he tackles the issue of how institutions can be conceived of and described and defined in the sociological sense, as well as how they are generated and transformed. This analytical sequence (i.e., definition, genesis, change) is neither casual nor merely chronological; rather, it takes into account the nexus between social ontology, explicative methodology, and practical theory (Archer 1995).

account, in particular, the institution of the family as a fundamental institution of society, not only because it ensures the reproduction over time but also because it shapes the personal and social identity through new generations' socialization (Colozzi 2009).

Despite the various approaches and their many contentious aspects, at least two theses in the debate on family as an institution have attracted wide consensus:

1. The family is an institution, addressing very basic societal challenges, particularly the upbringing and primary socialization of children, but also the mutual psychological–emotional support among the family members (Parsons and Bales 1956).
2. In the late twentieth century several transformations in family lives – particularly an increasing share of people without a partner and / or without children, different couple patterns – question some of the criteria that support the perception of family as an institution and thereby challenge this perspective (Coontz 2000; Donati 2014).

Notwithstanding the fact that the changes in family lives meanwhile have been put into perspective – clarifying that events in family biographies are often not omitted, but postponed to later stages in life (Amato et al. 2008) – and in spite of the fact that in the interim problematizing interpretations have not been established. This refers, for example, to changing gender roles (Scanzoni 2001), individualization (Beck 1992, 1997; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1993, 1995), and / or value changes (Lesthaeghe 1995; Van de Kaa 1987, 1997; Inglehart and Baker 2000).

Still, questions remain open as to in what way family gradually loses, or does not, its institutional character, in what way this deinstitutionalization is eventually counterbalanced by other institutions, and in what way these processes cause social disruption. This chapter explores whether and in what ways the family is still considered valid as an institution, investigating people's concerns and orientation.

Even though this topic is not novel in scientific and public debate, it generally is addressed by tackling some related trends in the current discourse such as single-parent families, stepfamilies, and childless couples, among others. Here, alongside detecting trends and institutional behaviour

(e.g., presence / absence of marriage, separation, and divorce), as sociologists of the family, we are interested in understanding the meaning and value of the family from the perspective of people. Such a choice therefore is focused on the value dimension as the core foundation of human actions.

Some relevant studies in fact stress the importance of individuals' values priorities in understanding and predicting attitudinal and behavioural decisions (Allport 1961). Despite the undeniable relevance of the concept of value, there exist so many, and such elusive, definitions (Halman 1995). The complexity involved in defining the concept of 'value' and its nature also confuses its identification in empirical research (Hechter 1993). Empirically speaking, since values cannot be measured directly, it is possible to resort to related concepts such as beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. Data from a recent survey carried out in Italy will facilitate studying people's subjective perception of whether the family is an institution.

Family and Institution: A Complex Relationship

In the middle of the twentieth century, in the time of the economic upswing after World War II, family lives in the 'Western world' experienced a historically unique phase in which the nuclear family was established both as a normative and an experientially chosen standard family form (Lévi-Strauss 1967). Whereas in the preindustrial era family had been predominantly a common production and consumption unit, based on economic and practical needs and strict societal regulations, sometimes in an authoritarian way, now in modern-industrial times family and work had become more and more specialized and separate. Thus, the family was idealized as an harmonious, peaceful, and reviving place of retreat from working life.

In sociology, the role of the family as an institution was emphasized following two argumentation lines. That is, partly referring to its traditional role in transmitting societal needs and norms to children and executing social control (Parsons and Bales 1956), and partly referring to new responsibilities in offering personal social relations in societies characterized by large, anonymous work environments and in organizing social integration in disrupted post-war societies (Blankenhorn et al. 1990; Evans and Bartolome 1984).

Against this strong socio–normative standard of the nuclear family and the strong emphasis on its institutional character, further changes in family life in the late twentieth century first appeared as a crisis and a decline (Colozzi 2009). With some distance, sociology started to describe the driving forces behind contemporaneous change in family life in a differentiated way, pointing out that with the disappearance of a linear biography, heading towards a nuclear family as a shared normative reference system, the individual can risk turning to himself or herself as the main selection criterion. Thus, family bonds are justified by the individual's reasons; self-fulfillment seems to become the primary goal and bonds that may be established are instrumental to that goal.

This weakens the value of family bonds, as these are considered outdated; partnership, marriage, and children have become biographical options, and to some degree it is left to individual preferences whether and in what way she or he wants to have a family. Shortly, contemporary individualization theories identified processes of disintegration and disorientation within the overall ambivalent development as well as destabilizing effects, particularly on family bonds (Bauman 2000, 2003; Beck 1992; Giddens 1991, 1992, 1999).

Following this theorization, Western culture has come to affirm that 'the family no longer exists' but also that 'there are as many and as different families' (Donati 2006a: 49) as there are forms of living arrangements with or without marriage, between different genders, or between individuals of the same gender. After the profound changes in the family, it is logical to wonder whether it is an institution of the past or one that still has a future (Bengtson et al. 2002; Bramlett and Mosher 2002; Casper and Bianchi 2002; Donati 2011, 2013, 2014).

In the attempt to answer this question, some scholars who reject individualization as an interpretative criterion have tried to sketch a more thorough and sophisticated way of conceptualizing and representing family life and, at the same time, find new ways of capturing the multidimensionality of relationships by valuing the concept of *relationality*, as opposed to the dominant individualistic interpretation (Smart 2007; Morgan 1996; Finch and Mason 1993, 2000; Carsten 2000, 2004; Gillis 1996, 2004; Chapman and Hockey 1999; Miller 1998; Donati 2011). Among these theorizations, we particularly agree with Donati's Relational Sociology (2011, 2012, 2013) according to which, despite today's changing scenario, the family remains an institution (Donati 2006a).

From the Relational Sociology viewpoint, the development and dynamics of the family can be fully grasped with reference to theories on social morphogenesis (Archer 1995, 2007, 2013; Donati and Archer 2015). These in fact can help us understand the differentiation processes at work in contemporary societies such as the attempt to consolidate the living arrangements of some groups of people. Although these may become settled for a time (i.e., morphostasis), they always must be screened according to certain criteria to decide whether a morphogenesis has taken place (Donati 2014).

The Relational Perspective (Donati 2014) postulates a family genome (i.e., a *latent structural pattern*) that has been present since the beginning of the history of civilization in all past cultures – namely, a *cultural universal*. It consists of a dual relationship with unique characteristics, and it connects the male and the female genders, produces vertical bonds between the generations, and creates interrelated genealogies. In contemporary society, humans feel free to experiment with novel ways of articulating the family genome inherited from previous generations, thus producing a spectrum of a variety of living arrangements. It would be incorrect, however, to regard this as a morphogenesis of the original pattern – that is, to think of a number of various family forms all equally falling within the family concept. Rather, it is the case of diverse lifestyles resembling, to a greater or lesser degree, a family pattern that in fact remains unaltered.

Nevertheless, the family can be defined as a social mediation relationship, as the mediations between the genders, between the generations, and between the individual and society that take place in it. Within the family, each individual is defined by both gender and position in the generational sequence (i.e., parent and / or child) and life cycle (i.e., age).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Within this theoretical and sociological context, this chapter focuses on Italian society as the subject of interesting morphogenetic processes. The research questions addressed were:

- Is the family still considered a valid institution by Italians?
- Is it possible to identify determinants or influencing elements (both structural and cultural, Rossi 2001, 2012) for this perception of the family as an institution? If so, which determinants are they?

The research hypotheses prompted by these questions are the following:

1. We expect the family to still be considered a valid institution by the majority of Italians.
2. In the light of Relational Sociology, specific structural and cultural influencing elements associated with a clear-cut idea of the family being an institution can be expected.

In particular, and consistent with a number of earlier findings (Dollahite et al. 2004; Glenn 1996; Mahoney et al. 2001; Bengtson et al. 2002; Coontz 2000; Hackstaff 1999; Scanzoni 2001; Stacey 1990), we expect the presence of children and the stability of the marriage bond (i.e., being married vs. cohabiting, separated, or divorced) to be the decisive favourable structural determinants, with strong religiosity and importance attributed to the couple relationship² (as opposed to personal gratification) as the crucial cultural influences.

Data

The questions were answered based on results emerging from a recent quantitative study on ‘The Family, a Resource for Society’ (Donati 2012) – a large population survey on family relationships in Italy³ – carried out between March and April 2011 and financed by the Pontifical Council

²The importance of being married, with a stable commitment, procreating, and bringing up children.

³The interviewees were selected by randomly digitizing landline and mobile phone numbers taken from the telephone lists of the sampled towns. Later, their eligibility for participating in the survey was restricted to individuals within the age bracket considered in the study and in couple relationships. A home appointment was made for each one for presenting 40-question questionnaire created by using the CAPI method. The opportunity to carry out face-to-face dialogues led to the collection of reliable data, with very low rates of unanswered questions. The data were computerized and 89 variables were obtained.

for the Family.⁴ The survey was based on a probabilistic sample of individuals representing Italy's 30–55-year-old resident population classified according to gender, age bracket (i.e., 30–35, 36–40, 41–45, 46–50, 51–55), area of residence (i.e., North–West, North–East, Centre, South, Isles). All respondents were in couple relationships and may or may not have been cohabiting with their partners.

The sample, theoretically set to a maximum of 3500 cases, was obtained through two-stage sampling. First, 21 towns were selected across Italy's 5 macro-regions: North–West, North–East, Centre, South, Isles; then prospective interviewees were identified. Subsequently, the interviews were distributed across the selected towns considering the weight of each macro-area. For each area, the interviews were distributed equally among the various towns. The reference universe amounted to a total of 23,439 and 217 units (Tronca 2012). The sample, covering all subsamples, included 3527 individuals, of whom 49.6 % were males and 50.4 % were females. Respondents had an average age of 42 and predominantly were living in highly urbanized areas and distributed as follows: 46.8 % in Northern Italy, 19.7 % in the Centre, and 33.5 % in the South.

All the interviewees were in couple relationships; most of the respondents were married (with or without children, 63.8 %) and others were unmarried – that is, either singles; cohabiting couples, with or without children; or living apart together (LAT), 36.2 % (see Appendix 5.1). Significantly, the number of family members was on average below three (i.e., 2.92). Most respondents held a higher education diploma (52.2 %). They were private-sector employees (35.0 %), self-employed (21.0 %), and public-sector employees (18.0 %); there were also some housewives (12.0 %).

Participants answered a series of questions in order to tap into the following areas: sociodemographic variables, solidarity and openness to the social context, social capital, trust in institutions, couple relationship, parent–child relationship (if they had children), work–family balance, and representation of their social context and of institutions.

⁴The Pontifical Council for the Family was instituted by blessed John Paul II with the *Motu Proprio* 'Familia a Deo instituta' on May 13, 1981; it is responsible for the promotion of the pastoral ministry and apostolate to the family, through the application of the teachings and guidelines of the Church's Magisterium (see http://www.familiam.org/famiglia_eng/about_us/00002569_Structure_and_Objective.html). The results were presented at the 2012 World Meeting of Families in Milan.

Methodology and Data Analysis

In line with international large surveys,⁵ a variable was devised specifically for analyzing the research questions and verifying the hypotheses. Depending on the answer given to the question: ‘Do you think the family is a social institution or just a matter of private choice?’, two groups were created: the people claiming that ‘the family is just a matter of private choice’ (59.1 %) versus those claiming that ‘the family is a social institution with public value’ (39.9 %) (Table 5.1).

A bounded cluster analysis was carried out by means of SPAD software⁶ in order to describe differences between the two groups; clusters were predetermined on the basis of a variable at two levels: those that consider the ‘family as a matter for private choice’ and those who ‘see the family as a social institution’. In each cluster, variables ranged from most to least significant, and only those that best served the researcher are presented and commented on. The data presented are not averages and describe a group in a statistically significant way (t -value over 2.00).

Those considering *the family a matter for private choice* (see Appendix 5.2) tended to be younger people (age 30–35), people living in the North–

Table 5.1 Do You Think the Family Is a Social Institution or Just a Matter of Private Choice?

	Number	Valid (%)
A social institution	1419	40.9
Just a matter of private choice	2053	59.1
Total	3472	100.0

⁵ In the European Values Study (EVS), as well as the WVS, a specific question was posed about marriage as an institution. Here we decided to change marriage with family because we consider, as previously explained, a marriage-based family.

⁶ The cluster analysis presented here was processed with SPAD software; this is a ‘bounded cluster’ because we do not search of clusters because these are predetermined by the researcher on the basis of a variable – in this case considering the family as an institution or private choice. This is not the typical cluster analysis; however, it uses the same procedures and the same tests. In particular, in tables the following data are presented: t -value is a measure of similarity between the mode of a variable and the group defined by the cluster, generally we can consider significant modes with a t -value equal or more than 2; PROB. is the test significance, which is accepted if lower than $p < 0.05$; percent Total is the mode percentage over the total sample; percent CAT/GRP indicates the mode percentage inside the cluster considered (for details, see Lanzetti 1996).

West and in large cities, people of medium–low socioeconomic status, cohabiting, separated / divorced people in new relationships, people married for the second time (or more times), childless people, and people with a medium–low degree of religiosity. They also showed low levels of social trust, openness to their social context, and solidarity (see bonding and bridging social capital⁷). Respondents reported low levels of couple satisfaction and seemed self-oriented; in fact they considered the couple relationship not to need any marriage bond and to be based on the partners' gratification. Some people believed in the importance of finding a good compromise between family and work in order to fulfill their aspirations. Finally, their main focus was work (see 'ideal family').

The second group, those who consider the family as a social institution (see Appendix 5.3), instead was composed of older people (age 50–55); people living in the South, in the North–East, and in small towns; people of medium–high socioeconomic status; married people with children; people who declared they were very religious. These respondents reported high levels of couple satisfaction, parental alliance,⁸ parental self-efficacy,⁹ and low levels of perceived parental stress.¹⁰ In addition, they seemed relationship-oriented – that is, they believed that a couple relationship should be based on the marriage bond and that the decisive elements for its success are the partners' commitment to the relationship and to

⁷This is understood as an increase in trust-based, reciprocal, and collaborative relationships. The reference here is to Relational Sociology's own concept of social capital (Donati and Prandini, 2007a, b; Rossi 2007; Rossi et al. 2011), rather than the individualistic-instrumental-structural perspective (Bourdieu, Coleman) or the holistic-politological-culturalist one (Putnam, Fukuyama). Considering the multidimensionality of the concept of social capital, and the variety of characteristics according to the various schools of thought and their research aims, a number of authors have highlighted their different features, including the distinction between bonding and bridging social capital (Narayan 2002; Putnam 2000). A bonding social capital binds the subjects from within and tends to be exclusive, typically applying to groups with strong identities; a bridging social capital, on the other hand, connects dissimilar people and environments. A third type, the so-called, called 'linking social capital' (Woolcock 1998), is the virtual vertical connection with public or political institutions that can influence choices.

⁸Level of parents' agreement in tackling children's upbringing: high (20.93 %).

⁹Parents must: (a) give children all they want: disagree, 40.73 %; (b) transmit to children what counts in life: agree, 38.13 %; (c) get children to understand what to do/not to do: agree, 36.36 %; (d) let children express themselves on anything: agree, 26.64 %; and ability to help your child solve various problems: high, 21.49 %.

¹⁰Bringing up my child is harder than I'd expected: not really, 14.94 %.

having children. They also believed in the importance of finding a good compromise between family and work in order to give their children a better upbringing and to dedicate time and energy to relationships (e.g., with partner, in-laws, other relatives, other families, and associations). Finally, these subjects showed high levels of social trust, openness to the social context, and solidarity. In particular, they reported being prepared to help other family members and people outside the family boundaries, to relying on other family members in case of need, and to participating in association activities. When compared, the two groups appeared to differ in terms of sociodemographic and cultural variables (Table 5.2).

To find out whether there exists a significant association between the importance attributed to the family as a social institution and the preced-

Table 5.2 Family as a Social Institution *versus* Private Choice

	Family as a Private Choice	Family as a Social Institution
Where living	In the North–West and in very large cities	In the South and in the North–East, and in small towns
Age	Younger people (age 30–35)	Older people (age 50–55)
Marital status and family type	Cohabiting, separated/divorced people in new relationships, married for the second time or more	Married people with children
Educational qualification	Childless people Low	High
Socioeconomic status	Medium–low	Medium–high
Religiosity	Medium–low	High
Couple relationship	Couple satisfaction: low	Couple satisfaction: high
	Important for the couple relationship: Partner’s personal gratification	Important for the couple relationship: Stability commitment Procreating and bringing up children
	Being married is unimportant for relationship	Being married is important

(continued)

Table 5.2 (continued)

	Family as a Private Choice	Family as a Social Institution
Parental relationship		Parental alliance: high Parental self-efficacy: high Perceived parental stress: low
Ideal family	Both working full time	1 full time +1 part time
Family in the near future	Both working full time	1 full time +1 part time
Family-work reconciliation is important to:	Fulfill my aspirations	Give my children a better upbringing Invest time in relationships
Bonding social capital	Low	High
Bridging social capital	Low	High

Note: The characteristics presented here are the modes according variables that significantly deviate in their percentages from the corresponding percentages in the total sample (compare to Appendix 5.2 and 5.3).

ing group characteristics, we have used a Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) method, a logistic regression showing all other attributes controlled for in the model being equal, the odds ratio that a certain result (i.e., dependent variable) may take place, depending on the independent variables.

According to previous research (Pollini 2011; Rossi 2012, 2014), the perception of family as a social institution was set as a dependent variable, while age (in five bands), religiosity (self-definition), marital status (married, remarried, separated / divorced, unmarried, widowed), number of children (nil, one, two, or more), education (low, medium, high), and area of residence (North, Centre, South) were chosen as independent variables (Table 5.3). We used a ‘predictive’ logistic regression model with dichotomous dependent variables and more multimodal independent variables, by the method ‘Enter’ in order to see the odds ratios of all variables considered.

The results highlight that perceiving family as an institution tends to be the view of people who regard themselves as religious, those who

Table 5.3 Logistic Regression Results: Prediction of Family as Institution According to Some Respondents' Characteristics

Variables	Exp(B)
Do you consider yourself quite/very religious?	1.320***
30–35 years (ref. mode)	
36–40 years	0.848
41–45 years	0.964
46–50 years	0.987
51–55 years	1.387**
Unmarried (ref. mode)	
Married for the first time	1.103
Married for the second or more time(s)	0.565*
Separated/divorced	0.768
Widowed	1.114
No children (ref. mode)	
1 child	1.204
2 or more children	1.448***
North (ref. mode)	
Centre	0.863
South	1.042
Low (ref. mode)	
Medium	1.437***
High	1.835***
Constant	0.352***

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

have two or more children, and those who have a medium or high level of education. In particular, those who are religious are more likely to consider family as an institution than nonreligious people, and those over 51 are more likely than younger ones. Moreover, a medium and high education increases the probability of considering family as institution in comparison with a low level of education, as well as having two or more children compared with having no children.

The geographical area of residence seems insignificant, as well as marital status, except for remarried people who are considerably less likely than unmarried to value the family as institution. This confirms at least some the results of the cluster analysis, and it is, at large, in line with our hypotheses. Besides, other things being equal, the most significant independent variables appear to be the number of children and religiosity, and unlike our initial expectations also the level of education.

How Can the Results Be Interpreted?

We had expected the presence of children to affect people's perception of the family being an institution. Strictly speaking, this hypothesis is not completely confirmed because the presence of one child does not increase the likelihood of that view significantly. Only the presence of a second child does. Such results are actually not so surprising in Italy where cohabitation is still considered as a prelude to marriage and married family is judged as the perfect context for childbearing. Moreover, the significance of the presence of a second child could be explained considering the Italians fertility choice: the modal value is in fact one child, while the choice to have two or more children assumes a strong investment in a family relationship and stable marital bond.

Regarding the favourable influence of religiosity on the view of the family being an institution, the expectation we formulated was confirmed. This relationship, however, is more complex and could be better highlighted by a variety of studies emphasizing the importance of religiosity for the couple bonds in terms of increased marital satisfaction (Hünler and Gençöz 2005; Dudley and Kosinski 1990; Orathinkal and Vansteewegen 2006), commitment (Sullivan 2001), and stability (Call and Heaton 1997).

In addition, as emphasized by Fincham, the sharing of religious faith enforces the marital relationship: praying together is potentially an important means for enhancing relationship outcomes (Fincham and Beach 2014), for increasing forgiveness, and for relationship satisfaction (Braithwaite et al. 2011). These results enlarge this perspective by highlighting the relevance of religion not only for couple satisfaction or functioning but also on personal judgment regarding the importance of the family for the society.

Conclusion

The original hypotheses have been partly confirmed. The family is still considered a valid institution (H1), though only by a minority of them (40.9 %). Thus showing a tendency, also in Italy as in most countries in Europe, particularly in the North–West, towards a view of the family as a matter of private

choice (59.1 %). The data, concerning people perception about family as institution, seem thus to confirm ISTAT findings (2014a, b) about the presence of a progressive de-institutionalization of the family in favour of a growing individualism, as claimed by several authors (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1993, 1995; Giddens 1991, 1992, 1999; Bauman 2000, 2003).

Beside these trends, however, a generative orientation valuing the family as the foundation of society can also be found. And it can be assumed that in particular parts of Italian society this orientation is still strong. It was possible to identify at least a few structural and cultural factors significantly affecting the importance attributed to the family as an institution (H2): procreation or, more precisely, a large number of children, religiosity and education take on considerable importance, unlike age and marital status.

These interesting results, however, are in line with what has emerged from other large surveys: particularly, the results of the European Values Study (EVS)¹¹ confirm that Europeans are surprisingly conservative as to the family: 'Married-with-children' is the preferred lifestyle for an overwhelming majority, despite the liberal 1960s, emancipation and individualism¹² (Halman et al. 2011); besides, the family represents the fundamental value for Italians¹³ as well as Europeans: data from the Fourth Wave (2008), in fact, show 91 % of Italians to attribute great importance to the family, a constant trend since 1999 and one slightly above that of 1990 (Pollini 2011). Besides, marriage keeps its institutional value to 76 % of Italians (one percentage point above a European average of 75 %) (Pollini 2011; Rossi 2012).

¹¹The European Values Study is a large-scale, transnational, longitudinal research program (carried out in 1981, 1990, 1999 and 2008) on human values in Europe. It investigated the moral, religious, societal, political, work, and family values of Europeans. Its fourth wave in 2008 covered 47 European countries / regions, and it is particularly interesting because it offers a new insight into the transformations of the couple bonds. The sample in 2008 included 1519 people in Italy, 67,492 people considering all 47 European countries.

¹²The European Values Study 2008.

¹³Italy ranges above the European average (84 %) in attributing 'great importance' to the family.

Further data processing based on the *Importance of the Family as Institution Index*¹⁴ and a logistic regression¹⁵ with EVS data confirm family as very important value and still considered an institution, moreover the people conception of the family as institution is strictly related to marriage: in particular, the analysis shows that it is possible to identify some cultural and structural elements distinguishing those who hold the family as an institution in high regard and those who do not; such differences are linked to religiosity, the presence of children and different couple paths. As confirmed by logistic regressions, the married who are highly religious effectively attribute great importance to the family as an institution, unlike the cohabiting and divorced (low index), thus showing religiosity is crucial to explaining the orientation towards the family as an institution, which particularly applies to Italy (Rossi 2014).

Data here presented confirm the importance of religious dimension, but to a lesser extend of marriage – if compared with the EVS data already mentioned. Such results, however, demand further reflection. Will the nuclear family, consisting in a married couple with children, become more uncommon and less appealing as a life choice? Why?

¹⁴The index was based on the variables constructed based on answers on the following questions:

- How important is the Family? (mode: very important)
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: ‘marriage is an outdated institution?’ (mode: disagree)
- Do you agree or disagree with those who say that, in order ‘to grow into a happy adult, a child needs a family with both parents?’ (mode: tend to agree).

Greater weight is attributed to some answer modes (family: very important; marriage is an outdated institution: disagree; child needs a family with both parents: tend to agree); the average score was calculated according to the answers given, then the score was recoded on three levels. The analysis shows a low correlation between the importance attributed to the family and the presence of both parents (Pearson’s correlation EU = 0.056 and Ita = 0.058, $p < 0.001$). An analysis of the main components confirms that the three variables considered are correlated with the same factor.

¹⁵To prove the existence of a significant association between the Importance of the Family as an Institution Index and some potentially relevant variables, we used a logistic regression, applied to both the Italian and the European samples, on an MLE basis. The high and low indices were used as dependent variables; conversely, age (in 4 brackets), gender, presence of employment, self-definition as to being (or not being) religious, and couple paths (married, cohabiting, divorced, unmarried, LAT) were used as independent variables.

What (pushing or pulling) personal, family and social factors will affect this trend?

Wondering about continuity and change of perception about family as institution in Italy, where relevant structural transformation are present, we can see that family as institution persist at least with a strong link with religiosity. This raises questions about the process of secularization outcomes in Italy: data here presented seem to suggest us that with a decreasing in religiosity also the importance of the family as an institution could fall.

These process need to be examined also by longitudinal survey research as well as by qualitative and narrative methodologies; these would encompass the subject's decisional and reflexive processes demanded by the family choice, to view it within personal / family history and in the self-construction process (Archer 2007).

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Appendix 5.1 Sample composition

	Gender		Age							Geographical Area		
	Total	M	F	30-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	North	Centre	South and Islands	
Married without children	11.7	12.0	11.3	15.1	9.7	8.8	10.6	14.6	11.2	13.0	11.6	
Married with one child	24.8	25.3	24.4	17.8	27.4	28.0	26.8	24.6	25.9	24.5	23.6	
Married with children	27.3	25.2	29.4	13.1	21.2	31.7	35.7	38.2	24.2	22.9	34.3	
Single parent with one child	2.5	1.3	3.7	2.1	2.6	2.7	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.0	
Single parent with children	1.4	0.3	2.4	0.9	0.7	0.8	2.5	2.3	1.8	1.0	1.1	
Cohabiting, without children	13.4	15.2	11.7	23.0	16.1	10.9	8.3	6.7	15.6	15.9	9.0	
Cohabiting, with one child	3.3	2.8	3.7	3.1	4.1	4.5	2.4	1.8	3.4	4.0	2.6	
Cohabiting, with children	1.8	1.4	2.1	0.4	2.5	2.1	2.2	1.7	1.8	2.2	1.5	
Family including other relatives	4.1	4.1	4.2	10.7	4.1	1.7	1.8	1.3	2.9	3.9	6.0	
Living alone	9.7	12.4	7.1	13.8	11.6	8.8	7.3	6.0	10.6	10.2	8.2	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
A.V.	3522	1747	1775	769	731	753	672	597	1646	694	1182	
How many in family? (average value)	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.2	2.8	2.8	3.1	

Appendix 5.2 Cluster 1: The Family a matter for private choice

Variables	Categories	% CAT/ GRP	% Total	t-value	Prof
Size of town/area of residence	More than 250,000 inhabitants	52.56	47.60	6.93	0.000
	North–West	29.57	27.05	3.95	0.000
Age	36–40	22.02	20.73	2.20	0.014
Status and family type	Number of children: 0	41.26	38.11	4.52	0.008
	<i>Who are the people living together?</i>				
	Cohabiting without children	15.05	13.41	3.35	0.000
	How many in total? 2	29.47	27.59	2.92	0.002
	<i>What is your marital status?</i>				
	Unmarried	26.60	24.89	2.73	0.003
	Separated/divorced, with partner	6.92	6.01	2.63	0.004
	Married twice or more times	4.24	3.57	2.45	0.007
Educational qualification	Lower secondary	25.91	24.24	2.70	0.003
Socioeconomic status	Medium–low	40.92	38.81	2.99	0.001
Type of work	Private-sector employee	36.73	34.96	2.57	0.005
Religiosity	Do you consider yourself religious? not at all	19.24	16.64	4.89	0.000
	<i>Religious attendance:</i>				
	Occasional	13.93	12.65	2.68	0.004
	Nil	30.64	29.06	2.40	0.008
Parent–child relationship	Parents must give children all they want	27.13	24.41	4.42	0.000
Couple relationship	<i>Commitment to couple relationship:</i>				
	Personal gratification: enough	41.74	38.33	4.90	0.000
	<i>Stability commitment:</i>				
	Enough	35.70	31.41	6.48	0.000
	Low	7.36	6.44	2.58	0.005

(continued)

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Appendix 5.2 (continued)

Variables	Categories	% CAT/ GRP	% Total	t-value	Prof
Couple relationship	<i>Procreation and children's upbringing:</i>				
	Enough	32.59	30.20	3.62	0.000
	Low	12.32	10.89	3.20	0.001
	<i>Importance of being married:</i>				
	Low	26.30	24.41	3.06	0.001
	Enough	41.26	39.55	2.41	0.000
	<i>Satisfaction with partner:</i>				
Ideal family	Enough	48.81	46.61	3.05	0.001
	Low	13.59	12.42	2.45	0.007
Family expected in near future	Both partners working full time	38.82	34.90	5.75	0.000
Family-work reconciliation to:	Both partners working full time	46.61	42.73	5.49	0.000
	Fulfill aspirations: enough	62.49	59.31	4.50	0.000
	Invest time in relationships: enough	59.52	57.24	3.19	0.001
Help within family (social capital bonding)	Give children a better upbringing: enough	46.57	43.83	3.83	0.000
	Reliance on family members when in need: enough	54.16	50.64	4.91	0.000
	Mutual help within family: enough	62.64	59.20	4.87	0.000
	Family members help more than they complain: little more	24.50	21.75	4.67	0.000
	Can you count on your grandparents' help? no	45.40	43.86	2.14	0.016
Social capital (bridging)	Participation in association activities by someone in the family:				
	Little	25.18	23.42	2.89	0.002
	Very little	24.55	23.05	2.46	0.007
	Family's trust in neighbours: very little	10.18	9.21	2.29	0.011

Appendix 5.3 Cluster 2: The Family is a social institution

Variables	Categories	% Cat/ Grp	% Total	T-value	Prof
Size of town/ area of residence	100,001–250,000 inhabitants	43.69	38.42	5.24	0.000
	Up to 100,000 inhabitants	17.27	13.98	4.54	0.000
	South	26.50	22.77	4.27	0.000
	North–East	21.92	19.71	2.66	0.004
Age	51–55	20.08	16.93	4.03	0.000
Marital status and family type	<i>Marital status:</i> Married for the first time	64.48	58.49	5.91	0.000
	<i>Family composition:</i> Married couple and 1+ children	31.78	27.30	4.84	0.000
	Number children: 2	29.46	25.94	3.85	0.000
	Number of children: 3+	6.84	5.78	2.11	0.017
	Number of family members: 4	28.26	25.43	3.11	0.001
	5+	7.19	6.12	2.08	0.019
Educational qualification	University/postgraduate	26.07	23.53	2.87	0.002
Socioeconomic status	High	25.23	22.03	3.70	0.000
Worker type	Public sector employee	20.51	18.00	3.12	0.001
Religiosity	Quite religious	44.40	40.18	4.16	0.000
	Very religious	11.42	10.29	1.74	0.041
	Religious attendance: Regular	16.07	12.59	5.02	0.000
	Occasional	29.53	25.94	3.93	0.000
Couple relationship	<i>Commitment to couple relationship:</i> Stability commitment: high	68.85	61.78	7.09	0.000
	Generating and bring up children: high	62.58	56.71	5.76	0.000
	Personal gratification: high	57.29	52.34	4.80	0.000
	Importance of being married: high	27.06	22.37	5.41	0.000
	Satisfaction with partner relationship: high	44.82	40.40	4.35	0.000

(continued)

Appendix 5.3 (continued)

Variables	Categories	% Cat/ Grp	% Total	T-value	Prof
Parent-child relationship	<i>Parents must:</i>				
	Give children all they want: disagree	40.73	33.57	7.33	0.000
	Transmit to children what counts in life: agree	38.13	34.90	3.25	0.001
	Get children to understand what to do/not to do: agree	36.36	33.51	2.90	0.002
	Let children express themselves on anything: agree	26.64	22.94	4.23	0.000
	Bringing up my child is harder than I'd expected: not really	14.94	11.57	5.04	0.000
	Level of parents' agreement in tackling children's upbringing: high	20.93	17.30	4.61	0.000
	Ability to help your child solve various problems: high	21.49	18.09	4.24	0.000
	Ideal family	1 full time +1 part time	44.68	38.28	6.37
Expected family in near future	1 full time +1 part time	33.90	29.32	4.85	0.000
Importance of reconciliation to:	Give children a better upbringing: high	49.89	44.40	5.35	0.000
	Invest time in relationships: high	32.49	29.80	2.82	0.002
	Fulfill my aspirations: low	10.85	8.90	3.25	0.001
Family help (SC bonding)	Reliance on family members when in need: a lot	41.23	35.92	5.34	0.000
	Mutual help within family: a lot	36.01	30.90	5.33	0.000
	Family members help more than they complain: a lot more	28.26	23.16	5.81	0.000
	Can you count on your grandparents' help? Yes	54.19	52.00	2.11	0.018

(continued)

Appendix 5.3 (continued)

Variables	Categories	% Cat/ Grp	% Total	T-value	Prof
SC (bridging)	Someone in the family participates in association activities:				
	Yes, a lot	13.46	10.26	5.03	0.000
	Enough	26.71	23.84	3.22	0.001
	Extent of participation in child's school life/other activities: a lot	24.88	21.07	4.49	0.000
	Family's trust in neighbours: a lot	22.90	19.73	3.82	0.000
	Time spent by family member(s) to help people living outside the family: a lot	15.15	12.96	3.12	0.001
	Do you assist people outside the family by listening to them and helping them overcome personal problems? yes, a lot	19.59	17.52	2.60	0.005

Part II

Family Across the Individual Life Course

6

The Influence of Personal Networks on Decision Making About Family Formation: Has It Changed?

Vida Česnuitytė

Introduction: Family Formation Between Natural Order and Individual Responsibility

For centuries, family formation has been associated with the reproduction of family members and the preservation of the socioeconomic status quo inherited by the family (Becker 1993 [1981]). Eventually, strategies, including social norms and control mechanisms of family formation, were developed and integrated into historic European societies (Bourdieu 1976; Lesthaeghe 1980). According to Malthus (1798), matrimonial behaviour depended on the interrelation of two control systems: *positive control* meaning socio-economic restrictions to individual choices (i.e., competition in the labour

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market, unemployment, poverty, others) and *preventive control* meaning the establishment of social norms and social control (i.e., early marriage or its postponement, conscious celibacy, large families, childlessness, others).

In pre-modern societies and early modern ones, positive control was usually not necessary once preventive control was internalized and practiced by individuals and groups. Consciously or unconsciously, individuals were pushed to follow the norms regarding marriage registration, which included an appropriate age at the time of marriage, choice of an appropriate partner, childbirth within registered marriage, and so on. Marriage of youngsters from families with similar ranks and amounts of capitals (e.g., economic, cultural, social, and symbolic) was at the same time prescribed by family groups and most of the time desired by individuals (Bourdieu 1976). For marriages of young people from families with unequal capital and status, social punishments (e.g., stigmatization, restriction of rights to inherit parental property, or even expulsion from the community) were applied. Individuals usually conformed to such social norms and control mechanisms assigned to the so-called *natural order* (Becker 1993 [1981]; Lesthaeghe 1980). Breaking social norms sometimes occurred when the age limit for family formation and procreation was reached and couples wanted to live together, have sexual relationships, or a child, and necessary resources for family formation were insufficient or even impossible to acquire. Individuals who ignored the social order inevitably experienced social sanctions. In pre-modern and early modern European societies, generally stigmatization or even social exclusion from the community were practiced. This way, individuals abandoned personal interests for the sake of the happiness of their families, communities, and society as a whole. In certain cases, when individuals managed to overcome the barriers of natural order, new symbolic codes (Lesthaeghe 1980) were created.

Burgess (1926), Lesthaeghe (1998), Van de Kaa (1997), and other scholars suggest that industrialization, urbanization, and modernization have changed the priorities in the family-formation process. New directions in family formation have become especially evident in modern times. The old social order was changed into *individual responsibility* (Lesthaeghe 1980). Individuals are supposed to have become liberated from the strict control of family and society. Because of the extension

of social and economic protection by the welfare state, the family is no longer the only source of funds. Individual choices and decisions on family formation are dependent on opportunities in the labour market, career, education, and various other spheres beyond family life (Bourdieu 1998; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Giddens 1999).

Involvement in the educational system and opportunities in the labour market offered new conditions for individuals to develop their personal networks. Such conditions are conducive to greater individual autonomy, including choice of family formation pattern (Bourdieu 1998; Manting 1994, 1996). Dating, partnership or marriage (un)registration became part of the lifestyle and identity of certain social groups (Giddens 1991). Personal feelings, needs for self-expression, and self-realization came to the forefront (Beck 1992; Giddens 1999). At the same time, senior family members began to lose their authority (Becker 1993 [1981]). Members of the societies, who maintained traditional strategies of matrimonial behaviour, were forced to accept new patterns of family formation. Unregistered marriage (cohabitation), voluntary celibacy, childbirth out of wedlock, and other patterns of family formation, at the beginning perceived as a break from social norms and the social order, became socially accepted and even expected (Lesthaeghe 1980, 1998; Lesthaeghe and Moors 2000; Manting 1994, 1996; Van de Kaa 1997, 1987).

Until the end of the twentieth century, structural and functional theoretical perspectives dominated the investigation of personal networks' influences in family formation. For example, based on such a structural perspective, Kearns and Leonard (2004) found that family networks at marriage predict wives' marital quality by the first anniversary. Cotton et al. (1993) found that spouses who maintain shared personal networks have more stable and satisfying marriages. Parks and Adelman (1983) showed that communication with friends and family networks positively influence romantic relationships. Other researches on personal networks' and family formation interrelation focused on disruptive influences – for example, Julien et al. (1999) found that ties beyond the family create relationships that compete with the conjugal bonds.

Milardo et al. (1983), conversely, showed that romantic relationships may not be conducive to maintenance of relationships with networks of friends. It was revealed that kin and non-kin networks have substan-

tially different influences on the family life of a couple. Differences are primarily in the amount of time, emotions, and other resources invested in each other (Wellman and Wortley 1989). Thus, personal networks contribute to a couple's stability or change, and on the other hand, family life influences the structures and functions of personal networks (Widmer 2004; Widmer et al. 2004, 2009).

More recently, research by Manning et al. (2011) revealed the influence of family networks in making a decision on unregistered marriage (cohabitation); it is realized through a variety of mechanisms, including parental advice, social modelling, religious values, economic control, and other factors. Other researches have focused on personal networks as a background for friendship development, finding similarities with works by Giddens (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) in which scholars argue that families are influenced by the persons within them and, at the same time, by the interaction with the networks beyond the family. For example, Spencer et al. (2002) identified ways that wider personal networks influence dyads' relationships – that is, through support, rendering of information, and extension of opportunities.

The Research Methodology

Goals and Questions

Even previous researches explored interrelations between family and personal networks, knowledge on influences of personal networks on individual decisions making concerning family creation patterns still is lacking. The main goal of this chapter is to explore current influences of personal and wider networks on individuals' decisions about family formation. The research is centred on two patterns: first, the influence of personal networks on the promotion of a registered marriage; second, the influence of such networks on unregistered marriages (cohabitation). A 'personal network' is defined in this research as consisting of parents, siblings, children, other relatives, and non-kin; among the latter could be friends, neighbours, and colleagues. Members of personal networks may influence decision making through the expression of opinions on the

individual choice of family formation pattern, or by showing examples of familial life, or by creating material conditions for family formation. Network influence also stems from the existence of social norms concerning marriage registration or choice of cohabitation.

Do personal and wider networks have influence in today's family-formation process? Are individuals influenced by the social control in their choice of registered or unregistered marriage? Theories and findings from previous research allow the formulation of the hypothesis that personal networks and social norms have lost their influences on individuals' decisions concerning family formation. Presuming that positive evaluations of personal networks' opinions and family patterns practiced by personal networks' members, social norms prove that they are important, and individuals are not immune to the influences of them in the family-formation process. Negative evaluations of opinions or family patterns practiced by personal networks' members mean that personal and wider networks have no more an influence on individual decision making. Moreover, an autonomy in decision making about marriage registration or moving into an unregistered marriage relates to the socioeconomic characteristics of individuals.

Hypothesis testing is based on quantitative data collected in Lithuania within the research project 'Trajectories of Family Models and Personal Networks: Intergenerational Perspective' (Kanopienė et al. 2013). Lithuania is an example of a society in transition. Since the middle of the twentieth century, family formation there was influenced mostly by inheritance from the previous generations' traditions and also by the Soviet system and ideology. The previous generations, especially those born before the 1950s, were socialized in Catholic values with an intense orientation towards commitments to the family and respecting the opinions of elderly family members.

Between 1940 and 1990, the state under the Soviet system took responsibility and control over material conditions that may have influenced decisions on family formation: absence of an adequate housing market, 100 % employment rate for men and women, low level of living with high level of equality in society, and 100 % of all children enrolled in the educational system from age 6 through 18. Citizens' capabilities to travel abroad, to read publications, or to receive any other information

on life patterns in countries beyond the Soviet space were limited. Under such conditions, unregistered marriage, childbirth outside of wedlock, divorces, and other alternative family patterns were not tolerated and in some cases punished by state institutions. Even so, divorces increased rapidly in Lithuanian society starting in the 1960s (Stankūnienė et al. 2003). The latter trend was influenced by industrialization and urbanization as had taken place in advanced Western countries (Lesthaeghe 1998; Van de Kaa 1997).

Since 1990, together with Independence Restoration, citizens of Lithuania have been able to travel abroad and receive information via the mass media from all over the world. People from various generations started to copy and practice lifestyles from the West, including its matrimonial and procreation behaviours. Moreover, the growth of a free market changed the situation of individuals in the labour market as well as their living conditions. Unregistered marriages, childbirth outside of wedlock, and other family formation patterns spread rapidly and widely in the society (Kanopienė et al. 2015; Stankūnienė et al. 2003). Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, as the European Value Survey (EVS) reveals, that change became evident not only in behaviours but also in attitudes: Lithuanian society became more open to alternative lifestyles than in Soviet times, and in the first decade after Independence Restoration various family formation patterns have been linked with more individual autonomy (Mitrikas 2000, 2007). Some assume that this means that individuals have gained more autonomy from personal networks and social norms. Nonetheless, empirical research on the influences of personal networks and social norms on individual decision making was still lacking.

Research Data

A quantitative questionnaire survey was used for the collection of empirical data. The sample size of 2000 respondents represents Lithuanian men and women born in four cohorts (i.e., 1950–1955, 1960–1965, 1970–1975, 1980–1985). The respondents were selected by applying a multistage stratified random sampling with the criteria being place of residence (e.g., big city, small city, village), gender (i.e., male, female),

and birth cohort. The respondents were surveyed in their homes. The fieldwork was carried out between November 2011 and February 2012.

The research is based on retrospective data, and therefore there are some limitations in our analysis: memory biases and dissimilar interpretations depending on time and context (Pearson et al. 1992) may mean the given information is not fully reliable. Nevertheless, we used such retrospective empirical data with the assumption of reliability and the possibility of verification in future research. To avoid memory biases and variations of interpretation, the analysis focused on cases of partnerships formed since 2000. Thus, the number of units of analysis decreased to 588 cases, among which 239 had chosen registered marriage and 349 had chosen unregistered marriage (cohabitation).

A standardized questionnaire with more than 100 questions was used for the survey. Among others, questions regarding the influences of personal networks on the family-formation process were included. For the analysis of personal networks' influences on marriage registration, the following question was formulated: 'How important were these factors for the registration of marriage with your current / last spouse?' This is a matrix-type question with 10 statements on how personal networks may influence decisions on marriage registration – that is, parents' opinions, relatives' opinions, friends wanted a party, your / partner's pregnancy, parents' family pattern, examples of married friends, desire to leave parental home, desire to begin sex life with boyfriend / girlfriend, opportunity to improve housing conditions, and desire to create a family.

Another question was the following: 'How many of these factors were important for nonregistration of marriage with your current / last partner?' This is also a matrix-type question with 11 statements on how personal networks may influence decisions on partnership without marriage registration – that is, parents' opinions, relatives' opinions, your / partner's pregnancy, parents' family pattern, examples of married friends, negative experience of previous marriage, is it economically beneficial, more social benefits offered for single mothers / fathers, partner doesn't offer / agree, don't / didn't want, and no need. Both questions contain the answers in columns. The answers are evaluated with a Likert-type scale: 1 = Not important at all; 2 = Not important; 3 = Neither important, nor unimportant; 4 = Important; 5 = Very important. For each statement, a

separate variable with corresponding values from 1 to 5 was created, with a total of 21 variables.

Since 2000, 303 male respondents and 285 female respondents from the sample have entered into a partnership. The empirical database covers the 1950–1955, 1960–1965, 1970–1975, and 1980–1985 birth cohorts. Because analysis is limited to partnerships since 2000, there are very few individuals from the oldest cohorts. Accordingly, the birth cohort variable was recorded using two values: 1 = 1950–1975 and 2 = 1980–1985, the first of which covers 195 cases while the latter covers 393 cases.

It was presumed that the respondent may be in the first, second, or a later partnership, in registered marriage or unregistered marriage. The respondent may also be living without a partner while being previously in a registered or unregistered marriage. Thus, a variable for the sequence of partnerships was introduced. In our research, 276 respondents stated that their current partnership is or last partnership was the first in their life; for 179 respondents it is / was a second partnership, and for 133 respondents the current / last partnership is / was their third or subsequent partnership.

A measurement of the educational level was included in the analysis based on research by Giddens (1999), Manting (1994, 1996), and other authors. In our research, 215 respondents correspond to higher education and 369 respondents correspond to a lower level of education. Finally, for the identification of people with whom respondents lived when dating started, five dichotomous variables were created, to represent living with parents, siblings, children, other relatives, and non-kin.

Results

We are first going to consider subjective opinions on the importance of personal networks and social norms in the decision of marriage registration and on moving into partnerships without marriage registration. For this reason, descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies and means) were applied. Further analysis of the groups of opinions in the case of marriage registration, and in the case of unregistered marriage, was carried out by applying a Factor analysis with a Principal Component Analysis extraction method and Varimax with the Kaiser Normalization rotation

method. Furthermore, dichotomous variables constructed based on Factor analysis scores and values of variables in the factors. These variables identify respondents with opinions corresponding to each factor.

Finally, for deeper analysis, we discuss sociodemographic features specific to the respondents in each group identified by Factor analysis. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was carried out for a further evaluation. The following sociodemographic features were considered: gender, birth cohort, sequence of partnership, level of education, and persons with whom respondents lived in the same household at the beginning of the last partnership.

Influences of Personal Networks on the Family-Formation Process

Opinions expressed by the respondents highlight an individual desire to create a family as the most important in decision making for marriage registration (mean = 4.4) (Figure 6.1). Parents' family pattern (mean = 3.3)

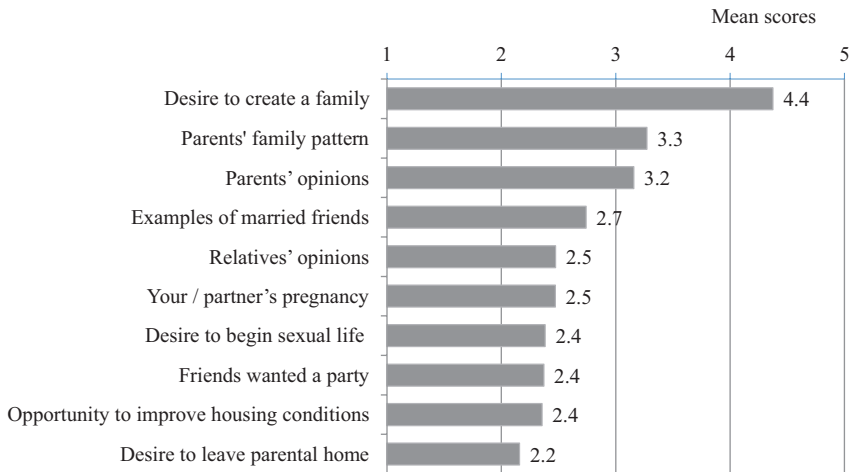


Fig. 6.1 Importance of personal networks for the decision of marriage registration. Mean scores of evaluations, with scale: 1 = Not important at all; 2 = Not important; 3 = Neither important, nor unimportant; 4 = Important; 5 = Very important

and their opinions (mean = 3.2) also are important in this process. Meanwhile, the evaluations' mean scores show less important examples of married friends (mean = 2.7), relatives' opinions (mean = 2.5), desire of friends to have a party (mean = 2.4), and other motivations related to personal networks.

Opinions of the respondents who live in partnerships without marriage registration reveal the importance of inner motives in family formation such as 'No need' (mean = 3.4) and 'Don't / didn't want' (mean = 3.3) (Figure 6.2). At the same time, relatives' and parents' opinions (mean = 1.9 and mean = 2.4), examples of married friends (mean = 2.4), and other personal networks' related motivations were evaluated as less important in the decision for nonregistration of the marriage.

At first glance, the presented results confirm the individualization theory (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 2002) and support the hypothesis that the individual is not affected by her or his personal networks' influences in decision making on family formation. It seems that the individual's desires

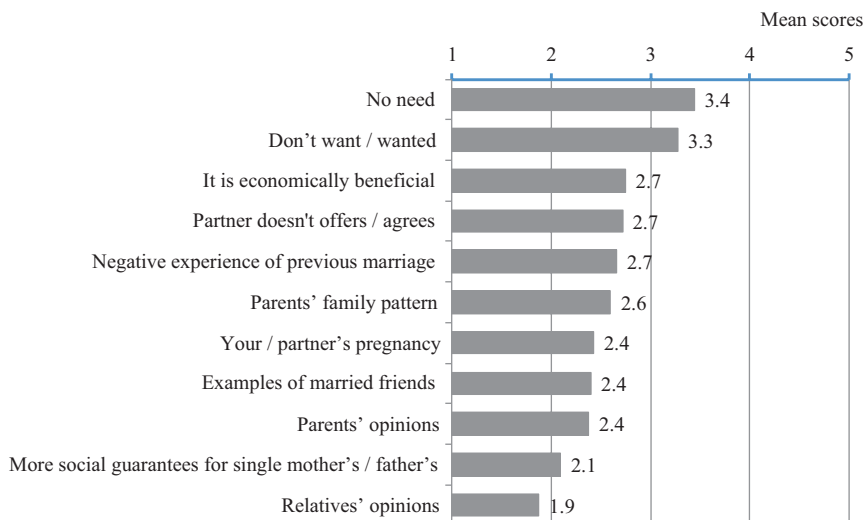


Fig. 6.2 Importance of personal networks for the decision on a partnership without marriage registration. *Mean scores of evaluations, with scale: 1 = Not important at all; 2 = Not important; 3 = Neither important, nor unimportant; 4 = Important; 5 = Very important*

and emotions in cases of a registered marriage or unregistered marriage are most important. Thus, it would seem that personal networks and social norms have not been so influential in the family-formation process in Lithuania since 2000. However, the Factor analysis led to a differentiation of opinions, and the research results reveal a different picture. At least four factors with different attitudes towards influences of personal networks for the decision on marriage registration were extracted (Table 6.1).

The first factor, called 'Orientation towards personal networks', focuses on parents' opinions, relatives' opinions, examples of married friends, parents' family patterns, and friends who want a party (Table 6.1, column 2). Respondents clear on this first factor are purposefully oriented towards expectations of their personal networks. Dichotomous variable show that in our research, 30.9 % of the respondents living in a registered marriage fall into this factor.

Table 6.1 Opinions on Personal Networks' Influences on the Decision of Marriage Registration. *The results of Factor Analysis*

	Orientation towards personal network	Orientation towards personal utility	Desire to create a family	Pregnancy
1	2	3	4	5
<i>Variances %</i>	27.827	21.513	10.745	10.617
Parents' opinions	0.834	0.050	-0.068	0.026
Relatives' opinions	0.827	0.126	-0.062	0.015
Examples of married friends	0.712	0.241	0.206	0.134
Parents' family pattern	0.677	0.228	0.271	0.318
Friends wanted a party	0.564	0.221	-0.324	-0.314
Desire to leave parental home	0.038	0.839	-0.077	0.113
Opportunity to improve housing conditions	0.208	0.826	0.043	-0.093
Desire to begin sexual life with boyfriend / girlfriend	0.241	0.759	-0.003	0.125
Desire to create a family	0.040	-0.022	0.900	-0.154
Your / partner's pregnancy	0.119	0.107	-0.164	0.884

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

Individuals with high scores on the second factor were first of all interested in leaving the parental home and improving their housing conditions (Table 6.1, column 3). Accordingly, the factor was called 'Orientation towards personal utility'. Inner demands, even expressed in material matters, are also a priority. Though, the decision to register a marriage because of the desire to begin a sexual life with a partner was also covered by this factor. This motivation expresses an orientation towards the social norm that a sexual relationship is valid only in a registered marriage. Control of procreative behaviours, including intimate relationships and childbirth, were the main instruments of preventive control and primary issues of so-called 'natural order' (Lesthaeghe 1980). Extramarital pregnancy was undesirable in Lithuania (Marcinkevičienė 1999). Its emergence was assigned to a break from the social norms and triggered sanctions.

In such cases, many individuals looked for ways out of the situation, among which was marriage registration of the child's parents, despite a possible lack of love between each other. Attitudes towards such situations have changed in the past decades in many societies, including Lithuania (Stankūnienė et al. 2003; Mitrikas 2000). In our research, the second factor, even primarily related to individual utilitarian needs, evidently is influenced by social norms on sexual life. As dichotomous variable show, 25.4 % of the respondents living in the registered marriage fall into this factor.

The third factor is linked with responses expressing 'desire to create a family' (Table 6.1, column 4). Such an attitude, on one hand, highlights individual desire and emotions and could be interpreted as digression from the opinions and examples of personal networks or social norms. On the other hand, such attitudes show obedience to rather traditional matrimonial behaviour: inner desires / emotions lead to family formation that is equal to registered marriage. According to dichotomous variable, 29.7 % of the respondents living in the registered marriage fall into this factor.

The fourth and final factor covers people who decided to register a marriage because they or their partners are pregnant (Table 6.1, column 5). Decision to register a marriage because of pregnancy may be influenced by the social norms that a child should be born in a registered marriage. It also can be a voluntary and conscious action. This factor could be joined with the previous one though Factor analysis revealed that the categories

'Desire to create a family' and 'Pregnancy' always goes separately, that is, these attitudes are common to different groups of the respondents. In this group we find influence of the wider network with its norms. As of dichotomous variable, 14 % of the respondents living in the registered marriage fall into this factor.

Factor analysis allows us to distinguish another four factors on attitudes on partnership without marriage registration (Table 6.2). In the first factor, decisions to move into partnership without marriage registration were influenced mostly by parents' opinions, parents' family pattern, examples of married friends, and relatives' opinions (Table 6.2, column 2). The factor is referred to as 'Orientation towards personal network'. Dichotomous variable show, 10.9 % of the respondents living in partnerships without marriage registration fall into the initial factor. According to the contents, this factor looks similar to the first factor of marriage

Table 6.2 Opinions on Personal Networks' Influences on the Decision of a Partnership without Marriage Registration. *The results of Factor Analysis.*

	Orientation towards personal network	Neglect personal networks' influences'	Orientation towards personal utility	Pregnancy
1	2	3	4	5
<i>Variances %</i>	24.457	17.397	13.968	11.677
Parents' opinions	0.854	-0.005	0.085	0.032
Parents' family pattern	0.790	0.060	-0.061	0.227
Examples of married friends	0.764	0.067	0.027	0.221
Relatives' opinions	0.737	0.045	0.228	-0.031
I don't want	0.086	0.870	0.008	0.175
I don't need	-0.165	0.821	0.100	0.062
Negative experience of previous partnership	0.264	0.586	0.098	-0.152
More social guarantees for single mothers / fathers	0.219	-0.031	0.846	0.088
It is economically beneficial	-0.018	0.208	0.843	0.013
Your / partner's pregnancy	0.230	-0.148	-0.044	0.777
Partner doesn't offer / disagrees	0.069	0.252	0.152	0.716

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

registration (Table 6.1, column 2). Notwithstanding, distinct final results mean that similar personal networks may have diverse influences.

The question is why? How does it work? It could be presumed that different decisions were influenced by variations in opinions: it may be supportive or nonsupportive. Similarly, an example of behaviour patterns may be desired or, on the contrary, undesired. In any case, the influence of personal networks on decisions to cohabit is evident.

In the second factor, called 'Neglect personal networks' influences', personal attitudes (I don't want; I don't need) are a priority in decision making on partnership without marriage registration (Table 6.2, column 3). It would seem that factor with autonomous from the personal networks opinions was found. But personal attitudes here align with the negative experiences in the previous partnership. As a consequence, individual attitudes are influenced by experiences in the personal life course and concern the interpersonal relationship with the former partner. In other words, persistence of influence of the personal network represented by its member (former partner) is evident. Dichotomous variable show, 67.3 % of the respondents in our research who enter into partnership without marriage registration fall into this group.

The third factor, called 'Orientation towards personal utility', covers motivations like 'More social guarantees for single mothers / fathers' and 'It is economically beneficial' (Table 6.2, column 4). People who chose partnership without marriage registration here were influenced by wider networks' measures: state's social policy or economy, situation in the housing and / or labour market, and other possible factors. According to dichotomous variable, 6.6 % of the respondents in partnership without marriage registration fall into this factor. These cases may be compared with the cases of orientation towards utility in registered marriages.

Thus, we have two separate decisions based on similar reasons. Why? And how does it work? It could be presumed that these two factors intersect, and variations in their decisions appear because of some aspects of state social protection laws or availabilities for young families in the housing market, and others; although in both cases, people make choices that are more beneficial to them (personal networks' influence), even though these benefits come from the wider networks (social norms' influence).

Finally, the fourth factor covers two main reasons for moving into a partnership without marriage registration: own or partner's pregnancy and absence of partner's wish or disagreement to register a marriage (Table 6.2, column 5). This factor is labelled 'Pregnancy'. On the one hand, the respondent agrees with the partner's attitude not to register a marriage even though pregnancy has emerged. On the other hand, the latter cohort holds with the attitude that a child should be born into a family, independent of its form (registered or unregistered marriage). As dichotomous variable show, 15.2 % of the respondents living in partnership without marriage registration fall into this factor.

Summing up the results, individualization in decisions about family-formation patterns can be found in Lithuanian society, at first glance. However, a deeper and more circumstantial analysis of individual decisions on family formation reveal influences of personal networks that may be on a personal-level, societal-level, or a mixture of both at the same time.

Features Interrelated with Variations in Personal Networks' Influence on Family Formation

To relate attitudes towards matrimonial behaviours with the sociodemographic features of the respondents, an ANOVA test was carried out (Table 6.3). Additionally, we explored the interrelation between the respondents' attitudes and network consisting of people who lived in the same households with the respondents at the time of the beginning of the dating relationship. Empirical data allow us to identify parents, siblings, children, other relatives, and non-kin in these networks (Table 6.4).

Means and the results of the ANOVA test (Table 6.3, row a) led to statistically significant results: the choice of marriage registration influenced by orientation towards personal network is specific to individuals who enter into their first partnership. Such matrimonial behaviour is more usual for women than men. Such individuals seem to have a lower rather than a higher education level. There is no statistical significance for cases when individuals choose unregistered marriage under the influence of their personal networks (Table 6.3, row e). The research results also suggest that marriage registration behaviour influenced by orientation

Table 6.3 Comparison of Score Means of by Sociodemographic Characteristics. Means and ANOVA test results

Factors identified by Factor analysis (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	Sequence of partnership		Birth cohorts		Gender		Level of education					
	1st partnership	2nd or later partnership	ANOVA test (F)	1950–1975	1980–1985	ANOVA test (F)	Males	ANOVA test (F)	Higher	Lower than High test (F)		
Cases of registered marriage												
a. Orientation towards personal network	0.27	0.13	10.78***	0.14	0.19	1.43	0.14	0.21	4.01*	0.21	0.12	5.78*
b. Orientation towards personal utility	0.26	0.08	20.86***	0.09	0.18	5.99*	0.12	0.18	2.96	0.16	0.13	0.67
c. Desire to create a family	0.24	0.14	4.96*	0.17	0.17	0.00	0.13	0.20	3.64	0.21	0.09	12.25***
d. Pregnancy	0.14	0.07	3.99*	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.11	0.06	2.55	0.11	0.05	4.39*
Cases of unregistered marriage (cohabitation)												
e. Orientation towards personal network	0.12	0.19	2.86	0.18	0.12	1.74	0.17	0.10	2.77	0.12	0.19	2.21
f. Neglect personal networks' influences	0.30	0.58	32.48***	0.55	0.47	2.88	0.55	0.44	5.78*	0.43	0.62	15.16***
g. Orientation towards personal utility	0.08	0.12	0.63	0.10	0.08	0.35	0.11	0.07	0.92	0.11	0.02	6.08*
h. Pregnancy	0.15	0.26	5.29*	0.21	0.17	0.54	0.17	0.19	0.12	0.12	0.31	15.05***

Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

Table 6.4 Comparison of Score Means of by Household Structure. *Means and ANOVA test results*

Factors identified by Factor analysis (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	Members of the personal network lived in the same household at time of beginning of dating											
	At least one parent					At least one sibling						
	No	Yes	ANOVA test (F)	No	Yes	ANOVA test (F)	No	Yes	ANOVA test (F)	No	Yes	ANOVA test (F)
Choice of registered marriage												
a. Orientation towards personal network	0.15	0.20	1.55	0.16	0.22	2.37	0.19	0.05	6.99**	0.19	0.05	6.99**
b. Orientation towards personal utility	0.09	0.20	9.99**	0.13	0.19	1.96	0.16	0.04	6.67**	0.16	0.04	6.67**
c. Desire to create a family	0.19	0.14	1.55	0.16	0.18	0.21	0.17	0.13	0.85	0.17	0.13	0.85
d. Pregnancy	0.07	0.10	1.07	0.07	0.13	2.29	0.09	0.05	1.04	0.09	0.05	1.04
Choice of unregistered marriage (cohabitation)												
e. Orientation towards personal network	0.16	0.11	1.45	0.15	0.11	0.50	0.12	0.36	11.94***	0.12	0.36	11.94***
f. Neglect personal networks' influences	0.52	0.47	1.41	0.53	0.41	5.01*	0.47	0.69	8.41**	0.47	0.69	8.41**
g. Orientation towards personal utility	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.11	0.96	0.07	0.27	10.59***	0.07	0.27	10.59***
h. Pregnancy	0.22	0.14	3.29	0.20	0.13	2.37	0.18	0.24	0.48	0.18	0.24	0.48
Members of the personal network lived in the same household at time of beginning of dating												
Other relatives												
Non-kin												
Factors identified by Factor analysis (0 = No, 1 = Yes)												
Choice of registered marriage												
a. Orientation towards personal network	0.17	0.15	0.19	0.09	0.17	0.19	0.17	0.19	0.10	0.17	0.19	0.10
b. Orientation towards personal utility	0.16	0.16	0.19	0.37	0.17	0.15	0.15	0.28	6.88**	0.15	0.28	6.88**
c. Desire to create a family	0.08	0.08	0.14	1.05	1.05	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.00	0.09	0.09	0.00
d. Pregnancy	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.15	0.05	2.67	0.15	0.05	2.67
Choice of unregistered marriage (cohabitation)												
e. Orientation towards personal network	0.50	0.50	0.49	0.01	0.01	0.50	0.50	0.47	0.20	0.50	0.47	0.20
f. Neglect personal networks' influences	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.02	0.02	0.08	0.08	0.12	0.71	0.08	0.12	0.71
g. Orientation towards personal utility	0.19	0.19	0.10	1.13	1.13	0.19	0.19	0.10	2.07	0.19	0.10	2.07
h. Pregnancy	0.19	0.19	0.10	1.13	1.13	0.19	0.19	0.10	2.07	0.19	0.10	2.07

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

towards personal networks is intrinsic to those who had no children living in the same household at the beginning of dating the last spouse (Table 6.4, row a). Meanwhile, the decision to cohabit under similar influences of their personal networks is more present among those who have children living in their households (Table 6.4, row e).

Individuals who choose marriage registration because of utility (Table 6.3, row b) likely do so when entering their first partnership, and they are from the youngest birth cohort. Marriage registration also is common when their mother or father but no child lives with them (Table 6.4, row b). Meanwhile, choice of unregistered marriage based on orientation towards personal utility is common among individuals who have a lower rather than a higher education level, and no more statistically significant characteristics can be given to them (Table 6.3, row g). Decisions about cohabitation are also specific to individuals who live with at least one child (Table 6.4, row g).

The choice of marriage registration in the situation of one's own or partner's pregnancy is specific to individuals who enter into their first partnership and have a lower instead of a higher level of education (Table 6.3, row d). However, unregistered marriage in the same situation is likely chosen by individuals who enter into their second or later partnership and have a higher education level (Table 6.3, row h). Unfortunately, nothing statistically significant can be said about the interrelation between matrimonial behaviour and the structure of the household in the case of pregnancy (Table 6.4, rows d and h).

Rejecting personal networks' influences in the case of unregistered marriage is intrinsic to individuals who enter into their second or later partnership (Table 6.3, row f). They often have a higher education level. Such behaviour is more developed for men than women, and it also was found among those who lived with at least one child but had no brothers or sisters in the same household (Table 6.4, row f). Finally, marriage registration just because of the desire to create a family is common among individuals who enter into their first partnership, and, likely, have a lower education level (Table 6.3, row c). At the beginning of dating, they probably lived with non-kin in the same household (Table 6.4, row c).

In summary, sociodemographic features differentiate the attitudes on family formation either in the form of registered or unregistered marriage. The most significant characteristics are the sequence of partnership and level of education. Children in the household may also significantly influence decisions about family-formation patterns.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore the influence of personal networks in Lithuania, in a time after a major political and social transition from state communism to free market and democracy, on individuals' decisions about the family-formation process. To avoid shortages of retrospective data, registered and unregistered marriages since 2000 were analyzed.

We hypothesized that personal networks have only a weak influence on individuals' decisions concerning marriage registration or moving into a partnership without marriage registration. The research results at first sight support this hypothesis and reveal the importance of individual desires in decision making about marriage registration. Such findings are in line with the individualization theory proposed by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995, 2002). However, deeper statistical analyses of empirical data made us eventually reject the hypothesis because our results revealed various influences of personal networks on individual decision making.

In the case of marriage registration, four factors of personal networks' influence on the family-formation process were extracted: oriented towards personal networks, oriented towards utility, desired to create a family, and by own (for women) or partner's (for men) pregnancy. In the case of unregistered marriage, four other factors were extracted: oriented towards personal networks, neglect personal networks' influences, oriented towards personal utility, and by own or partner's pregnancy.

For registered marriage, as is the case with unregistered marriage, similar factors were identified: oriented towards personal networks, oriented towards personal utility, and one's own or partner's pregnancy. The analysis of the sociodemographic features of the respondents in the identified factors revealed that the sequence of partnership, level of education, and the presence of children in the household at the beginning of the dating

period were the most important abnormalities for attitudes towards the selection of family pattern. In particular, the decision of marriage registration is clearly associated with the first partnership, lower education level, and no children in the household at the beginning of the dating period. Meanwhile, decision making about unregistered marriage more often appears with a second or later partnership, higher education level, and at least one child in the household.

Finally, it can be concluded that even though individuals declare independence of choice, the research results show the importance of personal networks on the family-formation process in Lithuania; the decisions of individuals on family formation patterns still mightily depend on opinions of members of personal networks, experiences of interrelations with members of the personal networks, and material conditions related to people living under one roof.

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7

Relational Networks of Young Couples and Marriage Choice Paths in Italy: Data on Membership and Influence

Matteo Moscatelli and Donatella Bramanti

Introduction: Couples' Choice Paths and Analysis of Networks

This chapter proposes an exploratory research on morphological structure and functions of the personal networks of young Italians organizing their lives as couples during their transition to married life.

In Italy, next to the weakening and a process of deinstitutionalization of marriages (Cherlin 2004; Bramanti 2013), new ways of forming couples are

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spreading such as long cohabitation and live apart together (LAT) with no intention to get married. Young people experience new relational codes in a social context that promote the reversibility of choices and / or the privatization of behaviours. These configurations affect the traditional role (and identity) of the family within society and could trigger a series of knock-on effects on future generations. A recent publication in fact has sized up the Italian situation by noting that the increase in unstable, fragmented couples poses questions also about the future of society there (Donati 2012).

In 2013 in Italy, about one-fifth fewer weddings were celebrated than in 2008 (ISTAT 2014a). These data illustrate the downward curve in marriage rates that started in 1972. In particular, in the last 25 years, the annual drop has been 1.2 % on average. This affects especially first marriages between Italian citizens; since 2013, however, the number of marriages where at least one spouse is a foreign national also has been decreasing (ISTAT 2014a). Besides, in 2013, about 29 % fewer marriages were celebrated with a religious ceremony than in 2008. Today, both in the North (55 %) and in the Centre of Italy (51 %), the number of civil marriages is more than religious ones (ISTAT 2014a).

The declining readiness to endorse a union with marriage can somewhat be attributed to the progressive spread of *de facto* unions, now twice as many as in 2008 (ISTAT 2014a). In particular, cohabitations between unmarried partners are on the increase, as well as premarriage cohabitations together with delaying the transition from the parental home.¹ First, longer periods of education and, second, the flexibilization of the labour market have contributed to the postponement of first marriages. Also more time is spent before investing in a shared home in order to try out the reliability of the partner.

Because of the crisis – that is, a weak welfare state and the lack of political reforms – many young people have also been experiencing serious difficulties, and the role of networks, including both ascribed members (e.g., relatives) and acquired members (e.g., friends), has gained importance in terms of ensuring the well-being of individuals, couples, and families (Bramanti 2014). So the relationship with community is crucial to people's well-being. The studies on partners' personal networks come

¹ In 2012, 52.3 % males and 35 % females aged 25–34 still lived with their families of origin (ISTAT 2014b).

within a long research tradition that began with those on marginality, showing that isolated persons are worse off (Litwak and Szelenyi 1969).

By theorizing the *living space* as the totality of interdependent psychological, social, and physical facts influencing people's thinking and behaviour, Lewin (1951) identified the social network as a fundamental aspect of one's living space. Since the 1970s and Granovetter's contribution (1973), there has been a proliferation of theories on the function of social networks (Mitchell et al. 1973; Wellman 1979), using a structural–functional perspective and the social network analysis (SNA) method. Social networks research in fact suggests a different level of analysis from the individual or dyadic ones by tracing the causes of behaviour to personal characteristics or specific relationships (Milardo 1986). In SNA-based studies, the social action of persons depends on the wider network in which ego is inserted and on its position with respect the other nodes and components of the configuration. The variety of these contributions is such that it is impossible to summarize them here.

Likewise, the concept of social capital, and the numerous empirical studies connected with it, have highlighted the possibility of building interdependence networks on the basis of trust relationships, as well as the construction by social actors of more or less open exchange systems for circulating relational, identity, and affective resources (Bourdieu 1980; Coleman 1990; Putnam 2000). The effects of the couple on personal networks and the community, and vice versa, have always attracted the interest of researchers, producing a long tradition of studies; however, not many of them have focused on networks during the transition to diverse kinds of marriage choices.

There are papers on the transition to marriage among couples (Manning and Smock 1995); some focus on how religious behaviour matters in marriage (Booth et al. 1995). Others focus on the influence of parents on marital choices (Axinn and Thornton 1992); however, there are a smaller number of papers that focus on couple's networks during the transition to various types of marriage, or ones comparing young couples intending to get married and couples who do not. From the pioneering analysis of Bott (1957) on the network as an intervening variable in a couple's life, up to the 2000s, the influence and impact of multifaceted social networks on intimate relationships (Felmlee 2001) has steadily gained momentum. The role of social context, for example, appears to have an effect not only on the phase of falling in love and forming opinions about cohabitation

of the partners (Manning et al. 2011), on stability, and on health but also on a possible break-up (Hogerbrugge et al. 2013).

The perception of being approved of by friends and by the partner's family can predict the stability of a relationship. The effects of social networks on couples are observable also after researchers have controlled for dyadic / couple's variables such as closeness to partner and conflict within the couple. The role of social networks also has been explored with reference to the family life cycle. As early as 1984 (Belsky and Rovine 1984), the effect of the arrival of a new child in the families' support network was evaluated; parental emotional and material support would steadily increase after the baby's delivery, especially in the case of a first-born.

Several results confirm the positive or negative roles played by social bonds, in some cases supporting the hypothesis that friendships can compete with couple's relationships. According to the dyadic withdrawal hypothesis, friends' networks shrink as cohabitation begins, and become superimposed on partners (Kalmijn 2003), while displaying mechanisms such as the competition and equilibrium principles. The percentage of common friends and the number of shared contacts increase gradually and continuously in the initial phase of cohabitation and during the aging process. Some studies have explored elderly partners' networks, showing how older people often have a substantial number of relationships (Van Tilburg 1998), even though these may be significantly more limited to spending time together.

Another paper by O'Reilly (2003) summarizes a comparative analysis of articles, describing the relationship between social support and / or social network and partners' health, by focusing on two basic methodological issues: (1) clarity in defining the indicators and (2) valid and reliable measuring tools. The importance of distinguishing between social support and a social network also is highlighted.

The methods for analyzing couples' networks are more sophisticated now thanks to a longitudinal perspective that follows the life course (Kalmijn 2003), and the study of the structural characteristics of contemporary family contexts and of the relational networks existing beyond nuclear family boundaries, as in a few seminal works on family diversity (Widmer 2010).

The Relational Perspective in Network Analysis

Relational studies in sociology (Donati 2010) have considered the functional role of personal networks (Tronca 2013). Relational Sociology intends to be an original approach that really focuses on relations, overcoming functionalism. In this approach relations and networks are considered through social ontology and critical realism. The individuals give rise to social relationships that are an emerging product of their mutual acting in a situated context. Social formations are neither a pure construction / projection of individuals nor a function of the structures of society, but they are a 'sui generis' reality – that is, the emergent effect of relationships activated by social subjects. In this theoretical frame not only structural axes of relations are important but also a referential one that includes symbolic ties and trust bonds (Tronca 2007, 2013).

The scheme of relational studies refers to Talcott Parsons' AGIL (i.e., adaptation, goal attainment, integration, latency) model and claims to adapt it for the analysis of social networks. A particular focus therefore is on the relations between the four AGIL dimensions and on connections between the micro- and macrolevel of social capital (Figure 7.1). The 'relation' itself is seen as an emergent property, with internal causal effects on its participants and external ones on others. 'We-ness' derives from subjects' reflexive orientations towards the networks they themselves generate – then affecting their actions in a couple.

In relational studies bonds have a multidimensional function² with the co-presence of adaptation, goal attainment, integration, latency – each function influencing the others. Thus, a network is at the same time a place for exchange, support (concrete or emotional), expression (leisure time relationships), influence (the exercise of power), and sharing values (belonging / membership) for the partner and the couples.

According to the relational sociological perspective in Italy,³ the couple bond has its own identity and is able to connect and diversely articulate sexuality, generative tension, reciprocity in exchanges, and readiness to

² In the language of SNA we refer to the *multiplexity* function of ties.

³ www.relationalstudies.net.

give (Donati 2006; Rossi 2001, 2012). In this perspective, moreover, the couple relationship is strictly bound to the intergenerational one, thus producing a web consisting of horizontal and vertical bonds with generative aspects where each subject is in turn a node in a generational web (Cigoli and Scabini 2012; Rosnati and Iafrate 2007; Scabini and Manzi 2005). By referring to this theoretical framework it is possible to perceive some transformations and reciprocal effects of the couple relationship, as well as its connection to both the personal and the community networks.

Objectives and Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to observe the morphology of social networks of young couples and what is transmitted and / or exchanged within them. A first goal of this research⁴ is to describe the effects of the networks on a variety of aspects, attributes, and modes of couple formation (e.g., the choice of getting married or not, and if so in a church or not). In reference to the community and to intergenerational relationships, we also want to know how membership values and how transmission of values in networks works with couples who marry (i.e., in a civil or religious wedding) or decide to cohabit without marriage. The study, exploring networks, also aims to collect proxy information on the concepts of civic openness and social generativity (Bramanti 2012; Scabini and Rossi 2006) and to identify diverse types of social generativity among couples and networks. Given the complexity of this operation, and considering the four functional dimensions of networks (see Figure 7.1), this chapter focuses on two types of ego networks of partners: an instrumental support network, for giving and receiving practical help; and an expressive / sociality network, with an integrative function, for leisure time and companionship.

In particular, the analysis of concrete support instrumental networks (Serason et al. 1983; Belsky and Rovine 1984; Thoits 1982; Van der Poel 1993) and expressive networks (i.e., social contact during leisure time) con-

⁴This pilot project will be followed by research on the role of primary networks for parents of young children, 0–3. We thank the partner ‘Institute of Anthropology—Abbazia di Mirasole’.

<p style="text-align: center;">RESOURCES (A)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SOCIAL SUPPORT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(giving and receiving practical help or emotional support)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CULTURAL RESOURCES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MATERIAL RESOURCES</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">WELL-BEING GOALS (G)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INFLUENCING, VALUES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TRANSMISSIONS, OPENNESS TO DO,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">POWER AND PRESTIGE,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PSYCHOLOGICAL SATISFACTION</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">INTEGRATION (I)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FRIENDSHIP, LEISURE TIME,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COMPANIONSHIP</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(trust and cooperation)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EXPRESSION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NORMS AND EXCHANGES,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SPENDING TIME TOGETHER</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">VALUES (L)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MEMBERSHIP, AFFILIATION,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ORIENTATIONS TO THE FUTURE,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LIFE EXPECTATIONS</p>

Fig. 7.1 Functional dimensions of networks and indicators to measure them. Source: Personal elaboration about the functional dimensions of networks (relational studies)

sider also the level of shared values with people outside the couple (i.e., alters⁵). Symbolic ties, which outline a scenario of shared values (network membership), common belonging, affiliation, and orientation (Tronca 2013) also are considered so as to see whether partners perceive the network to be close to the couple's values. One further issue is the influence of network resources on the couple's choices, as to whether, and to what extent, the young couple is influenced by the previous generation and / or their community. In summary, the questions asked were the following:

⁵This term is used in the language of SNA and for personal network analysis.

- Is it possible to reconstruct the morphologies of various network patterns for some forms of coupled life?
- Do networks convey support and frames? Do they also influence life projects?
- Which network has more influence: the support or the expressive one?
- Is active involvement / engagement within the local community related to the decision to be a couple in one way rather than another?

On the basis of these questions and using a relational approach (Donati 2010; Tronca 2013), the following main research hypotheses were constructed:

- The existence of diverse morphological structures (e.g., regarding amplitude, reciprocity, density) can be assumed among the three types of couples surveyed (i.e., civil or religious marriage, no marriage), such as family-centred and friendship-centred networks. Practically, a network centred on family is defined as one with a greater number of family members compared to other types of members in the network.
- The transmission of values influences young couples' life projects and choices; in this sense, networks may be crucial to the ability of couples to choose different life paths.
- A public orientation and social generativity can be assumed for the couples who have the project of formalizing their relationship.

The first hypothesis is about differentiation in the networks' width, density, and circles as to the couple's life project. Some network types are more focused on the family and others on friends, depending on the couple's choice.

The second hypothesis is about the effect of the transmission of values that differs according to networks and couple types. This effect could be an intergenerational effect, according to the kind of family relational resources (e.g., parents and grandparents) that are typically included in networks. The third is about the existence of a connection between the value attributed to the family as a social or private reality and the orientation towards the common good (e.g., prosociality, civic engagement). Different types of networks display a greater or a lesser opening of the

couple relationship correlated to various modes of thinking: as public and civil subjectivity interested in formalizing the bond, or as private subjectivity not interested in a formalization of the relationship.

Methodology and Data Analysis

As mentioned earlier, in this research the methods of analysis of the personal network space are refined through the relational approach (Donati 2010). Relational data were recorded by a structured questionnaire composed of 20 questions, including items on sociodemographic characteristics of the partners and questions about their lives. The questionnaire used for recording data on network subjects (Ego) and bonds consisted of three main sections. The first one was about the sociostructural aspects of committed couples (e.g., age, parents' status, presence of children, housing, and cohabitation) and some dynamic features of the couple path (e.g., years of mutual acquaintance, previous experiences).

The second section was about cultural variables in order to reconstruct the couples' reference values, with a focus on marriage choices; in particular, the GENCO/PAT scales – that is, the one inspired by the Loyola Generativity Scale by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) – were used to study the couple's generativity concept. The third part of the questionnaire, containing the core of the research, consisted of data specific to the network analysis (i.e., name generator, name interpreter, name interrelators). The data collection in this section gathered information on the couple's relationships by asking them to account for two relational networks:

- A tangible instrumental support network
- An expressive network, characterized by social contact during leisure time

Both partners were asked to fill in a questionnaire of their own. In some cases, the compilation was administered face to face.

This exploratory research on relational networks involved a sample of 150 people forming 75 couples: 53 intending to marry within the year (35 by religious rites, 18 by civil ceremony) and 22, about one-third of

Table 7.1 Couples' Life Projects—Choice Paths

Life project	Percent	Cohabitation percentage
Religious marriage	46.7	80.0
Civil union	24.0	62.3
No marriage in the next three years	29.4	50.0

the total, not planning to marry (at least within the next three years). Within the latter group, some were cohabiting and some were living in separate households as LAT (Table 7.1). Given the small sample there is no statistical significance. The reference target population for the analysis of ego-centred networks was made up of unmarried couples, with both partners age 18–40 from Northern Italy⁶ who indicated the following:

- Wanted to contract for religious matrimony within the year
- Wanted to contract for civil matrimony by within the year
- Were engaged, with no plans to marry within the next three years

The 'alters' identified in the network related to the following circles: spouse, partner, siblings, parents, grandparents, other relatives, friends, neighbours, colleagues, or acquaintances. The SNA method, with UCINET and EGONET software, was used for investigating the size of the network, the structures of the subsamples, the density of relationships, the dimensions of reciprocity, homophily, and centrality. In short, the following analyses were produced:

- Demographic data and couple values (totals and subsamples) with SPSS software
- Analyses of support and expressive networks (i.e., SNA dimensions, totals and subsamples: couples intending / not intending to marry) with

⁶ Because some of the couples interviewed were participating in marriage preparation courses (both religious and civil), we are grateful to the relevant organizations for their collaboration in the sampling; in particular, to the Diocese of Milan, the municipality of Villazona (Trento), and the municipality of Milan. It was a nonprobabilistic quota sampling.

SPSS and EGONET created by Steve Borgatti (2006) and UCINET (Borgatti et al. 2002)⁷

- Cluster analysis by the two-step method

Main Results

Each partner interviewed in 2013 was under 40. The average age of future spouses was 32.06, that of partners in ‘no marriage’ couples was 30.23. Half of them were male, the other half female and all from Northern east Italy, especially Lombardy. Most partners were graduates (34.7 %) or had an upper-secondary school diploma (38.0 %). Some of them (13.3 %) also had postgraduate qualifications (Master’s or Ph.D.). These data are consistent with the statistics for young people at a national level. The majority of the couples had a medium socioeconomic status index, based on the variables: education, qualification, and profession. A high socioeconomic index was recorded for 24.5 % of partners, a medium index for 60.2 %, and a low one for 15.3 %.

As to the orientation and openness of the couple towards the community,⁸ to which greater interest for a formalized bond had been correlated, the future spouses, particularly those religious, appear to be more involved together in voluntary activities (*My partner and I do voluntary work together*). Being committed as a couple within the community, which only applies to a minority of the couples, is a status / position that discriminates subsamples; in fact it shows low agreement among the couples not planning to marry and, conversely, tends to be chosen by future spouses, which confirms a direct correlation between civil commitment and the marriage institution. In particular, the average on a 1–9 scale is 5.88 for partners who will marry with the civil rite and is slightly higher compared with those planning to marry in church (Table 7.2). There seems to be a

⁷ Even though the initial objective was to observe the couple networks as a whole and evaluate some hypotheses on the overlapping of nodes, budget constraints prevented any further processing during this pilot phase.

⁸ The battery of questions on this topic (i.e., openness of the couple) was composed on a scale of agreement from 1 to 9.

Table 7.2 Couples' Values Using GENCO and PAT Scales

	Not planning to get married	All that are planning to get married	Planning civil marriage
16a: My couple relationship is a private matter regarding myself and my partner only. (PAT)	6.18	6.16	6.52
16b: My couple relationship is a matter for our couple and families of origin. (PAT)	6.32	5.93	6.21
16c: My couple relationship is a matter for our couple and our friends/groups. (PAT)	4.45	4.78	4.91
16d: My couple relationship is a matter for our couple and the members of associations/organizations we belong to. (PAT)	1.73	2.72	2.82
17e: My partner and I are committed, as a couple, within our community. (GENCO)	2.55	4.46	5.88
17f: My partner and I do voluntary work together. (GENCO)	1.39	2.81	2.67
17g: My partner and I would like to adopt children if we could not have our own. (GENCO)	6.77	6.00	5.77
17h: As a couple, my partner and I are a reference point for our friends. (GENCO)	5.40	5.50	5.87
18i: Marriage reinforces the stability of a couple relationship.	3.80	6.99	6.82
18l: When you want to have children, it is a good idea to marry.	4.27	6.09	5.91
18m: One purpose of marriage is to prevent loneliness.	1.25	2.22	2.34
18n: Marriage makes a person more human.	1.14	2.37	2.73
18o: Marriage implies openness and commitment towards the social community. (GENCO)	3.00	4.59	4.27
18p: Marriage, properly speaking, is only between a man and a woman.	6.50	5.49	4.91
18q: A couple can live together even without planning to marry.	7.48	6.45	6.24
18r: Marital love is indissoluble.	4.11	6.77	6.27

Note: Mean, min = 1, max = 9

Table 7.3 Prosocial Orientation Index⁹ in Total and Subsamples

	Prosocial Orientation Index	Prosocially Oriented					
		Men	Women	No marriage	Religious marriage	Civil marriage	Total marriage
Low	21.7	21.1	22.2	29.5	25.0	3.2	18.2
Medium	60.1	64.8	55.6	63.6	51.5	74.2	58.6
High	18.2	14.1	22.2	6.8	23.5	22.6	23.2

Note: Openness of the couples calculated on PAT and GENCO scales, in percentages.

public orientation among the couples planning to marry with a civil rite, with higher medium values about: *‘My couple relationship is a matter for our couple and our friends / groups’* and *‘My couple relationship is a matter for our couple and the members of the associations / organisations we belong to’*.

Besides, seeing their couple as a reference point for friends – *As a couple, my partner and I are a reference point for our friends*) in terms of the opinion of those who are not planning to marry tends to score in the medium category (43.1 %), while among future spouses the score tends to be high (39 %). The prosociality index (see footnote number 9) calculated with the preceding variables is high among more than 20 % of the couples getting married and among less than 7 % of those not planning to marry (Table 7.3).

Morphology of Networks

On exploring the hypothesis on morphology and a variety of life project forms, some significant differences in size (i.e., selected networks of maximum 11 resources, name generator), composition (i.e., alter statistics), and social circles of networks were recorded. The average concrete support networks were found to be made up of about six resources per partner; the average value is shown in Figure 7.2). The expressive networks (i.e., people with whom the couple prefer to spend their leisure time)

⁹The index was calculated over the variables of the set of questions illustrated previously (from 16a to 17h) plus the variable about single partner voluntary commitment in associations. The items were listed by importance, and more weight was attributed to positive answers; at the end the scores were added together.

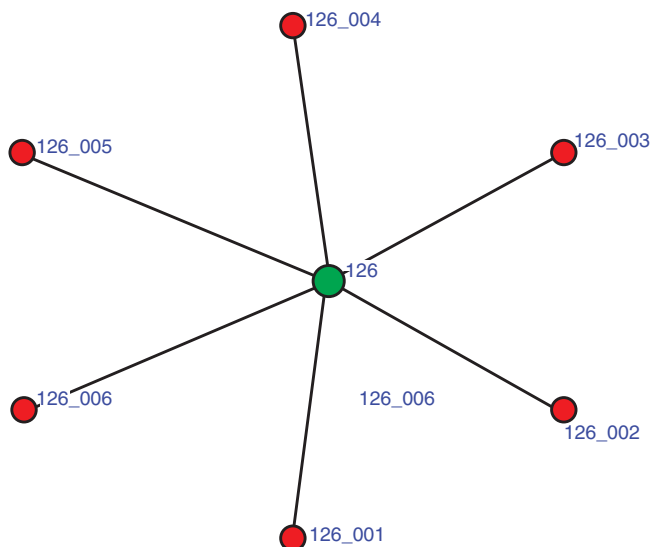


Fig. 7.2 The size of a tangible support network of a couple under 40 who will marry within one year (calculations made with Freeware EgoNet Tools)

were smaller, about five resources per partner.¹⁰ Females and couples preparing for religious marriage had slightly larger networks (Table 7.4).

If we check the composition of social circles, we can see some interesting differences. Circles are a homogeneous part of the network composed by the same type of members (e.g., relatives, friends, neighbours). Support networks were more family-centred, while expressive networks were more friends-centred. In expressive networks more than half the resources were friends (66.5 %), while in support networks they were less than 30 %; in this network relatives made up around 60 % of the nodes (Table 7.5).

In the expressive networks, male and female resources were basically equal, with the ego's age matching the relational resources¹¹ and age (i.e., about 60 % of them is aged 26–35 years). As expected, most of the resources included in this network were friends, while the partner,

¹⁰ *Network resources* means the people who belong to the network.

¹¹ We refer to alters' age, the age of the nodes of the two nets.

Table 7.4 Size of Support and Expressive Personal Networks of Partners

Size	Size of support network (150 ego)	Size of expressive network (150 ego)
Small (0–4 alters)	30.7	63.6
Medium (5–8 alters)	45.3	36.4
Big (9–11 alters)	24.0	0.0
Mean of all respondents	6.30	5.18
Mean ♀	6.63	5.43
Mean ♂	5.96	4.92
Mean of all who intend to get married	6.40	4.90
Mean – religious marriage	7.20	5.57
Mean – civil marriage	4.86	3.64
Mean – no marriage plan	6.09	5.70

Note: Percentage and means

Table 7.5 Composition of Networks: Alters and Social Circles

Composition	Support network (945 alters)	Expressive network (777 alters)
Male	46.1	48.3
Female	53.9	51.7
Age 0–25	3.9	7.0
Age 26–35	34.0	60.8
Age 36–50	23.1	23.6
Age 51–60	16.1	3.5
Age over 60	22.9	4.6
Lower-secondary school diploma	25.0	12.6
Upper-secondary school diploma	41.0	41.7
Graduate	26.4	37.4
Postgraduate	7.6	8.3
Social circles – Partner	10.9	4.2
Social circles – Relatives	58.8	21.9
Social circles – Friends	27.4	66.5
Social circles – Neighbours, colleagues, acquaintances	2.9	2.6

close family members (e.g., parents and siblings), and other relatives composed the rest.

In the couple's tangible instrumental support networks, female network resources were slightly more numerous. The majority of the resources (<50 %) were older than the ego (<40). About a one-quarter of

Table 7.6 Homophily in Support and Expressive Networks

Homophily	Percent in support network	Percent in expressive network
Gender homophily (average % same-sex alters in net)	47.6 (men) 58.8 (women)	64.6 (men) 65.7 (women)
Alters generally older (average %)	54.7	21.5
Age homophily (average % of alters at same age as egos)	45.2	78.4
Educational homophily (average %)	36.2	59.8

the resources of the support network was made up of friends (27.4 %), but most of the network consisted of relatives (58.8 %).

Homophily with respect to gender is more significant in the expressive network; it is centred on friends. It is higher among women in expressive networks than in support networks (65.7 % of gender homophily); that is, women seem to prefer female friends (Table 7.6). Also, in this expressive network there are more alters in the same age brackets as the egos (around 80 %); 21 % of alters are more than one year at least older, unlike the support network that had more older alters. This is especially because they are family members, parents, and relatives.

Now we focus on an in-depth analysis on the density¹² of networks – that is, exchange practices between alters, as recorded by the *name interrelator*. Density differentiates couples with marriage intentions and couples who are not going to marry. There seemed to be more connectivity in future spouses' networks, especially in expressive ones. Women seemed to have more connected networks (around 78 % of density in expressive networks). Density of networks takes values between 0 and 1 (Table 7.7).

The reciprocity index calculated¹³ shows that reciprocity is generally high; that is, 4/5 of support relationships are reciprocated (Table 7.8).

¹² Density is usually defined as the sum of all ties divided by the number of possible ties. Density is usually defined as the average strength of ties across all possible (not all actual) ties.

¹³ It is the percentage of reciprocal bonds in one networks calculated on all the potential connections.

Table 7.7 Density in Support and Expressive Networks

Density	(Δ) Density of support network (6 alters, mean)	(Δ) Density of expressive network (5 alters, mean)
Marriage soon	0.737	0.819
No marriage plan	0.619	0.670
Men	0.690	0.712
Women	0.722	0.781

Note: min = 0, max = 1

Table 7.8 Reciprocity in Support Network

Reciprocity	Index for support bonds, in percentages (exit degree 0–11)
Index (average %)	80.3
Std. dev.	26.7
Marriage soon (average %)	76.3
No marriage plan (average %)	89.5
Men (average %)	81.2
Women (average %)	79.3

Reciprocating concrete help received from the support network was actually slightly lower among women and the couples about to marry than in the rest of the sample. Maybe this is a hint of lower cohesion; or this data is suggesting that young couples at this stage of life receive more help than they give, especially the ones who are going to marry. This is a quite traditional way to see young people, and sons (also older than 18) in Italy, for example, by mothers and also in Catholic culture.¹⁴

It is also interesting to look at the scoring attributed to a final question in the survey: ‘To what extent do you think this network is a resource for your future couple life?’ Both samples demonstrate that their networks are important to them, the uppermost agreement with this affirmation being expressed by, respectively, 70.5 % of the partners who will not marry and 78.3 % of those who will.

¹⁴There are some research studies about young adults and on this topic in our Family Studies and Research University Centre (see Rossi del Corso and Lanz 2013).

Data on Membership and Influence

The questions on values closeness and the hypothesis on functions of networks and value transmission were intended to discover whether the network had influenced couples' choices regarding marriage. In the concrete support network membership was very high¹⁵; around 85 % of resources are close to value choices by the couple. Couples not planning to marry indicated dedicated network membership based on more closely shared values, even if their networks were a little smaller (see earlier). The similarity in terms of values was greater, especially for the tangible support network – that is, 94 % of resources were close to ego's values – as well as in the expressive network. Maybe it is a hint of a more deep-seated cohesion in their networks.

In 80 % of cases in survey sample, the people with whom they spent their leisure time had similar values (e.g., membership); however, this closeness did not significantly affect any decision regarding the couples' lives, except for approximately 20 % of them (Table 7.9). There were some differences between the 'soon-to-be spouses' and the 'no marital choice' in the sample; the latter seemed to be more united by values in their network of friends.

Table 7.9 Data About Membership: Do You Perceive the Network as Close to Your Couple's Values?

Membership	In support network	In expressive network
Index (average %)	84.2	79.4
Index – Std. dev..	25.2	30.6
Index – low (0–33%)	6.8	13.9
Index – medium (34–66%)	14.3	15.3
Index – high (67–100%)	78.9	70.8
Index – marriage (average %)	82.4	78.7
Index – no marriage (average %)	94.5	82.7
Index – men (average %)	87.1	81.6
Index – women (average %)	81.4	77.2

¹⁵ It is the percentage of agreement on the question 'Do you perceive Alter (1, 2, 3, and other) as close to your couple values?' in one network calculated on all the potential connections; if every alter is close to the couples' values, it will be 100 %.

Table 7.10 Data on Values' Transmission / Influence¹⁶: Has the Network Influenced Your Couple's Choices?

Influence	In support network	In expressive network
Values transmission index (average %)	31.96	23.2
Values transmission index – Std. dev..	32.49	29.2
Values transmission index – low (0–33%)	64.6	77.4
Values transmission index – medium (34–66%)	17.7	13.9
Values transmission index – high (67–100%)	17.7	8.8
Values transmission index – marriage (average %)	33.6	25.2
Values transmission index – no marriage (average %)	22.2	12.8
Values transmission index – men (%)	32.3	22.7
Values transmission index – women (average %)	31.5	23.8

Transversely, the influence exerted on the choices of the couples (Table 7.10) was stronger in the support network than in the expressive one; almost one-third of the support network resources had an effect on the couple. This was the case even if the 'no marriage' subsample was less influenced, with a percentage around 20 %. The subsample of those who did not plan to get married appeared to be less subject to network influences; they are still a minority in Italy, seem to be more independent, and tend to differentiate themselves from their networks despite being closely involved with them in terms of shared values (i.e., more than those soon-to-be married couples).

Apparently, therefore, partners in married couples show a higher propensity to acknowledge their belonging and dependence on their networks. The data show the strength of the intergenerational network in influencing couple choices, especially with regard to future spouses and in the support networks where family circles are more prominently represented. Maybe this reveals the feeling of obligation between generations (Stein and Abraham 2010), operationalized as a series of actions considered appropriate and negotiated within one's family relationships, as the backbone of intergenerational ties (Rossi del Corso and Lanz 2013). Even in this case, however, the majority of the people in this network did not have any kind of influence on the choices of the couples (see Table 7.10).

¹⁶It is the percentage of agreement on the question 'Has Alter (1, 2, 3, and other) influenced your couple choices?' in one network calculated on all the potential connections; if every alter influenced ego, it will be 100 %.

Table 7.11 Cluster Analysis on Sociodemographic, Values, and Network Morphology Variables

	Cluster 1 Partners going to marry with friends-centred networks	Cluster 2 Noncommitted partners with no marriage project	Cluster 3 Generative religious (women) with extensive support network
Percent	43.8 (56)	37.5 (48)	18.8 (24)
My partner and I do volunteering together (mean, min = 1, max = 9)*	1.66	1.17	6.75
Prosocial orientation index* Education*	Medium (80.4) High (64.3)	Medium (62.5) Medium (64.6)	High (95.8) High (50.0)
My partner and I are committed, as a couple, within our community (mean, min = 1, max = 9)*	3.50	2.44	7.71*
Couple type*	Religious marriage (55.4)	No marriage (72.9)	Religious marriage (66.7)
Volunteering*	No (85.7)	No (97.9)	Yes (62.5)
Influence in expressive network*	35.37	9.94	15.54
Size of support network*	6.70	5.77	8.67
Influence in support network	41.16	17.67	24.71
As a couple, my partner and I are a reference point for our friends	5.27	5.02	6.92
Age	32.62	30.12	32.58
To what extent do you see this network as a resource for your future life as a couple? (mean, min = 1, max = 10)	7.61	6.96	7.42
Sex	Man (55.4)	Woman (50.0)	Woman (58.2)
Size expressive network	5.52	5.75	6.17
Membership in expressive network	79.84	80.17	77.58

Note: * $p < 0.05$.

Other Data on Openness and Generativity of Couples

For exploring the third hypothesis of the study, a cluster analysis was conducted on some ego variables and on the networks; the variables are shown in Table 7.11). Data shows the vicinity between couples intending to marry and the public / social aspect (i.e., engagement in voluntary organizations / the community) versus a private concept of the relationship in others (see Table 7.11, as well as Tables 7.2 and 7.3).

An exploratory cluster analysis¹⁷ that uses the Two-Step method seems to differentiate between the men and the women in the sample as well as the various couple types. The first group (43.8 % of the total sample) '*partners going to marry with friends-centred networks*' have high education qualifications, no great interest in volunteering, and a medium prosociality index. They tend to be future spouses. The women prevail in Cluster 3 (18.8 % of the total sample), where 60 % of the subjects are female. This group (called '*Religious women with extensive support network*'), mostly planning a religious marriage, stands out for its particular generativity and openness towards community with wide networks. The remaining subjects '*Noncommitted partners with no marriage project*' (37.4 % of the total sample) score the lowest results on some of the variables on social generativity; more than 70 % of them are partners not planning to marry (see Table 7.11).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided some insights into couple's formation among young people by analyzing partners' networks from a relational viewpoint. The goal was to explore the morphology of nets and what is transmitted and what is exchanged within partners' networks as to values, support, belonging, and influence. A first achievement was the proposal of a model of network analysis harmonious with the relational approach to society that investigates the four main functions of networks through

¹⁷The model has a silhouette measure sufficient / weak. Only the first 8 input variables have an importance of more than 0.2.

the methodology of social network analysis (Donati 2010; Tronca 2013). Young partners' trajectories and marriage paths are considered in reference to the development model of families, during a key moment for young Italian couples because the propensity to religious marriage is weakening (ISTAT 2014a). Couples are evolving through time and studying various trajectories provides opportunities to highlight some changes and interdependencies with networks (Widmer and Gauthier 2011).

Data show that couples planning to marry, particularly female partners, and a public social dimension (i.e., commitment to associations and within the community) are opposed to the more reserved attitude of couples *not* planning to marry. Regarding some values, future spouses are more involved in volunteering and show greater openness towards the community, according to GENCO and PAT prosociality indices. The network is a more important resource to future spouses than to couples not planning to marry.

For what concerns orientation and opening towards the community, the results also show that future spouses, particularly those following a religious path, are more involved in voluntary activities. The 'community-committed couple' description applies to a minority of the couples and differentiates the subsamples; thus, this confirms a direct correlation between marriage and civil engagement. Crossovers, prosociality index, and cluster analysis carried out about ego and network variables shows a correlation between future spouses, particularly women, and the public social dimension, as opposed to a more private attitude displayed by couples not planning to get married.

There is a high differentiation in the morphology of the two networks, also depending on the couple's life project. Concrete support networks are family-centred, so they show the prevalence of family members and relatives. Expressive networks, on the contrary, are friends-centred. The couples with wider support networks are the ones about to contract for religious marriage, while those not planning to marry tend to have wider expressive networks. Women tend on average to have wider networks of both kinds.

Reciprocating concrete help received from the support network is high, but actually lower among women and the couples about to marry than in the rest of the sample, indicating that aid is more received than given, even if there is a more generative approach in partners. Homophily with respect to gender is more significant in the expressive network among women. Also in this network there are more alters of the same age as the egos. Density

differentiates marriage couples and couples who are not going to marry. It seems that in future spouses' networks there are more exchanges, especially in expressive networks. Women seem to have better-connected networks.

The values proximity of the concrete support network is very high (i.e., 84 % of the resources are close to a couple's values' choices); also expressive network membership is around 80 %. Membership networks' function is especially important to those who do not marry, showing nets more united culturally.

The influence exerted on couple choices is stronger in the support rather than the expressive network; nearly one-third of network resources have this effect on young people. The effect is more clearly acknowledged by married couples – for example, the subsample of those who do not marry appears less subject to be influence, represents a minority in Italy, and highlights an independent attitude. This marks an effect of a possible intergenerational values' transmission that is on average more soundly acknowledged by future spouses. This data show differences in feeling family obligations. Young couples who are going to marry seem to restructure this value transmission effect and seem to use this influence for their development tasks (Rossi del Corso and Lanz 2013). This is a real important topic that need more development in future studies because these effects show clues of obligations and transmission of values between generations and in society.

The results of this first pilot work are still partial and exploratory because there is no statistical significance and a future goal of our research centre is to conduct more studies on this topic, enlarging the sample to show a statistical significance. Another future objective is to analyze the couple's network as a whole, considering the overlaps between partners' networks. Finally, we want to study morphology of networks in married couples with and without sons.

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8

Rebuilding the Family: Continuity and Change in Family Membership and Relationship Closeness in Post-Separation Situations

Anna-Maija Castrén

Introduction

Family relationships are expected to entail emotional closeness and to offer love, care, and support to those belonging to a family (e.g., Becker and Charles 2006; Paajanen 2008; Ribbens McCarthy et al. 2003, 2012). These expectations are not dependent on the family structure because they survive family breakdown and are revived in repartnering. People living in stepfamilies also hold ‘strongly to family as a unit involving togetherness and commitment, [...] dependable and long lasting’ (Ribbens McCarthy et al. 2003: 130). Expectations towards family relationships are derived from the hegemonic cultural imaginary of the family as something forever nurturing and protective and constituted through myth, ritual, and image rather than as a constellation of lived relationships involving self-interested, competitive, and divisive behaviour (Gillis 1996).

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In this chapter I will use Finnish data to analyze family membership and emotional closeness of family relationships in post-separation situations. The analysis adopts a figurational approach that studies family relationships both as personally lived and as embedded in wider webs of relationships (Castrén and Ketokivi 2015). This approach combines qualitative insight drawn from interviews, and a systematic mapping of significant webs of relationships that both constrain and enable people (Castrén and Ketokivi 2015). In this exploratory study the purpose is to illustrate the simultaneous tendencies of continuity and change in post-separation family relationships, and to highlight the lived ambivalences between personal affinities and relational expectations.

The figurational approach draws on Norbert Elias's notion of figuration (1978 [1970]: 154; 2009: 1–3) that highlights webs of interdependence in which people live, many of which are opaque to people themselves. (For further information, see detailed outline in Castrén and Ketokivi (2015); previously, also referred to as the *configurational approach* – see Widmer et al. (2008) and Widmer (2010).) Elias's best-known examples of figurations or configurations tend to highlight large-scale constellations and power relations (e.g., Elias 1994 [1939]), but he also considered microlevel relationships and the emotional significance of social bonds.

'Figuration' is a conceptual tool that is used to look beyond abstract categories, as social relations have no objectified existence independent of the people involved. Any course of action is 'the outcome of the actions of a group of interdependent individuals' (Elias 1978 [1970]: 130). A figuration – whether small like a family or large like a society – is not more abstract than the particular people involved in it. People do not act as individuals in a vacuum, but always come in figurations of other people (Elias and Dunning 1966: 396–397).

In analyzing emotional closeness and family in the Finnish context, Ketokivi's study (2012) on the organization of intimate relationships gives valuable insight. Her analysis pointed out that for people living in a heterosexual partnership, the intimate couple (with children) is the central structuring principle that engenders what she calls 'exclusive family intimacy'. This form of intimacy was embedded in the family setting and characterized by the demarcation of 'the family' from all other relationships. Figurations of those living outside the couple family were often more inclusive but demanded agency of which not everyone was capable.

In Ketokivi's data, some figurations, of older men in particular, had not been able to recover from the loss of the partner through divorce or death, for example, because their organization had relied on a particular structure based on the intimate couple instead of intimacy that was 'agency-driven' (Ketokivi 2012: 13). In post-separation families, exclusive family intimacy, which also can be considered typical to Finnish sociability more generally (e.g., see Castrén and Lonkila 2004), is difficult to achieve even though it is exactly what is sometimes longed for.

In this chapter I investigate family belonging and relationships after separation in the case of stepfamilies, but also in the lives of single parents and noncustodial parents living alone. It examines the dynamics present in the webs of relationships, referred to here as 'relationship figurations', and focuses on belonging to a family and on the emotional closeness of relationships. Distinguishing between 'evidence of the life as told' and 'interpretations of the life as lived' (Holland and Thompson 2009: 464) is significant methodologically; while respondents' narratives on their families are constrained by the cultural imaginary of the family and intimacy, systematic mapping of felt closeness enables an analysis of what cannot be discussed.

Family Belonging in Post-Separation Situations

There is a considerable body of research literature, older and more recent, highlighting the variety of meanings attached to family in diverse cultural and geographical contexts and situations (for a review, see Ribbens McCarthy et al. 2012). One way to grasp the 'layered meanings' (Becker and Charles 2006) of what people refer to as family in everyday language is to emphasize at least two uses of the term. 'Family' refers to people considered as family and can mean different people in various contexts (e.g., family of origin, family of procreation, and so on), but it also holds a moral dimension indicating a normative ideal of what 'family' should be (Becker and Charles 2006: 107; see also Gillis's similar conceptualization (1996) of *families we live with* and *families we live by*).

The normative use of the term – family as an ideal – carries expectations of certain kinds of relationships in which family members provide

support, maintain contact, and generally are just ‘there for each other’ (Becker and Charles 2006: 107; Gillis 1996: xv). According to Becker and Charles (2006: 119), the contemporary diversity of family forms and meanings is not decreasing the strength and importance of families either practically or symbolically, but instead, family has ‘continuing symbolic significance, insofar as it is used to identify relationships which have the characteristics of closeness and permanence associated with kinship, as well as being rooted in material practices and ways of “doing” family’ (Becker and Charles 2006: 119).

Everyday references to repartnering as ‘a fresh start’ or ‘the second chance’ highlight the novelty of the relationship and the new family unit that is about to form. There are considerable differences in perceptions of stepfamilies, however, when it comes to family membership and what is expected of relationships. Simpson (1998) coined the term ‘unclear family’ to illustrate the ‘polyphony of voices’ in stepfamilies, where roles, spaces, boundaries, and classifications are ‘subtly transformed to produce competing, contested and often contradictory versions of kinship’ (Simpson 1998: 51). Simpson delineated two variants of unclear families that differ in terms of propensity for continuity and change in familial relations after separation. In the nuclear type there is discontinuity in the sense that family roles have stayed the same while the personnel have changed. In the extended family, on the other hand, Simpson detected a sense of controlled expansion of familial relationships, as well as continuities bridging the conjugal divide.

The question of who belongs to a stepfamily and how family boundaries are drawn in post-separation situations have raised such vast levels of interest that it is impossible to offer a comprehensive review of the research here. Stepfamilies often have been associated with ambiguous family boundaries (e.g., Braithwaite et al. 2001) and defined by a lack of clarity as to who belongs to the family (e.g., Stewart 2005; Boss and Greenberg 1984). Family belonging has been studied from the perspective of various stepfamily members (e.g., Church 1999; Larsson Sjöberg 2000; Smart et al. 2001), showing the existence of considerable variation in perceptions of family membership.

A recent study conducted in Switzerland highlighted that even though children in stepfamilies often conformed to adults’ views, when family

members were interviewed together, very dissimilar ideas about who counts as family could coexist in a single stepfamily (Castrén and Widmer 2015). The high level of separation and repartnering in contemporary societies have contributed to the loosening of household-based family boundaries (Ihinger-Tallman 1988), and those living together do not necessarily share understandings of family boundaries and of intimacy (Jamieson 2005).

In research literature, steprelations have been found emotionally less close than biological parent–child ties (for a review, see Arránz Becker et al. 2013). DeLongis and Preece (2002) coined the notion of ‘stepgap’, referring to the difference in emotional relationship quality for parents’ relations with stepchildren and their own children. In a recent study focusing on emotional closeness between parents and adolescent or adult children per family across a variety of family arrangements in Germany, nonbiological relationships fared worse in terms of closeness than biological parent–child ties (Arránz Becker et al. 2013). The stepgap, however, was strongly moderated by normative factors such as parents’ familistic values (Arránz Becker et al. 2013), suggesting that meanings attached to family may influence the experience of emotional closeness in stepfamily relationships.

The analysis presented in this chapter differs from the existing literature on family belonging and relationships in that it combines two methodological approaches for the investigation. The narratives on family and on who counts as family gathered in qualitative in-depth interviews are looked at side-by-side with the systematic relational information on emotional closeness of all people in the interviewees’ relationship figurations. Thus, family membership and felt closeness of relationships are not analyzed in a predefined context of a post-separation family, but in that of a wider web of relationships, familial and nonfamilial, intimate and less intimate, embedded in which people live their everyday lives (Jamieson 2005).

Analyzing emotional closeness from the perspective of wider relationship figurations helps to grasp the tensions and the conflicts of interest related to post-separation relationships escaping from the narratives (Holland and Thompson 2009). It is likely that certain continuities and discontinuities in family relationships are difficult to grasp in research because the normative meanings of ‘family’ (Becker and Charles 2006) influence the ways in which past and present families can be discussed in research interviews.

Data and Research Design

The data consisted of in-depth interviews and information on the relationship figurations of 19 women and 15 men, all separated or divorced at some point in their lives and living in Southern Finland. The sample was a convenience sample recruited mainly with advertisements on the Internet sites of Finnish nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) arranging activities (e.g., courses and support groups) for divorced or separated women and men. The interviewees' age varied from 30 to 68 years, they were all white, and all were of heterosexual orientation. Every participant had completed vocational education at least; however, they mainly represented middle-class occupations. All except two lived in urban surroundings in the metropolitan area of Helsinki or smaller towns in Southern Finland.

Apart from having divorced or separated at some point in their lives and being parents, the interviewees' family situations varied a great deal. At the time of the interviews eight women and two men lived in single-parent families, nine women and seven men in stepfamilies (full time or part time), and two women and six men lived alone.¹ All participants except two women had biological children (from one to four), and some already had adult children. Among the interviewees there were both custodial and noncustodial parents as well as those who had a different status in relation to different children. Likewise, stepfamily structures varied greatly.²

As mentioned, at the time of data collection, 16 interviewees were living in a new partnership. Of these 10 were second unions and 5 were third unions. In addition, there was one male participant in his fifth marriage. Five of those currently without a partner had previously lived in a stepfamily. Altogether, 21 research participants in this data had personal experience with a stepfamily after their first divorce or separation.

The interviews focused on significant people and relationships in the research participants' lives. Information on them was collected using name-generator questions about confidential relations, emotional and

¹ Of those living alone, two women and three men had children who were already adults and three men had nonresident children who visited regularly.

² There was one stepfamily with only her and three with only his children; one with his and shared; eight with her and his; and three stepfamilies with her, his, and shared children.

material support (given and received), day-to-day arrangements, leisure activities, holidays, and family celebrations. The names given by interviewees were listed by the researcher and afterwards research participants completed a questionnaire that included detailed questions about all the individuals and the relationships mentioned.³

The questionnaires were returned to the researcher by mail. In addition, at the end of the interview the interviewees were asked who of the mentioned people knew whom. This information was stored in a binary matrix by the researcher and was used to analyze the interconnectedness of people belonging to the relationship figuration. All people brought up by the interview questions and discussed were considered to belong to the interviewee's relationship figuration. Their size varied greatly: the smallest figuration included only 8 and the largest 50 individuals, with the average size being 34 people.

The data are made up of three types of information: (1) narratives about people and relationships significant in everyday life, (2) systematic information on these collected via questionnaires, and (3) information about the interconnectedness of the people. In the analysis all types of material were used, and the procedure can be described as cross-paradigmatic, using several methods that drew on distinct meta-theoretical assumptions (Moran-Ellis et al. 2006: 46). A figurational approach was applied, meaning that relationships were analyzed both in light of personal narratives and of the wider webs of relations in which they were embedded (Castrén and Ketokivi 2015).

The narrative analysis conducted drew from the idea that people's stories about their lives and relationships inform us about not only their personal experiences but also that the stories people tell are constitutive for those experiences (Widdershoven 1993). In the figurational analysis, the narratives were studied to highlight the sense-making of interviewees as subjects, putting forth aspects of what was personally significant, whereas

³ Information about the individuals included: age, education and occupation, place of birth, and residence; and about the relationship between the interviewee and the person mentioned: duration, context and place of first encounter, who had introduced this person to the interviewee, the nature of relationship (as an open question), its felt closeness (on a scale from 1–7 – 1 indicating very close and 7 not close at all), the frequency and the primary means of contact, as well as the context and time of the last encounter.

questionnaires based on the systematic mapping of relationships asked interviewees to act as informants reporting predefined aspects of their relationships. The different lines of analysis are set in a dialogue in which they challenge, accompany, object to, and complete each other. The possible discrepancy revealed by assorted methodological perspectives brings forth tensions in which relationships are lived and highlights patterns missing from people's own and expressed sense-making. (Castrén and Ketokivi 2015.)

Before going to the analysis of family belonging and emotional closeness, we take a look at what the interviewees expected of their stepfamily relationships. A detailed analysis of these narratives has been presented elsewhere (see Castrén 2008); however, to interpret the results discussed later on it is important to understand the subjectively significant context in which stepfamily relationships are made sense of. The view emphasized here is that this context is influenced by the idea of family as something more than a sum of its components (see also Becker and Charles 2006; Gillis 1996; Ribbens McCarthy et al. 2003), or, as in this case, more than a collection of dyadic relations between stepfamily members. In the next section the goal is to illustrate this view with examples from the data and from research literature.

Rebuilding the Family?

The narratives of stepfamily relationships in the interviews display the ways in which a post-separation family is expected to be an emotional community, and as such more than an assemblage of people living in the same household (Castrén 2008). For instance, the new partner was expected to adopt a parental role towards interviewee's children and to commit herself or himself to a relationship of emotional closeness. This is well illustrated in Marja's case. She is a 40-year-old mother of two and a stepmother of two. Her children lived with her, her new partner, and his children, but they visited their father who lived with a new wife and a baby regularly, though not often. The children of Marja's partner lived every other week with their father.

During the interview, Marja expressed concerns about her ex-husband's relationship with her children, as he seemed to be more focused on his new family. These concerns intensified her expectations towards her partner, and she hoped he could be emotionally available to her children:

It was difficult for [the partner] to make contact with my children at first, [...] and I felt like that it all doubled, that their father doesn't want to and that my husband is also like, like that it's difficult for him to be close to them. (From interview with Marja)

The quote illustrates how the expectations towards a particular relationship are embedded in a wider web of relationships and affected by other relations. Marja herself had a close relationship with her partner's children and was engaged in many free-time activities with them, something her partner was not ready for with her children.

In some cases, the expectations of the couple concerning their respective roles in the stepfamily clashed severely. Heikki is a 36-year-old non-custodial father of three children, who visit him and his new wife once a month. Heikki does not expect his wife to take care of the children during their visits. Instead, his hopes highlight family as an emotional community:

I think I had this traditional idea that we would be like a real family when the kids are here. But my wife objects to this completely, it is against her principles, she says. She doesn't see herself as a parent or a caretaker and she doesn't want to have that responsibility either. She has said so. Of course, it's a bit difficult for me to understand why. But now we've discussed it over and over again, I've got it; that this is the way things are. (From interview with Heikki)

'The way things are' was clearly very disappointing for Heikki, and similar disappointments regarding stepfamily relationships have been reported widely in literature (e.g., Cartwright 2008; Allan et al. 2011). It is argued here that the reasons for frustration in post-separation relationships derive less from the personal characteristics of the involved parties and more from

the way families fundamentally are after separation and repartnering; that is, figurations of intertwined relations of various qualities spreading out from each individual, without a shared understanding of the boundary marking out those who belong to the same family in terms of emotional closeness and loyalty and those who do not. These figurations constrain the people involved (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994) in a sense that even though people can influence those directly connected to them, they cannot master or control all the relationships influencing their lives, not even the most relevant ones. This is true of Heikki's case; he cannot change the relationship between his wife and his children, but whatever happens in that relationship has considerable bearing on his life.

Thus, to some extent, disappointment and frustration in post-separation relations are drawn from the functioning of relationships in which the protagonist himself or herself is not directly involved (Castrén 2008). For example, a stepparent may feel that the other relationships a child has prevent him or her from forming the kind of emotional and committed relationship he or she would want to have. Allan et al. (2011: 53–59) offer an illuminating example of a stepmother, Louise, who is willing to commit herself to the role of mother to her partner's daughter, whose own mother is deceased. Still, Louise feels this is not possible because of the close relationship between the girl and her mother's biological relatives. The girl's grandparents and two aunts stepped in as surrogate caregivers when the girl's mother died, and they have remained significant in her life, despite her father's marriage to Louise. Louise saw that her stepdaughter's grandparents sought to ensure that the girl continued to recognize them as her family, and in so doing foiled Louise's attempts to establish boundaries around the stepfamily.

These examples of expectations not met in some stepfamilies and the concomitant disappointments tell us about what is sometimes anticipated – that is, a constellation of emotionally close relationships between those defined as relevant by the protagonist. These relationships are expected to form a unity and preferably to entail feelings of closeness. In the following section I investigate in more detail how this goal is reached and focus on the research participants' views of family membership and their evaluation of closeness in relationships.

Family Belonging and Emotional Closeness

The first theme discussed in the interviews dealt with interviewees' views on family membership, and they were asked who belongs to their families. The descriptions that followed can be arranged in four groups. In the first, interviewees draw from feelings of emotional closeness and intimacy in defining the most important family members as the 'nucleus' and placing others in more peripheral positions. For instance, 40-year-old Kirsi, who lives with her partner, her two children, and her partner's two children, describes her family thus: 'I see my family as composed of circles [...] as the closest... I think that [daughter], [son] and myself, we are one family, and then [the partner] belongs to it, and then comes... then there's all six of us. And then there's my parents.'

In the second group, interviewees mentioned some explicit criteria in defining their family. Living in the same household was used especially by men, whereas some women defined family as those taken into account on a daily basis. For example, 32-year-old Kaisa, a mother of one and a stepmother of one, said that, to her, family are those 'with whom I interact every day and who belong to those I need to consider when planning the next week.' Kaisa's family included people outside the household; for example, her partner's mother, who lived in a nearby home for the elderly. In the third group there were meandering descriptions filled with phrases such as 'in a way', 'kind of', 'then again'; it was as if the respondents were trying to grasp something fundamentally unclear (compare with Simpson 1998). In the fourth group there were contextualized descriptions in the interviewees' life histories, showing family as a constantly changing constellation of people.

It is noteworthy that more than half of the research participants (18 of 34) included people (other than children) in their families with whom they did not live (e.g., parents, siblings, or a close friend). Only two retired men with grown children and grandchildren and who lived alone said that they did not have a family.

Analyzing emotional closeness in relationships provides insights into the complexity of intimacy and the way in which feelings of loyalty travel in post-separation figurations. Closeness was investigated in the systematic

relationship data collected using questionnaires. In the questionnaires the research participants were asked to evaluate the emotional closeness of their relationship to each person on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being very close and 7 not close at all. The analysis of closeness values depicts family constellations differing from those emerging from narratives. I will first discuss family membership and felt closeness in relationships with partners and ex-partners and then in relationships with children.

Partner and Ex-partner

All research participants with a cohabiting partner mentioned that they belonged to their family regardless of the type of the commitment (e.g., marriage, full-time or part-time cohabiting) or the length of the relationship. There were no exceptions regarding the inclusion of a partner in the interviewee's family, which highlights the importance of a couple relationship as a significant ordering principle in the organization of intimacy in Finnish society (Ketokivi 2012; Castrén and Lonkila 2004). Even those with a dating partner discussed their 'new love' in this context, mentioning, for example, that in the future the partner will hopefully be a part of the family.

Even though ex-partners were rarely mentioned as family members, in the majority of cases she or he was included in the research participant's wider figuration of relationships that were significant in everyday life and discussed in the interviews (ex-partner(-s) included by 24 interviewees out of 34). Ex-partners often were discussed in a rather distant manner, and mostly in the context of some practical issues related to children. The majority of interviewees seemed to be on good terms with their 'ex', but the relationship was not referred to as being particularly significant personally or in any way to be considered in the realm of emotional closeness.

The narratives placed ex-partners in parts of life and in families that no longer existed. Such a narrative about past partners is understandable and in line with current liberal attitudes towards family dissolution in many European societies. In accordance with the flourishing therapy culture (Illouz 2008), stressing the importance of therapeutic

introspection and coming to terms with your life and relationships, people are eager to convince others about their 'psychosocial maturity', using the correct wording of ex-partners, among others. A distanced manner of speaking indicates that one has got over whatever unpleasantness the separation might have involved and has moved on in life (Maksimainen 2010). To include the ex-partner in the circle of emotional closeness could jeopardize this influential cultural narrative.

There were, however, five interviewees whose views challenged the expectation of a clear-cut divide between past and present families. Two men and three women still named their ex-partners as family. Jukka, a father and grandfather, lived as a single parent with his youngest son:

Four children belong to my family. I also count my two sons-in-law and this newcomer, my grandson. I feel strongly that also the mother of my children belongs to it. Like, we are a family. We started it, we have made this family. ... Why can't I say the same as the children [that their mother belongs to their family]? Because this is how we live, being a family means taking care of each other, even though we live in separate households. (From interview with Jukka)

This type of counternarrative, which challenges or blurs clear-cut boundaries between past and present intimates, is in line with what the analysis of closeness values tells us. Despite the fact that the majority of narratives about current family composition did not include an ex-partner, there was a considerable variation in closeness values, indicating that ex-partners do not inevitably turn into people who are emotionally distant. While current partners were always given the closeness value of 1 (with one exception), ex-partners' values varied a great deal, from 1 to 7; the average was 3.3 in the case of respondents without a cohabiting partner ($n = 14$), and 5 in the case of those who had repartnered ($n = 13$) (Table 8.1).

The spread of felt closeness values afforded to the ex-partner in situations where there was no current cohabiting partner is suggestive of greater closeness between former partners than what stereotypical thinking would lead us to expect. Ex-partners were often given values of 3 or 4, which were typical for people such as relatives, friends, and long-term

Table 8.1 Closeness values given to partners and ex-partners and whether they were considered as family

	Respondent Single (<i>n</i> = 18)	Respondent Repartnered (<i>n</i> = 16)
Partner (<i>n</i> = 16)		Considered as family; closeness always 1* (one exception)
Ex-partner (<i>n</i> = 27**)	Rarely considered as family (5/34); closeness varied from 1–6	Not considered as family; closeness varied from 2–7

Notes: * The scale for closeness: from 1 = meaning very close to 7 = not close at all. One partner received value 2. ** Two interviewees included more than one ex-partner in their relationship figuration

work colleagues. For example, in the case of 57-year-old Peter, his ex-wife, his sister, and his brother all scored 3 as the value of felt closeness and the only person considered very close (1) was his now grown-up daughter.

Saara, a 45-year-old mother of one, currently in a dating relationship, gave a score of 4 to her ex-husband, her brother, a friend, and her daughter's godmother. Saara considered two people as her closest: her daughter and her dating partner (1), while the people considered as the next closest (2 and 3) were her mother and sisters and her three very close friends. Thus, many research participants without a cohabiting partner considered their ex-partner as a moderately close person, even if they did not see him or her as family. For the four single parents, two women and two men, the ex-partner was clearly among the closest, receiving values of 1 or 2.

In the cases of repartnering, the emotional distance towards the ex-partner had grown (mean value 5). However, these cases also show considerable variation (from 2–7). For example, 50-year-old Maija considered her ex-husband as a close friend, as close as her current partner's son and one of her sisters, to whom she had given 2 as a closeness value. Mikko, a father of two and a stepfather of two, gave his ex-wife the same closeness value (4) as he did to his mother-in-law and his long-term friends from work. For most repartnered respondents the ex-partner was, however, more distant. It also should be noted that in 10 cases, ex-partners were not included in the relationship figuration at all, so these observations may overemphasize the closeness of ex-partners.

Nevertheless, the analysis shows that ex-partners do not automatically turn into not-at-all close people during separation and repartnering. They

often remain in the mapping of significant people in everyday life and are situated in a similar position to a friend, a long-term colleague, or a relative. The closeness values suggest continuity in terms of felt closeness between ex-partners. This may be drawn from familiarity more than intimacy, but still, continuity is hardly ever acknowledged in the narratives.

Children

Narratives on family always included all cohabiting children, and in the interviews no distinction was made between the interviewee's own and the partner's children in this respect. The accounts were as uniform here as they were regarding a cohabiting partner; that is, if they live with you, they are your family. In addition, the respondent's non-cohabiting children were always mentioned as members of family. In this case, however, the closeness values displayed more variation (Table 8.2).

As can be seen in the table, the interviewees' own children living in the same household always received a closeness value of 1, indicating the greatest level of closeness. In addition, nonresident children were considered to be among the closest by four of eight respondents. Yet, in four cases with male interviewees, nonresident children received some other closeness value. Two of the men lived with a new partner, with children visiting regularly; one lived alone, with teenage children visiting regularly; and one lived half of the time alone and half with his first-born child from his previous marriage, with the second child from a dating relationship visiting infrequently. For the two in a new partnership, the only person receiving a closeness value of 1 was the current partner, while children received a

Table 8.2 Closeness values given to underage children and whether they were considered as family

	Resident	Nonresident
Interviewee's children	Considered as family; closeness* always 1 ($n = 44$)	Considered as family; closeness varied from 1–4 ($n = 17$)
Partner's children	Considered as family; closeness varied from 1–4 ($n = 12$)	Not always considered as family; closeness values ($n = 4$): 2, 3, 6, and 7

Note: * The scale for closeness: from 1 = meaning very close to 7 = not close at all.

value of 2 in both cases. The father of the visiting teenagers had given his daughters a closeness value of 4, whereas the fourth father considered his first-born as very close (1) but the younger one slightly less so (2).

Despite the fact that the partner's cohabiting children were always mentioned as belonging to the research participant's family, in three cases out of five the participant's own children were considered closer than the partner's. The only children who were not consistently included in the family were the partner's non-cohabiting children. There were only three such cases in the data and in two of these, the interviewee did not even mention their partners' underage children when discussing their families. The fact that they existed came out during discussion on other themes.

Anni, for example, did not count her partner's son and daughter as family, and they were given closeness values of 3 and 6; the children visited rarely and lived with their maternal grandparents as their mother had passed away. For Mirjam, her partner's now teenage son, whom she had known for more than 10 years, remained an outsider (closeness value 7). In both of these cases, children remained outside the circle of emotionally closest people, despite the fact that they were half-siblings of these women's younger children.

The structural analysis of relationship figurations displays a similar trend in how tightly or loosely children may be integrated into figurations. The research participants' own and the partners' cohabiting children, who received values indicating greater emotional closeness, were far more tightly integrated into the figuration structure than children who were considered emotionally distant.

The data on interconnectedness (see Data and Research Design section) were processed using UCINET network analysis software (Borgatti et al. 2002), which enabled a detailed analysis of figuration structures. Those who knew most of the other people in a particular figuration – usually those known for the longest and / or considered close by the respondent (e.g., the partner and children) – were located at the structural core of the graph. Likewise, those who knew only a few of the other people were located at the margins.

The graph in Figure 8.1 illustrating Mirjam's figuration serves as an example. Although Mirjam's partner, three children, parents, and ex-partner are found at the core of the graph, her partner's 16-year-old son remained at the margins. Such structural positioning indicates that

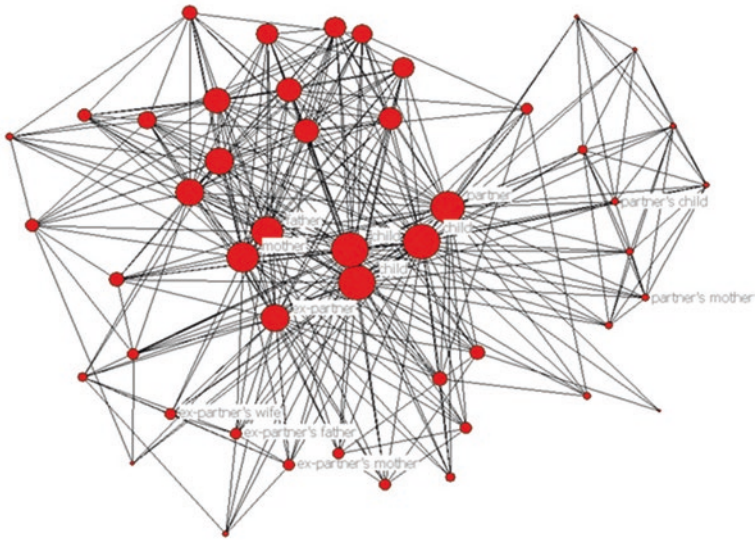


Fig. 8.1 The structure of Miriam's relationship figuration, indicating who knows whom.

Note: Node size indicates the centrality; the larger the node, the more the person knows other people in the figuration.

despite 10 years of knowing him, her partner's son had not become acquainted with most people in Mirjam's life.

What are we to think of the spread of children's closeness values vis-à-vis the wish to rebuild a family as a unit of emotional closeness? The biological children living with the interviewees were consistently among the closest, but non-cohabiting children were less so, as was shown in the case of the four men presented previously, insinuating that separation and repartnering can increase the emotional distance between parents and their children. There is also some fluctuation with one's partner's cohabiting children, whereas one's partners' non-cohabiting children can be shut out completely.

These observations of family membership and emotional closeness are made from a very small sample and they cannot be generalized to the wider population. Nevertheless, they suggest the existence of great diversity in the dynamics of post-separation family relationships, indicating both changes and continuities.

Conclusion

This chapter has applied a figurational approach to studying family belonging and the emotional closeness of relationships in post-separation situations, with a focus on continuity and change. The narratives highlighted the family as a unit where expectations of emotional closeness and commitment could be realized. The relational data, however, showed considerable diversity in the feelings of closeness, which suggest *both* changes *and* continuities often escaping from the ‘life as told’ (Holland and Thompson 2009). Family dissolution and repartnering often influence the way in which people talk about their families, and these transitions can create emotional distance in relationships between parents and underage children. In addition to such ‘changes’, continuities regarding, for example, the emotional closeness of relationships with ex-partners were observed. To summarize, post-separation families are characterized by complex dynamics, where little can be taken for granted. That is, family membership does not automatically indicate emotional closeness, and relationships originating from dissolved families do not inevitably lead to a lack of felt closeness.

The felt closeness towards former partners need not be interpreted exclusively in dyadic terms but as echoing a more encompassing affinity with former in-laws. Continuity in feelings of closeness may be linked with more general dynamics in post-separation kinship. As I have reported elsewhere, based on this same data set (see Castrén 2008), the majority of research participants have maintained contact with their former in-laws. This meant that, for example, the former partner’s parents, siblings, and other relatives regularly attended children’s birthdays, holiday celebrations, and family rituals, despite the breakup and new partnerships. Such practices drew from an understanding of a stepfamily highlighting its extended character (compare with Simpson 1998) and prioritizing a children’s perspective over that of an adult (Castrén 2008). Family and kin practices involving both former and current in-laws may offer a possibility to ‘relocate’ the former partner in a new position, similar to that of a friend or relative.

The idea of relocated, instead of removed, ex-partners bears similarity to Roseuil and Budgeon’s discussion (2004) on contemporary culture of

care and intimacy, and how it is increasingly characterized by decentring 'the family' and the heterosexual relationship. Authors describe personal networks as not being structured by biological, legal, or socially recognized ties, highlighting a conception of intimacy that 'blurs the boundaries' between family members, relatives, and friends. Such a conception can accommodate relationships with a changing degree of intimacy (Roseneil and Budgeon 2004) and may help in balancing between former and present families.

Continuity and change in the contexts of post-separation family relationships are entangled with questions regarding loyalty. Indeed, loyalty conflicts in stepfamilies have been a frequent theme in clinical, self-help, and research literature since the 1970s (e.g., Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark 1973; Doherty 1999). Balancing between former and current family members is demanding, as loyalty by definition entails an idea of prioritizing someone over someone else (Fletcher 1993: 8): 'A can be loyal to B only if there is a third party C [...] who stands as a potential competitor to B'. From this perspective, acts of loyalty are perceived to be in dialectical tension with opposing loyalty demands, so that when enacting loyalty in a given relation, relationship parties are simultaneously positioned to enact disloyalty in another (Baxter et al. 1997).

The dialectical perspective is, however, too simplistic to be transmitted to the analysis of contemporary family relationships. Instead, it is suggested here that contemporary intimacy accommodates ambivalences that encourage solutions to relational tensions based on choosing not only 'either / or' but also 'both / and' (compare with Nugent 2010). The analysis of family belonging and emotional closeness in relationships presented here elucidates multifaceted dynamics and contests the idea of loyalties automatically shifting in separation and repartnering, as is sometimes assumed (e.g., Furstenberg and Spanier 1987).

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9

Coresidence as a Mechanism of Relational Proximity: The Impact of Household Trajectories on the Diversification of Personal Networks

Vasco Ramos, Rita Gouveia, and Karin Wall

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

For a long time, the household unit – that is, the ‘ménage’ – has been a privileged doorway to study family and personal life (Laslett 1972; Wall 2005). Yet, the transformations of family arrangements associated with divorce, informal cohabitation, migration, and ageing alongside the pluralization of the life course have been challenging the heuristic potential of the household unit to capture family meanings and practices (Bonvalet and Lelièvre 2013). More recent approaches (e.g., the configurational perspective)

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highlight the importance of focusing instead on the networks of meaningful relationships in which individuals are embedded in their everyday lives that can go beyond the limits of the household (Widmer 2010).

Therefore, on the one hand, if the pool of significant ties does not necessarily overlap with the household members, then on the other hand, the role of coresidence as a relational mechanism should not be neglected. Considering a person as a family, or as important in one's life, can be associated with other relational principles (e.g., kinship primacy, genealogical proximity, homophily criteria, positive interactions, and exchange of emotional and instrumental support), but it also can be tied to a history of shared intimacy and routines under the same roof (Gouveia 2014). Actually, individuals rely on a combination of criteria to select from their pool of relatives those who they consider as close bonds, by excluding some kin, including non-kin, as family members (Wall and Gouveia 2014). In this chapter, we propose to (re)evaluate the importance of coresidence in the development of individuals' personal networks by taking into account the impact of the history of coresidence over the course of life.

Against the predominance of a kind of 'fetishism of the present' (Goodwin and O'Connor 2015) in most sociological research, the idea of looking at the past to understand the immediate present has been incorporated in critical studies. This retrospective reasoning underlies the theory of cumulative disadvantages (Merton 1968, 1988). Overall, this perspective sees individuals' well-being and social adjustment in the present as a result of the interplay between human agency and the accumulation of advantages and disadvantages over individuals' life trajectories (Gray 2009; O'Rand 2001). To endorse this sociogenetic view and processual orientation, the questions one needs to pose are 'how did "this" come to be?' and 'how are "these" interrelated?' (Goodwin and O'Connor 2015).

Following this line of reasoning, our point of view is that personal configurations are a product of an accumulation of relational resources / social capital over individuals' life trajectories and the exercise of personal choice. Thus, we adopt this biographical approach of personal networks (Bidart and Lavenu 2005) by investigating the role of household trajectories on the type of personal configuration in which individuals are immersed in the present time in the context of their gender and generational and educational backgrounds. How did personal configurations

come to be like this? How are household trajectories and networks interrelated with cohort, gender, and education? Although we believe that personal networks are not a full replication of household composition, we hypothesize that they are shaped by the history of significant relationships developed within the diverse households in which individuals have lived over the life course. Combining the configurational approach with the life-course perspective, we will be able to grasp the linkages between household trajectories and the types of personal configurations.

The assumptions of both perspectives (i.e., life-course and configurational approaches) are articulated in this chapter. The first element of articulation stresses the life-course *principle of agency* and the rejection of 'a priori' institutionalized definition of close bonds sustained by the configurational approach. Agency is considered as a bounded agency because individuals benefit from relational flexibility (Allan et al. 2011) to choose those who belong to their close relationships; however, they still are constrained by diverse contexts of socialization over the life course. Therefore, we assume a contextual exercise of choice as we perceive individuals as actors of their biographies, but acting within the resources and constraints of their social, generational, and relational contexts. The principle of agency is methodologically guaranteed in our study by allowing individuals to define their personal networks, by relying on the subjective criteria of whom they consider as important persons in their lives, instead of predefining the boundaries.

The second element of articulation is mainly methodological and brings together three main principles of the life-course approach: the *life-span development* perspective, the integration of *time and space*, and the consideration of the *timing of events and transitions*. To situate household trajectories and personal networks over these various interfaces of time and space, we can benefit from a cross-cohort design and a diachronic approach to individuals' life span. We used a cross-cohort design composed not only of three age groups, which simultaneously represent various historical and social backgrounds in Portuguese society, but also of distinct stages of the life course characterized by the experience of specific life transitions and critical events. Therefore, this design allows us to examine how household trajectories and personal configurations are shaped by generations and life stages. To cover the whole life span of the

individual, we were able to map, year by year, with whom individuals were living since birth and, thus, to analyze their household trajectories.

Finally, the concept that best bridges the two perspectives is the principle of *linked lives*, which stresses the importance of studying individuals not in a social vacuum but in their social and relational embeddedness. Thus, we consider two relational settings: the household (composed of those who lived with the individual at a certain point) and the personal network (composed of those they considered as important during the previous year to the survey). Moreover, changes in household composition can be generated either by ego (e.g., leaving the parental home) or by change in alters (e.g., birth or death of a relative; migration). In this sense, individuals' household trajectories are interdependent from the trajectories of other household members.

One last remark here is the key role of gender in the construction of household trajectories and personal networks within each generation (Aboim and Vasconcelos 2013). Empirical evidence on gendered life courses shows how the dynamics of the labour market and family life produce different pathways for men and women in the context of distinct generational times (Widmer and Ritschard 2013). Also, sociability has been empirically proved to be patterned by gender (Fischer and Olicker 1983; Troll 1987). Actually, women are often depicted as 'kin-keepers' because they have a privileged role in maintaining the connection with more indirect and distant kin. Instead, men's sociability often is characterized as more open to non-kin and restricted to the nuclear family. Nevertheless, the literature also stresses that these generalizations should be carefully analyzed in the light of life-span transitions and changing gender roles.

In summary, this analysis will be organized according to the following steps. First, we aim to characterize current household composition and to map the household trajectories of individuals belonging to the three birth cohorts, by carrying out a sequence analysis of the type of household corresponding to the 20 years prior to the survey (from 1990–2010). In a second step, we will first characterize the composition of personal networks (e.g., proportion of kin, coresidence) and then identify the main types of personal configurations by exploring the combinations of ties included in the current network of close relationships. Finally, we will investigate the link between types of household trajectories and types of

personal configurations by considering the interdependencies between them. Transversal to all these analyses, we will take into consideration the role of the birth cohort and structural conditions – namely, gender and education as contextual / shaping factors.

Data and Methods

This chapter draws on the national survey ‘Family Trajectories and Social Networks’, which was carried out between 2009 and 2010 in mainland Portugal¹ by a research team coordinated by Karin Wall from the Institute of Social Sciences (ICS). This survey used a cross-cohort design composed of three age groups of Portuguese men and women born between 1935–1940, 1950–1955, and 1970–1975 ($n = 1500$). We used a representative stratified sample, according to NUTS II and habitats distribution and the number of households needed to reach a response rate of >60 %, of the ones belonging to these birth cohorts. Fieldwork was conducted by a market research agency (GfK Metris) whose interviewers were trained by the ICS research team. Data were collected in homes by a qualified team through a paper and pencil interview (PAPI).

The questionnaire was composed of five main parts: life trajectories and critical events, subjective domains of investment in several life domains, personal networks, family values and gender roles, and sociodemographical characterization. In this chapter, we focus on life trajectories and personal networks, and we use some sociodemographical variables.

Birth cohorts were defined according to the experience of common historical events and societal circumstances during the transition to adulthood. The birth cohort of 1935–1940 was composed of individuals who were born before World War II and who were socialized in the authoritarian regime of a Portuguese dictatorship. The birth cohort of 1950–1955 made the transition to democracy and was socialized in the turbulent times of the revolution. Finally, the birth cohort of those who were born between 1970 and 1975 already was socialized in a democratic country integrated in the European Union (EU).

¹ This Project was funded by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (PTDC/SDE/65663/2006).

Our analysis of household trajectories considers individuals' life courses over the last 20 years (1991–2010) across the three cohorts. By doing so we placed the three cohorts at several stages of their life course, which is a key element for the analysis. Individuals from all these cohorts experienced significant changes not only in the structure of the household in which they lived but also a significant reconfiguration of their social roles. Those who were born between 1935–1940 are between 75–80 years of age. They are in mature adulthood and most likely have been married a long time and have adult children. Many of them have become grandparents in last two decades. Some possibly also have experienced divorce or widowhood. Those who were born between 1950–1955 are between 60–65 years old. Over the last 20 years they entered midlife. Their children have become adults and are moving out either to live on their own or to start a family. Those who were born between 1970–1975 are between 35–45 years old. Over the last 20 years they have evolved from young adulthood to the brink of midlife.

Family trajectories were measured by using a life calendar.² We asked individuals with whom they were living when they were born. Afterwards, we asked how old they were when household composition change occurred (e.g., a brother's birth, a grandmother who died, and so on). This procedure was repeated up to the present household. Eleven ego-centred categories were used for coding of individual sequences: 1 = 'alone', 2 = 'alone with children', 3 = 'alone with children and others', 4 = 'couple', 5 = 'couple with children', 6 = 'couple with children and others', 7 = 'couple with others', 8 = 'with one parent', 9 = 'with two parents', 10 = 'with other family', and 11 = 'with non-family'.

Third, data on individual trajectories were examined using Sequence Analysis – namely, the Optimal Matching method (Abbott 1995; Abbott and Tsay 2000; Gauthier 2013). To identify a typology of trajectories, a

²To reconstitute household trajectories, we considered with whom individuals coresided over the last two decades. Our approach to household trajectories draws on the contributions of family historians (Hammel and Laslett 1974; Laslett 1972). We adapted their theoretical and methodological tools by positioning *individuals* (ego) within household structures. Our examination of the empirical development of biographical events associated with coresidence does not anticipate a model of predefined sequence of stages and transitions.

distance matrix was constructed by using INDEL costs and substitution costs.³ Following this procedure, the distance matrix was used to perform a hierarchical cluster analysis using an agglomerative algorithm (Ward's method). Computations were made in an R statistical environment using the TraMineR package for sequence analysis (Gabadinho et al. 2011, 2008).

Personal networks were mapped by adopting a free-listing technique based on the Family Network Method (FNM) (Widmer et al. 2013; Widmer and La Farga 2000), by requesting individuals to name those persons (i.e., alters) who they considered important during the year prior to the survey. The term 'important' was left undefined, merely suggesting that by it, we also meant '*people who may have played an important role in your life, even if you did not get along with him / her during the last year*'. Individuals could cite up to 19 names. After listing the names, they provided information on the alters regarding the type of tie, gender, age, education, acquaintanceship duration, geographical residence, frequency of contact, and so on.

After this alters' characterization, individuals were asked to map the network of relationships between all the network members, including ego, in terms of contact, emotional support, and conflict. A last block of questions was asked regarding the dyadic exchange of instrumental support (e.g., financial, in kin and in services, and care) between ego and each alter. In this study, personal networks are thus ego-centred networks because they were reconstructed based on a privileged informant (ego). We also should mention that in this survey personal networks were assessed after trajectories. Therefore, we need to be aware that this might have a primacy effect, thus boosting the number of family members cited in close personal networks.

³The attribution of substitution and insert / deletion cost is a key element of optimal matching analysis (Abbott and Hrycak 1990; Gauthier 2013). Costs can be set using several methods. In our case, INDEL costs were set at 1 and substitution costs were differentiated according to their (inversed) relative transition frequency (more frequent transitions are less costly, less frequent transitions are more costly).

Results

Current Household Types and Household Trajectories

Taking a retrospective perspective of coresidence, we begin by looking at the current household and then, we reconstitute the recent past household trajectory. For the current household, we used a classification based on an external / outsider perspective, in the sense that we classified the households according to the elements forming the *ménage*, regardless of the position of ego within it. This provides a more synthetic analysis of household composition by cohort. Instead, for the trajectories, we needed a more in-depth analysis; we therefore took into account the several positions of ego in the household (i.e., 11 ego-centred categories).

If we look at the current household of the respondents by birth cohort, some trends stand out (Table 9.1). Among the oldest cohort, the majority of the respondents live in *couple without children* households. Compared with the other cohorts, we also find a significant percentage of respondents living alone (24.7 %). Individuals belonging to the middle cohort were mainly living in *couple with* and *without children* households. However, there is also an overrepresentation of individuals living in *complex families' households* (14.2 %). Finally, in the youngest cohort, nearly 65 % of the respondents lived in *couple with children* households. A note should be made here: this category includes both those who are living with parents and those living with their partner and children. Also within this cohort, we find a significant percentage of respondents living in *lone-parent* households.

Table 9.1 Type of Current Household by Birth Cohort

	Total	Cohort 1935–1940	Cohort 1950–1955	Cohort 1970–1975
Living alone	13.7	24.7	8.2	9.9
Several persons	1.7	2.5	1.0	1.7
Couple without children	26.8	41.6	34.7	7.1
Couple with children	40.9	16.9	36.5	64.7
Lone parent	6.5	5.9	5.5	8.0
Complex	10.5	8.4	14.2	8.6

Note: Chi-squared = 336.45; $p < 0.001$.

Notwithstanding the role of the present household composition as an important setting of relational interdependencies, we aim to understand the accumulation of relational capital in a retrospective longitudinal perspective of the coresidence history. Therefore, based on sequence and cluster analyses, we were able to identify seven patterns of household trajectories over the last 20 years. The first pattern revealed by the analysis – namely, the *established families (of procreation)* type – aggregates up to 33.3 % of the total sample. This is a quite stable household trajectory in which we found individuals who spent most of the last two decades coresiding with their partners and children.

The second type, which we named trajectory *Recently Established Families*, included 18.0 % of individuals. It mainly covered individuals who during the last 20 years made the transition from living with their parents to living with their own partners. Although a few have since separated, most of them were currently living with a partner and young children. A third cluster is composed of *empty nesters* and amounts to 17.2 % of the sample. Half of these individuals were still living with their partners and children at the beginning of our timeframe. Over the last 10 years all of them have been living exclusively with their partners, after the departure of their adult children. *Long-time loners* (11.5 %) were individuals who spent most of the last 20 years living alone. Some in this pattern (about 50 %) were, at the beginning of our observation window, still living with their partners or with their partners and children (Figure 9.1).

Three additional but less numerous clusters were identified. *Lone parents and others* (8.9 %) is a trajectory type in which individuals experienced a separation from their partners and have been living with their children and / or with other kin. A sixth cluster, *extended families*, includes individuals who have lived most of the last two decades with their partners, children, and others (kin and / or non-kin). This pattern covers 6.2 % of the sample. Finally, about 5 % of individuals fit into a mixed cluster composed of two subsets of trajectories, which we labeled as *loners with parents*. About half of them develop household trajectories that evolve from coresiding with their family of procreation to currently living alone (along with other less numerous household types). Another half currently live with their parents.

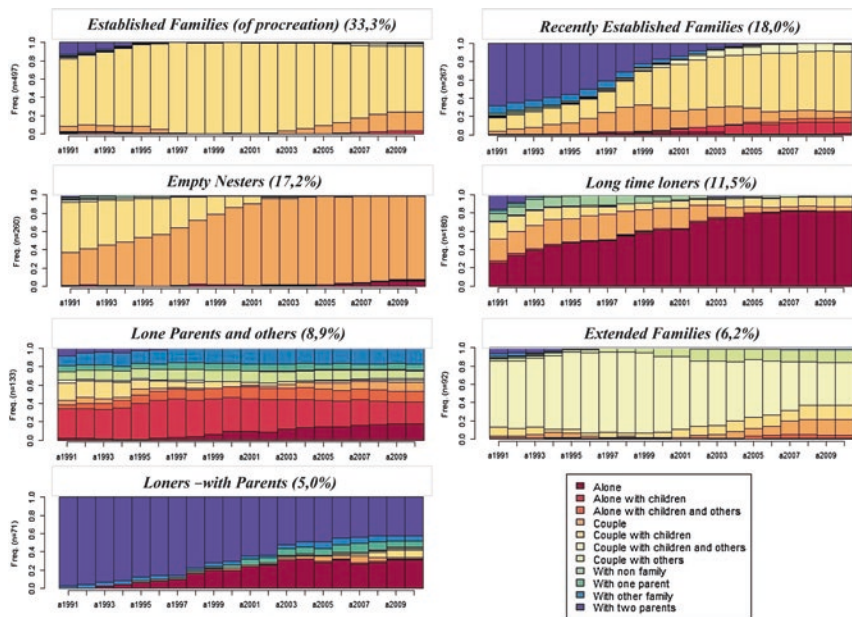


Fig. 9.1 Recent household trajectories

The type of household trajectories was persuasively shaped by birth cohort (Figure 9.2). In the oldest cohort, the modal trajectory is the *empty nester* (36 %). Also with an accentuated percentage, we find the *established families* (21 %) and the *long-time loners* (19 %) trajectories. It is also in this cohort that we find a strong representativeness of *lone parents and others' trajectories*. In the middle cohort, findings show a predominance of the *established families' trajectory*, with 53 % of the respondents belonging to this cluster. We also find an overrepresentation of *Extended families' trajectories* (9 %). Finally, in the younger cohort, the *recently established families' trajectory* is dominant, followed by the *established families*. The *loners – with parents* are overrepresented in this younger cohort, by with nearly 11 %.

Overall, differences in the distribution of trajectory types per cohort seem to be decidedly linked with the life course itself, and with an expected sequential ordering of stages, close to the concept of life cycle. From this point of view, young families are followed by established families, and

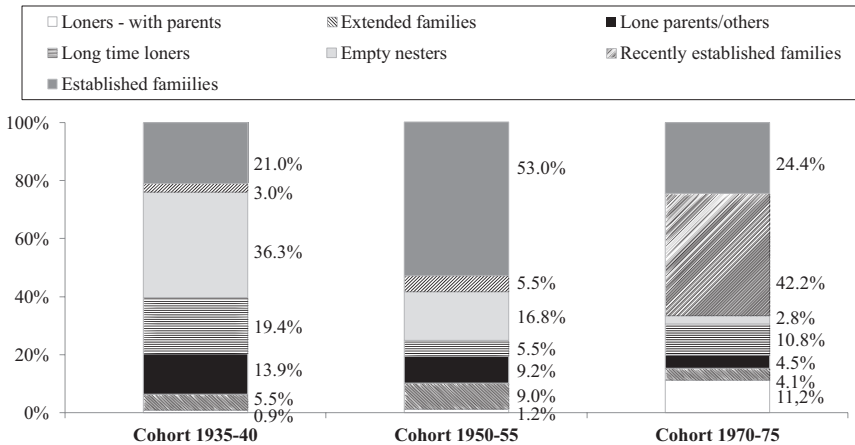


Fig. 9.2 Distribution of recent household trajectories by cohort

later by empty nesters. Even though these are the modal trajectories by cohort, there also are cohort effects. For example, in the younger cohort the weight of *loners – with parents* expresses important changes in the transition to adulthood in contemporary societies – namely, of delayed home-leaving and transitions to conjugal life and parenthood.

In sum, the analysis of household composition revealed that individuals belonging to the three cohorts are living in differentiated household arrangements. However, to explore the role of coresidence history, we need to look at the household trajectories corresponding to the recent past. The cluster analysis of the household moves / shifts over the 20 last years revealed seven main types of household trajectories: *established families*, *recently established families*, *empty nesters*, *long-time loners*, *lone parents and others*, *extended families*, and *loners – with parents*. These trajectories are closely related to biographical and generational times because they are otherwise associated with birth cohort. Next, we will focus on personal networks.

Mapping Personal Configurations

As we mentioned in the Methods section, respondents could name up to 19 network members who they considered as important. If we exclude ego, personal networks show an average size of 4.34 with a

standard deviation of 2.60 (Min = 0 and Max = 19). The value of the standard deviation reveals some variability on personal networks from more restricted arrangements to larger ones. Thirteen individuals did not include any person considered as important, meaning that we had 13 individuals with empty networks. Given the residual percentage of these respondents, they were not included in this study.

A first overview of personal networks shows that they are mainly composed of kinship ties; still there are also a significant proportion of mixed networks (combining kin and non-kin). We computed the number of kin and non-kin elements in each network and found that 68.5 % (1019) of the respondents show exclusively kin-based networks, while 31.5 % (468) of the respondents included at least one non-kin alter. Actually, 3.2 % (48) included only non-kin alters in their networks.

We also calculated the average proportion of networks' members who have shared the same household with ego at some point of his or her life. We found that, on average, 7 out of 10 alters have coresided with ego over the life course. This means that coresidence in the past plays a crucial role of bonding, and thus, alongside with the kinship tie, seems to act as a major criterion to choose who are the important persons in one's life. Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not provide information on whether each network member was sharing the same household with ego at the time of the interview.

Aiming to create a typology of personal networks, we followed the same statistical procedure adopted by the configurational approach (Widmer 2010) by running a cluster analysis based on the type of ties cited by the respondents. First, we focused on the type of tie that links each network member to ego. As described in the methodological section, we used a system of 40 labels, including ascendants (i.e., parents, parents-in-law, and so on), descendants (i.e., children, grandchildren, and so on), collaterals (i.e., siblings, cousins, aunts, and so on), spiritual kin (i.e., godparents, godchildren), step-kin (i.e., stepchildren, stepparents), and non-kin ties (i.e., friends, coworkers, and so on). For the cluster analysis, we kept the categories reported by at least 3 % of the total sample, and we regrouped the residual categories into categories of meaning. From this procedure, we retained 17 categories: children, partner, mother, friend, sibling, father, grandchild, child in-law, sibling in-law, neighbour, mother-in-law, other non-kin, collateral, work colleague, other kin, nephew / niece, and

Table 9.2 Percentage of respondents citing each type of tie ($n = 1487$)

Type of tie	Percentage of respondents citing the tie
Children	73.6
Partner	71.3
Mother	23.9
Friends	22.1
Siblings	21.3
Father	16.3
Grandchildren	15.5
Children in-law	9.3
Siblings in-law	6.5
Neighbours	5.6
Mother-in-law	5.4
Other non-kin (domestic employees, acquaintances)	4.4
Collaterals (uncles, cousins)	3.9
Work colleagues (coworkers and boss)	3.8
Other kin (spiritual, stepfamily, grandparents)	3.6
Nephews	3.5
Father-in-law	3.1

father-in-law. Table 9.2 shows the percentage of respondents who cited at least one element of each type of tie.

In a second step, we introduced the average number of network members⁴ cited in each category of tie into a hierarchical cluster analysis based on the measure of Euclidean distances and on the Ward Clustering Algorithm. We analyzed 2 to 10 cluster options and decided for the solution of seven clusters as the one which best fits the requirements of statistical robustness and theoretical interpretability (Everitt 2011). To understand the profile of each cluster, we calculated the average number of network members in each category of tie by cluster; thus, we identified the predominant orientation of each configuration.

The most common cluster was the *extended-conjugal* (40 %), which aggregates those respondents who mainly cited the partner and the parents and parents in-law. Less frequent, it also included the case of those who additionally cited having one child. The second main cluster was

⁴We used the average number of elements cited in each type of tie because we followed the same methodological procedure as Widmer (2010) to create the configurational typology, thus, ensuring future comparability. However, we assume that the proportion of elements cited in each type of tie would have been more accurate to assess the representativeness of these ties within the networks.

the *nuclear-closed* (28 %), which is composed of those respondents who restricted their personal networks to the elements of the family of procreation – that is, the partner and the children. The *friendship-up* (9 %) assumes a mixed nature as it brings together the respondents who cited both relatives (the parents) and non-kin elements (friends). Also representing 9 % of the sample, we found the *sibling-oriented* cluster. This cluster aggregates those who added siblings to their family of procreation, but also siblings’ in-law and their offspring (i.e., nephews and nieces).

The next cluster is the *beanpole-down* (6 %) and is composed of elements of three generations: the partner, children, children in-law, and grandchildren. The sixth cluster is the *nuclear-open* (5 %) as the core members are the elements of the family of procreation, but it also includes friends. Finally, the last cluster is the *adult-children* (4 %) and is composed of those respondents who cited more than five adult children, even if they sometimes included a partner.

The distribution of personal configurations across the three birth cohorts revealed some interesting findings (Figure 9.3). In the oldest cohort, we found an overrepresentation of the *nuclear-closed* (33 %), *beanpole-down* (11 %), and *adult-children* (10 %). Regarding the middle cohort, we found

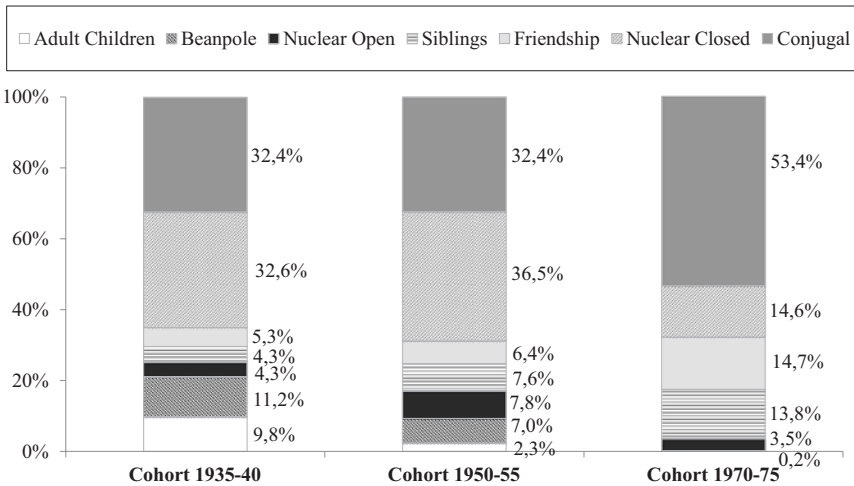


Fig. 9.3 Distribution of personal configurations by cohort

an overrepresentation of the *nuclear-closed* (36 %), the *nuclear-open* (8 %), and the *beanpole-down* (7 %). Finally, individuals from the youngest cohort were more likely to be embedded in *extended-conjugal* (53 %), *friendship-up* (15 %), and *siblings-oriented* (14 %). This distribution seems to indicate that life-course dynamics, in particular the effect of the life stage and of the pool of relatives available, have a major influence on the orientation of personal networks.

Older adults seem to be more restricted to their adult-children, in the presence or absence of the partner (*nuclear-closed* and *adult-children*), or, if they have grandchildren, they build a multigenerational arrangement (*beanpole-down*). In the younger cohort, we can see that the composition of the networks is quite in contrast with the oldest and middle cohort, and the experience or nonexperience of certain transitions (e.g. entry into conjugality and parenthood) seem to be paramount. We find individuals more focused on the conjugal bond and respective ascendants (*extended-conjugal*), because they were likely to be childless in this life stage. On the other side, individuals who are probably still living in the parental home and had not experienced the transition to parenthood are more focused on friends and parents (*friendship-up*).

In sum, the existence of a kinship tie, and the fact of having shared the same household with ego at some point in his or her life, seem to be two major mechanisms of relational proximity. Through a cluster analysis, we were able to map seven main patterns of the combination of ties – that is, seven main types of personal configurations: *extended-conjugal*, *nuclear-closed*, *friendship-up*, *siblings-oriented*, *beanpole-down*, *nuclear-open*, and *adult-children*. As a next step, given the importance of coresidence in personal networks, we examine the link between current household composition, household trajectories, and personal configurations.

Linking Current Household Type, Household Trajectories, and Personal Configurations

In the previous section, we found a strong presence of alters with a history of coresidence with ego in individuals' personal networks. We concluded that having shared the same household on a daily basis operates as

a mechanism of relational proximity. Thus, one may ask to what extent the composition of personal networks is a full replication of the current household composition or an accumulation of relational capital over the years through coresidence. To answer these questions, we carried out a two-step process: first, we compared the current household with the type of personal configuration; and second, we explored the link between household trajectories and type of personal configuration.

Table 9.3 shows the distribution of personal configurations by type of current household. As mentioned before, we did not have access to the number or proportion of network members currently coresiding with ego. Nevertheless, by comparing network composition with current household composition, we can obtain the degree of overlap or mismatch between the two settings. If we look carefully at the over- and under-representation's of personal configurations in each type of household, we usually find an extension of personal networks beyond the limits of the household unit; however, we also find situations in which there is a full overlap between household members and network members.

Individuals who are *living alone* are more likely to build a *friendship-up* type of configuration. This means that, despite living alone, their networks are composed of friends and parents who live in other households. In other words, for these individuals coresidence at the present moment is not a criterion to choose their close bonds. For those living in *couple without children*, coresidence at the moment also seems to play a secondary role, as *beanpole-down* stands out as the overrepresented configura-

Table 9.3 Personal configurations by type of household

	Total	Living Alone	Several Persons	Couple without children	Couple with children	Lone parent	Complex
Extended-conjugal	39.9	32.5	36.0	44.0	43.1	19.6	41.0
Nuclear-closed	27.4	33.0	12.0	24.1	25.7	51.5	23.1
Friendship-up	9.1	19.2	36.0	4.5	7.7	8.2	9.0
Siblings-oriented	8.9	6.9	12.0	5.3	12.0	10.3	7.1
Beanpole-down	5.8	3.4	0.0	11.6	2.1	2.1	10.9
Nuclear-open	5.2	3.0	0.0	5.5	6.4	3.1	4,5
Adult-children	3,7	2.0	4.0	5.0	3.0	5.2	4.5

Note: Chi-squared = 175.16; p < 0.001.

tion within this type of household. Within the category of *couple with children*, we have two situations: those who restrict their networks to the household members (*nuclear-closed*), thus showing a total merge between household and network; and those who extend the network by including friends (*nuclear-open*) or by including parents and parents-in-law (*extended-conjugal*). These results lead us to look at the role of coresidence in the construction of personal networks in a retrospective approach, by considering the household trajectories.

Thus, to explore the associations between household trajectories and personal configurations in the frame of individuals' structural circumstances, we carried out a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). This procedure allows us to obtain a comprehensive overview of the co-occurrence of categories to gain a better understanding of how they are organized in specific patterns (Greenacre 2007). We introduced the following variables: type of personal configuration (7 categories), type of recent household trajectory (7 categories), proportion of coresident alters (4 categories), level of education ISCED (5 categories), and a mixed variable of gender and cohort (6 categories). We decided to build the gender-cohort variable because gender differences are constructed in the context of generational time (Aboim and Vasconcelos 2013).

In the first quadrant we find individuals from the middle cohort (Figure 9.4). Again, although a common orientation to both *extended-families* and *established-families* trajectories may be found within this cohort, the graph shows two gendered trends: women are more associated with both *extended-families* trajectories and *nuclear-closed* configurations, which is nearly 100 % composed of previous coresident members; whereas men are strongly associated with the *established-families* trajectory and the *nuclear-open* configuration, with a slightly lower presence of former coresident alters.

On the negative side of the horizontal axis (2nd and 3th quadrants), we find individuals belonging to the youngest cohort: women are closer to the 2nd quadrant, whereas men are closer to the 3rd quadrant. Male individuals are more associated with higher levels of education, with a *loner – with parents* trajectory and a *friendship-up* configuration, composed of a low percentage of previous coresident alters (> 25 %). Though they can also build up an *extended-conjugal* type of configuration, composed

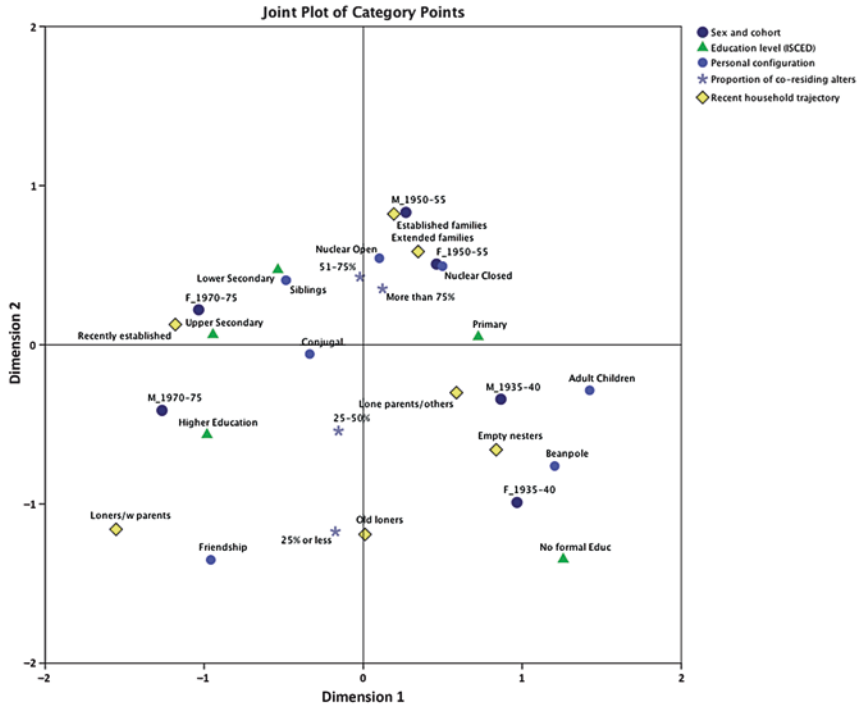


Fig. 9.4 Projection of the first two dimensions of multiple correspondence analysis

of 25–50 % of alters who have coresided with ego in the past. Younger women are more associated with the secondary level of education and are more correlated with the *recently established families*’ trajectory. It seems that those with lower-secondary levels are more oriented to the *siblings*’ configuration, whereas those with upper-secondary levels are more oriented towards *extended-conjugal* configurations, with moderate levels of former coresident alters.

In the fourth quadrant, we find individuals born in the oldest cohort. Although both men and women from this cohort are clearly associated with both *adult-children* and *beanpole-down* configurations, gender and the type of trajectory seem to shape the orientation towards one or the other. Men who are closer to *lone-parent* trajectories also are closer to *adult-children*; whereas women who are closer to *empty nesters*’ trajectories

also are closer to *beanpole-down*. Again, the difference between men and women are not sharp. These two configurations also are associated with various proportions of former coresident alters.

Interestingly, the *long-time loners trajectory* is not clearly associated with a specific cohort, but it is associated with the *friendship-up* configuration. This means that regardless of age, friends are paramount for those who are *long-time loners*, and thus the percentage of alters who shared the same household with ego in the past is quite low (<25 %). The diversity of profiles seems to be shaped by the intersection of two dimensions: biographical and generational time (horizontal axe), and the presence of former coresident members (vertical axe).

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to evaluate the impact of present and past coresidence on individuals' personal configurations as a mechanism of relational proximity. Following a life-course perspective in combination with a configurational approach, we adopted a diachronic perspective by taking into account the household trajectories of individuals over the last 20 years and the presence of former coresident members in their current personal networks.

Therefore, the question that we initially posed was whether coresidence is still an important mechanism of relational proximity, by bonding individuals together. Two main conclusions may be highlighted. A first conclusion is that our findings support a 'yes' and 'no' answer, as it depends on how we frame coresidence (present vs. past). If we compare current household composition and the type of network, we find that, in most cases, personal networks are not restricted to household members but are instead constructed beyond the limits of a household unit. On the other hand, if we frame coresidence in a retrospective longitudinal perspective, by focusing on household trajectories, we find that the fact of sharing the same household with ego at some point in life enhances the probability of being included in ego's personal networks. Thus, in line with the theories of cumulative (dis)advantages, the accumulation of relational capital over the household trajectory, as well as life transitions

that trigger household shifts, seem to be paramount in the way personal networks look in the present.

A second conclusion is that we found a diversity of profiles in the building up of personal networks, depending on different levels of integration of former coresident members, the type of household trajectory, and the structural circumstances associated with the birth cohort. The transitions and events experienced by individuals and their families trigger shifts in their household trajectories by simultaneously opening and restricting the inclusion of certain types of ties. Individuals belonging to the three cohorts followed quite distinct household trajectories over the last 20 years; combined with gendered and educational contexts, birth cohort seems to soundly impact their personal networks.

Individuals from the oldest cohort belong to a generation characterized by low educational resources and a strong gender role differentiation. They mostly experienced the *empty nest* and grandparenthood transition but also widowhood, especially men. Individuals living alone over the last 20 years (*long-time loners*), which is mainly a male pattern, build their personal networks around their adult children (adult-children configuration). These children may be paramount as providers of expressive and instrumental support but also as receivers. In contrast, those still living with a partner and who moved into an empty nest over the last 20 years (*empty nester* trajectory) seem more likely to increase their personal networks towards the inclusion of multigenerational ties. For these individuals, coresidence history has an important but somewhat secondary role, as their networks surpass current household composition and include a significant percentage of alters who have never coresided with ego.

Individuals born in the middle cohort are characterized by a slight increase in their educational levels; still the majority only attained primary school level. Again, we found a gendered pattern. Women are more likely to have been sharing the same household with extended family members (e.g., a parent or a parents-in-law) over the last 20 years. Interestingly, this is the case when they coreside with more distant kin; overall though, women tend to restrict their close bonds to the family of procreation (*nuclear-closed*), and thus, all alters are former coresident members. Instead, men from this cohort are more associated with the *established families'* trajectory, meaning that they mainly lived in a household of a couple with

children over the last 20 years. Interestingly, these individuals show the opposite situation; although they mostly shared their everyday lives with the family of procreation, their personal networks were open to non-kin, in particular friends (*nuclear-open*), thereby allowing for the inclusion of non-coresident members. This seems to reveal some gender differentiation in the formation of close relationships outside the domestic sphere.

Finally, in the younger cohort, we found a sharp increase in educational levels. Still, women are more associated with the secondary level and men with higher education. Actually, the interplay between gender, the extension of school careers, and the transition to conjugality and parenthood is clear in this cohort. For instance, young men are more likely to have spent the last 20 years between the parental home and living alone, which in turn shapes their preferences for a mixed configuration composed of parents and friends (*friendship-up*), with a low level of alters who shared a coresidence history.

Instead, young women are more likely to follow the *recently established families*' trajectory; that is, linked to the transition from living with their families of origin to entering into conjugality and parenthood. This family-formation trajectory seems to build their personal networks around the couple (and in some cases, the first child) and the parents and parents-in-law (*extended-conjugal*), and thus includes a moderate level of previous coresident members. Interestingly, women with lower educational levels (lower-secondary), in the context of this cohort's educational background, also are more likely to include siblings and siblings-in-law.

In conclusion, if we recall the three elements of articulation between the life-course perspective and the configurational approach – *agency*, *time*, and *linked lives* – we can understand how these three assumptions interact with each other in the construction of personal networks. First, we found that individuals build their trajectories and networks not only as a mere exercise of relational agency and choice but also in the frame of their social circumstances. Second, individual time, family time, generational time, and historical time are diverse layers that interact as shaping factors of both trajectories and networks in the context of gender and educational backgrounds. Actually, this high level of variable interdependency in our results drives us to problematize it as a result or as a statistical problem of multicollinearity. This challenges the adoption of

causal models in social science, generally, and in network and life-course research more specifically (Abbott 1998). Third, coresidence over the life course and the transitions experienced by ego and his or her household members create interdependencies between individuals (linked lives) that may last until the present.

Nevertheless, it also is important to highlight some limitations of this study, mainly linked to the methodology. First, the retrospective nature of the questionnaire can induce memory biases. Second, the order of the questions may have influenced the results because household trajectories were mapped before networks, rendering former coresident members more salient, thus more likely to be included. Third, the cross-cohort design may jeopardize the isolation of age, cohort, and period effects.

Future work on this topic would therefore benefit from both quantitative and qualitative longitudinal designs, allowing research to follow individuals over the life course as they move throughout the various life foci of socialization. A qualitative approach would provide an in-depth subjective understanding of how individuals build their personal networks and articulate diverse principles of relational proximity, as well as gain a better understanding of the impact of certain life transitions and events on the types of configuration. Personal networks are best comprehended if understood as unfolding narratives, instead of snapshots, which tend to understate their morphological transformations over the life course and their interconnectedness with life stages and social contexts.

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10

The Impact of Coresidence Trajectories on Personal Networks During Transition to Adulthood: A Comparative Perspective

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Introduction

Over the life course, individuals develop personal networks that provide essential resources, sporadically or on a daily basis, such as instrumental, emotional, and informational support. Those personal networks are composed of family (i.e., primary and extended kin) and nonfamily ties (i.e., friends, colleagues, acquaintances) (Pahl and Spencer 2004). The prominence of

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specific ties varies across the life course depending on life stages, transitions, and events. Following the linked-lives principle (Elder et al. 2003), these transitions trigger changes in household composition, promoting different types of relational interdependencies. The level of interdependence with some household members may have a cumulative effect by strengthening the bonds, whereas with others the effect may be more ephemeral and lead to the exclusion of such ties in current personal networks. Thus, coresidence trajectories, such as the experience of growing up in a two or one-parent family, leaving the parental home early or late, moving in with a partner or living alone, becoming a parent, divorcing, and other events, will differentially influence the composition of personal networks.

Drawing on a cross-national comparative perspective, the goal of this chapter is to investigate the impact of macrolevel, structural, and biographical factors on the construction of personal networks in young adulthood of individuals born between 1970 and 1975. More precisely, we aim to examine the impact of coresidence trajectories encompassing the transition to adulthood from age 20 to 40 years old on the composition of young adults' personal networks and to compare this across three European countries (i.e., Switzerland, Portugal, and Lithuania) with distinct historical, social, and economic pathways. Moreover, we will consider how this process is shaped by mechanisms of structural differentiation such as gender and education.

The period of the transition to adulthood is defined by a series of role changes in family and non-family life spheres. In the European countries, one observes that the transition to adulthood is getting longer, more individualized, and, consequently, more pluralized (Bidart 2008). The life-course perspective underscores the crucial role not only of education, with entry into the labour market delayed by longer educational trajectories, but also of coresidence and family events (e.g., living alone before entering conjugal

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life) in young adults' changing life pathways and resources. Beyond coresidence, individuals' life courses, and ways of connecting also are framed by various welfare regimes, in particular through family policies that shape residential autonomy and the work–family balance (Aidukaite 2006; Arts and Gelissen 2002), and by sociohistorical contexts. Depending on their country of residence, individuals born in the 1970s have entered adulthood and developed their personal networks within differentiated historical and social contexts. Social, demographic, and gender inequalities; economic and political stability; and better or worse living and work conditions are all likely to influence young adults' autonomy, transitions, and resources.

Theoretical Overview

Coresidence Trajectories During the Transition to Adulthood

The conditions of the transition to adulthood have changed drastically over time. After World War II, the transition to adulthood was characterized by the relative simultaneous occurrence of three events: first job, marriage, and departure from the parental nest (Galland 1991, 2003). This arrangement was progressively challenged as the number of years of schooling increased, the labour market became more precarious, and family formation was postponed. More recently, those transitions tend to be less simultaneous and more reversible (Bidart 2008; Modell et al. 1976). Independence often is partially achieved, for instance, when living alone (residential autonomy) and receiving financial help from parents (economic dependency), a situation that may encourage parent–child interdependence. This lengthening of the dependency phase leads scholars to emphasize both the emergence of the period of adolescence or youth, and the increasing diversity of individual trajectories (Galland 1991, 2003). The issue of the transition to adulthood echoes the more general debate about the extent of destandardization in life trajectories, associated with both the school–training–work nexus and family formation (Brückner and Mayer 2005).

From the 1980s onwards, life-course sociologists have stressed the importance of considering individual lives as comprehensive wholes, made up of interdependent sequences of social participation over time

(Elder et al. 2003). Life courses are multidimensional because they are composed of a series of parallel trajectories corresponding to participation in distinct social fields: coresidence, family, partnership, occupation, residency, and others. Individual coresidence trajectories are a means to capture the variation of household composition over time and, consequently, to investigate family stages and transitions (Levy and Widmer 2013). Research results show that a dominant pattern of coresidence remains, alongside a variable number of alternative patterns depending on the population and the contexts under study (Gauthier et al. 2009).

This standardized pattern is based on departure from the parental home during the early 20s after a stable stay in a two-parent family of origin, followed by two short stages (i.e., one of singlehood and another of conjugality), leading to a transition to long and stable parenthood (Widmer and Gauthier 2013). Still, the conditions of the transition to adulthood also depend on socioeconomic conditions (e.g., openness of the labour market) and welfare state social policies (e.g., student allowance or loans) (Mayer 2001; Van de Velde 2008) – all are important shaping factors of the pluralization of young adults' trajectories. Because the ways in which the transition to adulthood depend to some extent on structural factors, the variability of these patterns within and between social contexts and diverse state systems remains to be systematically explored.

Changes in Personal Networks

Personal networks are composed of various types of ties, kin, and non-kin. Kinship relationships are often considered of prime importance (Bonvalet and Ogg 2007), especially the couple relationship (de Singly 1996) and the parent–child relationship (Johnson 2000). Nonetheless, other non-kin relationships may be significant because individuals simultaneously participate in several social fields. Some authors point out that there is a process of *suffusion* going on between friends and family roles (Pahl and Spencer 2004; Wall and Gouveia 2014), while others highlight the specificities (Allan 2008) or focus on the circumstances under which friends play family-like roles (Bellotti 2008).

Friends are sometimes qualified as a *chosen family* or are selected as godparents and become part of a *fictive* or *spiritual* family (Weeks et al.

2001; Weston 1997). In addition to friendships, other relationships may be a source of support such as work colleagues (McDonald and Mair 2010), social workers (Widmer and Sapin 2008), and neighbours. As a result, there is great diversity in personal networks composed of various types of ties. Several studies investigate the assumption that in modern societies the importance of kin ties is decreasing, while the importance of non-kinship ties is increasing. They wonder whether this assumption holds true across countries with different welfare state regimes and socio-historical backgrounds (Boase and Ikeda 2012; Fischer and Shavit 1995).

Höllinger and Haller (1990) found this trend of kinship decline in the *Northwest-European cultural area* and in the *New World countries* descending from them (i.e., the USA and Australia), but not in Italy and Hungary – countries in which kin ties were found to be predominant. More recently, Gouveia and Widmer (2014) found that variations in the distribution of kin and non-kin in personal networks also are conditional on birth cohort, family values, biographical circumstances, and structural factors, thus, not the result of pure choice.

Beyond country specificities and structural contexts, life trajectories may constitute a generative mechanism of the development of personal networks, as they imply participation in multiple social fields and the opportunity to meet a wide array of persons who can be turned into significant alters. Family trajectories, in particular, are likely to influence various dimensions of personal relationships. As the prominence of specific relationships in personal networks varies over the life course (Doherty and Feeney 2004), coresidence trajectories clarify the likelihood of developing significant relationships. Broadly explained, children are first bound to their family of origin (e.g., parents and siblings first and foremost) and teenagers progressively get acquainted with their peers. The period of secondary and higher education usually is characterized by high levels of sociability and friendship.

Entry into the labour market, conjugality, and becoming a parent are transitions that significantly reorganize personal networks towards more selectivity (Bidart and Lavenu 2005; Degenne and Lebeaux 2005). For instance, having a partner implies a certain degree of overlap between the networks of the two partners, in particular when the couple starts cohabiting (Kalmijn 2003). In case of divorce, other family and friendship relationships may be activated and play a key role in overcoming material

and emotional problems (Kalmijn and Broese van Groenou 2005; Terhell et al. 2007). The case of siblings is particularly revealing, as these relationships are more voluntary-based and are often pushed away during family formation and regain importance in case of need or in old age (Cicirelli 1995; White 2001).

Contextual Background

It is important to briefly highlight some features of the sociohistorical and welfare contexts considered in this chapter because they may be expected to shape the life-course patterns and personal networks of individuals belonging to the 1970–1975 birth cohort, in particular with regard to living conditions, family forms, and social policies. Regarding historical and political background, individuals born between 1970 and 1975 in Portugal were born during the last years of a right-wing dictatorship (1928–1974) promoting male breadwinning and unsupported familialism, but grew up in a rapidly developing democratic state promoting education, social protection, and gender equality (Guerreiro et al. 2009).

In the 1990s and during the first decade of the twenty-first century (when sample members were between 20 and 40), economic growth and political stability, at least until the onset of the crisis in 2008, made for improvement in living conditions, rapid change in family forms and marriage, as well as a welfare regime providing more support for dual-earner families. Overall, however, the gross domestic product (GDP) remained one of the lowest in Europe, with low salaries often making it difficult for young people to be autonomous. In spite of the decline in large families and complex living arrangements over the last decades, interdependency across generations and within extended kin ties continues to be important (Wall and Gouveia 2014).

In Lithuania, individuals born between 1970 and 1975 experienced the Soviet Union regime during their childhood, but became adults in a democratic state. In contrast to Portugal, however, they experienced a period of extreme economic and political instability in the 1990s and early twenty-first century, with poverty, welfare retrenchment, high levels of unemployment, and emigration; during this period, there was also a shift towards refamilialization and cutbacks in support for families.

Constraints on residential autonomy were significant in socialist times, often leading to complex family households; however, economic constraints after the transition to independence continued to shape young adults' access to economic and residential autonomy.

Individuals born at the same time in Switzerland experienced the most privileged and stable economic and living conditions and lived in a democratic state without undergoing any major political change. Compared to the other two countries, Switzerland continued to have high employment rates and high levels of income and was never affected by economic or political upheaval. Social policies, on the other hand, have provided low support for families with children and endorsed a modified male breadwinner model based on the mothering mandate and female part-time work, in particular during the childrearing period.

Portugal entered the European Union (EU) in 1986, Lithuania joined in 2004, whereas Switzerland is not a member. Regarding the work–family balance, a dual-earner model thus prevails in Portugal and Lithuania, while Switzerland is characterized by a one-and-a-half earner model in which most men work full-time and most women work part-time. Interestingly, Switzerland with its higher GDP spends less on family policies than Portugal and Lithuania, two countries that clearly seek to implement policies to support work–family reconciliation (Kanopienė 1999; Stankūnienė and Maslauskaitė 2008; Valarino 2014; Wall and Escobedo 2009).

Finally, as in most European countries, divorce has become widespread: Lithuania has a very high divorce rate, while Portugal has high values and Switzerland average values in comparative European terms. New family forms (e.g., lone parents) are therefore more prevalent in Lithuania and Portugal, both because of divorce and as a result of migration (Aboim 2006). Childbirth outside wedlock also increased, with the exception of Switzerland where family formation remains closely associated with marriage.

This brief overview of these three countries highlights distinct living, welfare, and family contexts in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Referring to well-known welfare typologies (Arts and Gelissen 2002; Esping-Andersen 1990), we can distinguish between a variation of the Mediterranean type for Portugal (Wall and Escobedo 2009), the post-socialist type for Lithuania (Aidukaite 2006), and a mixed

type with liberal and conservative components for Switzerland (Obinger 1998; Cattacin 2006). From the perspective of family forms, marriage, and gender, we also find contrasted regimes. For example, more individualized but less driven by new family forms linked to birth out of wedlock, dual earning, and divorce in Switzerland; a focus on early marriage as well as soundly shaped by economic instability, refamilialization, and divorce in Lithuania; more centred on changing family forms and gender roles in Portugal. The latter has high levels of informal cohabitation and divorce, but also it is still shaped by a long history of familialization and economic constraints that hamper autonomy and individualization.

Research Issues

Our main goal is to understand how the personal networks of young adults are shaped by coresidence trajectories, as a proxy of individuals' biographies, in the frame of different macrolevel contexts and structural conditions. This main study subject can be divided into three specific research issues.

1. Because the transition to adulthood is said to have become more individualized and pluralized, the first goal here is to map the diversity of coresidence trajectories and to compare their main types across countries. Diversity in coresidence trajectories will depend on the timing of leaving the parental home, the presence or absence of a stage of living alone, the timing of becoming a parent, and the presence or absence of partnership dissolution.
2. Personal networks also are said to have become more diversified, thereby accommodating different levels of kin and non-kin, both primary and extended or more indirect kin, and different generations. Therefore, our second aim is to map the diversity of personal networks by focusing on the combination of various types of ties and to compare the networks across the three countries.
3. The third aim is to examine the role of multidimensional factors on the composition of personal networks. Therefore, we will investigate the impact of the macrolevel context (country), structural factors (gender and education), and biographical factors (coresidence trajectories)

on the composition of personal networks. We focus on trajectories because they represent a good proxy to study family transitions, events, and stages and are expected to have a structuring impact on the development of personal networks. For instance, trajectories, including a transition to parenthood, will create major changes in young adults' sociability, thus encouraging a focus on kinship ties; whereas living for a long period in a single-person arrangement (alone) may foster the importance of non-kin.

Methodology

Data Summary

The chapter draws on data from the national survey 'Life Trajectories and Social Networks' conducted between 2009 and 2010 in Portugal, in 2011 in Switzerland, and in 2012 in Lithuania. All three surveys used representative samples of men and women belonging to at least two birth cohorts: people born between 1950 and 1955 and 1970 and 1975. For the purpose of what is here, we selected a subsample based on the birth cohort 1970–1975. The total sample was 1418 individuals (i.e., Portugal, $n = 536$; Switzerland, $n = 382$; Lithuania, $n = 500$ ¹).

Personal Networks Based on a Name Generator

A name generator, based on a free-listing technique tested in several studies (Widmer et al. 2013), was used in order to delineate the composition of the personal networks of the respondents. They were asked to list the significant alters in their current lives: '*Who are the individuals who, over the past year, have been very important to you, even if you do not get along well with them?*' Importance was attributed to people who had played a significant

¹When computing personal networks, the sample is slightly reduced ($n = 1388$) because empty networks were excluded (to be found in Switzerland and in Lithuania); and in the Swiss dataset some network statistics were not correctly collected and had to be set aside. When computing coresidence trajectories, the sample is slightly reduced ($n = 1409$) because a few trajectories had too many missing statuses.

role in the respondents' lives. The question also emphasized both positive and negative roles, as we assumed personal relationships do include not only feelings of love and support but also of conflict and tension.

Co-residence Trajectories

Co-residence trajectories were constructed using a retrospective life-history calendar that recorded the dates of all co-residence changes of each respondent from birth until the year of the interview. The period of observation for the current paper covers the age span of 20 to 40 years old. For all respondents, a single co-residence status was attributed to each of the 40 time units. For those who were not yet 40 at the time of the interview, we attributed missing values to the last time units. We carried out the study using 10 different statuses according to both their statistical distribution and their sociological relevance: 1 = *'living with two parents'*, 2 = *'living with one parent'*, 3 = *'living with one parent and her / his partner (step-parent)'*, 4 = *'living alone'*, 5 = *'living with a partner'*, 6 = *'living with a partner and own child(ren)'*, 7 = *'living with a partner and stepchild(ren)'*, 8 = *'living with child(ren) only'*, 9 = *'living with friends / relatives'*, 10 = *'living in another situation'*. Sequence analysis followed by cluster analysis allows building a typology of co-residence trajectories (for a description of the method, see Gauthier 2013).

Structural Factors

Two indicators were used as structural factors in the logistic regressions presented in the results' section: sex (male or female), and level of education (primary education, lower secondary, upper secondary, tertiary I and tertiary II²). The country of residence is used as a proxy for the corresponding social context and welfare regime.

²Recodification: 1–Primary education ('No formal education', 'Preprimary education', and 'Primary education or first stage of basic education'); 2–Lower secondary education ('Lower secondary' or 'Second stage of basic education'); 3–Upper secondary education ('Upper secondary education', and 'Postsecondary nontertiary education'); 4–Tertiary I education ('First stage of tertiary education'); 5–Tertiary II education ('Second stage of tertiary education').

Results

Coresidence Trajectories Between Ages 20 and 40 Across Three Countries

The typology of coresidence trajectories that we use in this chapter contains eight types.³ Each number presented in Figure 10.1 indicates the proportion of individuals in each possible state, for each year of life (abscissa). We named the most common type *Parenthood* (29.7 %). The individuals following this type of trajectory experienced several stages (i.e., living with parents, alone, or with a partner), leading to the transition to parenthood approximately in the middle of the period of observation. This means that over the 10 years previous to the survey, they mostly lived in a household of a couple with children.

The second most common type was named *Early parenthood*, as individuals belonging to it experienced this transition at a younger age and spent the last 20 years in a household with a partner and children (28.7 %). This type may be considered as the most standardized because it follows a normative pattern with minimal variability, as well as less individualized in comparison with the former. Another group of respondents had been mostly living by themselves over the last 20 years (although some were living with their parents in early stages); we named their trajectories *Solo* (11.9 %). The next type is representative of individuals who lived during most of the period only with children in a lone-parent family (*Lone parenthood* trajectories, 6.4 %).

Two types were characterized by a longer stage in the parental home followed by a time of independence, ending or not with the transition to parenthood. In the first case, individuals lived in a parental home composed of two parents, so we named it *Nesting parental* trajectory (6 %) as it describes individuals who remained in the family nest with both parents. In the second case, individuals lived in a parental home composed

³This choice is supported by a value of the average silhouette width that is greater than 0.25 (Rousseeuw 1987).

of one parent, therefore we named this type *Nesting lone parent* (6 %) to highlight the fact that they continue to live with one of their parents. Around 5 % of individuals had *Conjugal* trajectories because they mostly lived with a partner over the last 20 years (4.5 %).

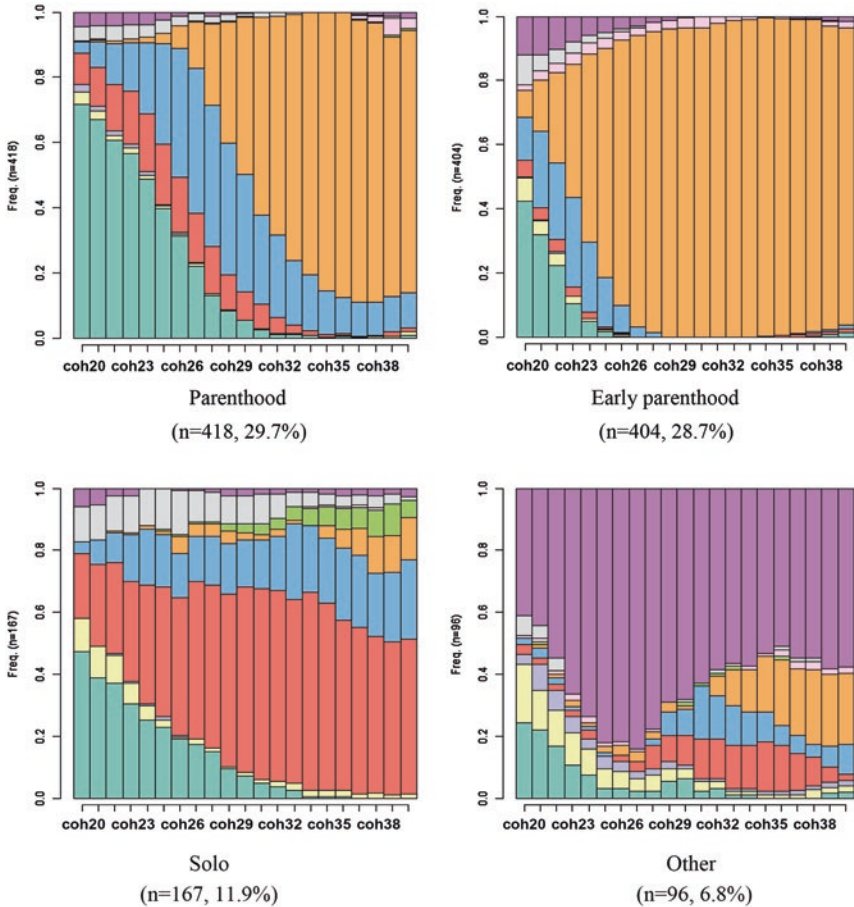


Fig. 10.1 Co-residence trajectories between 20 and 40 years old (n = 1409)

Note: A coloured version of these graphs is available at: <http://lives.unil.ch/familychangesandcontinuity/coresidencetrajectories.pdf>

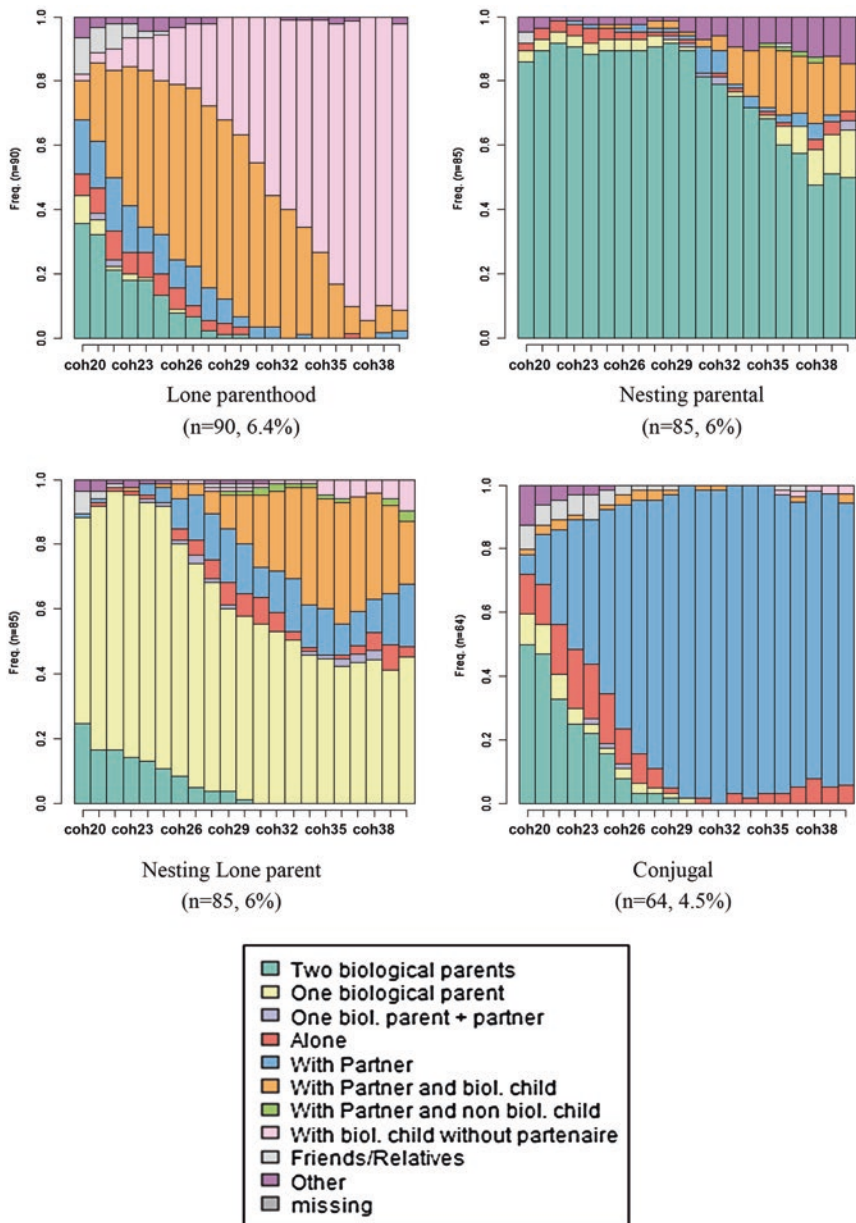


Fig. 10.1 (continued)

Finally, 6.8 % of the respondents were found in diverse situations, and we named their trajectories *Other*. These situations are likely to include a variety of complex family households (e.g., two conjugal families sharing a household, a couple with children, or a lone-parent family living with an elderly relative) or households of several persons (e.g., kin or non-kin). These other types of households are more frequent in social contexts where, because of difficult work and housing conditions, individuals and families have to share the same household. Yet, the quite high number of ill-defined coresidence situations also may be in part because of the aggregation of three countries with their specificities.

The distribution of these types across the three countries reveals contrasted patterns of coresidence in the transition to adulthood. Table 10.1 shows the distribution across countries (i.e., in percentages and a Chi-squared test). First, looking at the distribution within countries and at the two most common types of coresidence trajectories, we notice that one-third of the individuals living in Portugal experienced *Parenthood* trajectories (30.2 %) and another third *Early parenthood* trajectories (29.6 %). In Switzerland, almost half of the individuals experienced *Parenthood* trajectories (47.4 %) and one-fifth *Solo* trajectories (19.6 %).

Table 10.1 Distribution of the coresidence trajectories across countries

	Portugal (n=533)	Switzerland (n=382)	Lithuania (n=492)	Total (n=1407)
Conjugal (n = 64)	3.2	7.1	4.1	4.5
Nesting lone parent (n = 85)	6.0	3.4	8.1	6.0
Nesting parental (n = 85)	8.3	2.1	6.7	6.0
Early parenthood (n = 403)	29.6	14.9	38.2	28.6
Lone parenthood (n = 89)	7.3	3.7	7.3	6.3
Other (n = 96)	6.2	1.8	11.4	6.8
Parenthood (n = 418)	30.2	47.4	15.4	29.7
Solo (n = 167)	9.2	19.6	8.7	11.9
Total (n = 1407)	100	100	100	100

Note: Chi-squared = 202.042, $p < 0.001$. $n = 1407$; in percentages and Chi-squared.⁴

⁴In bold, when residuals are significant. Residuals indicate whether a category is under- or over-represented, statistically estimating the difference between the empirical value and an estimated value; residuals of lower than -2 indicate underrepresentation and higher than 2 indicate overrepresentation.

In Lithuania, the predominant type was *Early parenthood* trajectories (38.2 %), followed by *Parenthood* trajectories (15.4 %). *Parenthood* trajectories are thus predominant in all three countries, but there are major differences: Switzerland stands out for its late transition to parenthood, after a period of living alone and thus a strong focus on more individualized trajectories, which are characteristic of young people who have the means to be economically and residentially autonomous early on in life.

Lithuania has a high proportion of *Early parenthood* trajectories, generally associated with pathways involving partnering and a rapid transition to parenthood rather than living alone when leaving the parental home. Portugal seems to be in transition, gradually shifting towards a pattern of late transition to parenthood but also maintaining a fairly high proportion of *Early parenthood* trajectories, more characteristic of Portuguese young adults with low educational qualifications.

If we include the more residual trajectories in our analysis, we also see diversity and contrasts across the three countries. In Switzerland, the findings confirm a profile centred on individual autonomy and partnering (with or without children): *Parenthood* and *Early parenthood* trajectories together represent two-thirds of trajectories (62.3 %), *Solo* living has a high proportion (19.6 %), and the more residual *Conjugal* trajectory (7.1 %), connected to the postponement of parenthood, is the next most common trajectory. In this country, we may observe that all forms of trajectories related to *Nesting* and other living arrangements have very low values, thereby revealing early access to individual and conjugal residential autonomy as well as the absence of constraints making for complex living arrangements.

Compared to Switzerland, Lithuania reveals a very different profile, more diverse and also more vulnerable to disruption and fluidity in family life (e.g., divorce, lone parenthood, and sharing lodgings with others). *Parenthood* and *Early parenthood* trajectories together represent only 53.6 % of all trajectories, *Nesting* trajectories (14.8 %), in particular *Nesting lone parent* (8.1 %), and *Other* trajectories (11.4 %) have very high values, whereas individuals and couples living alone during this period of young adulthood are underrepresented.

Portugal, once again, lies in-between but closer to the Lithuanian profile: *Parenthood* and *Early parenthood* trajectories together represent 59.8 % of all trajectories, *Nesting* trajectories (14.3 %), predominantly parental rather than lone, and *Other* trajectories (6.2 %) have high values,

where as living alone or with a partner during young adulthood is less common, even if much more common than in Lithuania. This would seem to establish a contrast between national contexts where coresidence trajectories in young adulthood are marked first and foremost by living with a partner or alone and contexts where young adults face more diversity and less autonomy in young adulthood.

The long-lasting stay in the parental home in Lithuania and Portugal is likely to be linked to economic constraints (e.g., job precariousness, housing market), which jeopardize residential autonomy. This is quite evident if we complement this finding with the distribution of the *Solo* trajectory, which follows an inverse pattern that is much more common in Switzerland: 19.6 %. The high proportion of the *Nesting lone parent* trajectory also stands out in Lithuania (8.1 %) above the percentage in the total sample (6 %); it may be linked to family disruption because of migration, widowhood, or divorce. Interestingly, the *Lone parenthood* trajectory, which also is linked to family disruption, but at the level of ego, follows the same distribution with an underrepresentation in Switzerland (3.7 %).

Personal Networks Across Three Countries

The second goal was to characterize personal networks in the three countries. When we analyzed the network size, we found that personal networks are larger in Portugal ($M = 4.3$; $SD = 2.4$) when compared to Switzerland ($M = 3.9$; $SD = 1.9$) and Lithuania ($M = 3.6$; $SD = 1.8$) ($F = 17.27$, $p < 0.001$). Also the mean values (M) and the standard deviations (SD) are quite revealing because they indicate that personal networks can assume smaller or larger arrangements. To obtain a first overview of the level of integration of kin and non-kin in the three countries, we analyzed the percentage of respondents whose networks were exclusively composed of kin; composed of both kin and non-kin (i.e., mixed networks); and exclusively composed of non-kin, as shown in Table 10.2.

Concerning exclusively kin-based networks, we found that nearly 83 % of Lithuanian respondents included only kin ties in their networks, followed by Portugal with nearly 65 %, and Switzerland with 46 %. Instead, Switzerland is the country in which mixed networks are more frequent, with almost half

Table 10.2 Types of networks based on kin and non-kin integration

	Portugal	Switzerland	Lithuania	Total
Kin	64.6	46.1	82.6	66.1
Mixed	33.4	49.2	15.6	31.2
Non-kin	2.1	4.7	1.8	2.7

Note: Numbers are percentages. Chi-squared = 126.06, $p < 0.001$.

of the Swiss sample presenting mixed networks; whereas Lithuania is the country with the lowest percentage of mixed networks (15.6 %). Portugal assumed again an intermediate position, with 33.4 % of respondents integrating kin and non-kin into their networks. Non-kin networks are residual across the three countries. Still, Swiss respondents reported a higher percentage of networks exclusively composed of non-kin (4.7 %).

This analysis gives us some hints regarding the diverse levels of integration of non-kin in personal networks across the three countries, revealing that personal networks in Switzerland are more open to non-kin; that there is some integration of non-kin in Portugal; and Lithuanian networks appear to be more restricted to kinship ties. If we then follow by making a descriptive portrayal of the types of ties mostly cited by respondents in the three countries (Table 10.3), some further interesting findings come into view. We considered 15 categories, 14 of which were conceptually meaningful and mentioned by more than 4 % of the respondents plus a residual category – that is, partners, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, collaterals, male friends, female friends, colleagues, other non-kin, and other kin which is the residual category including various types of kin ties.

In the three countries, ‘partner’ and ‘parents’ (i.e., mothers and fathers) are the categories that are most frequently cited by the respondents. Still, in Lithuania the ‘partner’ is less frequently mentioned (70.1 %) compared to in Portugal and Switzerland. Regarding the family of origin, in Portugal ‘fathers’ are more frequently cited than in the other two countries; whereas ‘mothers’ are equally cited by Portuguese and Lithuanian respondents, with half of the sample mentioning mothers as important persons in both countries. Switzerland is the country in which parents are less frequently mentioned.

Table 10.3 The percentage of respondents citing each type of tie

	Portugal	Switzerland	Lithuania	Total
Partners	77.1	77.1	70.1	74.6
Fathers	38.4	27.8	29.2	32.4
Mothers	49.8	40.8	50.9	47.8
Sons	30.0	18.7	28.6	26.6
Daughters	30.0	16.3	29.7	26.3
Brothers	13.6	11.3	17.0	14.2
Sisters	17.7	17.9	20.2	18.7
Parents-in-law	4.9	1.9	4.3	3.9
Siblings-in-law	5.4	3.0	4.7	4.5
Collaterals	5.8	5.2	4.7	5.3
Male friends	11.8	15.2	1.6	9.1
Female friends	10.8	19.3	4.3	10.7
Colleagues	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.0
Others non-kin	2.2	2.5	3.9	2.9
Other kin	2.2	2.5	3.9	2.9

Regarding children, ‘sons’ and ‘daughters’ are more frequently mentioned in Lithuania and Portugal than in Switzerland. Regarding ‘siblings’, Lithuania stands out as the country in which ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’ are cited slightly more. When it comes to in-laws, Switzerland emerges as the country in which ‘parents-in-law’ and ‘siblings-in-law’ are not so important. Instead, ‘friends’ are more frequently mentioned by Swiss respondents and more residual in Lithuania. Interestingly, in the latter country, ‘female friends’ (4.3 %) are cited more often than ‘male friends’ (1.6 %). The percentage of respondents citing ‘coworkers’ is transversal across the three countries, but ‘other’ types of non-kin and kin are noted more frequently in Lithuania.

This detailed analysis of the types of ties cited by the respondents reveals that specific ties are more salient in some countries than in others, even if the results remain descriptive at this stage. Thus, we may expect to find a diversified pallet of configurations of ties. To account for the diversity of arrangements, we decided to analyze how individuals combine these various types of ties in specific configurations of personal networks. We created a typology of personal networks based on the type of ties presented in Table 10.3. We applied principal components analysis (PCA) using Varimax rotation on the 15 categories to extract the initial components. Following standard practice in factor analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell 1996), we retained eight components that accounted for 65 % of the explained variance.

The scores of the principal components were input into a hierarchical clustering analysis based on a measure of the Euclidean distance between individuals and on Ward's Clustering Algorithm (Ward 1963). We retained a solution with eight clusters, chosen because of its balance of interpretability and statistical efficiency (Everitt et al. 2011). Thus, we obtained a solution with eight clusters, in order of importance: *Parents* (22.3 %), *Nuclear-daughter oriented* (18.9 %), *Nuclear-son oriented* (11.6 %), *Friendship* (11.5 %), *Siblings-oriented* (11.2 %), *Partner-up* (8.8 %), *Work-oriented* (8.2 %), and *Mixed* (7.5 %).

Table 10.4 presents the average number of citations for each type of tie by personal networks. *Parents* networks were centred around parents (fathers, 0.75 and mothers, 0.90). Two networks were based on the nuclear family, one with a greater share of daughters (*Nuclear-daughter oriented*) and the other based on sons (*Nuclear-son oriented*). *Friendship* networks were about friendships with many female friends (1.30) and male friends (1.05). One type of network, named *Siblings-oriented*, was dedicated to sibling relationships, either siblings of the respondent (sisters, 0.92 and brothers, 0.74) or siblings of her / his partner (siblings-in-law, 0.40), as well as collaterals. *Partner-up* networks were centred on the partner, the respondent's own parents and her / his parents-in-law (1.03). It should be noted that the category 'other non-kin' was also quite prominent in these networks (0.59). *Work-oriented* networks included many colleagues (0.94). Finally, the last type was composed of a large variety of other kin ties (1.33) and was named *Mixed*.

Table 10.5 shows the distribution of the clusters across the three countries (in percentages and a Chi-squared test). First, looking at the distribution within countries, we find the following trends: in Portugal, the first most common type of network was *Parents* (23.5 %) followed by *Nuclear-daughter oriented* (15.7 %); in Switzerland *Friendship* (24.8 %) was followed by *Parents* (19.8 %); and in Lithuania *Nuclear-daughter oriented* (25.2 %) was followed by *Parents* (22.7 %). Thus, *Parents* networks were well represented in the three countries of interest.

Table 10.4 Cluster of personal terms

	Parents	Nuclear-daughter oriented	Nuclear-son oriented	Friendship	Siblings-oriented	Partner-up oriented	Work-oriented	Mixed	Mean
n	309	263	161	159	156	122	114	104	1388
%	22.3%	18.9%	11.6%	11.5%	11.2%	8.8%	8.2%	7.5%	
Partners	0.68	0.87	0.92	0.77	0.65	0.89	0.61	0.54	0.75
Fathers	0.75	0.13	0.03	0.20	0.12	0.43	0.32	0.42	0.32
Mothers	0.90	0.33	0.14	0.31	0.37	0.57	0.47	0.49	0.48
Sons	0.28	0.60	0.93	0.28	0.30	0.57	0.28	0.41	0.45
Daughters	0.16	1.41	0.00	0.23	0.17	0.49	0.46	0.42	0.46
Brothers	0.24	0.06	0.01	0.09	0.74	0.20	0.13	0.17	0.20
Sisters	0.22	0.12	0.03	0.13	0.92	0.25	0.18	0.28	0.25
Parents-in-law	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.12	1.03	0.05	0.03	0.11
Siblings-in-law	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.40	0.03	0.08	0.01	0.06
Collaterals	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.06	0.24	0.03	0.58	0.20	0.11
Male friends	0.14	0.03	0.00	1.05	0.06	0.10	0.14	0.15	0.21
Female friends	0.14	0.07	0.00	1.30	0.15	0.12	0.27	0.26	0.26
Colleagues	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.01	0.00	0.94	0.00	0.09
Others non-kin	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.59	0.08	0.05	0.06
Others	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.02	1.33	0.11

Note: Average number of citations for each term, by cluster

Table 10.5 Distribution of the personal networks across countries

	Portugal (<i>n</i> = 536)	Switzerland (<i>n</i> = 363)	Lithuania (<i>n</i> = 489)	Total (<i>n</i> = 1388)
Partner-up (<i>n</i> = 122)	9.9	5.0	10.4	8.8
Friendship (<i>n</i> = 159)	12.5	24.8	0.4	11.5
Mixed (<i>n</i> = 104)	9.3	8.0	5.1	7.5
Nuclear-daughter (<i>n</i> = 263)	15.7	15.4	25.2	18.9
Nuclear-son (<i>n</i> = 161)	9.1	8.5	16.6	11.6
Parents (<i>n</i> = 309)	23.5	19.8	22.7	22.3
Sibling-oriented (<i>n</i> = 156)	10.8	10.7	12.1	11.2
Work-oriented (<i>n</i> = 114)	9.1	7.7	7.6	8.2
Total (<i>n</i> = 1388)	100	100	100	100

Note: Chi-squared = 156.168, $p < 0.001$. $n = 1388$; in percentages and Chi-squared⁵

The distribution of the more residual clusters also points to some contrasts. For instance, in Switzerland data show a low percentage of the *Partner-up* (5 %), when compared to the distribution in the two other countries. Instead, friendship gains an important place in this country, contrary to Lithuania (0.4 %) in which this type of network is almost absent. In Portugal, this *Friendship* network (12.5 %) has nearly the same representation as in the total sample (11.5 %). In Lithuania, both cases of nuclear family based networks are overrepresented. As in the case of *Parents* networks, the *Siblings-oriented* type is quite transversal to all countries. This may suggest that the family of origin is still an important reference in the construction of close relationships in the three countries.

Coresidence Trajectories' Impact on Personal Networks Between Ages 20 and 40 Across Three Countries

In the previous section, we identified the main types of coresidence trajectories and the main types of personal networks, followed by the distribution by country. The final goal is to understand the impact of coresidence trajectories on personal networks, in the frame of macrolevel (country) and structural factors (i.e., gender and education). Therefore, we carried out eight regression model analyses to predict the impact of these dissimilar types of factors on personal networks. As biographical factors, we

⁵In bold, when residuals are significant. Residuals indicate whether a category is under- or overrepresented, statistically estimating the difference between the empirical value and an estimated value; residuals of lower than -2 indicate underrepresentation and higher than 2 indicate overrepresentation.

introduced the typology of coresidence trajectories; as structural factors, we included gender and education; and as macrolevel factors, we added the country of residence (Table 10.6).

Findings show that coresidence history is perhaps the factor that has the most impact, as all but two network types (i.e., *Friendship* and *Work-oriented*) are related to specific trajectories in this domain. For instance, the *Partner-up* network is predicted by coresidence trajectories as those who followed a *Nesting parental* trajectory are less likely to present this type of network than those who followed a *Parenthood* trajectory. Continuing to live with parents and not moving in with a partner, means that ties linked to partnership (e.g., partner and parents-in-law) will probably not emerge in the respondent's personal networks. Also, those with a primary and tertiary II level of education, and those living in Switzerland are less likely to present a partnership network. This last finding would seem to be linked to the trend, in Switzerland, to build up networks, when living in conjugality, more selectively oriented towards the nuclear family of procreation than to wider kin ties in an ascending line (e.g., parents and parents-in-law).

In the case of the *Nuclear-daughter oriented* network, coresidence trajectories also seem to be paramount. Those who followed a *Conjugal*, *Nesting parental*, or *Solo* trajectory are less likely to build up this type of network; whereas those who followed an *Early parenthood* or a *Lone parenthood* trajectory are two times more likely to build up this type of network than those who followed the *Parenthood* trajectory. Overall then, as may be expected, this type of nuclear network is strongly connected to the transition to parenthood, but also seems to take on more importance in the context of early and lone parenthood; this is because female lone parent families prevail in all three countries, which may suggest strong mother–daughter relationships in this type of coresidence trajectory. The findings, however, also seem to suggest the pivotal role of daughters in providing support to mothers who had children very early in life, in particular in contexts of disadvantage or vulnerability. Results also show that women and those who live in Lithuania, where lone motherhood and early parenthood is more predominant, are more likely to build up this type of network.

Likewise, the *Mixed* network also is related to biographical factors, with those who followed either a *Nesting lone parent* trajectory or a *Nesting parental* trajectory having almost three times more chances of building up

Table 10.6 Impact of coresidence trajectories on personal networks across three countries

	Partner-up	Friendship	Mixed	Nuclear-daughter	Nuclear-son	Parents	Siblings	Work
(Intercept)	0.141***	0.174***	0.074***	0.086***	0.161***	0.363***	0.111***	0.082***
Coresidence trajectories – ages 20 and 40 (ref. Parenthood)								
Conjugal	0.493	0.937	0.831	0.155*	1.251	2.108*	1.435	0.938
Nesting lone parent	1.466	0.437	2.391*	0.517	0.510	1.081	2.237*	0.625
Nesting parental	0.184*	0.689	2.258*	0.313*	0.308*	3.073***	0.832	1.351
Early parenthood	0.983	0.748	0.818	2.071***	0.968	0.709†	0.948	0.602†
Lone parenthood	0.355†	0.633	1.925	1.932*	0.470	0.572	1.605	1.437
Other	0.732	0.960	2.135†	1.050	1.485	0.651	1.052	0.685
Solo	0.633	0.883	1.779†	0.257***	0.431*	1.779**	1.787*	1.161
Gender (ref. Men)								
Women	1.261	0.887	0.956	1.364*	0.821	0.952	0.889	1.029
Level of education (ref. Upper secondary)								
Primary	0.211*	0.742	0.615	0.942	1.551	0.730	3.317**	1.178
Lower secondary	0.640	1.136	1.324	1.094	1.184	0.825	1.178	1.072
Tertiary I	0.792	1.604	0.910	1.353	0.614†	0.764	0.987	1.457
Tertiary II	0.510*	1.659†	1.187	1.219	0.627†	0.932	0.52*	2.119**
Country (ref. Portugal)								
Lithuania	0.916	0.024***	0.565†	1.656*	2.783***	1.013	1.468	0.736
Switzerland	0.336**	2.267***	1.019	1.304	0.997	0.672*	1.080	0.844

Note: † p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Note: Separated logistic regressions, odds ratios

this type of network than those who followed a *Parenthood* trajectory. This clearly points to the role of atypical or complex family households accommodating several generations in the context of reliance on economic and housing support from kin in this life stage. Young adults who stay on in the parental home between ages 20 and 40 thus are more likely to build up close personal relationships with a wide range of kin ties, very likely both within and beyond the household where they continue to live.

The *Parents* network is predicted by coresidence trajectories as well as by country of residence. Those who followed a *Conjugal*, *Nesting parental*, or *Solo* trajectory are more likely to build a *Parents* network than those who followed a *Parenthood* trajectory. Moreover, those who live in Switzerland are less likely to follow this trajectory than those who live in Portugal. These findings echo in the previously mentioned data on personal networks in Switzerland – that is, young adults tend to include peers, in particular friends, rather than kin in ascending line in their personal networks – but this trend is reversed in the context of a *Solo* trajectory, which has high values in this country.

Regarding the *Sibling-oriented* network, following a *Nesting lone parent* or *Solo* trajectory increases the chance of building this type of arrangement. In this case, education also plays a major role as a predictor because having a primary education increases the likelihood of building this network, whereas having the tertiary II level decreases the likelihood of this type of network.

Similarly, the *Nuclear-son oriented* also is predicted by coresidence trajectories, as following a *Nesting parental* or *Solo* trajectory decreases the chance of building up this type of network. As in the case of the *Nuclear-daughter oriented* network, this pathway is strongly linked to the transition to parenthood. Concerning the role of macrolevel factors, those who live in Lithuania are more likely to build up this type of network than those who live in Portugal.

Finally, if we look at the networks that are not predicted by coresidence history, findings show that the *Friendship* network is predicted by country, with individuals living in Lithuania being less likely to build up this network than those living in Portugal, and those living in Switzerland being more likely to build up this friendship arrangement than Portuguese respondents. As we saw earlier, respondents in Switzerland tend to cite friends as close

personal relations more systematically than certain types of close kin such as parents or in-laws; these are all more cited in Portugal and Lithuania, where both close and extended kin emerge as more relevant. Interpretation of this finding therefore may be twofold; on the one hand, there seems to be a strong cultural turn towards individualization and autonomy from parents and kin at this stage of young adulthood in Switzerland. On the other hand, this tendency is likely to be mediated and enhanced by coresidence trajectories because living alone is crucial in the two predominant coresidence trajectories (i.e., *Parenthood* and *Solo*) in Switzerland. It is interesting, nevertheless, to find that the main predictor is at the macrolevel (country), pointing to a generally more selective and more nuclear-focused family culture in Switzerland rather than at the coresidence–biographical level. Finally, the *Work-oriented* network is predicted only by structural factors (i.e., education), with those with higher levels of education (tertiary II) being more likely to build up this type of arrangement.

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze the coresidence trajectories and personal networks of young adults in three different national contexts in order to explore the impact of various factors (i.e., biographical, structural, macrolevel) on the composition of personal relationships at this life stage (between ages 20 and 40). Four main conclusions can be inferred from the data.

First, despite the generalized postponement of the transition to parenthood, there is a fair diversity of coresidence trajectories in this life stage, both within and across the three countries. Within each country, key events (e.g., age of entry into partnership and parenthood or experiencing separation / divorce) are important shaping factors of diversity; however, access to economic and residential autonomy also would seem to be paramount. Coresidence trajectories centred on life with partners and children or just children continue to be predominant in all national contexts, but differential opportunities to live independently and to leave the parental home also contribute to the pluralization of living arrangements at this life stage. Some young adults are able to and choose to live alone before

making the transition to partnership and parenthood, others stay in the nest with one or both parents and / or other kin, others continue to live single and on their own until the midcourse of life, others experience birth out-of-wedlock, or separation and live with children.

Second, historical and social context is crucial in explaining diversity across the three countries. There are high proportions of *Nesting* and *Early and Lone parenthood* trajectories in Lithuania and high proportions of late parenthood and solo living in Switzerland. Portugal's profile of pluralization reveals average proportions of early and / or late parenthood trajectories and solo living but, as in Lithuania, there is a fairly high proportion of young adults with *Nesting* trajectories and an average proportion of those living in other complex or atypical family arrangements. Young adulthood in Portugal and Lithuania has been more tightly constrained by difficult economic and housing circumstances, by incipient or oscillating welfare provision (in spite of an increase in state expenditure on families over the last decades), by a sharp shift to new family forms linked to divorce and births out-of-wedlock, and by more dependency on a wide range of kin and non-kin who may provide housing as well as other types of relational and material kinds of support (Aboim et al. 2013).

Third, coresidence was found to be a consistent and solid predictor of personal networks in this early stage of the life course, even if other factors are also key to explaining the range of diversity found in young adults' configurations of personal relationships. Overall, in all countries and social contexts, the young adults who made the transition to parenthood and have lived for some years with partners and / or children are more likely to include partners and children in their close personal relationships, while those who have lived alone or in *Nesting* arrangements are more likely to include close kin in the ascending line as well as non-kin.

In contrast, structural and macrolevel factors are only significant predictors of a few types of personal networks. Education, for example, is significant in the case of *Siblings-oriented* and *Work-oriented* networks, underscoring a trend for young adults with high levels of tertiary education to be less likely to include siblings and kin (e.g., parents and parents-in-law) in their personal networks and more likely to include their work colleagues; this highlights homophilous tendencies among

people sharing similar high social positions. We found no clear impact of gender in our regression models. Interestingly, in spite of the well-documented and important interrelationships between gender and the life course, there seems to be some independence between the dynamics of gender inequality over the life course and the building up of personal networks during young adulthood. This does not mean that gender does not play a role in the processes underlying the social construction of personal networks during this life stage. For example, in the discussion of findings we saw that young adults often include more female than male friends in their personal networks.

We also pointed to the likely linkages between *Lone parenthood* trajectories, mother–daughter bonds and the building up of a *Nuclear-daughter oriented* type of personal network. The connection between gender, life trajectories, and personal relationships is therefore more complex, suggesting that the processes of gendering in young adults' personal networks should be approached from various perspectives, in particular through the analysis of the impact of other trajectories (e.g., gendered work trajectories) or family processes (e.g., divorce and lone motherhood) on personal relationships (Krüger and Levy 2001).

Finally, national context (country) is the sole predictor of the *Friendship* network. Regarding the importance of friendship ties in personal networks, generally more typical of individualized life courses, we thus found that a high proportion of non-kin was more likely to be found in a country such as Switzerland, with a high GDP and a conservative / liberal welfare regime promoting both individual autonomy and conjugal interdependency within a nuclear family centred on formal marriage and male breadwinning when children are young. On the other hand, welfare states with a pathway of strong economic constraints, low GDP, and long-standing reliance on familialization (and refamilialization) to solve lack of housing and vulnerability over the life course, tend to encourage the inclusion of kin ties both within the nuclear family of procreation, especially for Lithuania, and beyond in the case of Portugal. Interestingly then, the *Friendship* network was not explained by coresidence trajectories, but solely by social context and the type of life-course regime.

In summary, we cannot directly derive young adults' behaviour and choices from the features of the welfare state in which they live, since

there is a risk of committing an ecological fallacy (Mény et al. 1996). Disadvantaged, unpartnered, or childless young adults may well live in welfare and / or economically rich or poor countries. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind the degree to which specific social contexts and policies contribute to the shaping of individual trajectories and personal networks.

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Part III

Family Practices

11

Why Parents Take Unpaid Parental Leave: Evidence from Spain

Gerardo Meil, Pedro Romero-Balsas,
and Jesús Rogero-García

Introduction

With women's rising participation in the labour market and the concomitant growth in the proportion of dual-earner families, the harmonization of work and family life has acquired increasing social significance in developed countries. Demands for public authorities to implement policies that would further such harmonization therefore have intensified. One of the responses has been to broaden the scope of traditional maternity leaves with policies that would enable fathers to take time off work to care for their children and facilitate their return to work on termination of their leave (Kamerman and Moss 2009). Although national governments have reacted in very diverse ways to such demands (Moss 2014), the initiatives observed in the European Union (EU) over the last 25 years define a common trend (Gauthier 2002) characterized

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by longer leaves (although this parameter is very variable), by a higher percentage of the salary paid during leaves, and by greater flexibility in leaves' use (OECD 2011). Moreover, fathers' usage of such leaves has been fostered by mainstreaming parental leave policies in overall equality policy (Meilland and Math 2004; Bruning and Platenga 1999; Haas and Hwang 2008). Despite this convergence in trends in parental leave policies across Europe, major inter-country differences persist in duration, pay, and flexibility.

The present study analyzes the factors that condition the use of parental leave based on experience in Spain. More specifically, it highlights the potential and limitations of leave policy in furthering greater balance between the sexes in a country characterized by deep-rooted familyism and gender inequalities in the distribution of paid and unpaid work. Analyzing Spanish experience is pertinent because it may afford additional evidence about the relevance of a high replacement income to furthering equality in such a context. More flexible labour legislation in Spain in the wake of the economic crisis, with the resulting rise in temporary jobs and self-employment that may limit access to leaves, likewise makes this case study apropos. Inasmuch as the familyism characteristic of southern European countries translates into substantial grandparental support in childcare, ascertaining whether parental leaves are an alternative for work–life harmony only when such support is unavailable is yet another factor worthy of analysis. In short, this chapter discusses the relevance of long-term unpaid leave for harmony against the backdrop of the changes affecting family structures in southern Europe.

It is organized as follows. The definition and empirical justification of the hypotheses underlying the approach is followed by a description of the general characteristics of parental leaves in Spain and of the database used for the empirical analysis and analytical strategy. The results are applied subsequently to determine the validity of the working hypotheses and the conclusions are established.

Hypotheses and Review of the Literature

In all countries, three major categories of factors condition the use of parental leaves (Hobson and Fahlen 2009; Kamerman and Moss 2009; Almqvist et al. 2011). The hypotheses posed here consequently revolve around economic and cultural factors and government policy.

The characteristics of family-oriented, especially of childcare leave policy, constitute a first set of factors. Governments define the leaves that can be used, the requirements that must be met to qualify, and the conditions of use, thereby conveying messages about social attitudes towards childcare. Whereas a high replacement income is construed as social encouragement to interrupt a career to provide childcare, guaranteeing a job with the same employer but with no or a very low replacement salary constitutes a more neutral position, in which the costs of forfeiting a salary are defrayed by families.

A first hypothesis (H1), widely documented in the literature (Moss and Kamerman 2009; Moss 2014; McKay and Doucet 2010; Haas and Rostgaard 2011; Ray et al. 2008) therefore would be that the rate of use is much higher when leaves are well paid than when the replacement income is low or nil. Scandinavian experience has shown that a high replacement income is necessary but not sufficient to further more egalitarian distribution of the time devoted to childcare by men and women. To be effective, leave time must be reserved specifically for fathers and is not transferable to mothers (Duvander 2012; Rege and Solli 2010). The second hypothesis (H2), then, is that establishing specific and well-paid leaves for men, irrespective of whether they adopt the form of a fathers' quota or a paternity leave, will encourage their use by men.

The second category of factors that condition leave-taking is related to a couple's financial situation. As the literature shows (Mussino and Duvander 2014; Bygren and Duvander 2006; Lapuerta et al. 2011; Romero-Balsas 2012), the use of leaves is affected by the type of work and working conditions. The feasibility of taking time off to care for a baby in the first few months of its life depends on social class, understood to mean the position in the labour market. The latter determines (1) security against the risk of losing one's job; (2) a steady income, a particularly strong determinant in lower-class everyday life; and (3) economic prospects, which are the

result of the other two and condition families' present and future decisions (Goldthorpe and McKnight 2004).

As a result of the economic crisis, in Spain employment policies and legislation have tended to become laxer, particularly for the groups most vulnerable to unemployment (e.g., the younger segments of the population). High unemployment has accentuated labour market duality between employees with steady jobs and as a result some degree of financial stability and others with a high job turnover rate. The latter commonly hold temporary positions with or without a legal employment contract or are forced into self-employment by the growing trend among companies and governments to outsource services. Part-time employment in Spain (15.9 % in 2014) is characterized by a significant imbalance between the genders, affecting 25 % of women and 7.8 % of men with paid employment. According to Eurostat (2015), 24 % of all employment contracts in Spain are for temporary work. The self-employment rate in turn stands at 17.5 % (Encuesta de Población Activa [labour force survey], INE 2015). Moreover, 53.2 % of Spaniards under the age of 25 were unemployed in 2014 compared to 24.5 % for the labour force as a whole (Eurostat 2015).

In Spain, as in other southern European countries, the economic crisis has reduced the proportion of families with a single male breadwinner (Escobedo and Wall 2015), attesting to a strategy aiming to ensure household income. The literature on the subject contends that steadier working conditions favour the use of leaves (Bygren and Duvander 2006; Geisler and Kreyenfeld 2011; Lapuerta et al. 2011; Romero-Balsas 2012; Flaquer and Escobedo 2014; Escot et al. 2012). In that connection, the third hypothesis (H3) is that parents with no economic security (i.e., no employment contract, a temporary job, or self-employment) make less use of parental leaves.

Most authors stress that a high level of schooling favours the use of parental leave by both fathers and mothers (Nyman and Petterson 2002; Sundström and Duvander 2002; Lappegard 2008; Lapuerta et al. 2011). In other cases, however, schooling did not prove to be significant (Geisler and Kreyenfeld 2011; Stropnik and Kump 2009). Taking level of schooling as a proxy for income level and thus financial stability, the fourth hypothesis (H4) is that the use of unpaid leaves depends on social class,

insofar as parents with more schooling are primarily the ones able to forfeit part of their income in exchange for more time to devote to childcare.

Cultural models or contexts also may be determinants. Parenthood is a social work in progress that informs behaviour through cultural bargaining and discourse (Brandth and Kvande 1998; Haas et al. 2002). Consequently, the fifth hypothesis (H5) states that the use of leaves is conditioned by the social portrayal of what parents' involvement in ideal baby care should entail, in terms of gender and time devoted as opposed to time devoted to work.

The use of leaves cannot be understood without knowledge of social portrayals recognizing the family's and specifically men's and women's roles in childcare. Two types of reasons can be envisaged for using leaves in this regard, one instrumental and the other emotive (Meil et al. 2016). Financial and family organizational issues prevail in the former, and values around the approach to childcare in the latter. A couple's, especially the father's more or less egalitarian outlook, in turn is of particular importance in the use of parental leave (Lammi-Taskula 2008; Romero-Balsas 2012). Two studies found instrumental reasons to carry greater weight among Spanish males (Borras Catala et al. 2012; Romero-Balsas et al. 2013). Therefore, the sixth hypothesis (H6) is that men are more prone to justifying the use of unpaid leave for instrumental reasons than are women.

Young Spanish women's recent penetration into the labour market has been possible largely thanks to their mothers, but also to their fathers, whose involvement in childcare has contributed to parents' work-life balance (Tobío Soler 2012; Moreno Mínguez 2007). Grandparental assistance with childcare has grown in the last 10 years in Spain (Meil and Rogero-García 2015). The seventh hypothesis (H7), then, is that parents only resort to unpaid leave when no grandparental support for childcare is available.

Characteristic Features of Childcare Leaves in Spain

Childcare leaves were first introduced in Spain in the early twentieth century, with the institution in 1929 of 12 weeks of paid maternity leave and one day of paid leave for fathers for the birth of a child (Wall and

Escobedo 2009). Childcare leave legislation developed very slowly, with significant progress recorded only after 1980 (Iglesias and Meil 2001). In the years following, maternity leave coverage and remuneration were expanded and new paid leaves for specific risks (e.g., during pregnancy, during nursing, and to care for seriously ill minors) were legislated, along with unpaid parental leave usable after paid maternity leave either under full- or part-time arrangements or a combination of the two.

Although initially envisaged for women only, the right to parental leave subsequently was extended to men, in 1980 as a family and in 1999 as an individual entitlement – that is, as the father’s personal right, independent of the mother’s. A mother’s right to assign part of her maternity leave to the father was acknowledged in 1989, and paid and paternity leave that is not transferable was instituted in 2007. The leaves available at this time are the following, according to Escobedo et al (2014):

Maternity leave: As a general rule, women are entitled to 16 weeks of paid leave, six of which must be taken immediately after delivery. Up to 10 may be granted to the father. For multiple births or when children are born with a disability, the leave is extended by two weeks per child. Some collective bargaining agreements envisage additional leave time. To qualify for 100 % of the replacement salary, women must have paid into social security for 180 days in the seven years prior to giving birth, although that requirement is less demanding for younger mothers. Employees who are not eligible receive a flat-rate payment for 42 days after delivery. Mothers, including those who are self-employed, may take part-time leave except during the first six weeks after delivery when full-time leave is mandatory.

Paternity leave: In addition to a two-day childbirth leave paid by the employer, the Social Security system pays the father’s full salary for 13 days, although under some collective bargaining agreements, mostly in the public sector, such leave may be extended for one or two additional weeks (e.g., the city of Madrid grants its employees a four-week paid leave). It may be taken at childbirth or immediately after the maternity leave comes to term.

Full-time parental leave: Either parent may take this leave until the child is three years old. It is wholly flexible and the number of leave periods is unlimited. Through the first year, employees are entitled to return

to the same job and thereafter to a similar job. It is generally unpaid, although 7 of Spain's 17 regions in 2000 envisaged a lump sum payment under certain circumstances. By 2014, however, such support was provided in only two regions.

Part-time parental leave: Either parent may reduce the working day by one-eighth to one-half to care for children up to 12 years old. This leave is unpaid; although some regions provide for a lump sum payment under certain circumstances.

Other leaves: Parents are entitled to two paid half-hour breaks per day for breastfeeding through the ninth month after birth – until month 12 in the public sector. Under some collective bargaining agreements, this leave can be taken consecutively in the form of two additional weeks (four in the public sector) of maternity or paternity leave. Only one of the parents is eligible, irrespective of whether one or both work. The cost of this leave is covered in full by the employer. Employed and self-employed pregnant women and mothers breastfeeding babies less than nine months old are entitled to be relocated to another workplace if working conditions are not compatible with women in such circumstances or where they constitute a risk for the baby. If this is not possible or cannot be reasonably required, the employment contract or activity must be suspended and the mother granted paid leave at 100 % of earnings. Such leave lasts until the beginning of the maternity leave (in cases of risk for pregnant women) or until the baby is nine months old (in cases of risk during breastfeeding). In addition, parents are entitled to full-time or part-time paid leave, with a reduction of no less than 50 % of the work week, to care for a severely ill child under 18 while the child is in the hospital or in need of continuous treatment at home; this needs to be substantiated by the public health service.

The present analysis of leave use covers maternity, paternity, and parental leaves but not the other leaves, for which insufficient data are available.

Methodology and Database

The analysis is based on the survey *El Uso Social de los Permisos Parentales, 2012* ('Social Use of Parental Leave, 2012'), designed under a broader eponymous project. The survey, which is cross-sectional and

retrospective, was conducted between January and March 2012 and covered all of Spain except the cities of Ceuta and Melilla. A total of 4066 respondents between the ages of 25 and 60 were surveyed. Random sampling with minimum gender and age quotas was used and weighting was based on those two variables.

The subsample for this study consisted of 2775 parents between the ages of 25 and 60 who had paid employment when their children were born. A total of 411 had taken at least one unpaid full- or part-time parental leave. The specific analysis of leave use was run on the 359 parents with children under the age of 13 at the time of the interviews. The reason for this selection was to avoid long-term memory bias and to take the break-off point as the entry into effect of Act 39/1999 of 5 November 1999 on harmonization of family and work life.

The aforementioned survey proved to be an innovative and useful source of information, for it shed light on the effect of leaves on the population eligible to apply for them. Moreover, it furnished data on the employment status of respondents and their partners when applying for the leave (or otherwise), the reasons for applying, the couple's decision-making process, and the participation of other members of the childcare social network.

The first two hypotheses were studied via descriptive analysis, whereas the factors on which the use of parental leave depend were analyzed via logistic regression, which estimates the odds ratio of taking a parental leave, either full- or part-time. The analysis was conducted for women and men separately and the model was fit using the Nagelkerke R-square method (Norusis 2005). The independent variable for the logistic regression model was based on the response to two questions: '*Have you shortened or are you shortening your working day to care for children?*' and '*Have you taken or are you taking a leave of absence to care for children?*' The options in both cases were 'yes' or 'no'.

An affirmative response to either question was indicative of having taken parental leave and coded as 1, whereas a negative response to both was coded as 0. No response was regarded as a missing value. Based on the hypotheses posed and the data available, the following explanatory variables were defined:

- *Respondent's financial situation when the first child was born or prior to applying for parental leave.* Inasmuch as parental leave can only be taken by people with paid employment, the variables studied were: permanent (coded as 1) or temporary employment, no employment contract or self-employment (coded as 0); public (1) or private or social sector (0); 40-hour work week (1) or less (0); highest level of schooling (primary reference), secondary (university), as a proxy for social class.
- *Respondent's partner's financial status.* This also referred to the time of the birth of the first child or prior to applying for parental leave: permanent (1) or temporary job, no employment contract or self-employment (0); and whether parental leave had been taken (1) or otherwise (0).
- *Childcare cultural models.* Among women, this was measured as disagreement with the assertion '*when children are very young, mothers should shorten their work week*' (1). Among men, it was measured as agreement with the assertion '*leaves to take care of children or dependent adults are primarily for women*' (1).
- *Availability of alternative resources to harmonize work and life.* After considering a number of other options, none significant, this was measured in terms of whether a grandparent lived within 30 minutes of the family (1). The reference was no living grandparent or no grandparent within 30 minutes (0).

A hierarchical cluster analysis was conducted to classify parents by the reasons given for taking a leave. The variables according to which the groups were created were extracted from the question: 'I'm going to read a number of reasons why people usually apply for a shortened work week or leave of absence. I'd ask you to tell me whether in your case it was... (1) because you wanted to engage in other professional activities; (2) because you wanted to cut back on job stress or fatigue; (3) because you didn't want to take your child to a nursery school or leave it with a babysitter; (4) because nursery schools and babysitters are expensive; (5) because you didn't want to overburden the child's grandparents'. On the grounds of these variables, cluster analysis defined three groups of parents. This analysis explored H6 by comparing men's and women's reasons

and supplemented the results of the logistic regression models for H3 by studying whether the decision to use leaves was work-related.

Results

Leave Use and Characteristics

The findings on the use made of the various types of leave available in Spain confirmed the first hypothesis; as in other countries (Moss and Kamerman 2009; Moss 2014; McKay and Doucet 2010; Haas and Rostgaard 2011; Ray et al. 2008), leaves bearing high replacement incomes were taken by the vast majority of eligible parents, whereas unpaid leave was taken by only a minority. This use pattern was seen not only among men but also among women, although wide gender-based differences were observed in connection with unpaid leave. This discussion analyzes first women's and then men's use of leaves.

According to the survey *El Uso Social de los Permisos Parentales, 2012*, 81 % of the women between the ages of 25 and 60 who had paid employment when their children were born benefited from maternity leave. Significantly higher rates of younger than older mothers took maternity leave at the time of the interview: 90 % of eligible mothers under 35 had taken the leave, 85 % from 35 to 44, 71 % from 45 to 54, and 61 % from 55 to 60 (Meil and Romero-Balsas 2016). Those values were the result of progressive improvements in the legislation on leave-taking. Given that maternity leave is mandatory in the first six weeks after delivery, the reasons for not taking it lay primarily in the type of employment contract. Asked why they failed to take maternity leave, the women involved responded that they were self-employed at the time (31 %), had no employment contract (16 %), had a temporary contract (11 %), had been laid off (13 %), or other (29 %).

Unpaid leave in turn was taken by 26 % of eligible mothers when their children were born, with part-time (19.9 %) prevailing over full-time leave (10.4 %), inasmuch as the former has a reduced impact on income. Most mothers used only one of these forms of leave (22 %) but 4 % combined the two.

The differences in leave use among men depending on whether it was paid or unpaid were even wider. While 75 % of eligible fathers used paternity leave, only 2 % took parental leave, despite their individual entitlement to such leave, irrespective of the mother's – that is, unless they work at the same company, in which case the employer may justifiably opt to grant a leave to only one parent. These findings also confirmed the second hypothesis to the effect that establishing specific well-remunerated leaves for men fosters their widespread use, whereas in the absence of a replacement salary, they are taken very sparingly. These results are consistent with reports for Sweden and Norway (Duvander 2012; Rege and Solli 2010).

Prior to the institution of paternity leave in 2006, the possibility of resorting to some manner of leave to care for children did not form part of any father's expectations. According to a 2014 Eurobarometer survey on European attitudes towards parental leave, 95 % of eligible Spanish men had neither taken nor were they considering taking parental leave. Only a few years later, with the institution of specific well-paid paternity leave, with a 100 % replacement income, 75 % of eligible fathers took it.

This substantial change attests to the importance of leave policy in modelling social behaviour, even in countries, such as Spain, where family culture is still heavily conditioned by traditional gender-based role assignment. The fathers who did not take paternity leave, like the mothers who failed to take maternity leave, offered reasons primarily relating to the type of employment contract; 35 % claimed to be self-employed and no percentage responded that they were working under a temporary or part-time contract. A small minority contended that they feared losing their jobs or were discouraged from taking leave by their employers (11 %). The remainder gave 'other' reasons.

Factors Conditioning Parental Leave-Taking

The remaining hypotheses were explored with multivariate analysis, as described in the methodology. The results of the logistic regression of the likelihood of using parental leave are given in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 Logistic Regression for Factors Conditioning the Likelihood of Using Parental Leave or Otherwise, by Gender

	Women	Men
	Exp(B)	Exp(B)
Level of schooling (ref. primary)		
Secondary	1.755*	6.499
Tertiary	1.920*	5.320
Permanent employment	4.360***	2.902*
Public-sector employment	0.811	3.917***
Work week > 40 hours	0.569**	0.693
Attitude towards childcare	1.678**	–
Traditional attitude towards childcare	–	0.224*
Partner used a parental leave	1.668	2.544*
Partner with permanent employment	1.432	0.990
Grandparents less than 30 min. away	1.231	0.819
Constant	0.059***	0.002***

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Nagelkerke's R-square for women, 0.188; and for men, 0.164

Source: *El Uso Social de los Permisos Parentales*, 2012

These findings confirmed the third hypothesis, according to which people without a steady job had less actual access to parental leave despite the fact that, by law, dismissing a worker while on leave is wrongful (and subject to severance pay). The results are consistent with prior reports (Bygren and Duvander 2006; Geisler and Kreyenfeld 2011; Lapuerta et al. 2011; Romero-Balsas 2012; Flaquer and Escobedo 2014; Escot et al. 2012). The variable that carried the greatest weight among women was job security; mothers with a permanent job were 4.4 times more likely to take parental leave to harmonize work and family than women with temporary or self-employment. Although temporary workers are entitled to parental leave, the risk of nonrenewal of their contract at term is very high.

Given the risk of losing clients or market share, besides forfeiting part of their income, very few self-employed or businesswomen temporarily reduced or interrupted their professional activity. Not only respondents' but also their partners' employment situation weighed in the decision, for the likelihood of taking parental leave rose by 51 % when the latter had a permanent job. Men's own job security, but not their partners', was likewise a significant factor in their decision to take parental leave. This

may be related not only to their breadwinner role but also to the strategy among some men to use parental leave to protect their partners' jobs – that is, by taking leave to care for children when their partners have a temporary job (Meil et al. 2016).

Ensuring the family income was, then, an essential conditioning factor in couples' strategies around the use of parental leave to harmonize work and life. Given the more precarious working conditions in place for younger than older employees and the fact that such leaves are unpaid, they are scantily used as a harmonization strategy. In other words, the increasingly precarious nature of employment as a result of the economic crisis is eroding the right to harmonize life and work and partially undermining leave policy.

In addition to the type of employment contract, other job characteristics condition the use of parental leave. While public versus private-sector employment was not a significant factor among women, for whom the sector was less important than having a temporary or permanent job; however, for men it was. Among men, the likelihood of applying for parental leave was 3.9 times higher among public than private-sector employees. The reason for this difference may be the greater ease of exercising rights in the former. The number of hours worked prior to childbirth was not positively related to the likelihood of using leave – that is, a longer work week did not translate into a higher probability. Moreover, women with a work week of more than 40 hours prior to childbirth were less likely to use parental leave. That may be interpreted to mean that women with more demanding jobs are less able to extend their maternity leave. No relationship whatsoever was observed among men.

After controlling for the effect of all other variables, another factor that affected the likelihood of using parental leave was the level of schooling. Similar findings were reported in some (Nyman and Pettersson 2002; Sundström and Duvander 2002; Lappegard 2008; Lapuerta et al. 2011) but not all earlier studies. In Germany, this variable was not significant among male respondents (Geisler and Kreyenfeld 2011). Further to the present results, women with a higher level of schooling were more likely to use parental leave than those with primary schooling only. The same pattern was observed among men, although the significance levels were

slightly higher than the conventionally accepted values, probably because of the small number of cases in the sample.

Taking the level of schooling as a proxy for social class, inasmuch as it is closely related to income, these findings partially confirm the fourth hypothesis. Because of the absence of replacement income and the greater job insecurity to which they are subject, women in the least privileged class took part- and full-time parental leave at much lower rates than middle- and higher-class women. The data for men merit the same interpretation. Nonetheless, this and the other explanatory variables must be interpreted with caution, for only 2 % of the eligible men used parental leave.

Social portrayal of infant care in terms of time devoted relative to time at work and the person primarily responsible for such care are circumstances that predefine the resources used to harmonize work and life. Women, believing that mothers should prioritize care for very young children and thus lighten their paid work load, were 50 % more likely to apply for parental leave than those who did not share that view (i.e., after controlling for all other variables). Men who regard leaves to care for children to be primarily intended for women are 78 % less likely to use parental leave than those who believe otherwise. Consequently, social portrayals of how new-born care should be provided significantly conditioned the decision about using unpaid parental leave, thereby confirming the fifth hypothesis.

Although grandparents constitute a resource for harmonizing work and family life (Tobío Soler 2012; Moreno Mínguez 2007) and their support for childcare has risen in Spain (Meil and Rogero-García 2015), their availability for assuming such care was not observed to be a significant variable. Consequently, the final hypothesis was not confirmed. The absence of grandparents in the vicinity able to help care for children was not, then, a limitation that would explain the use or otherwise of parental leave. Use may have more to do with a desire to devote more time to caring for children and enjoying this very unique experience, providing the family's income is guaranteed.

Reasons for Taking Parental Leave

One of the key questions addressed in the sociological analysis of leaves is why they are taken, irrespective of the structural factors conditioning their use. Ascertaining those reasons is the only way to determine whether public policy in this regard is meeting its stated objectives. In Spain, leaves are designed to allow parents more time to care for their children without jeopardizing their careers – that is, without forfeiting job- or employment-related rights. The reasons for taking unpaid full- or part-time parental leaves were analyzed here in light of their normally long-term nature and high opportunity cost.

The reason most frequently given for applying for such leaves (i.e., the desire to spend more time with the baby) is closely related to the reluctance to surrender childcare to others (Table 11.2) – for example, to avoid overburdening grandparents (48.8 %), placing the baby in a nursery, or hiring a ‘nanny’ (51.5 %). The underlying assumption in such responses is that parents, more than any other agent, are primarily responsible for

Table 11.2 Categories of Parents by Reasons for Taking Leaves

	Care-oriented	Paid-work oriented	Burnt-out workers	Total	Sig. Chi-square
To spend more time with their child(ren)	94.4%	77.8%	97.6%	94.3%	0.067
To engage in other professional activities	0.8%	100.0%	0.0%	3.7%	0.000
To reduce job stress or fatigue	14.1%	44.4%	100.0%	26.8%	0.000
To avoid placing the child in a nursery or in the hands of a domestic worker	54.2%	11.1%	43.9%	51.5%	0.023
To avoid the high cost of childcare	44.8%	0.0%	0.0%	37.2%	0.000
To avoid overburdening grandparents	49.0%	33.3%	51.2%	48.8%	0.618
<i>n</i> (%)	249 (83.2%)	9 (3.1%)	41 (13.8%)	299 (100%)	

Source: *El Uso Social de los Permisos Parentales*, 2012

childcare. Furthermore, as in other countries (McKay and Doucet 2010), a significant percentage of women (46 %) in Spain also claimed that they wanted to breastfeed their children beyond the termination of paid leave.

A significant proportion (26.8 %) claimed that it was to reduce job stress and fatigue.

A minority of respondents listed other reasons for taking leaves: 3.7 % did so to engage in other professional activities, 3 % to participate in training courses, and 4 % to reduce their likelihood of being laid off. These reasons were given more frequently by men than by women. Cluster analysis identified three types of parents with respect to their reasons for taking leaves.

- The first, labelled 'care-oriented', covered most (83.2 %) parents who claimed reasons essentially related to the desire to avoid resorting to family or extra-family resources. Occupational status or aspirations carried little weight in these parents' decisions to take a leave.
- The second group, labelled 'paid-work oriented', accounted for 3.1 % and differed widely from the majority. All these parents were characterized by a wish to use the leave time for other professional activities, with 35.7 % contending that it was to reduce job stress or fatigue. Only 71.4 % claimed to have taken the leave to spend more time with their children. Very few mentioned other types of care and none gave the cost of nursery school or paid help as a reason.
- The remaining 13.8 % constituted the third group, the 'burnt-out workers', all of whom took the leave to reduce their job stress or fatigue. Although none mentioned the cost of other alternatives as a reason for taking leaves, many claimed that their intention was to avoid the need to fall back on grandparents or extra-family resources.

Because care-oriented parents accounted for the majority, their characteristics differed little from the features of the overall population of leave-taking parents proving that, on the whole, parents used leaves for essentially the reasons for which they were designed. As the vast majority of men and women both (87.9 % and 82.7 %, respectively) fell under this heading, both genders can be said to share these purposes: to devote

more time to caring for their children without jeopardizing their job status (Brandth and Kvande 1998).

The other two groups, however, exhibited differential features that merit discussion. Paid work-oriented and burnt-out workers were more likely to be the families' primary breadwinners, which is consistent with their option to reduce their working hours, rather than interrupt work altogether, at a much higher rate than other leave-takers.

The larger proportion of men among the paid work-oriented group would confirm H6, for it shows that even when they used a resource of this nature, a higher proportion of men than women did so for instrumental (in financial terms) reasons (Borras Catala et al. 2012; Romero-Balsas et al. 2013). Nonetheless, these differences must be interpreted carefully, given the small number of cases involved. The group also included mothers who, while taking the leave, purported to maintain firm links with the labour market. The lower rate of agreement with the assertion '*when children are very young, mothers should shorten their work week*' denoted a more egalitarian attitude towards gender-based roles. Consequently, these parents combined a more work-oriented attitude with a less traditional vision of the distribution of childcare along gender lines.

Among burnt-out workers, the desire to decrease job stress or fatigue may be an indication that the exhaustion induced by the deterioration of working conditions in Spain since the onset of the economic crisis also has encouraged the use of leaves. Labour market duality would therefore have two contradictory effects. On the one hand, further to H3, the job status of workers in precarious situations made it enormously difficult for them to take long-term unpaid leave, either for reasons of entitlement or because of the difficulty of justifying the decision in the informal dynamics of a given position. On the other hand, for some well-positioned workers, leaves were used to avoid tiresome and stressful work, in addition to devoting more time to childcare. This reason denotes the existence of workers who, despite having a steady, well-paid job, were dissatisfied with their working conditions; this was a circumstance apparently found more frequently among women, 14.7 % fell into this category, than men (6.1 %).

Conclusion

In Spain, as in other countries, childcare leave policies have been implemented to favour work and life harmonization and further greater equality in women's and men's involvement in childcare. Against that backdrop, in addition to flexible conditions that favour leave-taking in general, men in particular have been encouraged to take advantage of this option. This analysis of leave use shows that in countries, such as Spain, where familyism is firmly entrenched and that lags behind in the change to a more egalitarian distribution of paid and unpaid work, parental leave policy can help to involve men more fully in childcare.

The institution of well-paid paternity leave, which is not transferable to mothers, has proven to be an effective tool for attaining these objectives, for, as in other countries (Meilland and Math 2004; Haas and Rostgaard 2011), most eligible men take it. The configuration of unpaid leave as an individual entitlement for men and women, in turn, intended to favour life and work harmonization among men, has not significantly fostered greater use of this resource. The literature shows that taking such leaves effectively socializes those concerned and enhances their involvement in childcare (Meil 2013; Duvander 2012; Rege and Solli 2010; Reich et al. 2012). The successful deployment of paternity leave may be not only because of the fact that it is paid but also because it is short term (two weeks). That notwithstanding, its use shows that greater male involvement in childcare can be furthered through longer paternity leaves.

The growing duality of the labour market in the wake of the economic crisis, with an ever-larger segment of primarily young workers (i.e., potential parents) in temporary or alternative jobs, or self-employed, is eroding the ability to resort to parental leave to provide childcare. Self-employment, a shadow economy, and unemployed workers, as well as those with precarious working conditions, tend not to take leaves to which they are entitled or to do so for less than the maximum time set down in the legislation. This applies to both paid and unpaid leaves. The latter is used primarily by people with a permanent job and, among women, when their partners have a permanent job, as a strategy that involves no

risk to the household income. In other words, the rate of unpaid leave use is higher among the best-positioned workers. These leave use characteristics reveal the constraints to which such policies are subject, for they reproduce the social inequalities generated in the labour market. They also show, however, that unpaid leaves are a valid solution for a significant proportion of women, especially those who wish to devote more time to caring for their children.

The reasons that induce parents to use unpaid leave are related primarily to caring for the baby. Both the men and the women who use it have interiorized the idea that they, as parents, should assume childcare rather than surrender the task to third parties, even relatives (e.g., grandparents). Leave use is not, therefore, a strategy to compensate for the absence of grandparents who could assume childcare, but to parents' desire to devote more time to their children, even at the expense of lowering their income for the duration. Although this is the most common explanation, cluster analysis revealed that a minority of users, more men than women, pursue other professional interests or use leaves as relief for unsatisfactory job situations.

One of the limitations to this study is that the results do not distinguish between part-time and full-time leaves because the sample size precluded a more detailed analysis. Future research could explore the conditioning factors affecting these two types of leaves to determine possible divergence. Moreover, the reasons for using unpaid leave might be studied in greater depth on the grounds of qualitative methodology. The results of this study provide an innovative understanding of the use of unpaid leave in Spain, as in neighbouring countries such as the UK, Greece, Ireland, and Malta (Moss 2014), as a tool for harmonizing life and work. Another area that could be beneficially pursued in future studies is a cross-country comparison of the factors conditioning and the reasons for taking leaves.

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12

The Creativity of Mothering: Intensity, Anxiety, and Normative Accountability

Lisa Smyth

Introduction

Explanations of the continued emotional intensity and strain experienced by mothers in an era of formal gender equality tend to focus on the ongoing difficulties of combining infant and child care with paid employment (e.g., Ridgeway and Correll 2004). The strains are explained as a consequence of continuing expectations of the unencumbered, implicitly male employee, who prioritizes paid work over family commitments and is available full-time, often for long hours throughout the year (Hodges and Budig 2010; Williams 2010). Childcare presents a major challenge to this model of the ideal worker, given the relative unpredictability of children's everyday needs. Furthermore, the organization of children's education, involving short school days, long holidays, and irregular school

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closure days, tends not to fit easily with expectations of regular, unbroken involvement in paid employment. These conditions make the coordination of employment and family life especially unwieldy for those who continue to bear the burden of care, mostly women (Stone 2007; Williams et al. 2013). The underlying difficulty of subjecting the care of infants and children to the logic of rationalization makes it a problematic feature of a social world that is principally coordinated in this way.

Explanations of the strain of motherhood also tend to focus on the low status accorded to the work of human reproduction and care, a consequence of a gendered social order where women's work is often either invisible, regarded as a private choice, or carries low or negative levels of social esteem, depending on the context (e.g., Aassve et al. 2014; Benard and Correll 2010; Ridgeway 1997). Situations in which women reproduce at a relatively young age and without partners, for example, are explained as a reflection of these broader gender structures because they intersect with class, race and / or ethnicity, and other forms of inequality (Arai 2009; Armstrong 2006; Edin and Kefalas 2005).

Analyses such as these focus on the strains generated by the gender dynamics of labour markets, as well as the effects of multiple intersecting forms on inequality on family life: 'What exacerbates the strain in the working class is the absence of money to pay for services they need, economic insecurity, poor day care, and lack of dignity and boredom in each partner's job. What exacerbates it in the upper-middle class is the instability of paid help and the enormous demands of the career system in which both partners become willing believers' (Hochschild and Machung 2003: 197).

Structural explanations such as this tend to support policy initiatives aimed at transforming labour market expectations, allowing for greater flexibility for involvement in paid work so that parenting can be combined more easily with employment (e.g., Crompton et al. 2007; Hewlett 2007; Lewis 2009). Calls for high-quality and affordable childcare, flexible working conditions, and clear parental leave entitlements that are not gender-specific all provide important responses to the claim for gender equality in the context of coordinating employment and family life.

Although this approach explains a great deal, the unpredictability of experiences and responses to maternal strain, which go beyond the coordination tensions generated by the labour market, tends to be overlooked.

The well-known struggle to live up to normative expectations of 'good' motherhood, as much from mothers themselves as from those around them, indicates that acting as a mother carries an evaluative, along with a coordination, burden (e.g., Silva 1996; Warner 2006). Can the tension associated with this experience, particularly the anxiety routinely associated with motherhood, be regarded either as an inevitable product of conflicting institutional structures, or alternatively, an effect of the idiosyncrasies of specific women's personalities? Is there something more fully social shaping the emotional dynamics of this gendered social role? Can we understand maternal role performance not simply as determined by structural pressures but also as shaped by agency?

This chapter draws on the insights of contemporary action theory, particularly as it has taken shape in response to the pragmatic turn in sociology (Bernstein 2010), to answer these questions. Consequently, the emphasis in what follows is on emotionally configured intersubjective interpretation of normative structures. The analysis aims to explore responses to the strain of contemporary mothering by focusing on maternal anxiety and pride as emotional indicators of the evaluative burden involved in performing this role. The major elements of pragmatist action theory, including the significance of the self as the locus of responses to perceived social evaluation, and Joas's model of the creativity of action, will be outlined initially. An ideal typology of the core logical features of three distinct norms of selfhood will then be developed, drawing on illustrative material from in-depth interviews with mothers across two research sites. Finally, the chapter considers the value of pragmatist action theory for drawing attention to the patterned, yet undetermined, quality of maternal actions, despite the intense structural pressures attached to this role.

Action Theory

Weber's argument that the task of sociology is to explain meaningful action, and particularly its social quality – namely, the 'orientation [of the agent] to the *expectation* that others will act in a certain way' (1978: 1375) – has become central to contemporary action theory (Strand and

Lizardo 2015: 45; Joas and Beckert 2001). Although mid-twentieth century functionalism transformed this perspective into a behaviourist, static understanding of action as largely determined (Coleman 1986; Joas 1993: 221), contemporary action theory rejects this in two important ways. First, the idea of the agent as either voluntarily pursuing preferences, or as acting in ways that are governed, through early internalization of norms, by the functional needs of the social system, is rejected (Joas and Knöbl 2009: 41, 64). Instead, the social world, and the norms that drive it, is assumed to be complex and contested and, consequently, demanding of agency (Silver 2011). Rejecting a 'socialization' model of action, which assumes a high degree of agent conformity with static social norms, understood to be 'internalized' early in life, this perspective instead focuses on situated interpretation of the normative appropriateness of specific forms of action (Bicchieri and Muldoon 2011).

Second, contemporary action theory rejects explanations offered by rational choice perspectives, where the focus is either on 'means-ends' rationality or 'desire, belief, opportunity' models (Hedström 2005: 44). These approaches tend to rely on an assumed rational actor, who devises her goals, and calculates the most efficient means to reach them, prior to engaging in action. Thus, rational actor perspectives tend to rely on problematic distinction between thinking and acting (Joas 1996: 157). The rational actor model carries a number of other controversial assumptions, notably a mind–body dualism, which treats the body as a tool of the will, in the pursuit of goals – a moralized distinction between rational and nonrational actions (1996: 184).

Instead, the pragmatist's focus in contemporary sociology has sought to develop a nonteleological approach, which does not assume, as a rationalist approach does, that action is always oriented towards and motivated by preestablished goals (Bernstein 2010; Emirbayer and Goldberg 2005; Silver 2011). Goals are understood here instead as emerging through the normative dynamics of action and interaction, as agents seek to act appropriately for the situation and the normative attitudes in question. From this perspective, an agent's goals are understood not to be a necessary effect of preferences established through early socialization. Neither is social action assumed to be principally oriented towards conforming with the functional requirements of the social system. Similarly,

motivation is not understood to be found in the rationally calculated interests of the actor.

A pragmatist perspective instead returns to a Weberian sociology of interpretation, taking the perspective of the actor rather than, for example, examining statistical regularities and relations between factors in order to explain social action not only with respect to structures but also to subjective meanings and motivations (e.g., Martin 2011; Reed 2011; Strand and Lizardo 2015: 44). The relationship between agents, norms, roles, and positions are central to this approach. Social action is assumed to be neither determined by structures nor motivated by a simple desire to conform, but instead is driven by an effort to ‘express... to one another, ... what matters to us, who we take ourselves to be, and how we see ourselves and others’ (Brennan et al. 2013: 37). It is through this process of seeking recognition for our normative attitudes that social evaluation takes place, as we ‘hold one another to account and ... demand and expect things of one another’, as well as of ourselves (Brennan et al. 2013: 36; see also McBride 2013; Silver 2011). The ways in which agents interpret and act in relation to normative structures and situated perceptions is the central focus of this type of analysis.

What constitutes appropriateness is, of course, neither entirely self-evident nor structurally determined, but it depends on the dynamics of the specific situation, the variety of normative claims in play, and the commitments of interactive partners. This uncertainty and struggle for appropriateness demands agency, as the actor is faced with competing expectations, both from the situations they find themselves in and from their own expectations and evaluations of themselves, as they seek to move with some consistency from one situation to another. The agent is assumed to be capable of responding intelligently to situational dynamics, as she copes with the complexity of social life and seeks to act in a way that is meaningfully oriented towards others. In so doing, the agent is understood to be necessarily engaging in interpretations and evaluations of situational and dispositional social norms, as well as perceived interests and needs (Joas 1996; Bernstein 2010).

In this way, contemporary action theory seeks to explain the patterned, yet undetermined and unpredictable quality of social life (Martin 2011; Reed 2011; Strand and Lizardo 2015). Emphasis lies on the need for

normative interpretation and judgement, as the agent copes with situations often characterized by competing expectations (Burke and Stets 2009; Joas and Knöbl 2009: 123). This process of acting through interpretation and evaluation in turn reproduces, modifies, or contributes to the transformation of the structures of expectations. Thus, analysis of social action provides the route into an examination of normative structures, as actors account for themselves in terms of their interpretations of situated expectations (Brennan et al. 2013; Mills 1963 [1940]).

Through these dynamics, the self takes shape. Rather than conceiving the self as an autonomous, pre-social substantial entity, characterized by an instrumental attitude to the world, it is understood instead to be a product of situated interactions and a focus of continuous reflexive attention (Burke and Stets 2009; Dalton 2004). This reflexive quality, or 'self-dynamics', provides the primary motivation for agency of any sort (Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 974), registered through 'self-feeling' (Denzin 2007; Turner and Schutte 1981). The struggle to be recognized as a coherent, competent, and accountable agent constitutes the central mechanisms of social action from this perspective, and it is through this process that specific motives emerge.

Creative Action

Joas (1996) has developed this approach into a specific theory of social action as creative in character (see also Elliott and Turner 2012). From this perspective, actors draw on their dispositional normative commitments as they respond to situational dynamics (Joas 1996: 161). Action is understood as corporeal, interactive, and informed by specific biographical and historic contexts. Creativity is demanded as new situations arise or problems develop that require responses that are not routinized (Joas 1996: 197).

This is close to what Emirbayer and Mische (1998) identify as the 'practical–evaluative' element of agency, which they place alongside 'iterative', or routinized and 'projective', future-oriented elements. The practical–evaluative element can be understood, in Joas's terms, as creative. It is defined as 'the capacity of actors to make practical and normative

judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations' (Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 971).

Unlike the latter model, however, Joas rejects a sharp distinction between routine ('iterative') and creative elements of action. Instead, routines are understood as the result of creativity, 'a dimension that is present in all human action' (Joas 1996: 197). For example, partners to interaction may develop new definitions of the situations they find themselves in, which in turn will require a creative effort to revise previously established intentions, for instance, or to alter the relations between means and ends (Joas and Knöbl 2009: 522). This approach to action views intentions as taking shape through situated, self-reflective interaction.

The Creativity of Motherhood

The evaluative burden shaping experiences of motherhood are explained in what follows through the just described model of creative social action. The ways in which women, interviewed for the 'Demands of Motherhood' study (Smyth 2012), related their experiences of mothering in situated, emotionally laden terms will be explained. This study involved interviews with 40 mothers, mostly middle-class and white, across two research sites in Northern Ireland (22) and Southern California (18). The mothers on average were in their early 30s, of mainstream white ethnicity, with one or two children under five years old, and either married or in long-term partnerships. The majority were either in full-time or part-time employment in middle- or upper-middle-class careers. Although most were actively mothering babies and young children, a small number had older children. To support involvement in paid employment, mothers in the USA (US) tended to rely on private day care in their own homes, whereas mothers in Northern Ireland (NI) tended instead to use group childcare provided by private nurseries, as well as help from their own mothers.

As a qualitative study, this was not designed to be representative or strictly comparative, but instead to gather material from two distinct research sites in order to develop a richly informed typology of the action orientations relied on by middle-class mothers in response to the

evaluative demands of this role. These sites shared remarkably similar traditionalist value patterns, including belief in God, respect for authority, nation, and the patriarchal family, although differing significantly in attitudes to diversity, equality, and self-expression (Inglehart and Baker 2000).

The patterns of similarity and difference in the social values of both contexts promised access to a range of normative structures including, but going beyond, those identified by previous research into maternal action orientations in Southern California (Hays 1996). Hays argues that middle-class women have significantly intensified their involvement in maternal caregiving and, consequently, have become enmeshed in highly strained lives. Based on her study during 1991, which included an analysis of both historical and contemporary popular ideas about childrearing and qualitative interviews with 38 mothers in San Diego, Southern California, she claims that ‘the contemporary cultural model of socially appropriate mothering takes the form of an ideology of *intensive* mothering’ (Hays 1996: x). This is explained as ‘an explicit and systematic rejection of the logic of individualistic, competitive, and impersonal relations’ that operate in the labour market and the wider culture (Hays 1996: 154). She argues that ‘intensive’ mothering has come about in response to instrumentalism in the wider society.

This is an important effort to explain middle-class mothering as a practical–evaluative form of agency, against a background where labour market and state institutional pressures generate particularly difficult coordination and evaluative burdens for employed mothers. Still, the singular model of ‘intensity’ offered is somewhat unconvincing in its lack of complexity, as is the portrayal of motherhood as a site where instrumentalism is rejected. A more fully creative interpretation of the dynamics of maternal agency could identify a wider variety of available types of action orientations. This requires taking analytic account of normative complexity, situational dynamics, and perceptions of needs and interests.

This chapter’s study aimed to do precisely this by developing an ideal typology of maternal action (Weber et al. 1978: 20), beyond Hays’s singular ‘intensive’ explanation. The analytic approach adopted here rejects ‘[t]he widespread empiricist tendency to think of the scientist’s mind as a passive instrument for the registration of sense impressions’ (Parsons

1990 [1934]: 325), and instead aims to identify the core logical features, rather than the average or typical elements, of each type. Weber explained this analytic approach as ‘the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct’ (1949 [1904]: 147).

This non-positivist methodology involves a process of abstraction aimed at building sociological theory without relying on the empiricist assumption that absolute certainty can be achieved (e.g., see Dewey 1905: 393). This process instead seeks to highlight the essential features of a phenomenon, in broad brushstrokes (Aron 1998: 207). Ideal type analysis accepts that ‘it is probably seldom or ever that a real phenomenon can be found which corresponds exactly to one of these ideally constructed pure types’ (Weber et al. 1978: 20). This approach offers an interpretation of the phenomenon in question, beginning with untheorized observations, and then working towards conceptualizing the underlying core features into an ideal type (Abend 2008: 177–178).

The ideal types developed through this analysis identify three distinct norms of selfhood, as they inform various orientations to mothering. Norms of instrumental rationality and romantic expressivism have been identified as significant in landmark studies of selfhood and social action (e.g., Bellah et al. 1996; Taylor 1989; Turner 1976; Weber et al. 1978). Instrumentally rational action tends to refer to a type of action that aims to set and pursue goals through efficiency calculations (Weber et al. 1978: 24), although romantic expressivism prioritizes the full articulation of the agent’s natural impulse, or ‘inner voice’, as the source of moral action (Taylor 1989: 374; see also Turner 1976).

This analysis adds a third selfhood norm (i.e., pragmatism) to these two orientations, to develop a fuller typology that captures the dynamics of interview material more fully. Pragmatism emphasizes situated problem solving and adaptability over the calculated pursuit of plans or the expression of impulses or emotions (e.g., see Joas 1996: 127). The purpose of developing these abstract types is to allow for an analysis of the creative dynamics of agency as mothers cope in patterned, yet undetermined, ways with this gendered social role. Patterns of emotional intensity and tension

will be commented on as important aspects of these creative responses to the evaluative demands mothers routinely face.

Emotions, particularly self-feelings, are treated here as indicators of perceived evaluations of the quality of the agent's mothering. 'Self-feelings' were identified in 1902 by sociologist Charles Cooley as central aspects of the 'looking-glass self' (Denzin 2007: 3). As Cooley explains it, we imagine how we appear to an interactive partner; we imagine their judgement of that appearance; and we, consequently, experience 'some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification' (Cooley 1902: 152). Self-feelings thereby provide crucial feedback signals concerning evaluative interactions (Turner and Schutte 1981: 3), so guide further actions (Burke and Stets 2009: 32, 50).

The creative, evaluative quality of maternal action, as it is guided by self-feeling, is the focus of attention in what follows. The discussion examines how mothers demonstrate what matters to them, and in so doing, make themselves accountable, to themselves as well as to others, through their orientation to this role.

The Ideal Types

Rational Planners

The first type of maternal self is oriented towards instrumental rationality. This involves, as outlined earlier, a purposeful and industrious attitude to the pursuit of goals (Weber et al. 1978: 24, 26). The actor expects to orient her life through an early establishment of general life goals, and then to engage in careful calculations of the optimal means by which those goals can be pursued. This sort of planning rationality is applied both to the external world and to the inner life of impulse and emotion. Consequently, the self is highly disciplined in the struggle to realize goals. Partners are carefully chosen for their potential as future parents, and the number, timing, and spacing of babies is calculated and agreed on in advance. Unplanned pregnancies, for instance, are regarded as potentially disastrous for the achievement of life goals.

Childcare routines and regularity are highly valued by this type of mother, an attitude that is clearly reflected by one strand of the advice literature for new parents (e.g., Ford 2001). Discipline, both of the self and of one's children, is crucial in controlling impulses that threaten the achievement of goals, and it tends to be managed by the promise of small interim rewards. For mothers raising infants and young children, rewards (e.g., time off) are highly valued.

At the time of our interview Brenda¹ (US), a solidly middle-class professional white woman involved in caring for her young baby and working part-time from home, exemplifies this type to a significant degree. Daily routines are carefully constructed to make sure that she can manage the various tasks she has committed to, and also to build towards the longer-term achievement of her life goals.

... *Lisa*: Had motherhood always been part of your life plan?

Brenda: Yes, yes, exactly. So it's funny because ... the day I met my husband, ... I actually said ... 'What are you looking for in a woman?' and he lists these things. I said 'Oh that sounds a little bit like me, and maybe we should date?' And he said 'Oh, well okay!', and I said, 'But I really need to ask you something, do you want to have kids?' And he said 'Yeah, with the right person.' And I said, 'okay then, we can start dating'. So I mean it was like, you know, at that point, when you're late, you know, late twenties, you don't even want to *go* on a date unless you know this person is heading in the same direction as you are. ... I think it was about eighteen months later that we actually got married, and then it was another eighteen months before we had [our son]. ... [E]verything was smooth, and, no stress, and I had been doing reading, and of course all my girlfriends, like I was the last in line, so I've talked to all them, and got a lot of hand-me-downs, I knew exactly what I needed here and everything. So it was a very easy transition. (From an interview with Brenda)

Pride in one's success at reaching one's goals is a major reward of instrumental planning, the self-feeling evident in Brenda's explanation of her life as a mother. Nevertheless, the priority accorded to calculation, planning, and self-discipline has the consequence that the actor regards

¹All respondents have been anonymized by the use of pseudonyms and by changing other identifying features of their stories.

herself as primarily responsible both for the achievement of chosen goals and for any failures encountered along the way. The effort to maintain discipline in order to avoid failure creates significant anxiety for this type of mother. For example, Rachel (NI) commented on her high levels of anxiety about how to care for her baby daughter:

... [W]ell I definitely think, you know, ... 'am I doing this right', ... you do sort of criticise yourself a lot. 'Am I doing this right?', or 'Should I be lifting her, you know, every time she cries?' or, you know, 'Should we be doing this?', or 'Should we be doing that?' (From an interview with Rachel)

The struggle to carefully calculate how best to care for a baby in a context of uncertainty, given the lack of professional consensus (Ramaekers and Suissa 2012), caused significant anxiety for Rachel. One response was to deliberately train herself to control her anxiety and become calm, and so better fit into her conception of how to mother:

...I couldn't relax, but I ... I did a lot of reflexology and, alternative therapy to make things, you know, to keep myself calm and [to try to be positive]. I was you know, very relaxed and, just obviously had panics now and then. (From an interview with Rachel)

Rachel's rational planning attitude meant that impulses should be controlled, as potential threats to good mothering. She recalled her pride in resisting her desire to comfort her baby daughter when she cried during the night:

... [S]he woke up once in the middle of the night, and, you know I jumped out of bed and I was like [*whispered*] 'Don't lift her, don't lift her, she's just awake, don't lift her, she's fine, she's grand. She's around beside me, just awake, she's not hungry' you know. And ... I just wanted to lift her and give her a cuddle. And I didn't, I just, you know, she was awake, and she was, you know, talking to herself, in her sleep, making noises. And I was just so, I was proud of myself that I had done the best for her rather than, you know, doing what was best for me, you know which was, to give her a cuddle. (From an interview with Rachel)

This impulse control can be understood as a creative form of action, as Rachel's response to her self-feeling (anxiety) signalled her evaluation of her instincts as potentially undermining her intention to prioritize her perception of her daughter's needs over her own. So although her general life goal was to have children, a goal she had achieved, her specific intentions concerning how to actually care for her baby were worked out through embodied situations such as this, as she interpreted her own instincts and evaluated them against her wider dispositional commitment to instrumental planning. Her basic distrust of instinctive forms of action, and her preference for detached calculation of the best means to achieve a specific goal (e.g., that her daughter learns to sleep for long stretches at night), led her to restrain herself in this way, and to feel proud of her effort. This sense of pride then informed her subsequent caregiving.

Romantic Expressivists: Authentic Mothers

The second type of mother considered here relies on the Romantic tradition, with its emphasis on living an authentic life that will give full expression to individual uniqueness. As Taylor explains, '[t]he notion of an inner voice or impulse, the idea that we find the truth within us, and in particular in our feelings – these were the crucial justifying concepts of the Romantic rebellion [against rationalism] in its various forms' (1989: 368–369).

The expressive attitude to the self views the detachment necessary for calculated reason as stifling authenticity. Instead, the true, natural self is realized by expressing the 'inner voice', which in turn will reveal, and so give form to, otherwise fairly inchoate emotional responses and desires. In this way, the inner voice guides the individual to take a 'proper moral stance towards the natural order' (Taylor 1989: 370). It is only through the effort of expression that we realize our authenticity, albeit in partial, incomplete ways. As Taylor explains, 'there is always, inescapably, something beyond our articulative power' (1989: 390). The inner, authentic self is never simply transparent and available to the agent as a source of action. Instead, the agent must continuously give voice to their impulses, desires, and feelings if they are to come to understand, and so realize, their inner authenticity.

Mothers who adopt this radical form of individualism prioritize freedom and choice over any idea of duty and responsibility. By freely choosing motherhood, they give expression to their natural, nurturing self. It is this act of expression itself, rather than the substance of what is expressed, that indicates to the actor that they are living an authentic life. Expressivists, consequently, understand family commitments as enhancements of their individuality rather than as moral imperatives in their own right (Bellah et al. 1996: 48).

The goal of motherhood, for this type, is to express the authentic character of the mother, and facilitate the expression of the child's authenticity in turn (Bellah et al. 1996: 50). Expressivist mothers prioritize spontaneous, impulsive, and emotion-driven action, and they reject the structures of routine and calculated, scientific caregiving, as unnatural (Apple 2006). This attitude often entails a deep-seated attachment to gender, perceived as a naturally occurring difference that should be given full expression. This is quite different from rational planners, who instead regard gender as incidental to parenting. Indeed, rational planners tend to resent gender as an irrational block to their ability to achieve their lives' goals – for example, because of an unequal division of labour or the operation of gender norms in employment situations.

In choosing motherhood as an expression of natural gendered impulses, expressivists also tend to choose to engage in devoted, attentive, and highly responsive caregiving. This reflects, for example, the 'attachment' method of parenting found in childcare advice literature, characterized by constant physical contact with and responsiveness to infants and toddlers (Hardyment 2007; Sears and Sears 1993). Impulses should be given free reign, and fun, for example, provides a strong motive for acting in specific ways.

Expressive mothering, like rational planning, can entail a large degree of confident, positive self-feeling. As one interviewee, Terri, commented, 'I think I just am very gifted with intuition'. ... I also just believe that [motherhood] was my spiritual gift. Like, I, I'm not a bragful person, but I don't beat myself up. I mean I know I'm a good parent, I just know I am.'

Nevertheless, the instinct-orientation also gives rise to negative emotions, including depression and anxiety, when the relationship between mother and child does not meet expectations of closeness and intuitive

understanding. For example, Sophie's son did not settle into his Belfast play group when he began attending at age four. Sophie and her partner then decided not to send him to a state school, which he would have been expected to begin from that age. Instead, they sent him to a small private liberal school but also encountered difficulties there:

[W]e took him up to [private liberal] school, which in some ways was good, but they were saying 'He is not normal. He is not normal. He doesn't want to play 'house', he doesn't want to like, do any of these things. And I was saying, 'Alright, he loves to run, like he just wants to be outside running'. And he's aligned himself with a child in the class who has severe emotional and behavioural problems and, you know, there's like, the cement between the two of them now. And the other kids are starting to ostracise him now because he's friends with this other kid. And I was like, 'Oh!' So this went on for the year. And then I was like, 'What is really wrong with me and my child?' (From an interview with Sophie)

Other expressive mothers recalled experiencing lasting depression in response to what Bellah et al. describe as the 'the lack of fit between the present organization of the self and the available organization of work, intimacy, and meaning' (1996: 47). The effort to act spontaneously, choosing to give free reign to one's instincts in having and raising children, in a context where rational planning is expected, can result in job or career loss and damaged relationships with partners, friends, and with children themselves.

Sandy, for example, experienced significant postpartum depression as she struggled to mother authentically. Strongly committed to this type of mothering, yet finding involvement in intensive infant care deeply unsatisfying, she experienced an emotional crisis during her daughter's early years. She developed a situated, creative response to her depression through the highly individualistic, introspective method of therapy, described by Bellah and coauthors as teaching clients to perfect their expressive ability, for instance, by becoming independent from anyone else's judgements (1996: 139). In this way, Sandy began to act expressively in her wider life, embarking on an artistic career following the loss of her previously established professional life, although hiring a nanny as an expressive 'shadow' mother (MacDonald 2011), and gradually developing a keener interest in and attachment to her daughter as she left her infancy behind.

Pragmatists

The third type of mother this study is concerned with can be described as pragmatic. This involves treating intentions and strategies as provisional responses to specific situations, rather than either as the best (i.e., most rational) way of acting, or as an expression of authentic individuality. Motherhood is regarded instead as requiring adaptation to ever-changing circumstances and needs, rather than a mode of action based on prior certainties, whether about the value of acting on impulses and feelings or on scientific calculation. Practical know-how, familiarity with tasks, and problems developed from past experiences provide a primary guide for mothering.

This is not an unprincipled form of action, simply aimed at adapting to circumstances to get results, or ‘muddle through’ (Joas 1996: 127). Instead, the pragmatic actor is both future-oriented, like the rational planner, as well as past-oriented, engaging in reflection and revision of intentions in the light of past experiences. ‘As any good pragmatist knows, nobody has the final word’ (Bernstein 2010: 124). Goals are discovered through action, rather than preestablished, inflexible choices, or expressions of inner feelings.

Like other types, pragmatists also respond to self-feelings (e.g., pride and anxiety). For example, Maxine (US), a busy mother of four who works full-time in a job that involves a long commute, reflected that she tends to feel proud of her mothering when she and her husband manage to successfully get through a busy weekend. The ability to simply cope with the variety of demands involved in family life is sufficient grounds for feeling proud. She recalled the struggle of getting ready for Christmas:

I had like bags and bags and bags and I was like ‘Oh my gosh’ cause I try to accumulate you know, over a couple of months in advance, and then, when I actually, I took the mini-van to a parking lot, and I turned the radio up, and had a soda, and had the wrapping paper, and just, assembly line. I sat in the parking lot! And this man comes walking by, and he goes ‘wow, I love your system!’ I’m like ‘I know this is actually kinda nice! I’m just out in this parking lot by myself, wrapping presents. I know it looks strange, but, it’s working!’ So yeah, after Christmas, that night after Christmas,

I was like, 'Wow! That's cool that I got all that done, I can't believe I got everything wrapped', and the kids were all happy. (From an interview with Maxine)

Pragmatists are not free from anxiety, but it is less focused on whether their planning has adequately calculated risks and put contingency plans in place in order to reach specific goals, nor is it focused on whether spontaneous impulse-driven mothering might generate expected results. Instead, it focuses on the dynamics of specific situations:

... [T]here's so much now, these days [to feel anxious about], just you know, kids being snatched and stuff, and I've lost a couple of them some times, at the zoo. I lost [my eldest] at the zoo. ... It is very scary. And ... I hear of different things in the news that happen to families, you know, with their kids, and you know you say 'gosh, how could that happen, and could that happen to one of my kids?' you know, could they end up being so mean to do that, or, could they end up, you know, running in front of a car and getting hit, you know there's just so many variables, and there's so many scary things that could have, you know, this could have happened, you know, think about what could have happened. We took our bikes out on [the] fourth of July, and [my son] just bumped off a curb, and he started heading out, and you know cars were coming head on, and just at the last minute he swerves, and he didn't even, really pay attention. And I was just like 'Oh my gosh!!' I mean and I guess you can't, well you can't really live your life in fear every day. I mean I think about it at night a lot but, you know. (From an interview with Maxine)

Maxine perceives these anxieties as potentially overwhelming and largely beyond her control, so rather than attempting to carefully predict and control every possible risk her children may encounter, she instead focuses on trying not to let the multitude of fears she experiences, not only about her children's safety but also about their developing personalities, dominate her mothering. Like rational planners and expressivists, the creativity of pragmatic mothering lies in the responses to self-feelings. Maxine tries to keep her anxiety under control, for instance, to allow her son to take risks as he grows, intending that he will learn how to navigate the world independently.

Although self-feelings, such as pride and anxiety, are experienced by pragmatists, they are less intense because they are less all-encompassing reflections of the mother's self and more focused on specific, situated actions. Maxine, for instance, took offence at my question about whether she takes personal pride in her children's achievements at school, apparently regarding such an attitude as self-serving and unfairly overshadowing the children's own efforts and talents. Motherhood is not treated as a route to goal achievement or self-realization, but instead, as she put it, as 'a role that you find yourself in, a routine that you've gotten used to'. This scaled-back, flexible, and revisable approach to motherhood makes it easier for pragmatists to share both authority over children and responsibility for their development with others, including partners and other childcare providers.

Pragmatists understand the appropriateness of mothering in terms of meeting the varied needs of family members, including themselves, without undue strain. Consequently, these are the very opposite of the intensive mothers identified by Hays.

Conclusion

The ways in which women mother can be understood, from the perspective of action theory, as intensely strained not only because of coordination difficulties generated by conflicting expectations of maternal and employee roles but also because of the significance of this role as a mode of evaluation. This chapter's goal was to reconsider Hays's explanation of the experience of contemporary middle-class motherhood as relentlessly more intensive, by virtue of a rejection of instrumental rationality in this role. Through the development of a typology of action orientations, this chapter has demonstrated the variety of ways in which mothers creatively respond to evaluative demands.

It was somewhat surprising not to find a strong pattern of expressivism in Southern California in contrast with Northern Ireland. Instead, the full range of action orientations were drawn on across both sites. Yet, a larger study would be necessary to explore patterns of action orientation more systematically. It is important to bear in mind, however, that '[i]t would

be very unusual to find concrete cases of ... social action, which were oriented only in one or another of these ways' (Weber et al. 1978: 26).

Selfhood norms provide the basic tools that mothers rely on to claim recognition for the value of their role performance. A rational planning action orientation appears to carry with it quite intense experiences of anxiety, as the agent struggles to predict and plan for risks that may block the achievement of goals. Expressivism, similarly, carries with it a tendency to feel anxiety and depression, particularly when expectations of a 'natural' closeness between mother and child seem to be unfulfilled. Pragmatism appears to be more weakly associated with anxiety, as the agent expects to routinely revise plans and strategies. Pragmatism, as an action orientation, responds to the evaluative burden of motherhood by emphasizing the specific problems and situations within which it is performed.

Through their actions as rationalist, expressivist, or pragmatist mothers, women convey what matters to them; what they expect of themselves and others; and in so doing, hold themselves and others to account. The self-feeling of pride indicates that their mode of mothering is the most appropriate one, whereas anxiety suggests uncertainty, whether about their ability to live up to their own expectations of themselves or about the effects of their mode of action, whether on their children or on other influential figures in their lives.

The model of creative action focuses on the situated, corporeal, and interpretive quality of action, as a source of new capacities, generating new forms of practical competence. The emotional intensity of motherhood, which involves paying close attention to the feedback provided by self-feelings, often under highly strained practical conditions generated by coordination problems, makes this mode of action routinely, necessarily, creative.

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13

Farm Fathers and Their Fathers: Flexible Work and Cultural Change

Berit Brandth

Introduction

This chapter applies an intergenerational perspective to the study of change and continuity in fathering practices by dealing with the work–family interface of two generations of farm fathers in Norway. Agriculture in Norway, as in many other countries, is typically organized as a family business characterized by the colocation of work and home and flexible working hours. Surprisingly little research, however, has explored how this structural organization of home and work affects farm fathers and their engagement with children. One conception is that farmers are present and available to their children during the working day and that they are involved in a way that is not possible in families that have to relate to the restraints of separate work spheres. Another suggestion is that

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colocation of home and work represents a barrier for fathers that might make it difficult to escape the pressures of work. Being at home they are constantly reminded of work waiting to be done.

The changing nature of fatherhood and fathering has been the subject of much research during the last few decades (Hobson and Morgan 2003; Brandth and Kvande 2003, 2013; Doucet 2006; O'Brien et al. 2007; Dermott 2008; Miller 2011; Eydal and Rostgaard 2015). At the everyday level, research reports that in many European countries, fathers now engage in a wider range of childcare practices in ways that are significantly different from their own fathers (Dermott and Miller 2015). This research has shown how the transformation of the traditional gender division of labour has provided opportunities for more nurturing relationships between fathers and children – a positive development that has produced the term 'new' or 'involved' fathers. In addition to caring *about* their children through economic provision, fathers also are now expected to care *for* their children.

Additional research has noted the emergence of greater father involvement on a cultural or *discursive* level (Plantin et al. 2003; Wall and Arnold 2007; Vuori 2009; Eerola and Huttunen 2011; Yarwood 2011). Both women and men seem to support ideals of more equal sharing and regard the caregiver–breadwinner divide as untenable (Kaufman and Gerson 2012). Accordingly, this shift has produced higher expectations for father involvement in the care of young children.

There is, however, a debate within the literature on fatherhood concerning culture versus conduct; that is, some studies have identified a contradiction between words and actions and a lack of commitment to men's rhetoric of equality (La Rossa 1988; Wall and Arnold 2007; Dermott 2008). So, although cultural representations of fatherhood suggest a new model of increasing emotional involvement, more nurturing, and commitment to spending time with children, it is argued that the actual practices of fathers indicate much less change towards equal sharing. This chapter intends to study both the conduct and culture of farm fathers. It, however, will move beyond binary positions to acknowledge the contexts within which fathering occurs and that might supply a diversity of practices and meanings.

Working at home is often presented as a new development in working life, but it does have a longer history both in agriculture and industry. Using farm fathers and their flexible home employment as a case, the

chapter aims to contribute knowledge about how the practices of fathers in two different time contexts are affected by working at home. Moreover, it seeks to highlight how fathering practices and narratives are intertwined and dependent on the place and structure of work.

Research and Theory

Day-to-day fathering practices are highly context-specific, and it is a particular challenge to capture the different, intersecting layers of context that impact fathering (Marsiglio et al. 2005). The various macrolevel societal and historical contexts of farmers brought about by economic, demographic, and industrial change have been influential (see Brandth and Overrein 2013). This chapter, however, captures context at the microlevel of everyday life. One part of this context is the organization of home and work within the same space; another is the entwined set of cultural frames that put greater detail into this contextuality.

Working at home is the structural context within which father–child relations are put into practice. It offers fathers the possibility to increase their involvement with their children and might constitute a step towards more gender-equal practices. Research results are, however, contradictory as to whether actual experiences come up to this ideal. Indeed, it is claimed that traditional gender dichotomies may become more pronounced in such a context. For women, working at home may obscure their status as workforce participants and contribute to gender-typical images and expectations. For men, home-based work can potentially create a space for reshaping household practices and thus challenge gendered family norms (Osnowitz 2005: 100).

Craig et al's (2012) study of home-based self-employment supports this ambiguity and documents gender differences as an effect of home working. In their study, women strategically used the flexible working practices to achieve some balance between work and family while men used it to increase salaries and pursue higher-level jobs. For mothers, home-based self-employment created favourable conditions to provide more care. They tended to arrange their schedules to meet care needs, while men working at home met the standard workday approximately.

These contradictions when it comes to combining paid work performed at home and household responsibilities may suggest that outcomes are contingent on the character of the context. Moreover, it shows the dominant influence of the work-oriented gender identity of men where their jobs often consume their lives, and where the overlap between home and workplace may push people to overwork.

Most research on working at home has considered standard, organization-based jobs, and a topic of concern has been the effort of homeworkers to establish boundaries and manage time, particularly because the absence of physical distance means that boundaries between work and home may have collapsed. Unlike working life in general where flexible hours are often market-driven, farmers are in a situation in which they can control the flexibility to a greater extent. In farming there is no flexibility stigma, and men have nothing to lose in terms of career development. Farm work is not only time-based but is also task-based – that is, the ability to work at any time with never-ending tasks to complete. This means farmers have the responsibility to set their own working hours; however, this freedom also may result in [work that never stops](#) and taints what is left of time with their families.

In addition to the possibilities located in the structural–spatial organization of work and home, this chapter focuses on the cultural dimension of fatherhood. To gain an understanding of the complexity of fathering, the frames or discourses that inform the organization of fathering practices is central. Fathering practices are embedded in cultural narratives, and women and men use framing devices, or systems for categorizing and defining things, actively when they work out their positions for themselves, speaking and acting within the boundaries that are available to them. Goffman's (1974) concept 'frame', which is quite similar to 'discourse', was developed in order to analyze how people identify and make sense out of practices and events. Practices are formed and given meaning by particular frames or discourses, and when the frame changes so too do the situational practices of the participants. Different frames / discourses and practices are complexly intertwined with each other, and one practice may be traced back to several frames (Alasuutari 1996: 111).

The notion of frame as a concept facilitates understanding of how fathering is produced in everyday practices. The fathers use different frames in order to justify their fathering practices in the various temporal contexts

in which they live. Foucault (1978) argued that specific discourses come together at particular historical moments to produce subject positions. So too do particular discourses produce fatherhood over time. Yarwood (2011) has shown how fathers construct themselves as 'good fathers' in line with the current political and social discourses of parenting. They shape their practices in relation to what can and cannot be thought of culturally as proper ways to be men and fathers. Most of the men in the Eerola and Huttunen (2011) study of Finnish fathers recounted their fatherhood using storylines such as shared parenting, nurturing, and caregiving; no features of a premodern narrative were found. Because fathers talk to make sense of their everyday experiences, research needs to take into account the way fatherhood is enmeshed within societal norms and practices of working and caring.

Drawing on these perspectives, the chapter explores how fathering among farmers assumes meaning in their stories about family and work. The two questions analyzed are: In what ways does the collocation of work and home influence farm men's fathering practices in the two generations? Within what discourses / frames do they locate their practices?

Method and Data

This study is based on interviews with two generations of farm fathers (i.e., retired fathers and their adult sons who were also fathers) in an agricultural district in mid-Norway that primarily produces milk and grain. The fathers were recruited by means of a 'gatekeeper' who knew the agricultural area and suggested possible farmers to contact. Men who had one or more children 10 years old or younger, who were active farmers on a full- or part-time basis, and whose fathers had been active farmers on the same farm, were sought out for interviewing. By talking to two generations of fathers we expected to get information about how their fathering practices had remained stable or changed over time. Thus, the sample was purposefully constructed to capture how farm fathers formed their fathering strategies in two different temporal contexts.

Fourteen fathers within seven extended families were interviewed about their farms, their work, their families, and their experiences as fathers. The younger generation was born in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The

older generation was born in the 1940s, and they were between 63 and 68 years of age at the time of the interviews in 2010 and 2012. The older generation had been full-time farmers all of their working lives but were now retired, and their wives also had worked on the farm when their children were young. The younger generation of fathers had been working away from the farm before taking over, and at the time of the interview, two of them were part-time farmers, while all the wives worked away from the farm either full- or part-time.

Two slightly different, semistructured interview guides were composed, one for each generation. We were interested particularly in the relationship between farm work and childcare in their lives. Their specific work situation, working hours, the interface between home and work, and the participation of children in farm work were all important. The interviews took place in the interviewees' homes. Care was taken to meet the ethical demands for confidentiality and anonymity, in part by supplying scant background information. The chosen farms were located at a distance from each other to avoid them identifying other participants. The fathers all have been given pseudonyms, and the father and son personal names start with the same capital letter to signify their kinship.

The older generation of fathers talked retrospectively. It is a methodological challenge that accounts from the past are vulnerable when it comes to mistakes in memory. Such mistakes may be of two sorts (Dex 2003): the interviewees may not remember at all, or they may remember occurrences incompletely or different from the way in which they actually happened. Not all memories diminish at a similarly rapid rate, however, and experiences regarded as important or positive are more easily recalled than others. For instance, one of the fathers who had negligible recollection of care work could recall in detail how farm work was done, indicating that they remembered what was most significant to them. To ask about practices that happened in a time context different from the one at the time of the interview represents another methodological challenge. Because the past is told and interpreted in light of the present, it is important to be aware of how current discourses shape the stories of the past (Brannen et al. 2004: 210).

The interviewees were not explicitly invited to tell stories during the semistructured interviews, yet their experiences as fathers often were related and given meaning in accordance with the cultural conventions

in their times. They often compared and contrasted their stories to the other generations. This has been a useful methodological tool in highlighting change.

Colocation and Fathering Practices

How does the colocation of home and work influence fathering practices in the two generations? First, this section will deal with the younger generation and how home and work impact their fathering practices. Next, attention turns to the older generation. As we shall see, there are profound differences between the two generations regarding where and how fathering is practiced.

Fathering in the Home and Beyond the Farm

When the fathers in the younger generation described how they were involved with their children, they contributed their involvement to the proximity between work and home. Comparing his work situation as a farmer with standard, organization-based jobs, Gard said:

It is of course more family friendly to have a normal working week of forty hours and free every weekend and every evening. But, at the same time, the first year of her life [daughter] – she was born in the winter – I had much more time with her than would the ones who go away to work. They would not have experienced the same as me because the child would have gotten up when they left for work in the morning and gone to bed only a few hours after they came home again. So, they would only have [had] a few hours together between dinner and bedtime.

In contrast to fathers who go away to work and have regular working hours, he was able to spend more time with his child during the day. Winter is the season when most farmers have less work than the rest of the year because the fields are frozen and covered with snow. Thus, there was plenty of time for Gard to look after his daughter in between dairying tasks.

Likewise, Barry believed that his work as a farmer gave him greater possibility to be with his children. He said: *[this is] because I regulate my working day as I wish. I have the milking and the barn and I can't change that, but otherwise I decide myself when to work or not, so definitely, it is an advantage for the children [that I work at home]*. Farm work is flexible work, and Barry made an effort to adjust his work to the children, particularly when there was added need for it. Thus, he assumed the identity of a father who was available.

Evan, who was a full-time dairy farmer with a wife who worked full-time off the farm, described how he used the opportunity of colocation:

We did not send the children to kindergarten every day. I had them at home a couple of days a week. I knew, of course, that I would not get much done on those days. The main objective was to mind the kids. But I managed to do some carpentry with the kids around me. I renovated the attic, *and I took care of the kids!*

To be a work-at-home dad a couple of days a week was possible because of the season and the overlap between farm and home. He emphasized that the children's needs were his primary task. Because the mother was away at work, the father was 'home alone' with the children (Brandth and Kvande 2003), and this made him form a more direct relationship with them independent of the mother who was not there to organize or interpret the children's needs for him.

The current fathers describe how they became involved from the very start. Gard, who recently became a father to his first child, said: *I did everything I could. I changed diapers, fed the baby, took walks with the stroller, put her to bed and got up at night – and I bathed her*. At the same time he said that his partner had changed more diapers, fed her more, and washed more clothes, but *I think that compared to many others I have done my part and more so*. This pattern is confirmed by others: Evan says: *I think I have changed diapers as much as my wife, yes I think so. ... But it is she who has put them to bed the most, and she has bathed them more than me. ... She has done the most!* The fathers are supporting players in the daily care routines. *She has done the most, but I participated* sums up how they describe the division of care work.

When the children got older the fathers came with them to their organized activities such as football, skiing, and shooting practices. These practices are separate from the spaces of the home and seem to have increased in importance with this generation. Fathering thus seems to center a lot on sports, games, and just being together for the sake of companionship. *My youngest is very interested in football, so we spend time together watching the local team play their games. I enjoy it too, but it's mainly for his sake we go to the game.* These fathers are ready to respond to their children's initiatives. When they can, the fathers prioritize spare time with their children and do what is fun.

According to these fathers, the children are not interested in work on the farm, and thus the farm is not an important site for fathers and children being together. *Their interest in coming with me to the barn or the tractor is variable,* said Didrik. *They seem to have other interests.* Their children wanted to participate in after-school activities like other children in the area, and their fathers wanted to be involved like other rural fathers. This needs to be understood in connection with the fact that there are relatively fewer children growing up on farms today.

Fathering at Work But Not in the Home

The fathers in the older generation gave other answers to the question of how the proximity of home and work affected what they did together with their children: the children often came with them when they worked, where they worked. According to Bart: *When my children were old enough they would come with me to the barn and they would ride the tricycle inside the barn while I worked. They helped feed the animals as well. So they were by my side and they got to try different things.* Andy of the younger generation described how it was when he was a child:

During the day I saw my father more than children who lived in the residential area saw theirs because he was always around here somewhere. If he stayed in the barn we could go there, and if he worked in the woods we could go there. So it was simple to get hold of him.

It is the close conjunction between home and work that facilitates children's joining their fathers at work; the children could run back and forth between the house and the work. Describing his relationship with his three children, Arthur said:

My wife and I both worked in the barn, and then we often had to bring our children with us because we had to keep an eye on them. The same happened when we worked outside during the summer. So I don't think I've spent less time with my children than other dads in other jobs, even though I may have worked more hours. ... I didn't have much time to play with my children, but we were together side by side.

By referring to fathers in other jobs, this generation believed that bringing children to work allowed them to see more of them despite the longer working days. As Arthur emphasized, however, there was no time for play. He and his children were side by side, not face to face. Looking after the children was not the primary activity, but boundaries were indistinct as these fathers were accessible during work. Dermott (2008: 57) has pointed out that accessibility is a form of reactive childcare, but it leaves open the possibility of conversation, particularly as the children grow older. 'Physical presence' and 'being present' are two different things. Physical presence was a characteristic of the fathering culture during the 1960s and 1970s when the idea of 'being close' had not yet entered the vocabulary of fathering (Mosegaard 2007). In these cases, fathers and children are together, and it is work that shapes their lives together.

In this generation proximity between home and work did not lead to them taking care of the children in the spaces of their homes. *It was very limited what I did inside*, said Edward, *but after all I was still home*. Farm fathers in those days did not share care tasks, but they were able to see the baby during the day and witness its early development more closely than fathers whose work was not colocated with the home. Bart explained: *I popped inside to check on them [his wife and baby], and I participated when there was something extra*.

As the children grew they helped out. Bart, now a retired dairy farmer, very much enjoyed involving his children in farm work, and the fathers regarded it as important to teach the children how to work and

to equip them for a future as farmers (Brandth and Overrein 2013). Commenting on his childhood, one of the younger fathers said: *Back then, they handed you a shovel and you went to work!* This was because farming consisted of more tasks that children could do compared with today. Consequently, the opportunities for children to come along were better.

In sum, we have seen that colocation between home and work facilitated fathering practices, but in very different ways for the two generations. The current generation of fathers went *inside* to engage with their children in the spaces of the home; they also left the farm site in order to come along to children's organized activities, something that might reflect the general shift towards intensive parenting and child-centeredness (Smyth and Craig 2015). In the older generation it was the children who changed spaces and went *outside* to be beside their fathers at work. As they grew, the children participated in work on the farm. Fathering was weakly integrated into the domestic realm, and fathers primarily were accessible to their children in the physical spaces of work.

Discourses of Contemporary Fathering

As seen previously, the effects of home–work proximity on fathers' engagement with their children are not static but temporal. In this section the cultural aspects of this temporality are explored. The focus is on the ways in which the younger fathers frame their fathering practices in relation to the prevailing norms of contemporary society.

Involved Fathering

The narrative of the involved father characterized by shared parenting has been described as the proper way to be a father in contemporary society. Parental leave for fathers in the Nordic countries supports the idea that both parents can be caregivers from the infant stage onwards. Gard, who took parental leave for 12 weeks while the baby's mother went back to her work as a veterinarian, described himself in terms of active coparenting:

During the parental leave period it was self-evident that the one of us who was home on leave did most of the care work. But there were a couple of things I couldn't do, like breastfeeding. So, we visited various rest areas in her district in order for her to give milk. Other than that, when she was away, I fed the baby. When both of us are home, she does the most, but we share. I think we share well, but if you ask her she might think differently.

Gard saw himself as an active coparent in comparison with the older generation, but he was aware that he was not an equal sharer. The parental leave period reserved for fathers that was introduced in the 1990s (i.e., the father's quota) is a solid signal that fathers are expected to take responsibility for childcare (Brandth and Kvande 2003). Gard justified his practices as 'self-evident', and continued: 'It was the most natural thing to do. It was expected of me, and I expected it of myself. I had very much looked forward to it, and I think it is quite natural that I participate.' Andy described his routine when his children were infants some 10 years ago:

[The children] slept in the cradle beside me as in a gender-equal society it is the father who should mind them at night. ... With the first one I woke up every night just to check on his breathing – one is scared of cot death, right? ... Number two, he would never take the comforter, so when he wasn't breastfed anymore he woke at three o'clock every night and cried, and I got up many a night for that reason.

In this story, father involvement in care is a distinct element. The children slept on his side of the bed, and he experienced lying there worrying and listening to their breathing, comforting them during the night as a regular matter. He felt that direct involvement in the daily care of the babies was expected of him, and he referred to the norms of a 'gender-equal' society to legitimize his practice. The change in the normative climate concerning gender and parenting in society since the 1970s seems to have affected the farmers who expressed sensitivity to the norms of gender equality in caring.

Intensive Fathering

The moral obligation in which fathers are expected to be together with their children means new duties for fathers. Increased possibilities and choices for them are claimed to form the content of parenting over the last few decades (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995). 'Intensive' ways to parent means using relatively substantial resources (e.g., money, time, and interests) for the children, and their spare time, play, and games have assumed importance in the relationship between fathers and children (Shirani et al. 2012). Evan, who compared himself with his father, said:

I have more fun together with my kids! ... Whenever I was with my dad as a kid, I had to work. As a father I have arranged for more time to be with my children, more fun and games! ... I probably spent just as many hours together with my dad, but it was work. With my kids, it is leisure time!

The current generation of fathers is involved in many activities together with their children that are not farm-related. Anders said: *I do more things with my kids outside the farm than my father did.... I spend an awful lot of time accompanying them to football and skiing practice.* When the older generation related their previous fathering practices to this frame, which they sometimes did, they easily became constructed as inferior fathers. Edward, who was in his 60s, reflected about his son's different practices in the following way: *It's a great difference particularly when it comes to following up on the children's organized activities. I was a nobody in this respect. He is a champion! He has two children and he is fantastic in participating in whatever they are occupied with.* The discourse of intensive fathering was not available in his time, and when he interprets his practices within this frame, he defines himself as a 'nobody'.

Leisure activities for fathers and children have increased in rural as well as in urban areas (Creighton et al. 2015). Generally speaking, such organized activities barely existed until the end of the 1980s (Frønes 2011). That the activities are organized makes children's leisure time very different from when the younger generation of fathers grew up. Evan

narrates his involvement with children within the discourse of intensive parenting, saying that he is ...*involved in driving them to practice, participating in their practice, and coming along to watch. And, it is fun! And, I get to spend time with them. I think this is being a good father.* In this way he constructed his own good fathering practices in relation to an intensive fathering frame.

Changing Childhood

It has been pointed out that there has been a cultural shift in childrearing in late modern society, where it is the individual who is foregrounded and idealized. Gullestad (1996) writes that individuals used to be resources for families, but today it is families who are becoming resources for the individual (1996: 216); young people today are culturally set free from their parents' position in society. To be a child today means something else than it did a generation ago, as understandings of what children can manage to do, and what they ought to be exposed to do, have changed over the years (Frønes 2011).

The tendency of the fathers to appreciate children's organized activities must be seen in connection with the understanding of modern childhood and what is considered best for children. Ideologically, childhood is considered to be a happy and carefree stage of life, and this influences fathering. The norm asserted by the younger fathers seemed to be that children should 'play or do homework and not engage in farm work'. They framed their fathering activities based on the idea that 'children should be allowed to be children' even if they live on a farm. Their children had few farm work duties, and they were not expected to help out. Instead, it seemed to be expected that the parents owe their children time and interest. This redefinition is an indication of change in the moral obligations of fathering – that is, men are expected to be involved with and show interest in their children's activities.

Didrik, for instance, presented himself as a 'good father' who took time off work to spend with his children and to join their activities, and Barry emphasized his children's expectations that he did so: *The children, if they don't demand it, they would think it was very strange if*

the father never joined in. It has become normal. What they described is that the new fathering moralities in the larger society are conveyed by children.

The changing rural context is part of the background for this shift. Most neighbours are not farmers any longer; farmers' children want to join activities like other children, and farm fathers want to be involved like other fathers in the rural community. The fact that they farm has become less relevant to their fathering practices, and they take care not to be defined as 'traditional' or 'bad' fathers because they do nothing but work, which is in accordance with fathering norms in general.

Framing the Practices of the Older Generation

What discourses does the older generation of farm fathers use to justify their fathering practices? This generation became fathers during the 1960s, a historical period when the father still had a very prominent role in the farm family, women were not employed outside the farm, and farm work was central in the lives of children growing up there (Brandth 2016).

Complementary Gender Roles

Literature has described the cultural ideologies of fatherhood within agriculture as embedded in a fairly rigid, gendered, complementary social structure (Shortall 1999; Brandth 2002). In agriculture men have been defined as the heads of the farm and the family, and patriarchy has been the hegemonic definition of agrarian masculinity (Little 2002) even if it has eroded in other sectors. Accordingly, farm men were not expected to be involved in domestic activities in the 1960s, and fatherhood was framed in norms of gender complementarity. As we saw earlier, working at home created no space for reshaping parenting practices and challenging the established gendering. Childcare was defined as indoor work, and indoor work was women's work on the farm. It was the mother who was supposed to take care of the changing, feeding, and bathing of the small

children. The division of work was rather fixed: 'I had my job outdoors' is the fathers' explanation for why they participated so little. The fathers' outdoor work duties released them from caregiving work; the gendered culture of agriculture was a primary factor in defining fathering practices (Brandth 2016).

Notably, fathers' nonparticipation also had to do with women's dignity: *On a farm, it has always been that I would not have been anything of a farm wife if I had demanded that he come inside to work*, Astrid said. Expecting him to come in *to nurse the children or vacuum or do anything in the house...* was never in her thoughts. When asked why they did things this way, Christina, Carl's wife, said that *it came naturally in a way*. It was part of the taken-for-granted discourse of gender differences.

The change in gendered work norms from one generation to the next was recognized by the older generation. Reflecting on both his son and his son-in-law, Arthur said: *The fathers today, they change [diapers], they nurse their children even if they have a farm. Men today ... it is different, it is expected of them*. Expectations change with the new framing. Barry, of the younger generation, shared this perception: *We are a bit influenced by the times. Now, it is more common to be together with your kids, for the father. Earlier, it wasn't so important, I think. It has become very different*. In this way both generations acknowledge that fathering practices among farmers have been influenced by new moralities in the larger society.

'Good Farming'

A second important framing for the older generation was the ethics of 'good farming': *The work in the barn with the cows, this always had to be prioritized no matter what*, said Bart. *When I took over and started working on this farm I threw away my watch for good. You just have to work until you're finished*. Farmers' strong work ethic (Burton 2004) seems to have shaped the fathering practices of this generation. Their statements that 'work came first' voice a pattern that was commonly accepted during the 1960s and 1970s.

Hard-working and devoted farmers enjoyed high standing and great respect in the rural community. What rendered strenuous labour meaningful was articulated by Arthur who was born in the early 1940s:

You should try to hand over the farm to the next generation in a better shape than it was when you yourself took over the farm from your own father. That's your main goal: to try to manage and develop the farm as well as you possibly can while it's in your hands.

Working hard for long hours and being able to do almost everything themselves, such as repairing tools and machinery, carpentry, and building, used to be *the* sign of a good and steady male farmer (Riley 2016). This parallels the breadwinner discourse; the culture of hard work prevented fathers from being involved in caregiving work.

Fathering framed within the 'good farmer' discourse also affected their definition of children. In those days, Charles reminisced: *It wasn't common that the parents came with their children to activities, at least not among our circle of acquaintances. This was not what they [children] should be occupied with. They should work, or do something useful.* This was what he himself grew up with, and no contradictory cultural ideas seemed to manifest themselves to invite objections or change practices in his time. Bart explained: *I had to help my parents on the farm when I was young, so that when my children were about the same age as I was, I expected them to help me like I had helped my father.* This fathering model has been called 'apprenticeship fathering' (Elder and Conger 2000). Being good at practical work holds a high status in rural areas, and the transfer of skills to their children was an important fathering practice.

Farm Succession

The good farming frame overlaps with the 'farm succession' frame. Both derive their force from the importance of work in pursuit of a viable farm. 'Working for the future' is what the farming ethos is about. Therefore, teaching the children to work seemed an especially important part of their fathering practices, and their own success in life was manifested in

the next generation's ability to carry on the farm and prosper. Arthur said: *I wanted my oldest son to learn how to farm when he was young so he would know what he was in for later.* Not having children taking over, makes farming almost meaningless. Arthur's wife Amy, who sometimes peeked in during the interview, said:

If you don't have children and you don't know if anyone will take over the farm after you retire, the farm will probably be sold on the free market. What have you been working for? ... You work and you work ... but there is so much working for the future, the forest you're growing and everything else you're working on – it often brings results many years later!

Bart was very satisfied that his son carried on and that the farm survived instead of just becoming a place to live (see Brandth and Overrein 2013). The son had learned how to farm from his father, and the father felt it was to his credit that the son had taken over and become a farmer he could be proud of. Knowledge transferred to the son from childhood is therefore an important part of fathering and mirrors his own success as a farmer. In short, the new generation and their taking over the farm was an important motivating factor for this generation's fathering practices.

Conclusion

One question in this chapter has been how the proximity of work and home affects fathering practices. The colocation of work and home on the farm is something the two generations have in common. Yet, results have shown that it does not lead to homogeneous undertakings by the two generations of fathers, which indicates that fathering practices are subject to diverse historical, cultural, and social dimensions. Their narratives confirm what other research has pointed out – that is, fathers' working at home do not necessarily lead to greater participation in domestic activities.

To further understand the variation in fathering despite the structural similarities of flexible work, the chapter has explored how the fathers frame their practices. The analysis shows that fathering practices are legitimized by reference to very diverse discourses illustrating how farm men do fathering

in response to the prevailing norms of their time, assisted or resisted by the demands of their work. Historical changes in the moralities of gender, childhood, 'good farming', and future prospects for the farm help to explain the differing effects of working at home on the two generations.

Thus, the chapter has highlighted how fathers position themselves as good fathers with reference to dominant discourses of their time and context. Today's fathers, for instance, are responding to new fathering norms where men are expected to be 'involved' fathers who actively engage with their children. They often turn to leisure and sports to engage with them and fulfill expectations of what it means to be a good father. The change in fathering from the adult spaces of work to children's spaces of sports and games is related to the assimilation of farm families into rural communities that are no longer primarily agricultural; the activities of farmers' children increasingly resemble those of the ones whose parents do not farm.

In this way the stories of the current generation echo the term 'intensive parenting', a term that is increasingly used in the literature on contemporary child care. Intensive ways to parent have been mostly connected to middle-class parents in urban areas (Vincent and Ball 2007). This chapter has demonstrated how it transcends the rural–urban dimension in that it contains expectations directed at rural fathers. Yet, there will exist local versions of intensive parenting based on place and cultural traditions.

Moreover, we have seen that the current generation is more involved in hands-on caring, which represents a move towards greater involvement in child care, but it does not challenge the mother as primary caregiving person. The discourses of gender equality, however, seem to be actively used to justify current fathering practices. The complimentary division of labour in farm families is weakened, but not eradicated. The findings in this chapter are similar to the Dermott and Miller (2015) observation that from a fatherhood perspective changes might appear substantial. From a feminist perspective, however, they seem disappointing in that they have only led to minimal transformations in gender relations.

The debate concerning culture versus conduct was referred to initially. This chapter has shown that there are many practices as well as cultural frames, not the least because they are embedded in a variety of historical contexts. It also has shown that culture and conduct are variously intertwined with each other in everyday life.

Exploring the effects of home-based work on fathers' caregiving practices, this study has demonstrated that the effects are relational, contingent, and unstable. What it has most clearly demonstrated is that cultural conceptions of fathering and fatherhood have a great impact on the way in which they act, independent of structural constraints or opportunities. Some of these processes of change and continuity experienced by Norwegian farmers also will occur in European family lives in general.

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Conclusion: Changes and Continuities in European Family Lives

Detlev Lück, Eric D. Widmer, and Vida Česnuitytė

Introduction

The family, and changes in the family, have been a subject of political and public debate and a topic of scientific research since the very inception of the social sciences. Changes in the family have been interpreted very differently according to time and place (Harris 2008). In all cases, several of the main paradigmatic approaches to sociology have taken up an immanent normative standpoint with regard to the features of the

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family and the direction and meaning of family changes. For instance, the nuclear family – and its establishment as the standard private living arrangement – played a major role as a characteristic of modern society in Talcott Parson's structural–functional theory (Parsons and Bales 1955). Correspondingly, the decline of the nuclear family and the pluralization of forms of private living became an indication of individualization or of other late-modern social diagnoses by some influential scholars in the late twentieth century to which partially negative and partially positive connotations were attached (e.g., Beck 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; Baumann 2003; Giddens 1991, 1992; Van de Kaa 1987).

The empirical work on family lives, on the one hand, always has been shaped by these paradigmatic assumptions, while on the other hand these assumptions have repeatedly been challenged and modified by the results of empirical family research. Until the middle of the twentieth century, it seemed that modernization was a quasi-evolutionary one-way process, or even a unique turning point at which family structures had started to undergo a considerable shift for the first time in centuries. This perspective was questioned during the late 1960s by a new set of sudden changes in family lives, known as the Second Demographic Transition (Lesthaeghe 1995; Van de Kaa 1987).

What at first was regarded as a crisis of the family later came to be understood as either a second phase of accelerated modernization, or a dimension of global social changes in its own right. But also the theses that were formulated in order to interpret and explain the family change in the late twentieth century (e.g., individualization, de-institutionalization, changing gender roles, value change, and so on) were often challenged later in detail by empirical findings. New insights forced family sociologists to reinvent and differentiate its theoretical categories, exercise restraint in normative evaluations, and strengthen the empirical foundation of its interpretations through more differentiated and more focused research projects.

That notwithstanding, replacing the binary worldview of family change with a more complex set of narratives, has been only one of the reactions in academia. Another reaction has been to question the very existence of any institutionalized pattern in the processes of social change in families

and to rely on empirical observation, in which theory plays only a minor role. This implies abandoning the ambition to explain any large-scale complex process of change in family lives across many countries and decades, discarding the systematic collection of empirical evidence, and focusing instead on highly specific, manifestly limited research questions.

The large spectrum of heuristic perspectives on the family, which are currently battling for attention or dominance in the social sciences, reflect the contemporary ambiguity of change and continuity in family lives and visions for the future of sociological inquiries in the family study field. There are still large-scale theories in place, claiming to summarize the global patterns of the social change that has taken place in the past centuries – be it in terms of the First and Second Demographic Transitions, the first and second modernity, modernization and post-modernization, or similar conceptualizations. Nevertheless, all in all it is clear that these theories can only vaguely describe broad trends, on a level of abstraction that is too high to stand alone and that is useful just for a first approximation in new fields of research. The more detailed an empirical description becomes, and the closer it comes to providing meaningful information for consulting policymakers or the public, the less a large-scale theory, such as those just mentioned, can be regarded as suitable. Rising importance is enjoyed by small issue-specific, medium-range theories, as well as by exploratory–inductive empirical research designed to establish theoretical explanations rather than to be guided by theory.

Even though the topic of continuity and change is not novel in the social sciences, it is nonetheless a challenge to tackle and precisely understand the ways in which family lives develop over time, given that more ambitious analyses often reveal more differentiated descriptions and causal mechanisms, as well as question the knowledge that we assumed we had. Also, continuity and change remain an ongoing research agenda because current social trends may end and be replaced by countertrends, which again may turn out to be short term or long term. Finally, change and continuity can be addressed at various levels: Aside from the development of patterns at the European or the national level of each nation, we should at times investigate processes which are specific to single social milieus or groups within each nation or across

nations. We even can focus on specific family configurations and the changes across the generations within them, gaining from the details that such observations may offer.

The family sociologists from nine European countries who contributed to this book share this interest in change and address it with regard to a variety of issues. These include current insights into post-divorce families, marriage versus cohabitation, mothering, fathering, subjective conceptions of family, and others. The chapters and research findings are assembled into three key parts according to the main issue at hand: continuity and change in family understandings, in family trajectories, and in family practices. Interestingly, these three dimensions interact with each other; changes in family trajectories and family practices obviously are interrelated. Less evidently, such changes have triggered major changes in the perceptions of what family is and means, and how it should be studied. Alternatively, changes in theoretical understandings have contributed to shifting the focus of empirical research and furthered the discovery of new family practices and trajectories. This concluding chapter selectively picks some of the results that were presented in the previous chapters of this book, embedding them into a broader discussion of change and continuity in family understandings, family trajectories, and family practices.

Family Understandings

Subsequent to the Second Demographic Transition, after which family change was no longer understood as a one-way evolutionary process of modernization, new understandings emerged that have placed considerable emphasis on individuals and their freedom of choice. Individualization theory (Beck 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1993, 2002) stressed that in the late twentieth century people became more and more liberated from pre-modern societal obligations and restrictions and were left to form their own preferences and decisions. Although some scholars accordingly chose to recognize the family as the outcome of individual interaction that simply needed to be ascertained but not explained, other family researchers turned to economic–utilitarian

approaches to explain individual action by the actor's own interests and associated 'rational choices'.

The individualization theorists themselves already acknowledged that late-modernity did not only liberate the individual from societal restrictions but also at the same time created new dependencies on institutions (e.g., the welfare state or the labour market). The continuity and importance of old and new constraints nevertheless have become increasingly evident since then. Family lives are certainly the outcome of individual interaction and individual agency; however, these continue to be firmly embedded in meso- and macrolevel influences, stressing the need for family researchers to refine their theoretical models beyond individualization or rational choice models.

As a whole, the chapters here stress that there is a need for family sociologists to carry out not only sound empirical work on new family realities but also to develop new theories and approaches towards the family. Family is a multifaceted process-orientated phenomenon. This makes it necessary to approach it from various angles at the same time. Understanding it necessitates addressing a variety of facets and contexts that demand a number of research methodologies. A broader perception of family change and continuity can be attained only by involving a variety of aspects as well as assorted mechanisms and influencing factors within the described contexts, each identified at various levels of abstraction – namely, micro-, meso-, or macrosociological.

Accordingly, this book includes a variety of theorizations of family changes by European researchers. Practice Theory (Punch et al. 2010) has become influential in the social sciences in recent decades and has been applied successfully to family exploration. In this approach, the core of family understanding is that family life is what people 'do' with reference to other family members (Morgan 2011). In that respect, asking for change and continuity implies the investigation of how practices consolidate and change, as Brannen outlines in Chapter 2. According to her, 'practices have historical trajectories that provide for the study of social change through generating insight into how particular practices recruit and lose practitioners'.

This directs the focus towards specific research questions, and away from others; it calls for specific qualities of data and therefore raises par-

ticular methodological issues. For example, a highly sensitive organization of the data-collection process becomes important. Practice Theory requires paying attention not only to what respondents say but also to what they do not say, as well as the ways in which they recount their stories. Family with its practices can be explored only through the assembly of a large and diverse set of answers and, preferably, through mixed method research designs (Brannen and O'Connell 2015) – for example, by combining methods that produce both intensive and extensive data.

An important factor of any family analysis is historical time, as Brannen points out. This may be true in particular for research on family change and continuity. It concerns the fact that the starting and endpoint of any process by definition fall into different points in time, at which different institutional, structural, or cultural settings apply. It also concerns the fact that any short-term phase of continuity or change falls into a large-scale historic era, defining specific circumstances that add to the understanding. Various methodological conceptions have been designed to implement this perspective of historical family research – for example, the life course approach (Elder 1985) or the biographic–narrative approach (Wengraf 2000). Each of these requires careful attention with regard to empirical data gathering and the interpretation of such data, given that retrospective memory and interpretations, which depend on time and context, may render the information unreliable (Pearson et al. 1992). Brannen also stresses the importance of the researcher's own positioning towards research time and the context of family interpretation.

Another developing theoretical understanding of family in Europe that can be found in this book is represented by the configurational perspective on families (Widmer 2010). Whereas Practice Theory primarily focuses on practices and their meanings embedded in time and place, works inspired by the configurational perspective stress the importance of patterns of relationships embedded in a broad set of social conditions evolving through historical time (Elias 1994). Various countries have experienced multidimensional, often nonlinear, trends of social change that research has to take into account in order to gain a better understanding of families in their current form. The present of the family is considered as a temporary stage within a continuing process of social

change in which former states of societies, in their various dimensions, shape their future.

With their analysis of family salience across welfare states, Widmer and Ganjour (Chapter 3) contribute to this configurational perspective on family. Their findings reveal that the configurational features that are important for the maintenance of family salience in sociability practices differ from conditions that are important for the maintenance of family salience in social norms. For example, countries with weak divorce and non-universalistic social policies for single parents promote a high level of family salience in sociability practices. The spread of divorce in a society interplays with a set of conditions that increases family salience in sociability practices, but reduces it in solidarity norms. Family solidarity also loses its salience in sociability in favour of non-family sociability when individuals become dependent on the market or on the state. These and other findings permit one to assert that various configurations of broad social conditions, which have been established distinctly by nations during their historical development, account for family salience in societies.

Cultural perspectives on families have been developed recently in Europe; the 'leitbild' approach, described in Chapter 4, is an example. Lück, Diabaté, and Ruckdeschel show the necessity to take the cultural contextual background into account in a given historical, national, or social setting in order to understand family change and continuity, because these may either stabilize patterns of family lives against institutional change or interact with a changing institutional context in their influence on families. The perspective is grounded in empirically observable ambivalences and contradictory concurrences of rapid change and continuity in European family lives.

The underlying hypothesis of the approach is that changing institutional settings (e.g., higher education, particularly among women) are bringing about change with regard to particular facets, while robust cultural-normative conceptions of family life, referred to as 'leitbilder', are perpetuating others. The concept assembles and reorganizes well-known cultural-normative theories (e.g., values, norms, and frameworks) by implying that most conceptions of the family are not only subjectively desired, socially expected, or taken for granted but in fact all of these at

the same time. It furthermore implies that the imagination of one detail of how family usually looks and ought to look is typically associated with many other details, and that these come together to shape a complex holistic imagination, known as a 'leitbild'.

To distinguish between the individual and the societal levels, the authors propose the terms 'personal leitbild' and 'cultural leitbild'. The former concerns individual beliefs and attitudes, while the latter represents a cultural climate in which individuals live and by which their behaviour is influenced. The empirical research reveals significant differences between personal and cultural leitbilder. Such findings reinforce the argument that individual behaviour is influenced by cultural leitbilder, independent of individual beliefs and attitudes, and that only a concept that encapsulates the two can explain the outcome.

Family Across the Individual Life Course

Two questions regarding change in and continuity of family trajectories are considered in Part II of this book. First, how do individual people in Europe change their family status and family-related roles during their life trajectories? Second, how are macrolevel patterns of family trajectories in European societies changing over time? The first question, which is more central here, addresses a wide range of classical research fields in family sociology, approached through a life-course perspective. The latter question addresses a core interest in life course sociology that is debated in light of macrolevel research and theory.

It is a characteristic of modern societies that life expectancy is high and, even more important, that it is quite *reliably* high. People today can count on not dying before reaching old age and on living well into retirement. As a result, the life course has taken on the character of a social institution in the twentieth century; it has become rationally planned, institutionally regulated, and standardized (Kohli et al. 1983; Kohli and Meyer 1986; Kohli 1988; Imhof 1984). This is true for family events in particular. Moving out of the parental home, starting to date somebody, moving in together, marrying, having a child, and / or having a second or further child are events for which societies have specified that they

should be included in a standard life trajectory. Societies also have established somewhat clear-cut norms with regard to the sequence in which, and the ages at which, they should occur (Billari et al. 2010; Settersten and Hägestad 1996; Riley 1987). People are oriented towards these age norms, act accordingly, and make long-term plans for their future. Then, they feel that they are 'on time' or 'off time', depending on how well their own biographies are synchronized with the age norms (Berntsen and Rubin 2002; Janssen and Rubin 2011) – or with their 'leitbild' of a family biography (compare to Lück et al., Chapter 4).

Empirical research nevertheless has revealed that life-course patterns, and the extent to which they still are institutionalized, vary between countries, social groups, and generations (e.g., see Buchholz et al. 2008; Yeandle 2001; Mayer 1985) and change over time (Mayer and Schulze 2009). Life-course sociology also recognized tendencies towards a de-standardization and pluralization of life courses towards the end of the twentieth century (Huinink 2013). In particular, the events in the life course that characterize the beginning of adulthood are drifting apart and mostly are being postponed to later stages of life. Moreover, the sequence and timing of events have become less standardized in recent birth cohorts. Analogously to the debates on the de-standardization or de-institutionalization of family forms, a debate on a possible de-standardization or de-institutionalization of life courses has emerged, arguing that family trajectories have become less reliable since the 1970s (Brückner and Mayer 2005; Mayer 2001). Similar to the debate on the de-standardization or de-institutionalization of family forms, however, one intermediate conclusion is that contradictory trends can be observed so that differentiation and intensification of empirical research are called for.

The chapters in Part II also focus on the microlevel question of how individuals experience family events during their life courses, and how they change their family status within their individual family trajectories. When taken together, these individual experiences form the macrolevel patterns and thereby shape societal norms and life course-related institutions. They are shaped in turn by the same economic, technological, institutional, and / or political macrolevel conditions. At the same time, however, they also are strongly influenced by individual-level conditions

(e.g., experiencing unemployment) (Özcan et al. 2010). In that respect, the microlevel perspective allows a much more precise, revealing analysis, which in turn may provide information to fuel the theoretical macrolevel debate. This would equip empirical researchers with the foundation of information they need in order to focus on individual family trajectories.

In light of economic theories and of the individualization debate, the literature often has emphasized how family events have more than ever become the result of individual choices, reflecting subjective preferences and individual utilities. In contrast, the research presented in this book stresses in various ways that the occurrence, timing, and configuration of family events are still embedded in a wide variety of relational constraints. One emphasis of the chapters is on the cultural–normative impact of personal networks and on their members' expectations vis-à-vis the individual. Chapter 6 by Česnūitytė focuses on an example; it reveals that, aside from pregnancies and family planning, family and friends have a significant impact on couples' decisions to marry or to move into unregistered marriage (cohabitation).

Moscatelli and Bramanti (Chapter 7) expand the understanding of this influence by identifying that support networks, which are typically family-centred, have a greater impact on marriage decisions than do expressive networks, which are typically centred on friends. Aeby et al. (Chapter 10) show that the reverse causation is also true – that is, personal networks are shaped by the transitions through which people have gone during their previous life trajectories. The development of an individual's household composition across the life course, which also represents an underlying partner and family biography, is linked to their present type of relationship networks. Both trajectories as well as networks varied widely according to national and sociodemographic backgrounds. The authors highlight the ages of entry into partnership, of entry into parenthood, and of experiencing separation or divorce as crucial factors.

All in all, family trajectories prove to be embedded in cultural, historical, and social contexts. They are shaped by their contexts in historical time and place, institutional settings, and the cultural background of the social stratum and cohort. Relationships constitute constraints in their own right. Social structures, social norms, and social institutions

impact individuals through relational configurations that can be difficult to acknowledge when coming from traditional sociological–theoretical perspectives. Such relational constraints nevertheless exert a pervasive influence on individuals’ family lives.

Family Practices

In the mid-twentieth century, the most influential work on family sociology described the family as a clear cut unit with a clearly defined membership and with distinct roles (Parsons and Bales 1955). Parents were assigned the role of leaders and children followers; females were assigned an expressive and males an instrumental role, legitimizing the patriarchy in *de facto* terms. All of that was reasoned by the supposed necessity for families to fulfill their social functions of socializing children and stabilizing adults’ personalities. Necessities, efficiencies, and unquestionable social norms seemed to form adequate categories characterizing the ways in which family lives unfolded at the time.

In contrast, individualization theses emphasize individual autonomy and intrinsic motivations as factors explaining family practices. Relationships at the turn of the millennium were characterized as ‘pure relationships’ (Giddens 1992), free of hierarchies, between partners who negotiated individual, creative ways of practicing intimacy and togetherness (de Swaan 1982; du Bois-Reymond 1995). Such relationships were supposedly developed by independent individuals with interests and lives of their own (de Singly 1996, 2000). In post-modern societies, so the hypothesis goes, family members interact with each other not because they feel obligated to do so and in ways that are socially predefined, but because they feel affection. In addition, they do so in ways they find pleasurable and that nurture their self-development. Several chapters in this book have attempted to estimate how far this supposed change actually has progressed in Europe, to what degree a continuity of traditional patterns can still be found, and which characterizations of family practices are accurate.

An example is given by Meil, Romero-Balsas, and Rogero-García (Chapter 11) who address the issue of fathers and mothers taking or refusing to take parental leave in Spain. It turns out that the family practices

of Spaniards in that respect are very much constrained by social class issues and interact with the design of policy instruments. Leave linked to a high replacement income is taken by the vast majority of eligible parents; unpaid leave, in comparison, is taken rarely. Fathers can be encouraged to participate in caregiving work by leave schemes that are dedicated to them in particular. Unpaid leave is primarily taken by people with a permanent job and by women with a favourable material situation in the family, which implies that gender-equality programmes need to be considered carefully. Social conditions, such as stress at the workplace, as well as individual attitudes regarding fathers' and mothers' responsibilities for care work and paid work, also affect the decision.

Another example of family practices being embedded in social constraints that blur the distinction between modern and traditional family patterns is provided by Brandth (Chapter 13), who is concerned with farmers spanning two generations in Norway. This case is particularly telling because the absence of a distinction between the family and the workplace, which according to Parsons (Parsons and Bales 1955) is typical of pre-modern times, leads to fathers becoming heavily involved in education and childcare practices.

All in all, the chapters contained in Part III reveal contrasting results, with a mix of modernity and traditionalism in family practices, sometimes in quite unexpected ways. They first find that practices change, without necessarily being less standardized, less institutionalized, or less culturally restricted. On the other hand, the social expectations towards parenting practices seem to be more demanding and ambitious for current generations than they used to be. Individual autonomy may have increased in the sense that the individual has more options with regard to how to act. Nonetheless, this decision is still restricted by cultural–normative standards that flow within the expectations of significant others, the outcomes of which need to be ensured by the individual's choice of action. People in late modernity are, in a sense, free to find creative ways of practicing family – as long as they are able to respond to the social expectations that flow through their personal networks.

Conclusion

In many European societies, diminishing shares of people who are married at any given point in time are accompanied by a persistently high probability of being married at some point in the life course. Declining birth rates go hand in hand with a persistently large portion of young adults who would like to have children. An increase in women's employment rates is accompanied by quite stably low numbers of total hours of their gainful employment. Pronounced attitude shifts towards gender equality are contiguous with a persistently unequal division of household labour.

If one takes a closer look at the issue of family change, as proposed by the chapters of this book, this reveals that such changes most likely have been very gradual, and in some areas nonexistent. Previous societies were not fully restricted, nor do contemporary societies give individuals a broad autonomy of choice when it comes to family matters. This statement, which certainly may appear overly blunt, contrasts with research that stresses irrational choices or lifestyle preferences as the main features of family life in Europe today. A different perspective therefore needs to be found in order to account for the ever-evolving ways by which agency and structures intermingle in families.

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