Managing boundaries between family and work in family daycare

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Mareike Tudor, M.A.
Institute of Social Sciences
Osnabrück University
mareike.tudor@uos.de
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-Stadtfeld 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?
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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., l#4, l. 281-283)

"There they have their own area; it’s a carpet where they can pick the toys."

(translation M.T., l#1, l. 134-136)
"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)
"I want to satisfy their emotional needs, I like to cuddle with them and I find body contact important." (translation M.T., l#1, l. 323-325)

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

"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., l#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., l#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., l#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!


