

# Managing boundaries between family and work in family daycare



ESFR Conference 2016  
WS19: Work and family life III - employment patterns, working  
conditions and family relations 1  
02.09.2016

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# Structure



- Characteristics of family daycare in Germany
- Questions and research results
  - Areas of tension in family daycare
  - Boundary management strategies
- Conclusion

# Characteristics of family daycare in Germany



- Paid childcare in the private household of the family daycare provider
- Permission for 5 children maximum (plus own children)
- Children participate in the daily routine of the care provider's family
- Governmental funding
- Registration of daycare providers at the local youth welfare service
- Official permission required
- 160-180 hour qualification program

(Hillmann-Stadtfield 2009; Kerl-Wienecke et al. 2013)

# Characteristics of family daycare in Germany



- In 2015: 44.100 registered daycare providers, 97% female (Statistisches Bundesamt 2015: 77)
  - 101.600 children, largest age-set under the age of 3 (Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder 2014: 7)
  - Intersection of family life, privacy and paid work
  - Boundaries must be (re-)arranged by the daycare provider
  - Creation of patterns of interconnection or demarcation
- *Positioning of my research in the practical family sociology approach* (Jurczyk 2014; Morgan 2013)
- *Key concept: Boundary management* (Jurczyk et al. 2009; Jurczyk 2014: 124)

# Questions



- 1. In which respect becomes managing boundaries between family and work important in the context of family daycare?**
- 2. How do family daycare providers cope with doing care as an activity of work and family at the same time?**

# 1. In which respect becomes managing boundaries between family and work important in the context of family daycare?



Areas of tension:

- (1) Public vs. private sphere
- (2) Formal vs. informal relationship
- (3) Intimacy and attachment vs. distance

# (1) Public vs. private sphere



- 'Family likeness'
- Located in the private sphere
- Inclusion of the care children in a family context
- 'Mother like' caregiver

(Jurczyk 2005: 23)

- Embedded in an institutional framework
- Qualification requirements
- Legal equality with public daycare  
(Kerl-Wienecke et al. 2013: 52f.)
- Logic of 'offer and demand'/market mechanisms  
(Jurczyk 2005: 22)

## (2) Formal vs. informal relationship



- Formal service relationship or personal friendship?
- Varying expectations of reciprocity between parents and daycare providers (Nelson 1990)
- Contractual agreements and regulations vs. favours
- 'Picking up in time' as a critical aspect



# (3) Intimacy and attachment vs. distance



- ‘Emotional management’ relevant in personal services (Hochschild 1979; 2005; Geissler 2006)
- Emotional work is necessary to find the right balance between intimacy, attachment and distance (Dunkel 1988; Nelson 1990)
- Level of intimacy as a relevant indicator for the integration of the care child in the caregiver’s family

## 2. How do family daycare providers cope with doing care as an activity of work and family at the same time?



Boundary management strategies on three levels:

- (1) Spatial boundaries
- (2) Personal boundaries
- (3) Emotional boundaries

# Sample and Method



- Qualitative reconstructive approach
- Semi-structured interviews with 10 family daycare providers and 10 parents
- Interpretation follows the approach of objective hermeneutics (sequence analysis)

# (1) Spatial boundaries



*"[...] it is already like **a second home** for them, they **spend so much time here**. And when I would say you are just allowed to stay on **this carpet** - **I wouldn't do that to my own children either**."*

*(translation M.T., I#4, l. 281-283)*

*"There they have **their own area**; it's a **carpet** where they can pick **the toys**."* *(translation M.T., I#1, l. 134-136)*

## (2) Personal boundaries



*"For me it's very import that [...] I get the feeling we **are on good terms** and we **can talk to each other**, even if **times are getting critical**." (translation M.T., I#1, l. 350-352)*

*"[...] and I **explain**, well it's this or that phase in development, that's normal and I **react like this**. I **explain it to the parents** and I find it important that we **can talk openly to each other**." (translation M.T., I#1, line 364-368)*

*"Yes, the fact is that I actually also **meet some parents privately**." (translation M.T., I#5, line 835-836)*

*"[...] um well certainly **there is a mix up with work** and so on, but I **don't mind**, because at the moment **work is really fun** and so I **don't need a sharp distinction** so to say, I won't say this is private and now we can't talk about anything else." (translation M.T., I#5, line 843-849)*

## (3) Emotional boundaries



*"I want to **satisfy their emotional needs**, I like to cuddle with them and I find **body contact** important." (translation M.T., I#1, l. 323-325)*

*"[...] I have **no inner distance** or something, basically every child is wonderful." (translation M.T., I#1, l. 341-342)*

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*"Well this is where one can **draw a clear line**. It's good to give them a cuddle and **that's it**." (translation M.T., I#4, line 833-834)*

*"Certain things we have **clearly defined as a family**, only mum and dad get kisses on the mouth, **there are definite bounds**." (translation M.T., I#4, line 820-822)*

*"[...] one mother told me [...] that I occupy **one of the first places** after her for her child. Even **before grandma grandpa**, this is where I sometimes think um **that's awkward**." (translation M.T., I#4, l. 719-723)*

# Conclusion



- Family daycare represents a specific interconnection between work and family
  - The content of the work is family life
- Institutional regulations interfere in the private sphere
  - Areas of tension
- Different boundary management strategies
  - Individual patterns of intersection and demarcation
- Further research required to fully understand the dynamics of social relationships in the context of family daycare



Thank you very much for your attention!



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