

Everyday Family Life: Investigating the Individual/Social in a Radicalized Modernity

Allan Westerling

Dept. of Psychology and Educational Studies

Roskilde University, Denmark

allanw@ruc.dk

What are the implications of ongoing processes of modernization and individualization for social relations in everyday life? This overall research question is the pivotal point in empirical studies at the Centre of Childhood-, Youth- and Family Life Research at Roskilde University. One research project takes a social psychological approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a longitudinal study of family life. The knowledge interest of the project is the constitution of communality and individuality in everyday family life. This article presents the theoretical framework and the conceptualization of everyday family life of the social psychological research agenda in this field.

The main line of argument is that ongoing modernization is synonymous with accelerated processes of detraditionalization and individualization. This calls for a re-conceptualisation of 'the family' which enables researchers to grasp both continuity and change. The article refers to everyday life studies and social psychology and argues that the term 'family life' may serve as one stepping stone for transgressing the dichotomy.

Furthermore the article unfolds the implications of this framework for the research design and methods and it illustrates this by presenting a research design which comprises a multi-methodological approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods in the study of the relationship between the individual and the social (the individual/social), thus enabling analysis of both meaning and practices and of both continuity and change in family everyday life.

Lastly the contours of further research are outlined.

Ongoing modernization and individualization

Ongoing processes of modernization and detraditionalization bring the individual to the fore of social life and install her as the privileged point of reference in her lived biography (Bauman, 2001a; Bauman, 2001b; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Dencik, 2005; Dencik, Jørgensen, & Sommer, 2008). This gives rise to a number of questions, central to social studies. Such questions are: What are the implications of these processes transformation and individualization for families and social networks of everyday life? Through what practices are individuality and communality constituted and interpreted? What tensions between continuity and change can be identified? What can we learn about the contemporary relationship between the individual and the social by studying family life?

The aim of the research agenda presented in this article is to develop insight into the impacts of individualization for family life. It has been argued that these impacts can be identified as a proliferation of family forms (e.g. one parent families, LAT-relationships¹), as shift in meaning of friendship vis-à-vis kinship or as a individual orientation in family life *away* from the collective projects and commitments *towards* the individual life trajectories and its idiosyncratic projects (Budgeon & Roseneil, 2004; Dencik, 1997; Levin, 2004; Pahl & Spencer, 2004; Roseneil & Budgeon, 2004). Dencik talks of

a tension between the increasingly individuated family members' goals of individual self-realization and the sense of communion necessary for a collective to function as a family unit. (Dencik, 1997:266)

The tension identified by Dencik is the same tension which theories of ongoing (radicalized or reflexive) modernization discuss (Beck, 1994; Beck, Bonss, & Lau, 2003; Giddens, 1992; Giddens, 1994). These theories posit that individualization brings the individual to the fore of social life. Individualization can be understood as

... a historical process that increasingly questions and tends to break up people's traditional rhythm of life – what sociologists call the normal biography. As a result, more people than ever before are being forced to piece together their own biographies and fit in the components they need as best they can. They find themselves bereft of unquestionable assumptions, beliefs or values and are nevertheless faced with the tangle of institutional controls and constraints which make up the fibre of modern life (welfare state, labor market, educational system, etc.) [...] the normal life-history is giving away to the do-it-yourself life-history. (Beck-Gernsheim, 1998:56f)

Individualization is a constitutive part of modernization processes but the concept is weighed down by misunderstandings. It is important to distinguish between the neoliberal idea of the free-market individual and the concept of individualization as *institutionalized individualism*. The latter concept of individualization is construed as “*a product of complex, contingent and thus high-level socialization*” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002:xxi). Individualization does not imply the notion of the self-sufficient individual but rather of an individual who is tied to others through a complex web of social relations, networks and institutions *as* an individual. Individualization is a “*nonlinear, open-ended, highly ambivalent, ongoing process*.” (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002:221) These processes of individualization go hand in hand with processes of de-traditionalization, which means that all matters of life can be called into question without

1 A term promoted by Norwegian professor Irene Levin. LAT means living-apart-together, which describes the relationship of adults constituting a romantic couple who does not share a household.

any authoritative guidelines to formulate answers by. Bauman writes eloquently about this in his discussion of tradition in modernity:

Tradition is invoked for the authority of its silence: a silence that neither needs nor brooks argument and which renders all argument superfluous, pretentious and impotent. Yet in order to yield its authority (...), tradition needs to be argumentatively established: its silence must be broken. But once it has been broken, its authority becomes of a kind altogether different from the now lost, virginal, unthinking allure. It is now but an authority of choice and declared loyalty: of a choice among choices, a loyalty among loyalties. (Bauman, 1996:49)

This means that lifestyle choice and orientation in life become reflexive processes. This brings the individual to the fore of social life and place the individual as the general manager of the individual biography; a biography which cannot be modeled by the standard biographies of industrial society. The self becomes the privileged instrument of navigation and orientation as we move through life. Hence, biographies are individualized and become 'do-it-yourself-biographies' (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Individualization entails historical new forms of individual identity and new forms of collectivity and coherence. But individualization also entails a demand for social sensitivity. Individualization does not – by default – endanger social integration and the experience of we-ness. In fact it facilitates social integration, but in a new way. These developments and trends can be studied in many areas of society, and surely also in family life. Family life may in fact work as a prism which emphasizes the impact of individualization and detraditionalization on everyday life.

According to Budgeon and Roseneil (2004) Europe is witnessing a shift in the way intimacy and sociability is organized. This shift is both produced by – and constitutive of – a proliferation of relationship practices. Referring not only to the patterns of reconstituted family life which has been visible on the sociological and demographic radar for some time, but also including same-sex relationships, LAT-relationships, the neo-tribal nature of shared housing of young adults and novel trends in the crisscrossing of friendship and family life, Budgeon and Roseneil identifies processes of individualizations as the dominant feature in the social dynamic underlying the erosion of the conventional family. This means that the concept of 'the family'

... is increasingly failing to contain the multiplicity of practices of intimacy and care which have traditionally been [the family's] prerogative and its *raison d'être*. (Budgeon & Roseneil, 2004:127)

More than anything this calls for new research approaches and strategies in the study of family life.

A social psychological approach

In our focus on the relationship between the individual and the social we take a social psychological approach to the study of family life. Swedish social psychologist, Johan Asplund (1983) argues that it is exactly the relationship between the individual and the social which is at the heart of social psychological enquiry. He presents this relationship as *a slash* between the individual and the social thus combining the dichotomized concepts into and interrelated figure: *the individual/social*. Social psychology studies the slash between the individual and the social.

Asplund aligns with a long tradition of social psychologist tracing back to Simmel who has insisted that individual and society cannot be conceptualized and much less be studied independent of each other. Simmel's concept of *vergesellschaftung* – *societalization* – implies

just this: that the constant processes and connections between the individual and the social constitute both the individual and the social at the same time (Simmel, 1908). The daily, routinized practices and social interactions are crucial parts of the answer to the question formulated by Simmel: How is society possible? These interactions - the processes of *societalization* - are social life in its making. Individuals are connected and interlinked in and by these processes even if these processes do not stabilize as structures or institutions. These processes of mutual, ongoing constitution of the individual and the social, which Simmel identifies as the microfibers of society comprising the macrostructures, is also what is referred to by the concept of everyday life.

Everyday Life

Following Simmel, everyday life can be understood as a world of face-to-face relations where humans construct themselves and each other by negotiating historical and cultural norms and values, traditions and social institutions (Bech-Jørgensen, 1988). Everyday life unfolds in interpersonal social practices. The world is interpreted and becomes meaningful through social interaction, and through these practices everyday life is constituted. At the same time, everyday life is made up of material structures and social contexts that are in a sense independent from the singular individuals yet constituting the conditions for individual existence; this makes the contexts and structures a part hereof. The structure of the material world can be understood as one of collective meaning which serves to frame and recreate norms and needs; one that connects individual's practices with each other. This means everyday life is always also a part of the social field studied by macro sociology and yet the local present in which individuals are situated.

In her 'reinvention' of the definition of everyday life, American sociologist, Rita Felski, contemplates the conceptual dissonance between 'modernity' and 'everyday life' (Felski 2000:22). For Felski, everyday life is grounded in three key facets: Time, Space and Modality. The feature of time is *repetition*. The rhythm of everyday life revolves around cycles of events which reoccur with more or less fixed intervals. Getting up at the same time, going to work at the same time, having dinner at the same time - doing the same things day after day - are easily identifiable features of everyday life in many households and families. Furthermore, the spatial ordering of everyday life is anchored in a sense of *home*. Felski refers to Agnes Heller when she claims that we experience space in circles of increasing proximity or distance from the experiencing self and that home lies at the centre of these circles (Felski, 2000:22). Thirdly, Felski identifies *habit* as the mode of everyday life. Much like Bauman (Op.Cit.) identified the power of traditions as stemming from their hidden or taken-for-granted position in culture, Felski claims that habits rule everyday life exactly because they are unnoticed.

Unless a specific problem emerges to demand our attention, we rarely pause to reflect upon the mundane ritualized practices around which much of our everyday life is organized. (Felski, 2000:27)

Yet, as tradition (in its traditional form) stands counter posed to modernity, so does these features: repetition, home and habit. In other words there seems to be an opposition between modernity and everyday life; as if processes of modernization erodes the very foundation of everyday life. While this may be true in some cases, Felski's discussion comprises a more nuanced picture of everyday life in a radicalized modernity: one of ambiguity and ambivalence.

Notions of modernity and modernization rest on processes of transformations and ruptures. It entails a breakup with traditions and movement towards the new and unknown. On the other hand, everyday life is almost synonymous with the familiar, the self-evident and that

which must be transgressed. The routines of everyday life are carried out as our bodies go through the motion while our minds are elsewhere. Key features of development in modernity seem to be resolution and reflection which are oppositions of everyday life. Yet such a dichotomization is the unfortunate result of conceptual short circuits. Felski draws on Heller again, when she argues, that we would not be able “*to survive in the multiplicity of everyday demands and everyday activities if all of them required inventive thinking ... Disengagement is an indispensable precondition for continued activity*”. (Felski, 2000:27)

Repetition and continuity are not strange visitors in the life of actors in a radicalized modernity. Rather, repetition is “*one of the ways in which we organize the world, make sense of our environment and stave off the threat of chaos. It is a key factor in the gradual formation of identity as a social and intersubjective process.*” (Felski, 2000:21) German psychologist, Klaus Holzkamp, also writes about this in his discussion on life conduct (Lebensführung) (Holzkamp, 1998). He argues that the repetitive practices of everyday life constitute a circular structure where chains of actions assume a position and acquire meaning, and it is this structure he calls life conduct. Despite the circular nature of the life conduct it must be emphasized that it is driven by individual - or rather subjective – actions.

So, rather than a clear opposition between radicalized modernity and everyday life, what emerges are interconnected ambivalence and ambiguity. Everyday life comprises both stability and change. It encompasses meanings and practices, as well as structure and action. Everyday life is the site of the individual/social of a radicalized modernity and the focus of empirical studies. Bech-Jørgensen cautions us not to employ a formal definition of “everyday life” prior to investigation but rather, to develop our insight and knowledge through a progressively detailed description of everyday life. Everyday life should not be the object of reflection but the point of departure for reflections (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994).

Re-conceptualising ‘the family’ as family life

Having arrived at this conclusion, that modernity and everyday life are not dichotomized contradictory terms, but rather two sides of the same ambivalent coin, we are left to ponder the question of how to study this. How can we study processes of change in family life while at the same time recognizing that key features of everyday family life are stability and continuity?

Beck-Gernheim has suggested that we reinvent the category of the family. She coined the term, ‘the post-familial family’ (Beck-Gernsheim, 1998; Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) as a conceptual framework of analyzing the proliferation of new lifestyles. Others have proposed a range of concepts from “post-modern families”/“late modern families” over “network families” to more elaborated terms such as “dual earner families” or “multi-local multigenerational family” (Bertram & Kreher, 1996). According to Karl Lenz (2003²), to look for what is new about family life, social science needs to liberate itself from the concept of ‘the family’ in order to escape its value-laden ties. Similar arguments are made by Swedish professors Bäck-Wiklund and Johansson in their edited book on network families (in Swedish) (Bäck-Wiklund & Johansson, 2003; Bäck-Wiklund, 2003).

The metaphor of *network families* is coined to aid the analysis of social change which brings about complex family forms. Bäck-Wiklund and Johansson (2003) argue that while statistical and demographic data provide some overview of the changes in the family, research drawing solely on such data also tend to exclude family forms which does not meet the criteria of conventional sociological and demographic categories or which simply deviate to

2 Lenz, K (2003): Familie – Abschied von einem Begriff? In: Erwägen – Wissen . Ethik, 14. Jg., Heft 3, 485-498.

strongly from the norms. However, abandoning the notion of the conventional, nuclear family is not a viable solution for researchers. One must include both stability and change in ones research focus. According to Bäck-Wiklund and Johansson the new concepts of the family may steer the researcher's interest towards ruptures and change in family life, while the notion of the nuclear family, directs the analytical attention towards stability and continuity in people's lives in a reflexive modernity. But since stability is a key feature of people's experience of their own family life, a one-sided focus on social change may lead to the evaporation of the subjective perspectives of the individuals. Individual motives and actions, individual's sense of self, escape our focus if we devote our attention entirely towards new tendencies and social change. Hence, Bäck-Wiklund and Johansson propose a research strategy which works simultaneously with a notion of new trends and old forms, analyzing stability and change. They suggest the concept 'the network family' as an attempt to broaden the focus and to include in the research perspective the actual lived experiences and everyday life of people. According to this line of thinking, family research should attempt to include, describe and explain people's lived experiences and their reading of cultural codes and routines within the practices of interaction in everyday life.

While Bäck-Wiklund and Johansson have their primary focus towards the ethnographic avenues of research, they argue for a methodological approach which combines qualitative methods with quantitative approaches.

In an empirical study we have done exactly this: we employed questionnaire based surveys as well as in depth, qualitative interviews in our study of everyday family life. We refer to the same networks of relationships that is comprised by the notion of 'network families', when we speak of 'family life'. It is the social relationships which constitute the meaning and practice of 'family' in a radicalized or reflexive modernity.

Using both quantitative and qualitative methodology in the study of everyday life

Henningsen and Søndergaard (2000) argue that the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods is often overstated and claim that even though research approaches apply different methods they may actually share a common interest in knowledge. Instead, Henningsen and Søndergaard argue, the methodological demarcations run between experimental and empirical designs. We align with Henningsen & Søndergaard when we employ a complementary use of methods embedded in the same meta-theoretical framework, where knowledge interests are shared. Henningsen & Søndergaard are interested in "*developing the complexity of the possibilities of actions and of the varied forms of socio-cultural patterns.*" They work to "*differentiate and complicate that which appears taken-for-granted, the simplified, common-sense discursive and possibly crudely categorized phenomenon.*" (Henningsen & Søndergaard, 2000:31)³. Our knowledge interest is similar: we aim to transgress everyday life by critically scrutinize established social categories used by research and laypersons in order to analyze and understand new tendencies.

We do this by using quantitative methods to create new categories that yield more relevant information, compared to conventional categories, about the phenomenon under study. This is done through a form of deconstruction of the conventional categories through specification of sub-categories and the creation of new categories. The aim is to describe complex relationships in a non-reductionist way in order to preserve relevant information. In this way quantitative methods contribute to the explorations of social landscapes, enabling the creation of new categories which may expand and differentiate our understanding of that which

3 My translation (AW).

otherwise would have been taken-for-granted. Qualitative methods aim at the same issue: to destabilize and deconstruct conventional categories, but also to gain access to the cultural conditions for the making of meaning through analyzes of the everyday, subjective management of these conditions. Qualitative methods may seek to investigate central collective narratives and common interpretative reservoirs with the purpose of studying how situated individuals come to overtake these resources, for instance through self-narratives

Despite the similarities between quantitative and qualitative methods there are also differences. One difference is that quantitative methods enable the researcher to focus on the subtle processes of discursive positioning and the constitution of subjectivity, while qualitative methods are better geared towards uncovering the effects of this dynamic and these processes regarding specific actors' positioning in the social landscape. (Henningsen & Søndergaard, 2000:33)

The crucial question is not one of methodological synchronicity but rather the consistency between the knowledge interests, the theoretical foundations and the analytical perspectives of the research.

Studying everyday life of families

In 2003 we used this approach for the first time when we investigated family life using a design that combined questionnaires and in-depth interviews for the first time (Dencik et al., 2008; Westerling, 2008)

We developed a questionnaire, IFUSOFF1⁴, in a study of the implications of individualization for family life. We were both interested in studying what individualization meant for the structure and practice of family life, and what it meant for the practice and meaning of family life. We were interested in uncovering what kinds of family life we could identify in a Danish Welfare Society (which we argue can be characterized as reflexive modernity), and we were interested in studying how individuality and commonality was practiced and constituted in this family life.

IFUSOFF1 was administered among a representative sample of 35 year old people, living in Denmark in 2003 (born in 1968, N=1003). We chose people of 35 years because this generation of people living in Denmark comprised the highest degree of difference in family types, according to demographic studies, using conventional statistical categories (Qvist, 2003). Since our aim was to uncover the meaning and practice of family in everyday life, we chose not to depart from any fixed typology of families. Instead we created a sample of individuals, without considering what conventional category of family they belonged to. Instead we made sure that the sample was large enough to guarantee statistical representativity. This meant that our conceptual point of departure for our notion of family life is home.

Rita Felski argues that the vocabulary of modernity is the vocabulary of anti-home.

It celebrates mobility, movement, exile, boundary crossing. It speaks enthusiastically about movement out into the world, but it is silent about the return to home. (Felski, 2000:23)

The argument seems to be, that home is where we start from but not what we are confined to. In this respect our research design is parallel to this argument. From this point of departure we investigate the social relationships constituting family life.

4 which is an acronym for "InterviewFormular til Undersøgelser af SOcialt Fællesskab og Familieliv". This translates into interview guide for the investigation of Social Networks and Family Life (SONEFAL).

The focus of the questionnaire was on the social relationships of the everyday life of the respondents. IFUSOFF1 consisted of 139 questions. Some questions inquired about who the respondents shared a household with, who they shared childrearing responsibilities and related tasks with, who were engaged in the household chores. Others were focused on who the respondents leaned on for social and emotional support. The aim was to uncover what persons participated in the household and to study the role of kinship, neighbors, friends, colleagues, former romantic partners and anyone else who might be involved in the everyday social networks of the respondents. The questionnaire sought information about the persons whom the respondents interacted with in everyday life; about which parts of the networks that took part in the practices of family life, and vice versa; what the family members did together, and to some extent the emotional investments in these relationships. The questionnaire is inspired by social network analysis (Marsden, 1990; Marsden, 2005a; Marsden, 2005b; Milardo & Allan, 2000; Mizruchi, 1994). Social Network Analysis tends to focus on the relationship between social actors and objects (nodes), and this vein of research usually directs its attention towards the relationship between the nodes in a network as well as the network structure. The objects of research within Social Network Analysis are diverse and deal with the social status, social integration, social support and social capital. Attention is also directed towards structural aspects such as differentiation, centrality or density (Fyrand, 2001; Marsden, 2005a).

IFUSOFF1 has its focus on the personal networks of the respondents. It uses social categories (such as parents, siblings etc.) in the identification of nodes of the personal networks. Social Network Analysis also distinguishes between a) the social network as a configuration of relationships and b) the social support which is exchanged within these relationships (Fyrand, 2001; Garro, 2003). Marsden argues that social networks studies which focus on support tend to overlook the problematic side of social relationships.

According to Marsden, key studies⁵ have concluded that people generally do not provide accurate information about their social interactions. However, other studies indicate that this is not the case if the relationships have some durability (Marsden, 2005b). Problems of validity can also be countered if researchers probe respondents by limiting the time frame (within the last week, within the last 24 hrs) or by focusing on specific social activities (household chores, arguments etc.) or specific categories of persons (parents, siblings etc.).⁶ In IFUSOFF1 the social networks are uncovered by asking questions about "how often" the respondents are in contact with the nodes of the network, and by asking questions about interactions "during this last week" and about the events and activities which have occurred 24hrs prior to the time of interview. The respondents are also probed with events (household chores, babysitting, arguments etc.)

The questionnaires were administered as Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews. The duration is approximately 45 minutes. 1414 persons were included in the sample and 1003 were interviewed (70,9 % of the sample). Out of the 98,6 % of the respondents who agreed to a second interview a strategic sub sample was generated (N=16) and this sample was contacted for an in-depth, face-to-face interview. The sample was constructed based on principles of maximum variation.

5 Bernard, H. Russel, Peter Killworth and Lee Sailer (1981) "Summary of Research on Informant Accuracy in Network Data and on the Reverse Small World Problem" in *Connections* 4(2): 11–25.

6 Bailey, Stefanie and Peter V. Marsden (1999) "Interpretation and Interview Context: Examining the General Social Survey Name Generator Using Cognitive Methods." *Social Networks* 21: 287–309.

The qualitative interviews

The qualitative interviews were semistructured, departing from the everyday life practices of the informant. It was the informant's subjective and personal narratives which constituted the ground for on-the spot explorations and elaborations in the interaction between interviewer and informant. The informant was initially asked to give an account of the events of an ordinary day. The last ordinary day (most often the day before) was the preferred proxy. This way the everyday life of the informant structured the interviews. In such cases, "time chooses the theme" as Haavind (1987) puts it. The well known events of the daily day are made the topic of the interviews which enables a collective exploration of the social events and relationships of everyday life which is often simply taken-for-granted and more easily ignored in survey research. In many ways this kind of interviews follows the agenda of the ethnographic interview, formulated by Spradley:

I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experiences, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand? (Spradley, 1979:34)

In this way the research interview is a site for the researcher to get access to the informants' subjective perspectives on the social interactions of everyday life: the conceptions, ideas, feelings and reflections over the persons and situations all making up everyday life.

Certainly the differences between the questionnaire interview and the ethnographic interview are evident. To the ethnographic interviewer the interviewee is an *informant* whose life world and subjective perspective must serve as the point of departure for the interview. It is this life world – this subjectivity – which must be explored. In the questionnaire driven interview the interviewee is a *respondent*. One who responds to the questions and categories already established prior to the interview setting providing information about a list of topics deemed relevant by the researchers.

The informant and the respondent yield different types of data, which constitute the backdrop of different types of analysis. Through quantitative analysis we are able to unfold the way households are comprised by different kinds of actors, the networks of everyday life and the daily practices and activities connecting the respondents with other actors in family life. By analyzing the qualitative data we learn about the interpretive frameworks and reservoirs of meaning which are constituted in and by the social relationships and practices of family life. By unfolding the subjective perspectives and narratives of the informants we are able to find collective and shared understandings of family, kinship, and friendship etc. And we are able to see how these everyday understandings of family life facilitate and negate subjective experiences and identities.

By combining qualitative and quantitative analysis we are able to generate unique insights into the relationship of the individual and the social in everyday family life.

The individual/social in family life

Through our multi-methodological approach we are able to study how a sense of coherence and belonging between the actors of family life is constituted. We may learn what constitutes we-ness (*gemeinsschaft*) in family life.

When we focus on the relationships between partners in a romantic relationship – 'the couple' – we are aware that this relationship does not exist in a social vacuum, isolated from other social relationships. For this reason, other kinds of relationships (such as kinship, parenthood, friendships etc.) as well as wider social networks and the work-life are also included in analysis.

It goes beyond the scope of this article to present the analysis itself. This is done in Westerling (2008). Through this analysis we are able to identify different and contradictory *grammars of interaction* which serve as action frameworks and interpretative resources for doing care and support in family life. On the one hand a social grammar of reciprocity acts as both resource and framework in the distribution of care giving and care reception. Ideals of *symmetrical justice* or *fairness* work as an important point in the orientation of everyday life relationships. On the other hand, asymmetry may also be said to act as an important point of orientation. This point is particularly evident when we focus on the generational relationships (children and parents/grandparents, kinship). In such cases unconditional (asymmetrical) *devotion* and *solidarity* tend to serve as another important point of orientation. In this way, caring in family life unfold in an ambiguous field of tension, constituted by apparently oppositional grammars of interaction.

A third grammar of interaction may also be identified. Within this framework *togetherness and coherence* act as important markers of orientation. This grammar is most obvious when we focus on relationships between adults where children are involved. In caring for children we often find an alignment of individual and collective modes of orientation. The commensurability of the individual's, subjective orientation with the orientation of other family members towards a shared project (of caring) is the central point of orientation in this grammar of interaction.

The results reveal that it is through practices of care in everyday life that the relationships between actors of family life are constituted. This takes place in different and ambiguous ways, by no means void of conflict and power struggle. In the everyday life of a reflexive modernity characterized by flexibility and change, the establishment and maintaining of routines needed in the production and exchange of care is a constant and ongoing challenge.

With a focus on care it is possible to investigate the processes of everyday life which contributes to coherence of family life; and it is possible to investigate the processes which do not. Care may be understood in a variety of ways. Caring and nursing for sick, disabled, children, elderly or other categories of persons, who are not considered to be able to take care of themselves, is one way to comprehend care. In the Danish literature this way of comprehending care is most prevalent in studies of healthcare, childcare or caring for the elderly within the welfare state (Hjort & Baagøe Nielsen, 2003; Juul, 2002). Caring in this sense primarily refer to the custodial type of *practical support* and assistance. However, caring may also refer to the emotional participation in other people's life and wellbeing. Caring for how someone is doing also entail assuming some sort of moral responsibility for others. We may talk of *emotional care* in this sense. Practical and emotional care go hand in hand – or they may constitute fields of tension loaded with (potential) conflicts. In everyday life caring is part of the routines and activities of the daily life. It may often be subtle, invisible and taken-for granted but it may also be the object of open contradiction and struggles. In this sense caring is always also a matter of power relations. Detailed and focused research is required to analyze these processes. The analysis must both focus on the specific *practices and practicing* in everyday family life and at the same time it must consider the meaning of these practices. It is this kind of analysis which is made possible by the concept of grammar of interaction if the research design also allows for a combined investigation of practice and meaning.

Further research

It seems almost self-evident that processes of change in family life could be studied more thoroughly in a longitudinal perspective.

It appears as if such research could gain much insight into the individual/social by a focus on care. Caring and care relationship may both develop and enable the sense of we-ness in a family in constructive ways, and it may act to hinder and dissolve family life.

A longitudinal design would allow research to follow more closely how ongoing changes and transformation affect family life. Sometimes changes occur slowly and almost unnoticed. At other times it happens abrupt and without prior notice. Family life change because of a variety of events: moving, getting a baby, death of a family member, unemployment, getting a new job, beginning to study, falling in love, accidents, new technologies, financial crises etc. In and by these changes the relationships and practices of care also change. A longitudinal research design which is made sensitive towards changes of everyday life and aim at describing and exploring the processes of family life would surely provide an excellent starting point for analysis of the impact of modernization in family life.

This would demand an updated and developed version of IFUSOFF (IFUSOFF2) which would also focus on the development in family life and social networks since IFUSOFF1 was conducted. IFUSOFF2 would have to be administrated among panel from IFUSOFF1 (the sample of the 1968-generation) some 10 years after IFUSOFF1 and it would have to be combined with qualitative studies.

This would allow us to study how care is practiced in different parts of the social network and the ways in which these patterns of care practices change over time. It would be interesting to study if care practiced in the wider parts of the social networks compensate for care deficits in the household? Or do the different parts of the network enhance care practices? We would also be able to see if there are any correlations between practices of care in the social network and the stability of a couple's relationship, and if there are any correlations between the equal distribution of care within the couple and the stability of the couple.

By virtue of a multi-methodological design we would also be able to study the meaning of care practices in family life. We could analyse the processes by which caring practices and routines of everyday life promote and hinder coherence and togetherness in family life. Furthermore we would be able to study what form of individuality the framework of we-ness, which is constituted in and by the relationships of care in family life, enable.

This research would draw on the data generated on the basis of IFUSOFF1 and IFUSOFF2, but it would also depend upon analysis of qualitative data generated through face-to-face interviews. The overall outcome of this study would be insights in the way in which stability and change manifest in family life. In doing so we would be able to provide new knowledge and insights into the consequences of individualization and modernization for family life, and through this we will contribute to the development of social psychology of everyday life.

References

- Asplund, J. (1983). *Tid, rum, individ och kollektiv*. Stockholm: Liber förlag.
- Bauman, Z. (1996). Morality in the age of contingency. In P. Heelas, S. Lash & P. Morris (eds.), *Detraditionalization* (pp. 49–58). Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Bauman, Z. (2001a). *Community. seeking safety in an insecure world*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bauman, Z. (2001b). *The individualized society* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bech-Jørgensen, B. (1988). "Hvorfor gør de ikke noget?". In B. Bech-Jørgensen, C. Bloch, L. Højgaard & B. L. Nautrup (Eds.), *Hverdagsliv, kultur og subjektivitet* (pp. 68–123). København: Akademisk Forlag.
- Bech-Jørgensen, B. (1994). Kapitel 5: Hverdagsliv og selvfølgelighed. In B. Bech-Jørgensen (ed.), *Når hver dag bliver hverdag* (pp. 139-184). København: Akademisk Forlag.

- Beck, U. (1994). The reinvention of politics: Towards a theory of reflexive modernization. In U. Beck, A. Giddens & S. Lash (eds.), *Reflexive modernization. politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order* (pp. 1-55). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization*. London: Sage.
- Beck, U., Bonss, W., & Lau, C. (2003). The theory of reflexive modernization. problematic, hypotheses and research programme. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 20(2), 1–33.
- Beck-Gernsheim, E. (1998). “On the way to a post-familial family. from a community of need to elective affinities. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 5(3-4), 53–70.
- Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Reinventing the family. in search of new lifestyles* (P. Camiller Trans.). Cambridge & Oxford: Polity Press & Blackwell Publishers.
- Bertram, H., & Kreher, S. (1996). Lebensformen und lebensverläufe in diesem jahrhundert. *Aus Politik Und Zeitgeschichte*, (B42, 1996), 18–30.
- Budgeon, S., & Roseneil, S. (2004). Editors' introduction: Beyond the conventional family. *Current Sociology*, 52(2), 127–134.
- Bäck-Wiklund, M., & Johansson, T. (2003). Nätverksfamiljens yta och djup. avslutande reflektioner. In M. Bäck-Wiklund, & T. Johansson (eds.), *Nätverksfamiljen* (pp. 286–301). Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.
- Bäck-Wiklund, M. (2003). Familj och modernitet. In M. Bäck-Wiklund, & T. Johansson (eds.), *Nätverksfamiljen* (pp. 17–39). Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.
- Dencik, L. (1997). The position of families in the transformation of the modern scandinavian welfare states. In L. A. Vaskovics (ed.), *Familienleitbilder und familienrealitäten* (pp. 248–277). Leverkusen: Verlag Leske + Budrich.
- Dencik, L. (2005). *Mennesket i postmoderniseringen - om barndom, familie og identiteter i opbrud* (A. Westerling Trans.). (1st ed.). Værløse: Billesø & Baltzer.
- Dencik, L., Jørgensen, P. S., & Sommer, D. (2008). *Familie og børn i en opbrudstid*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Felski, R. (2000). *Doing time : Feminist theory and postmodern culture*. New York: New York University Press.
- Fyrand, L. (2001). *Sosialt nettverk* (1st ed.). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Garro, L. C. (2003). *Studying the social networks of dual career couples* No. 14). Los Angeles: University of California Los Angeles, Sloan Center on Everyday Lives of Families.
- Giddens, A. (1992). The transformation of intimacy: Sexuality, love and eroticism. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1994). Living in a post-traditional society. In U. Beck, A. Giddens & S. Lash (eds.), *Reflexive modernization. politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order* (pp. 56–109). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Haavind, H. (1987). Liten og stor : Mødres omsorg og barns utviklingsmuligheter. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Henningsen, I., & Søndergaard, D. M. (2000). Forskningstraditioner krydser deres spor. kvalitative og kvantitative socio-kulturelle empiriske forskningsmetoder. *Kvinder, Køn Og Forskning*, 9(4), 26–38.
- Hjort, K., & Baagøe Nielsen, S. (2003). *Mænd og omsorg* (1 bogklubudgave, 1 oplag ed.). Kbh.: Gyldendals Akademiske Bogklubber.

- Holzkamp, K. (1998). Daglig livsførelse som subjektvidenskabeligt grundkoncept. [Alltägliche Lebensführung als subjektwissenschaftliches Grundkonzept] *Nordiske Udkast*, (2), 3–31.
- Juul, S. (2002). Modernitet, velfærd og solidaritet: En undersøgelse af danskernes moralske forpligtelser. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Levin, I. (2004). Living apart together: A new family form. *Current Sociology*, 52(2), 223–240.
- Marsden, P. V. (1990). Network data and measurement. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 16, 435–463.
- Marsden, P. V. (2005a). Network analysis. In K. Kempf-Leonard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of social measurement* (pp. 819-825). Oxford: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Marsden, P. V. (2005b). Recent developments in network measurement. In P. J. Carrington, J. Scott & S. Wasserman (eds.), *Models and methods in social network analysis* (1st ed., pp. 8–30). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Milardo, R. M., & Allan, G. (2000). Social networks and marital relationships. In R. M. Milardo, & S. Duck (eds.), *Families as relationships* (pp. 117–133). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Mizruchi, M. S. (1994). Social network analysis: Recent achievements and current controversies. *Acta Sociologica*, (37), 329–343.
- Pahl, R., & Spencer, L. (2004). Personal communities: Not simply families of 'fate' or 'choice'. *Current Sociology*, 52(2), 199–221.
- Qvist, A. (2003). *Statistiske efterretninger: Befolkning og valg* No. 7). København: Danmarks Statistik.
- Roseneil, S., & Budgeon, S. (2004). Cultures of intimacy and care beyond 'the family': Personal life and social change in the early 21st century. *Current Sociology*, 52(2), 135–159.
- Simmel, G. (1908). *Soziologie. untersuchungen über die formen der vergesellschaftung* (1st ed.). Berlin: Duncker & Humblot Verlag (<http://socio.ch/sim/unt1b.htm>).
- Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Group - Thomson Learning.
- Westerling, A. (2008). Individualisering, familie og fællesskab. en socialpsykologisk analyse af hverdagslivets sociale netværk i en reflektiv modernitet. (Monografi, Roskilde Universitetscenter). *Ph.d.*, 274.