



Hans Bertram

Nancy Ehlert (eds.)

Family, Ties, and Care

Family Transformation in a Plural Modernity

Barbara Budrich Publishers



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Modernity

The Freiburger Survey about
Family Transformation
in an International Comparison

Barbara Budrich Publishers
Opladen • Berlin • Farmington Hills, MI 2012

This publication project was funded by the Ernst Freiberger Stiftung in Amerang, Germany.

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from
Die Deutsche Bibliothek (The German Library)

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www.barbara-budrich.net

ISBN 978-3-86649-392-6 / eISBN 978-3-86649-581-4

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Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme
Ein Titeldatensatz für die Publikation ist bei Der Deutschen Bibliothek erhältlich.

Verlag Barbara Budrich  Barbara Budrich Publishers
Stauffenbergstr. 7. D-51379 Leverkusen Opladen, Germany

28347 Ridgebrook. Farmington Hills, MI 48334. USA
www.barbara-budrich.net

Jacket illustration by disegno, Wuppertal, Germany – www.disenjo.de
Language editing: Máiréad Collins, Belfast, Northern Ireland
Typesetting: R + S Beate Glaubitz, Leverkusen, Germany
Printed in Europe on acid-free paper by
Friedrich Pustet KG, Regensburg, Germany

Content

Preface	9
1. Introduction: The Plural Modernity <i>Hans Bertram</i>	11
I. The Retreat from the Male Breadwinner Family in Industrial Societies	31
2. The Late Arrival and Early Demise of the Male Breadwinner Family <i>Stephanie Coontz</i>	33
3. Thoughts about the Earner-Caregiver-Model <i>Janet C. Gornick and Marcia K. Meyers</i>	47
4. Historical Perspectives on Marriage <i>Arland Thornton, William G. Axinn and Yu Xie</i>	61
5. Margnialization of Fatherhood in Western Countries <i>John R. Gillis</i>	85
6. Father's Capabilities for Care: An European Perspective <i>Barbara Hobson and Susanne Fahlén</i>	99
II. Challenges for Development of Attachments and Care	117
7. Recognising Care and Sustaining Carers: Social Policies in the 21 th Century <i>Hilary Land</i>	119

8.	Gender Strategies: Socialization, Allocation, and Strategic Selection Processes: Shaping the Gendered Adult Course <i>Phyllis Moen, Erin Kelly and Rachel Magennis</i>	135
9.	Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers and the International Divisions of Reproductive Labor <i>Rhacel S. Parreñas</i>	155
10.	Love and Gold <i>Arlie R. Hochschild</i>	177
11.	The Invisible Heart <i>Nancy Folbre</i>	189
12.	Developing Social Policy <i>Nel Noddings</i>	195
13.	Cooperative Breeding and the Paradox of Facultative Fathering <i>Sarah B. Hrdy</i>	207
III.	View from Europe	223
14.	The Future of the Family in Europe: Diversity and Convergence <i>Norbert Schneider</i>	225
15.	Economic Perspectives on the Demographic Situation in Europe <i>Alexia Fürnkranz-Prskawetz and Thomas Fent</i>	241
16.	European Families' Care for Their Older Members – A Historical Perspective and Future Outlook <i>Rosemarie Nave-Herz</i>	255
17.	Family and Care in Later Adulthood: A Lifespan Motivational Model of Family Care Giving <i>Margund Rohr and Frieder Lang</i>	271
18.	Migrant Mothers Transforming Ethnic Identities <i>Umut Erel</i>	289
19.	Value of Children and Intergenerational Solidarity <i>Bernhard Nauck</i>	297
20.	A Cross-Cultural Study of Intergenerational Relations <i>Gisela Trommsdorff and Boris Mayer</i>	315

IV. View from Japan	343
21. Ideational Changes and Family Transformation in Postwar Japan <i>Makoto Atoh</i>	345
22. A Comparative Perspective of Social Legislation Concerning Intergenerational Relationships in Germany and Japan <i>Bernd von Maydell</i>	367
23. Intergenerational Relations in Japan's Aged Society <i>Sepp Linhart</i>	379
24. Time, Change, and Agency in Japanese Elder Care <i>Susan O. Long</i>	393
V. View from China	409
25. China's Demographic Transition: Certainties and Uncertainties in Current Population Development <i>Thomas Scharping</i>	411
26. The Arrival of Low Fertility in China <i>Baochang Gu</i>	429
27. Population Change and Poverty of the Elderly in the Reform Era China: A Conceptual Thinking <i>Juhua Yang</i>	445
VI. View from Africa	463
28. The Demographic Situation of Sub-Saharan Africa <i>James Ntozi</i>	465
29. Attachment and Care in West African Webs of Kinship <i>Erdmute Alber and Tabea Häberlein</i>	481
30. Who Cares? Family and Lineage Coherence and Caring Capacity during Rural Malawi's HIV/AIDS Crisis <i>Deborah Bryceson</i>	503
31. Transformation of the Family Economy in Africa: From Pioneers to Survivors <i>Gerd Spittler</i>	521

32. Social Crisis and Social Forces in Africa: Families Threatened by HIV/AIDS <i>Reimer Gronemeyer and Michaela Fink</i>	537
33. Gender Relations in Context of War, Peace, and Postwar Era <i>Ute Luig</i>	547
VII. View from Middle East	567
34. The Transformation of Sexual Morality within the Sunni World and its Effect on Family, Attachment, and Care <i>Hoda Salah</i>	569
35. Patriarchy Challenged: Women and the Changing Family in the Middle East <i>Valentine Moghadam</i>	587
Conclusions	609
36. Care, Attachments, and the Diversity of Modernity: Perspectives for a Future-Oriented Family Policy <i>Hans Bertram</i>	611
Glossary	649
Index	661
Authors' general information	666

Editors' Foreword

The family is not only the place where groundwork is laid for the human resources of a society; it is also the foundation for a lifetime of generational solidarity and the willingness to take responsibility for the care of others. The present volume offers 35 contributions from noted scholars in sociology, political science, ethnology, economics, psychology, and anthropology, from many different regions of the world, on the subject of safeguarding the provision of care within the family, ensuring care, and supporting the older generation.

As part of this collection, we take up the perspective of William J. Goode (1963) in his book *World Revolution and Family Patterns* and present studies on developments in the family, family lifestyles, and children's living conditions that can be recognized at the local level in regions such as Europe, the United States of America, Japan, China, Africa, and the Middle East. In contrast to Goode's approach, however, the future developments in these countries are predicted on the basis of studies by authors who work and do research in the regions. The structure of the book thereby establishes two perspectives: we present the stages in the development of family lifestyles that vary from place to place and the ones that coincide, and at the same time we specify ideas for the future with reference to the respective cultural contexts. This method allows us to identify the cultural differences in the respective developments in addition to the commonalities, and to depict the plurality of modernity.

The first part of this volume explores the disappearance of the male breadwinner role in industrial society, prompting a discussion of fatherhood, marriage, and models of care. The next section, on challenges in the evolution of attachment and care, focuses on strategies that go beyond combining care, work, and gender roles to conceive of a social policy for the 21st century. Following this, we turn our attention to individual regions – Europe, Japan, China, Africa, and the Middle East – to make demographic, economic, family- and gender-specific assessments and to

discuss the problems and solutions inherent in intergenerational relationships and the care of the elderly.

The editors give special thanks to the Ernst Freiberger Foundation, without whose financial support this book would not have been possible. Ernst Freiberger, the head of the foundation, deserves particular thanks for allocating the funds for such a comprehensive work. This book is based on his idea of world visions, which are already reflected in the volume previously initiated by the foundation, *Religion – Humanity's Blessing or Curse?*¹ This book would not have come about without Freiberger's fundamental perspective that the future of the family decides the future of humanity, and his understanding of the foundation as a bridge between scholarship and society.

We owe our thanks also to the authors, who with their work have contributed to a vibrant spectrum of analysis and country-specific reports. We are grateful for their collaboration, which offers the reader a current, comprehensive view of regions across the globe, one that reflects many years of research by the scholars involved and thus guarantees a diverse array of scientific insights. Barbara Budrich, the publisher, provided knowledgeable and competent support and has our gratitude for her patience throughout the process of completion of this collection. Her precise and personal counsel and encouragement were decisive factors in the success of this book. We also thank Casey Butterfield, who translated the German contributions into English with great care, as well as Antje Korsmeier and Marie Naumann, who carried out the translations from English into German with precision. We thank native speaker Máiréad Collins for her professional editing of the English translations. We also thank Katrin Konrath and Mira Pielen for their helpful editorial support. Finally, the editorial work on this volume was made possible through cooperation and mutual trust, and the editors are grateful to each other: Hans Bertram directed the project with great inspiration and a wealth of ideas, and Nancy Ehlert acted as liaison with the contributors and oversaw the editorial preparation of the manuscript.

1 von Brück, Michael (ed.) (2008): *Religion – Segen oder Fluch der Menschheit?* Frankfurt: Verlag der Weltreligionen.

Introduction: The Plural Modernity

Hans Bertram

We often characterize the “traditional” family as one in which the children live in one household with both of their parents, where a loving and caring mother looks after the children, keeps house, and spends her free time with the father and the children. Meanwhile, the father provides the economic foundation of the family and at the same time represents the values of career and society to the children. Many academics and journalists today who are between the ages of 40 and 70 have experienced this lifestyle. In this generation of children, who grew up after World War II, the perception of the family and the duties of the family in our society has been deeply shaped by the image of the “good” mother who was caring, always available, and had an eye toward her children’s needs and fears, and the father who was predominantly committed to his work and was almost never around during the day, only able to look after his children in the evenings and on weekends.

However, the historical demography of Peter Laslett, Jean Louis Flandrin, Richard Wall, and Tamara Hareven has shown that this idea of family and this sort of family life was an achievement of a developing industrial society that increasingly separated economic wage labor from work that was done in the household. Donald Hernandez (1993, 2005) uses data from the U.S. census to show that until the mid 19th century, most children in the United States grew up in farming families, where they could not experience this type of division of labor between mother and father because of the production conditions of agricultural work. The model of the “traditional family” reached its peak in precisely the era when those who are writing and arguing about the family today developed their ideas of what it is – namely, after World War II. A division of labor of this kind requires not only the separation of housework from jobs outside the household, but also the availability of the appropriate living space for this lifestyle. This living space was first realized through the expansion of suburbs in the United States (Levittown 1949) and Europe – a development that began after World War II (Aries/Duby 1993).

This form of love and caring, along with the support of children in the private context of family and household, was usually interpreted by mothers in the Fifties

and Sixties, as well as in academia and in policy, as being “quasi-natural” and “universal” in theory. When the American sociologist Talcott Parsons referred in his writings to families as “factories” that produce the personalities of modern societies, he was therefore simultaneously formulating the idea that a mother transmits her expressivity, emotionality, and orientation toward the family and the household to her daughters, and that a father transmits his more rational action, oriented toward universalist values and norms, to his sons.

This interpretation is by no means limited only to American sociology; textbooks from German sociologists and even government reports (Zweiter Familienbericht 1975) were oriented toward this normative picture that interpreted love and caring as the familial basis of children’s personality development and above all as elements of the maternal personality and mode of behavior. Of course, in this model the father’s economic efforts to support the family and the manner in which he brings up the child on the basis of universal values and norms are also informed by caring, but this is based to a large extent on rationality, without the expressivity and emotionality that has been and continues to be ascribed to the mother’s role.

Today, when 60 to 80 percent of mothers in most European countries and the United States who have children in day care, kindergarten, or school (depending on lifestyle and number of children) are employed in the workforce, this 1950s image of the family seems antiquated, because it is rarely experienced. The increasing participation of mothers in working life has also been accompanied by a differentiation in familial lifestyles, so that children today are more likely to experience a parental separation or to have parents who date, than children in the Fifties and Sixties. These newly developing family forms can also be comprised of very different familial contexts. Even if in most highly developed industrialized countries the great majority of kindergarten- and school-aged children live with their natural parents, a diverse array of lifestyles and various relationship models has developed.

These far-reaching changes are described in detail in several chapters of this book. Yet it still seems to be the case today that in spite of the increasing frequency of women’s employment outside the home, the expectation remains that the care of children and the responsibility for their development is substantially the mother’s responsibility. Thus a “good mother” is equally responsible for the care and development of her children whether she is as just as busy with her career as the father or whether she embodies the model of the “traditional” mother who is oriented toward the household and the family.

A crucial motive for this book was to analyze and discuss solutions to the “cultural contradiction” (Hays 1996) that is appearing between the expectation of a good mother who is there for her children wholeheartedly, and the expectation on the other side that she stand her ground in the working world. This contradiction has been described and discussed by many authors, male and female (Pfeil 1966, Tilly/Scott 1987, Lewis 1991, Hayghe/Bianchi 1994), in many different countries, and will also be addressed in various essays in this book. Most authors have not at-

tempted to simply analyze this inconsistency, however, but rather have continually developed perspectives on how these discrepancies can likely be avoided in a society that feels obligated to ensure the equal participation of all its members in social development.

Stephanie Coontz, thus, not only describes in her contribution the historical evolution of the “traditional” family model and the triumph over it, she also shows that Betty Friedan’s 1960s work “The Feminine Mystique,” which emphasized women’s dissatisfaction with their living situation as housewives and mothers and their marginalization from other social spheres, no longer applies to young women today. But today there is still a “career mystique,” or the expectation that subjective satisfaction with one’s life is primarily dependent on the complete integration of the individual into the labor market. As a consequence of this, people invest as much of their own energy and time into their careers as possible, while at the same time it is accepted that their employers will take these things for granted.

While in the Sixties these career expectations were usually associated only with the role of the male breadwinner, today they are equally valid for all women and mothers, and obviously also for those fathers who intend to combine the different spheres of life. But if politics, economics, the media and the labor world all hold to the idea and expectations that social participation can essentially only be realized through above-average performance and attendance in the workplace, then it is relatively unlikely that fathers and men will develop a new form of caring, and mothers who wish to combine both spheres are subject to precisely this cultural contradiction.

In conceiving this book, we began with the theory that the idea of a complete (mostly male) dedication to career and of subordinating other social requirements and options to the demands of the labor market and the professional world – an idea that is generally accepted in society and continues to have an effect – is also connected to the reflexive assumption in highly developed industrial societies that society can only be modernized once all of those fit to work are as highly integrated into the labor market as possible. This theory is borne out well in Europe with, for example, the “Lisbon Strategy of the European Union” (Rat der Europäischen Union 2001). In this jointly adopted strategy, all European governments assume that European economic development can only be ensured if at least 70 percent of men and women are integrated into the labor market in all European countries. At the same time there are thoroughly critical debates over whether this strict labor market orientation can, realistically, be successful in the long term, because this also requires that there is appropriate employment available for all of those willing and able to work. Paul Krugman (2008) critically asks of some studies whether it is precisely the advances in modern information technologies that could be putting highly skilled occupations into question.

This touches on a second question that again is dealt with in the various contributions throughout the book: without exception, care that includes the willing-

ness to take on the responsibility for another, to make a commitment and support another person, is interpreted as a highly private and personal decision, one that, in contrast to work, is to be performed voluntarily and without social expectations and norms. At the same time, however, doesn't such an idea of care and support for others also mean that one's own life course and life path is directed toward those spheres that can use sanctions to ensure that the efforts expected in these areas will be made?

Phyllis Moen, Erin Kelly and Rachel Magennis undertake the difficult endeavor of integrating the meaning of care for others – and not just for children, but also for older people – into a life-course theory perspective that does not center the organization of daily life and the life course on labor and the labor market alone, but where there are also opportunities to integrate those spheres of caring and supporting others into life, such that this sphere is not permanently subordinate to the labor market.

However, such a model also requires the suspension of traditional gender roles. Thus, *Janet C. Gornick and Marcia K. Meyers* delineate a model of an earner-caregiver society in which men and women have the right, independent of their gender, to both care for those they love and to participate in all other social spheres. The authors also admit how difficult it would be to actually implement such utopias.

According to the historical analyses of *Arland Thornton, William G. Axinn, and Yu Xie*, the relationships between men and women and between parents and children also depend on their respective societies. They show that many parts of Europe and the United States exhibit a high level of agreement in their development of increasing liberalization and acceptance of various lifestyles, and the institutional regulations associated with these. At the same time, however, it also becomes clear that such processes of liberalization do not necessarily lead to a change in gender roles. Just as *Coontz* convincingly demonstrates how the economic structure, cultural developments and normative expectations in certain historical contexts influence gender roles, partnership, and the relationships to parents and children, *Thornton, Axinn, and Xie* show how these connections are once again embedded into certain institutional contexts. This begs the question of whether and how modern societies are in the position to develop such earner-caregiver societies at all.

The response to this question from *John R. Gillis* turns out to be rather sobering: as long as the role of men derives chiefly from their social participation in professional roles, and the role of fathers is largely as breadwinners, *Gillis* views the role of the father in modern society as increasingly marginalized. Many men can no longer fulfill the traditional breadwinner role at all, because their opportunities for income in post-industrial society are not nearly sufficient to provide for their families. Or, the middle and upper classes become slaves to the career mystique and have no more time for their families. *Gillis* sees a chance in reconstructing the role of fatherhood if it is no longer solely defined through the male gender role.

This consideration is shared by *Barbara Hobson and Susanne Fahlén*, who confront the issue of whether and to what extent it is possible in post-industrial societies to also define fathers' participation in social development by their capacity for care. Comparing various European family policies, *Hobson and Fahlén* are cautiously optimistic; at least, the reader has the impression that through influencing the cultural context of gender roles and also, through a family policy that centers on fathers, more fathers may be motivated to discover that the capacity for caring can be worth taking a stand for. Their chapter also clearly shows that the policies in individual European countries and parts of the United States are developing through comparisons with other countries, as measures and perspectives from other countries are adopted and implemented in each particular cultural context. Michael Mitterauer (2003) considers this strategy to be typical of the historical evolution of family, the family household, and the economic basis of the family in Europe.

Against this background, then, it is hardly surprising that *Hilary Land* not only endeavors to break the connection between care and gender roles and redefine it, she also attempts to formulate a social policy that makes care and caregivers the focus of policy for the welfare state. Thus, work and family are not discussed as just a simple issue of mutual compatibility, but also as a question of the integration of care into the infrastructure and institutions of civil society. From this perspective, care is not only central to the family sphere, but must also be integrated into other spheres of the welfare state in the same way.

Phyllis Moen, Erin Kelly, and Rachel Magennis attempt to anchor this way of integrating care into women's and men's lives in a life-course perspective, which makes *Land's* theoretically grounded claim appear to be a possibility, at least in terms of perspective. Care as a part of women's and men's own life plans obviously has a different status than care that mostly affects the children in one's own family. However, they believe that such a perspective could only have a chance of being realized if the monopolistic obligatory character currently claimed by the work world were redefined to also benefit other social obligations.

Rhacel Salazar Parreñas presents a completely different solution for redefining care in our societies and separating childcare from being the exclusive responsibility of the mother. According to *Parreñas*, a society can also take the burden off of its highly qualified and professionally aware women during the time that they need for their professional obligations and development by bringing in the support of women from a developing or threshold country, as part of an international division of labor. On the one hand, the international caretaking transfer takes the burden off of privileged and high-income women in highly developed industrialized countries, and on the other, it gives the women who take on this caregiving work the opportunity to purchase reproductive labor for their own children in a similar way in their home countries.

Arlie Russell Hochschild not only continues this discourse, she also criticizes this "care drain" for infringing upon the rights of children, who are entitled to have