

▶ Report of the Study Visit in Glasgow

The 8th Conference of the European Sociological Association

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Local Organising at the Hamish Wood Building

Registration Point at Caledonian University

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The 8th Conference of the European Sociological Association

The main topic of this conference was **“Conflict, Citizenship and Civil Society”**. It took place at the Caledonian University and the Strathclyde University of Glasgow. The theme of the Conference focused on conflicts and their resolution debates about civil society and its recent transformations. They disturb traditional institutions and need a political interpretation of the contest between “traditional” and “new”. Classic concepts vie for explanatory efficacy.



In and near Glasgow you can find five Universities, three in Glasgow and the University of Paisley and the University of Stirling.

figure 1 sourced on the web-site of the city

In this report you can find a summary of the scientific and common impressions I got at the conference and a current look at the presented state-of-the-art papers of sociological research in my interested fields.

My study visit had two aims: First to take part at the conference and present my own poster, secondly to prepare a longer study visit in November 2007. Additionally I completed my knowledge about

sociological findings of Family and Childhood research.

The view into international studies could strengthen my results and my theoretical framework. So I'm very thankful to have been there. It was an important experience for me.

Below you can find some explanations and remarks which comment the most important papers in the sessions. In addition to these scientific remarks I'll describe some impressions of the conference generally.

Opening and Closing Plenaries

The lecture of Donatella della Porta who is professor of sociology and director of research in the Department of Political and Social Science at the European University Institute stood in the centre of the opening plenary. Two messages in her lecture *“How emerging social conflicts challenge social science approaches”* seemed very relevant to me.



figure 2 Hall where the opening plenary took place

She discussed the concept of the civil society as opposed to state within the normative theory of Non-Governmental Organizations in international relations of social movements. On the one hand she explained that anti-globalization movement uses the globalized views and the same elements like the politicians. On the other hand it's amazing that this social protest movements' duration was longer than expected. A collective identity was raised which pushes them together. Finally she discussed conceptualizations of citizenship and cited as an example the emergence of a new generation of scholars that embody transnational backgrounds.

So she was delivering a very interesting key note address to the conference which was discussed at the first evening while the reception of welcome was going on.



figure 3 Prof. Donatella della Porta

The Closing Plenary took place in the remarkable Assembly Hall of Strathclyde. The lecture of Prof.

Archer dealt with “*The New Reflexive Imperative and transformations of Civil Society*”.

The high modernity and nascent globalization lead on to a rising reflexivity even in traditional societies. She elaborated how reflexivity as the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, considered themselves in relation to their social context and vice versa.

Prof. Margaret Archer is currently based at the University of Warwick. Her main research interest is in social theory; she is internationally recognized for her work on critical realism and the structure agency debate. In the following I'll summary her slides.

Basics of action have social conditions. In a contextual continuity there are routine as well as reflexive actions. With the emergence of self-cultures it is rather a lack of social structures. Agents cannot act in a rational and responsible manner that is with reference to the possible consequences.

“Habitus” peters out in the new millennium because change becomes too rapid for intergenerational socialization. Habitus depends on cultural history. Therefore it disappeared in favor of reflexivity. Modernity prompted the growth of reflexivity but restrained by facts that:

- Involved only a minority of the population who prompted contextual discontinuity, the majority continued with traditional routine action
- Slowness of modernity allowed some re-establishment of routinization

There are four dominant modes of reflexivity:

1. *Communicative Reflexives* – those whose internal conversation needs to be completed and confirmed by others before they lead to action. It is based on contextual continuity.
2. *Autonomous Reflexives* – those who sustain self-contained internal conversation leading

directly to action. It is based on contextual discontinuity.

3. *Meta Reflexives* – those who are critically reflexive about their own internal conversation and critical about effective actions. It is based on contextual incongruity.
4. *Fractured Reflexives*- those who cannot conduct purposeful internal conversation but intensify in society their own distress on disorientation.

The European population confronts contextual discontinuity and they must deliberate about matching their skills and personality. Not merely as an individual psychological process but rather as a social element of a major unity.



figure 4 Prof. Margaret Archer

“Since reflexivity is held to mediate between structure and agency, its own transformation is re-defining and re-structuring conflict, citizenship and civil society – as the novel reflexive responses to the novelty of ‘morphogenesis unbound’.”

I was very impressed by her model of increasing reflexivity in the civil society influences everybody’s life and public life as well. I think in addition to her implementations it depends on social background maybe class or age.



figure 5 Barony Hall of Strathclyde University

Both women provided a particular frame for the conference. In this context anybody could integrate his own political attitude and philosophy of life.

Common Impressions

During the conference 30 research networks and 20 research stream meetings took place. I decided to take part on two sections which are offered - of course the *Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives* and additionally the section *Sociology of Children and Childhood*. The main content about children’s life was stressed on rights, participation and sometimes about abuse and victimization. The point of view in the sessions of Childhood Sociology was influenced by the subject status of the child and the trend to emphasize the rights of children much more as in the past.

Family Sociology was dominated by papers about working structures, household management, interpretation of fertility rates and child care arrangements and the effects on women’s employment.

Many studies compare data from several countries.

I'll join the outcomes of the paper presentations with my own interpretation in the following.

Both research networks showed their own attitude and the interests are mainly directed towards the isolated focus on their single subject. I missed the connection between both approaches. The children's point of view appears becoming of no interest when the labour in households is distributed. Family consists of the couple as active parts and the children as passive part. Otherwise adults and parents occur only marginally in the new children sociology debate.

I've got the notion too that the presented sociological studies in the majority use primarily quantitative data (Panels and Surveys). The outcomes are quiet formal and deeper questions cannot be answered. Some of the questions had shaken the evidence of the results. For example the responding rate of questionnaires of 40%, mainly females. These are selected cases which influences the results. So called representative case numbers are influenced by the interest of the informants, e.g. the report of a National Survey in Finland about intergenerational transmission: "Women responded more actively and baby boomers' sons most passively."



Figure 6 Some interesting results

They are almost selected data as well as in qualitative studies. The validity is generated around the main research question and the relevance accrues out of the utility.

Research Network Sessions

Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives

Half of the time I spent on the sessions of this section. I'll report chronologically and stress on the most important papers. My comments are emerged from a very individual and specific point of view. The appraisal of results constitutes not a universal claim only a personal attitude. I'll mention only the results which are important for me in some respects.

On Tuesday I attended the first session named "Family Networks, Support and Intergenerational Relationships"

The Finish research project "The chain of generations – Interaction between generations" focused only on financial and social exchanges of the Finish "baby boomers", their children and parents. The aim of the whole study is to get information on interaction between generations and reciprocal financial support and practical help. Economic support between three generations in the same family are collected by mail questionnaires and compared with results of SHARE¹ and some other European Countries. The results are too complex to resume it here but a longer paper and a handout I have got.

Professor Ulla Björnberg from Gothenburg University, Sweden, gave a lecture on "Intergenerational kin support in a Swedish welfare state context" She correlated practical support and emotional closeness. This differs dependent on cultural type of the family. The most amazing result for me was that friends are much more important in cases of giving and taking as siblings. It can be a sign for weakening of familiar responsibility or family ties. She regarded the motives for giving and receiving support between kin members of different family forms.

¹ SHARE 2004 is a data collection funded by the European Commission – Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe

Trees De Bruycker from the University of Ghent, Belgium, presented a paper about “Support received from close kin: Explaining Differences by Family Type”. Based on the *Netherland Kinship Panel Study* this study focused on the differences in support received from close kin for individual living in different family types, with particular emphasis on differences between classic and new family types. The family is still fairly the most important factor in supporting especially in crisis. The family compensates for missing partner and a strong relationship is very important in receiving support from family of origin. Differences between family types do exist but are not necessarily negative for alternative family types.

The contribution by the University of Bern “Ritual practice of the multi-local, multi-generation family. A study on Christmas celebrations in Swiss families.” was revealed that 42% of the families celebrate two times, and 24% even 3 times. The main celebration takes place in the nuclear family or only with grandparents.

The research group **LA**bour, **G**eneration, **S**tratifaction (AGES) of the *Swiss National Science Foundation* used the data of SHARE too. The title of their current presentation was “Grandparents and Grandchildren in Europe – A Matter of Intergenerational Solidarity?” Child caring by grandparents depends on the public offered amount. In European comparison the duration of and the relation towards inner familiar child caring is dependent on the attitude towards public services. The central questions are

- Do grandparents help their children with childcare? How strong is this intergenerational solidarity?
- Are there country-specific differences, and how can they be explained?
- Which factors and structures do influence the occurrence and the intensity of the childcare provision by grandparents?

The conclusion is that childcare provision by grandparents is an important form of solidarity between generations and there are significant differences between countries.

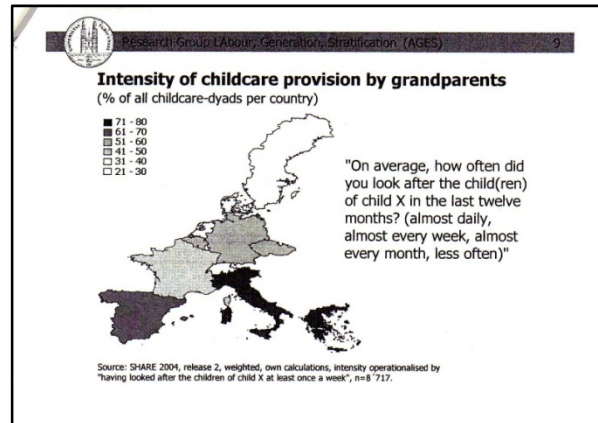


figure 7 slide 9 presentation of AGES

The research project “The changing role of grandparents in looking after grandchildren – an example from the SHARE survey” from France stressed the role of grandparents as important consequences for the mix of public and private childcare policies too. The women participation in labour market is influenced by demand of childcare as well. Changes to family systems that occur following the birth of a grandchild are explored.

The second session on Tuesday “*Conjugal Dynamics in Late Modernity*” was also interesting.

Helen Peterson from the Ebro University in Sweden spoke about “Love, Power and Respect: Swedish Couples negotiating Working Hours, Household Work and Gender Equality in the Domestic Sphere”. She reported some findings from the project “Postmodern Lives Work, Family and Gender in the new Economy”. It draws on a qualitative material consisting of interviews with Swedish heterosexual couples and highlights how these women and men negotiate and justify their distribution of household work and child care responsibilities in relation to paid

work responsibilities. The paper explores the possibilities to balance work and family.

Dr. Sofia Aboim from the University of Lisbon, Portugal, discussed “Men within the couple: conjugal diversity and family change from the male perspective”. The erosion of the male provider model alongside the spread of ideals of a new caring man has been tied with the modernization of conjugality. The findings enable them to discover diversity from the male perspective alongside a general trend to construct new family-based masculinities. The rise of companionship couples impact the transforming of the traditional role of man as provider. The male providing responsibilities always mixed with caring roles.

Iliana Voicu from the Romanian Academy of Science accented that gender-equality in couples depends more on the individual, micro sociological influences like e.g. better education as on macro sociological reasons like the home countries’ conditions.

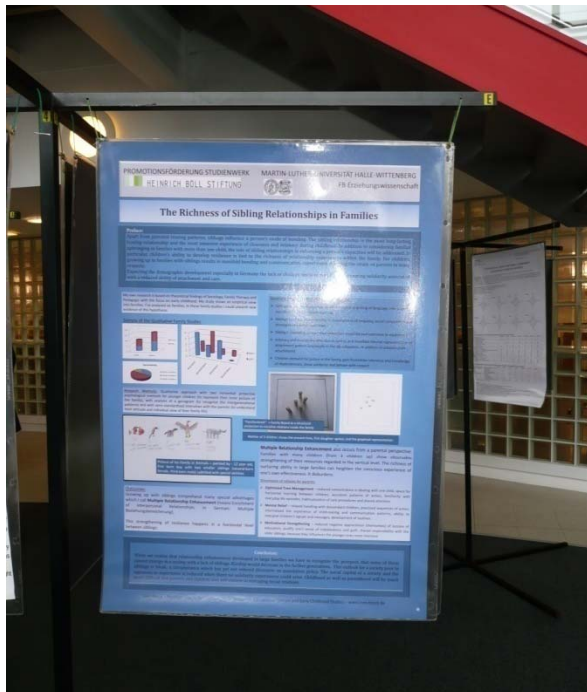


figure 8 My Poster hanging in the Clic-Building at Caledonian University

All scientists analyze the adult arrangements without regarding the children’s point of view. Here they remain objects. It’s an indication that the two streams of sociology (Family and Childhood) are not even enough connected to each other. The transfer of subject status of child into family research should be the next step I think. On the other hand siblings didn’t play any part in child caring in these studies.

On Wednesday I attended the session “*Transition to Parenthood and Fertility Patterns in Europe*”

Sergio Mauceri from the *Social Research and Sociological Methodology Department* at the University of Rome presented “The Italian delay in transition to parenthood as an outcome of intergenerational and inter-gender inequalities.” Inter-gender and inter-generational comparisons are essential to interpret the set of choices, motivations and expectations linked to parental role. “The principal purpose of this research program is to interpret the determinants of the Italian phenomenon of delaying the birth of the first child, in order to indicate social policy guidelines aimed at supporting young people in their transition to adulthood and thus promoting an increase in the birth rate.”² The Italians would like to have more children and at a lower age, as well as in German assessed. The young generation in Europe suffers from a general decrease in social opportunities. One of the most important factors to consider in depth is the relationship between socio-economic inter-generational mobility and the transition to adult roles.

He called it “the second demographic transition in Western Europe” and characterized the phenomena of late parenthood as a delay in the transition to adulthood.

Next paper was given by Dr. McDonnell, University of Sussex. “Me, you and us: negotiating the question of children in late modernity” She made an issue of demands on parenthood. It was a qualitative study with male and female interviewees aged between 29-

² Cited the handout of 18 pages

46 years who had not yet had children. One of the finding is that fertility decision-making was a site in which the competing demands of self and other/s were forced to find resolution, sometimes uneasily. Fertility biographies were jointly constructed over time.

Torsten Schroder from the University of Bremen focused on the German PAIRFAM study. In “The Timing of Family Formation – a New Approach” he explained that the decision for family formation can only be understood in the context of other competing aims of life which are sometimes not as resource-intensive as parenthood. (Cp. Summary page 16)

Vanessa Cunha from the Social Science Institute, Lisbon, spoke also about the postponement of birth. She used a national survey and a representative sample of 1776 Portuguese women aged between 25 and 49 living in a couple and had at least one school child. Her goal was to find out the flow of changes from the early seventies to the middle nineties, the social diversity in her sample and representations, expectations, behavior and strains to fertility.

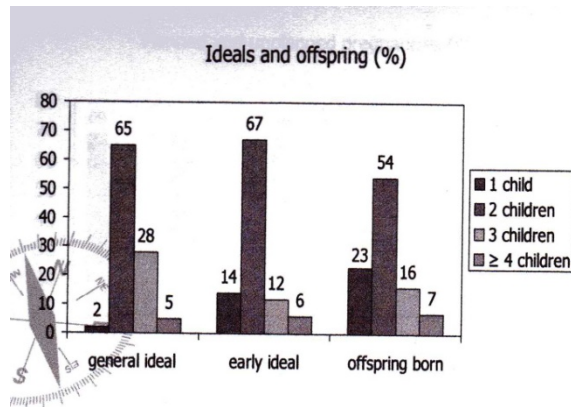


figure 9 slide 5 out of the handout
She described the postponing of birth as a phenomenon of decreasing the number of children. The early expectation of 1-2 children and the consolidation of the general ideal of 2 children lead

nevertheless to an increase of small and planned offspring of only one child.

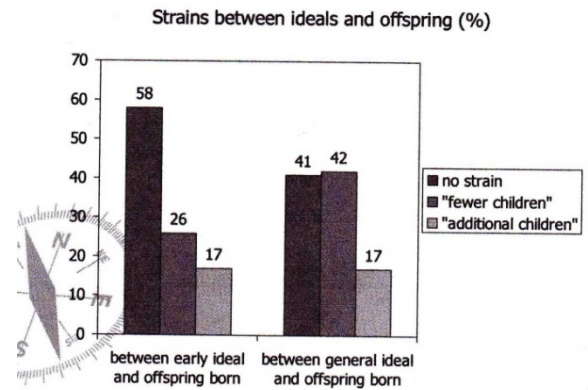


figure 10 slide 6 of presentation

The strains between ideals and offspring demonstrate the high rate of fewer children towards the general ideal and the great accordance with the early ideal.

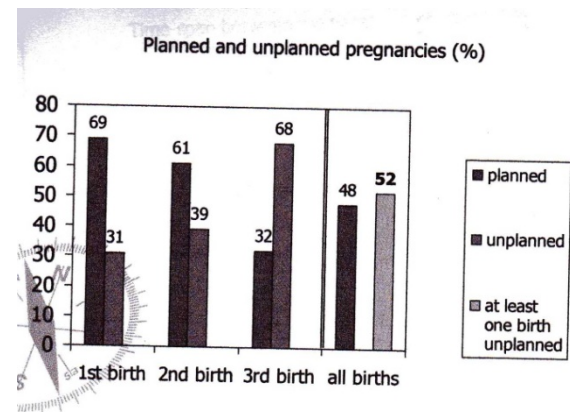


figure 11 slide 7 about planned and unplanned children

Here you can find that more than a half of births are unplanned, especially the third pregnancy is mostly a surprising event for women. To have more than two children is a remarkable emergence in the families.

Later on she reported about social diversity and fertility patterns and the time spans between beginning of marital life and the first birth and between the births. (Cp. Summary page 16)

Dr. Quadrelli, University of Urbino, Italy, acknowledged the findings in this session. She illustrated “The experience of Autonomy and Independence of Italian Young People Living with their Parents”. Nearly 70% of the 25-29 years-old adolescents are still living in the family home. The results of the qualitative study investigated the subjective experience of autonomy and independence. The lack of policies that support young people as well as cultural factors are considered to be the main explanation of it. Young adults living with their parents intended to reduce the risks of the transition to adulthood.

Last but not least the Finish scientist Mina Kelha from University of Helsinki described “Motherhood, age and social class in Finland”. The order of life events postpone the adulthood in Northern Europe too. The notion of free youth delayed parenthood and reduced the number of children in families. The purpose of her study is to analyze and understand the motherhood of women who become mothers for the first time either at a very young age (under 20) or at an older age (40'ish). It depends on education and social class which way was chosen.

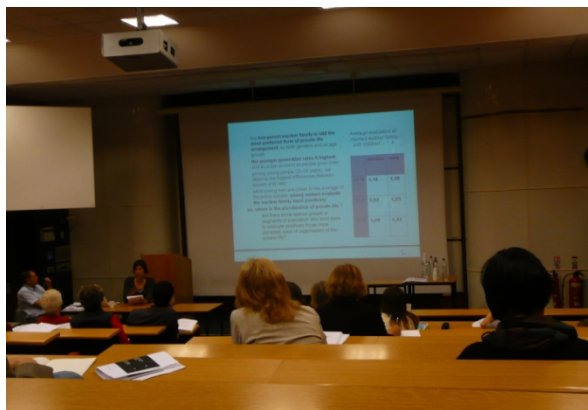


Figure 12 Lecture and Presentation in the Section of Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives

On Thursday I listened the session “Family and Work III: Balancing Work and Family Life – how do individuals and families manage?”

Maria das Dores Guerreiro from ISCTE, Portugal, spoke “of the need to reconcile work and family as a requirement for individual well-being and fulfillment and the quality of family life, especially with regard to the relationship within a couple and between parents and children and to equality between women and men.”³ A minimum of conflict and tension exists when the correlation between stress at work and stress in the family are balanced. The confidence of parents is reliant on number of children and hours of work. It’s always the same in all seven European countries which are focused on. (P, S, F, Sp, GB, Ger, Czech)

“It just doesn’t seem as like together: night work and family dynamics” titled Miss Thompson, University of Surrey, UK. Night working mothers were interviewed, they are qualified hospital nurses. The findings were interesting for me. Firstly the spouses participate in household working. The agreements between the partners induce a better partnership. Secondly the older siblings had got a business in keeping an eye on the younger sibs while mother is sleeping by day.

In Czech population occur different possible arrangements of private life and cohabitation but the nuclear married family is still the most preferred form of intimate relationships. The summary of the results of “Family and families in the Czech Republic – are arrangements of private life becoming more pluralistic” presented Radka Dudova from the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic.

Sociology of Children and Childhood

I was very interested in some papers presented in this section but in general the Childhood Studies are actually concerning mainly with participation, rights, abused, disadvantaged and deprived children. Child

³ Quoted according to the Abstract Book page 204

protection and moral development dominate the current research. The strict attention on children's rights is connected with the approach of investigators too. It is quite another atmosphere in the research process to recognize the child informant as an expert. They prefer informal situations and no standardized questions. Feed back interviews become more important to let children participate in the research process.

Therefore I'll only refer about some of the papers. I want to summarize the session 3b on Tuesday "Contested Families and the State" first.

The papers dealt with foster and residential care and with implications for children in enforced contact cases. The most interesting point was the reflection about the methodological challenges and the children's participation in research processes.

Maria Eriksons research (Uppsala University, Sweden) follows the approach children regarding as social actors no matter if they are victimized or vulnerable. Within child welfare research it's their aim to treat children as subjects both in their own lives and in research. That means the investigation process becomes a democratic process and follows the principles of children's citizenship. She stressed there are a number of ways to negotiate the tension between adult responsibility and childish spontaneity. Nevertheless the aim of this research – give the child the position of an important expert - supports children's agency in the interview situation. The frankly interaction could grow up the motivation to help others in the same situation. (Cp. Summary p.17)

The last presentation by Dr Geraldine Brady, Coventry University, titled "It's not the real me – Children's experiences of ADHD⁴ and medication", covers the concepts of normal and abnormal child behavior. ADHD is accepted as a mental health issue requiring medical treatment. She asked the concerned children about her self esteem and self confidence.

"Despite increases in both the UK rate of diagnosis and prescription rates of stimulant medication (the most commonly used intervention) a limited number of research studies have reported how children and young people perceive their condition."⁵



figure 13 Session of Sociology of Children and Childhood

The most notable session "Thinking Sociologically About Children and Childhood?" was a very special session on Wednesday. Leena Alanen titled "Bourdieu and the sociology of childhood: towards relational theorizing" She distinguishes between children as actors and childhood as the structure. "The real is relational" she quoted Bourdieu and appointed the interconnection between structure and practice. Thinking childhood relationally the generational order divided between micro and macro approaches. The relations and interactions between social groups based on generational distinctions. She focused on the field not the individual. She suggested adjusting the perspectives in studying childhood in a more dynamic direction. Bourdieu has developed his theory of social fields. This approach may help to overcome the present divide in the sociology of childhood, between micro-sociologies that treat children as social actors and macro-sociologies that conceive of childhood as a social structure.

⁴ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

⁵ Abstract Book p. 66

I'll annotate that the generation concept is getting more and more improperly because the borders between generations are disappearing and transitions are changing. The pattern of adulthood becomes blurred. The generation's gaps lose their validity. The descent of knowledge varies increasingly.

The next key note was given by Prof. Doris Bühler-Niederberger from Germany: "Marginality and Voice – Children in Sociology and Society" The background of this research project is the systematic appraisal of nine to even ten country reports about the actual public debates about childhood and sociology of children. She discussed the future orientation of childhood sociology. This international perspective isn't a comparison of findings but of approaches and strategies in different countries to understand childhood. (Cp. Summary p.17)



figure 14 University of Strathclyde in the Centre of Glasgow

On Thursday the two afternoon sessions "*Between School and Home*" and "*Social Construction of Children in care*" were orientated on social perspectives of the welfare state and institutional care of children.

Prof. Berry Mayall, University of London focused on a new theoretical understanding of childhood. She highlighted the two settings: family life, leisure and play as belonging to children's life beside school. Home is a private apolitical domain which is neglected in research about children in the past. Only one of 13

studies dealt with family all the others with school environment.

Harriet Strandell, University of Helsinki, gave an account of perspectives of the welfare state in Finland. Childhood was connected to economic and social interest of society in the recent past. She was interested in individuals on the contrary. Changes in the welfare state have influenced child politics in the direction of joining together adult surveillance and control with the mobilization of children's own agency, autonomy and self-regulation. Regarding children as citizens not as victims is the current aim to empower the individuals building up their cultural, social and cognitive capital. Concerning the pre-school sector public day care was given as an offer enabling parents to engage in paid employment outside home. Now early childhood education and care have to raise a partnership bridging the private-public divide. The child's way of acting has to take into account.

All the other papers dealt with residential and foster care and adoption of children.

Regarding childhood as notion and construction of difference was most impressing for me. The conceptualization of good and bad childhoods, required and undesirable childhoods and to segregate bad childhoods is a new line of reasoning for me.

Additional Meetings

The cultural life of Glasgow attracted some of the participants so that they used some time to visit exhibitions and famous buildings.

In my case I only spend the evening time with colleagues, especially postgraduates to become acquainted with their own work and to discuss the findings heard during the plenaries.

Occasionally we could listen to live music in some pubs and can see very original and extraordinary clubs. The official receptions as well as the private



arrangements led to further contacts to keep in touch with each other.

We agreed in maintaining the exchange of ideas furthermore.

We also discussed about the organization of the

conference. We were agreed in criticizing the place of the poster session.

We arrange that we will give a feedback to the organization team. “Dear Jacqueline⁶, dear Karin⁷, a small group of nearly 10 PhD students talked about the organization of the conference and had some ideas to do something better next time.

1. For the younger participants it would be nice to organize an alternative meeting in the evening. You could rent a club in the city with live music maybe where everybody can go to meet the others. We all couldn't pay the expensive dinner Ceilidh at Barony Hall but we were very interested in an event at the evening too.
2. The Poster Session was very disappointing. We know the poster presentations at other conferences in quite another way. The place is more central, where all the participants have to go along, for example in the registration area. And normally we are acquainted with an officially organized short introduction in front of the poster at a pointed time. Some Conferences award a price to the best posters too.

3. Some of us missed an e-mail-list of the scientists who made a presentation or maybe of all participants. Now it will be difficult to find anyone to come into contact.

Last but not least we were very satisfied with the organization. With kind regards”



figure 15 Ph.D students from Italy, Germany, Denmark and Lithuania

The Section of Sociology of Children and Childhood invited for a little reception on Wednesday. I could have a word with two colleagues to prepare my requests in November in Scotland during the meeting.

I talked to Dr Samantha Punch a lecturer in Sociology at the Department of Applied Social Science in the University of Stirling. She recommended me a visit at her Institute in November. Her key aspects of research are Sociology of childhood; sociology of development; qualitative methodologies; household livelihoods, migration and childhoods in the Majority World; **siblings and birth order**; young people and food practices in residential care homes.



⁶ Conference Organiser Jacqueline Tait Glasgow Caledonian Uni

⁷ Karin Wall – Organiser of Sessions



Furthermore I talked to a PhD student in Edinburgh. Sue Milne works at the Centre for research on families and relationships in the University of Edinburgh. She is also an expert on family relationships in connection to institutions like school. The title of her dissertation is: **Child-Adult Relationships beyond the Home and School**. The aim of her research is to explore children's relationships with adults who are not their parents or school teachers from the perspectives of children on the edge of transition from childhood to adolescence (11/12 years old, Primary 6/7) and living in Social Inclusion Partnership areas within a Scottish city. The study will examine the relationships that individual children have with individual adults in terms of the place of adults in their social networks. It will also investigate children's general experiences of contacts and interactions with adults in the public world and consider how the children's accounts of these relationships may influence their constructions of child and adult.



Therefore I'll discuss my findings with her during a study visit at this old traditional university.

Reception in the Glasgow Science Centre



One of the formal receptions took place in the Science Centre near the river Clyde. After a long way through the city we approached a very futuristic building. In the Glasgow Science Centre we could see the attractions of the exhibition. The Centre offers a range of exciting and inspiring activities for pre-school, primary and secondary pupils, all with direct links to the Scottish Curriculum. But we were interested in the objects

too because it gave a nice variety to us as social scientists.



figure 16 The futuristic Buildings

It was a good idea to meet there at the second evening because we come into contact with others in quite a straightforward way.

On the other hand we learn something about some scientific phenomena of Physics, Optics and Mechanics. We could wonder about the equipment in the science mall.



Glasgow Science Centre is one of Scotland's must-see visitor attractions - presenting concepts of science and technology in unique and inspiring ways.

Glasgow Science Centre is an independent Scottish Charity the aims of which are:

- To develop and enhance awareness of educational opportunities surrounding current and future health, science and technology issues;
- To be a socially inclusive and accessible visitor Centre of Excellence;

- To extend all opportunities within the Glasgow Science Centre to as many people as possible, particularly addressing the needs of people of all ages who are socially, cognitively or physically challenged.⁸

Appointments to Colleagues at Paisley University and Strathclyde University of Glasgow

One of the main aims of my study visit was to meet colleagues' one-site. I could arrange appointments in Paisley and Strathclyde. I could receive an invitation to talk with one another at their departments.

First I explained my request in this way: The theme of my current research project is connected with sibling-research as well as family-research. On the one hand it's very useful to work with an interdisciplinary approach on the other hand it's difficult to join family and childhood sociology, educational research and psychotherapy (family therapy) together. I try to do this. I analysed the effects of experiences siblings made in the family. The main focus is the relationship between the young siblings and how they influence each other. I'm interested in the present not in the retrospective perspective. I made six family studies of empirical qualitative research. The triangulation of four methods supports the understanding of little children without the need of speech. I'm looking for reciprocal effects in siblings' interaction in greater families as well as for the benefits they'd got in growing up with brothers and sisters if they are in early child care and bring their experiences back into the sib system.

The German research about horizontal synchronic kin-relationships is not so large. Therefore I'm in search of some findings in the Scottish and British literature. Additionally I will try to get into scientific contact with colleagues in the institutes of psychology or sociology, about family life, primal health and

midwifery⁹, childhood and primary education. In my interest I will enlarge my point of view with the help of special British/Scottish literature. I would like to collect some findings supporting my own results and strengthen my theoretical background. Therefore I'll come into contact with colleagues to discuss my results and exchange experiences.



figure 17 The four Campuses of Scotland's' biggest modern university

Prof. Lena Robinson – University of Paisley - School of Social Sciences

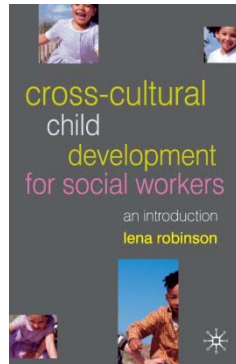
On Friday I met Prof. Robinson in Paisley 20 train-minutes away from Glasgow. She is a congenial and friendly woman and gave me the sensation to be welcome.

She is an expert on **Revisiting Black perspectives in Psychology**¹⁰ and worked about “A Critical Interdisciplinary Analysis of Culturally Appropriate Research Approach and Practices in Health Care and Social Work”¹¹ This article presents a critique of research approaches used in health and social care research with vulnerable and socially disadvantaged groups, and children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in Britain. The paper aims to critically examine research processes in health and social care from a psychological perspective and a social work perspective.

⁸ Quoted from the web presence

⁹ Because of additional interest in infant research, family nursing and health prevention

Prof. Robinson published last year a book about cross cultural child development which applies itself to the task helping social workers in Britain to understand children with another ethnical background. She concentrates herself to the cause of black children above all.



The University of Paisley is a location of interdisciplinary approaches. The Subject Groups in the School of Social Science are Politics and Sociology, Psychology and Social Policy and Social Work. The groups contribute to programmes in health studies, nursing and midwifery. The School is a partner in the newly formed *Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social work Education* and is working with others to develop the curriculum for the new honours degree qualification in social work.



In Paisley I'm very interested in Health and Nursing Studies and Advanced Studies in Midwifery and Family Nursing, which are thought on the School of Health, Nursing and Midwifery. Mrs. Robinson recommended me to contact the head of courses there because she hasn't any contact to that department.

On 1st August 2007, the University of Paisley and Bell College merged to create Scotland's biggest modern university with campuses in Ayr, Dumfries, Hamilton and Paisley.

With over 18,000 students and almost 2,000 staff, the University is unique in its geographical coverage across the West of Scotland.¹²

¹⁰ Title of a key note at a conference

¹¹ Title of an article published in the journal "Childcare in Practice"

¹² News at the web-site of the university

Dr. David Warden – Strathclyde University – Department of Psychology

I met Dr. Warden in the department of Psychology on Friday afternoon. He spent one hour to discuss my requests. Sometimes he challenged me to an argument. The warm reception was surprisingly for me and finally I think he would like to be a kind of gate-opener for me. Let me introduce Dr. Warden firstly.

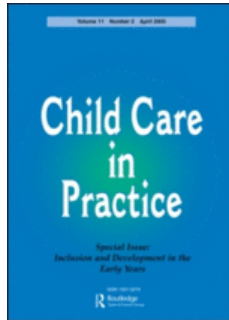
His "early research was concerned with aspects of children's language development, both spoken and written. This interest led to more applied research on children's reporting skills, specifically in the context of child witnesses, and effective interviewing strategies. During the last several years, his work

has taken a more social-developmental slant, with a series of projects on aspects of children's personal safety, culminating presently in studies of the role of peer interaction in the development of children's prosocial behaviour and social competence, and, specifically, the distinctive characteristics of prosocial children."¹³ In the meantime he arranged a new contact for me and we e-mail each other. I'm in the hope to keep a close scientific contact to him.

I'm especially interested in the Curriculum of BA Childhood Studies at Strathclyde University as an innovative part-time degree programme and the first taught course in Scotland to enable early-years workers to continue working while gaining a degree which is focused on children aged 0-5 years. The course builds on existing knowledge and skills and extends understanding of early childhood, curriculum studies, social influences and professional issues.

I visited the Library of Strathclyde University at the main campus and find some books and journals about early childhood research and siblings. (cp. Literature page 20)

¹³ Web-site of department



Actually I prepare my next study visit in making a plan where could I go to. The famous and prestigious universities present a great variety of possible experience in my subjects. When I'm back in Scotland in November I'll systematize the new knowledge of childhood and family studies to arrange the previous notes in association with the new remarks and complete my research temporarily.

Summary of the Actual Earnings and Scientific Benefit for my own research

The paper "The Timing of Family Formation- A new Approach. Is the Timing of Parenthood a female decision?" of the colleagues from Bremen was attracting my attention because of the project relationship- and family panel (BFP). Now they are preparing a Mini Panel of Relationships and family development. Finally the DFG-Project PAIRFAM (Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics) will start in 2008. I'm intended on pursuing the development and formation in Germany. (www.tess.uni-bremen.de)

Below I go further into four lectures which are given at the conference. These papers are essential for my qualification work because of different reasons.

Children's Perspectives on Place, Space and physical Activity by Colin MacDougall

Actual Earnings: Methodological Innovations and interpretative pattern

The overall aim is to provide an interpretively detailed and theoretically developed account of Australian children's cultural and social geographies of places and spaces in relation to play and physical activity. (Darbyshire, 2005) In the first large-scale

interpretative study of how children 3-13 interpret physical activity, places and spaces led to a multi-agency strategy and the current study aims to maximize research transfer by involving government agencies. The outcomes change theorizing about childhood too.



The research team needs to include that considered environment make physical activity the easy choice, children's perspectives on safety and risk, urban design and car hegemony. The informants drew diagrams and maps, took photographs about the important places of their everyday life. Additionally they built focus groups to comment the pictures. That encourages and enables children to articulate their perspectives and its related barriers. (MacDougall, 2004)

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Fertility Patterns of Portugese Women: modernization and social diversity by Vanessa Cunha

Actual Earnings: Generated six types of fertility patterns

She generated six types of fertility patterns and social diversity. The more traditional ones tend to get three or more children. The modern pattern reduced the number and postponed the births. And the so called transitional types widen the timing between births. Fertility control takes place more in the educated population. Therefore they get fewer children.

It's very interesting to recognize that an early transition to parenthood leads not automatically to more children because of the time span between the births.

1. Strong traditional
2. Weak traditional
3. Modern consistent
4. Modern ambitious
5. Transitional with less fertility control
6. Transitional with more fertility control



figure 19 George Moore Building Caledonian University

Conclusion:

- Fertility decline
 - Defined expectations
 - Consistency of the 2 children norm
 - Improvement of the contraceptive behaviours
- Gradual fertility changes
 - In expectations and representations (middle seventies)
 - In behaviours (middle eighties, early nineties)
- Social settings
 - Different fertility patterns
- Paradoxical realities of Portuguese fertility
 - “fewer children” (impediments and constraints)
 - “additional children” (sexual education, family planning)

Vanessa.cunha@ics.ul.pt

Marginality and Voice – Children in Sociology and Society by Doris Bühler-Niederberger

Actual Earnings: The configuration of childhood studies in several countries and the differences and the universal validities

Doris Bühler-Niederberger compared nine reports about the state-of-the-art of childhood studies in different countries to find any similarity. (France, Germany, England, Italy, Netherlands, Finland, Brazil, US, Australia)



This international perspective can grant a simultaneous development of research approaches. She looked at the Meta-level and emerged 5 common elements overall:

1. Children as a marginalized group (count as human capital, educational success)
2. Childhood sociology as marginalized branch
3. Books and same authors in almost any report
4. Two theoretical concepts
5. Resetting of research on social problems not normal childhood

At one of her slides she made a comparison between the amount of studies and the living standard of children in that country (based on WHO-Well-being status). Amazingly Great Britain with its large number of childhood studies has a low living quality for

children. Vice versa the Netherlands has a low number of studies and the children there live well.

Someone could hypothesis that research and well-being is reciprocal correlated. But why?



Vulnerable and victimized children’s participation in research processes by Maria Eriksson

Actual Earnings: The reflection about the participation of the child informants and the handling

The chapter “Handling the presence of a mother” deals with acceptance of mothers wish to protect their child are take care on it. With respect the investigators speak about their own wishes and let the child decide by itself and empower them.

“We also respected when a mother wanted to stay during the interview whether this was because she wanted to feel safe with us or support her child during the interview. Some mothers left the interview after the initial phase while others staid all through both the first and the feed-back interview... In some cases the attendance of the mother clearly seemed to work as an emotional support to the child.”¹⁴ The children were always asked where they wanted to be interviewed. They prefer the kitchen or the living room. In chapter “Children’s own agendas” we can find that the children appreciate the position they got as experts. Some of them wanted to have a voice and to have the opportunity to tell their story to spread

¹⁴ Quoted the handout paper page 29

the message and help others in the same situation. In the concluding remarks she stressed the responsibility for both children’s rights to participation and to protection and support. The interview has contributed to the sense of meaning (third dimension of Antonovsky’s sense of coherence). They could feel being an important person. This was very impressing for those victimized children. maria.erikson@soc.uu.se

Finally I mention some further notes I brought with me. On the one hand I get acquainted with the International Bibliography of the Social Science (IBSS). It will be useful to select special articles out of the diversified amount of literature in my scientific field. (www.ibss.ac.uk). The advantage to do this in Great Britain is maybe to find some texts in the libraries. Additionally I could make a choice to pick out special Scottish authors to get in touch with.

On the other hand I heard about **4th Congress of the European Society on Family Relations (ESFR)** at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland in September 2008. Susanna Rautio from the Family Research Centre presented an empirical Family project study about a locally working family service network in Glasgow. A new model of peer support was analysed. Early intervention can prevent social problems from evolving and it can also help families become more active and stronger.

This new findings are important for the contemporary German discussion about early warning systems to recognize child abuse and neglect. It seems to be interesting to track the planning of this conference.

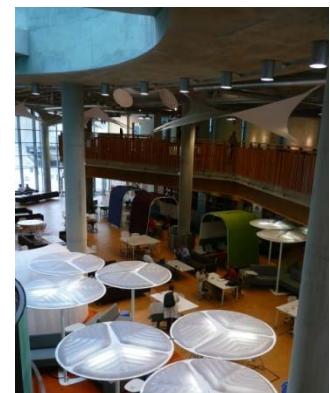


figure 20 Student#s Learning Area at Caledonian

Last but not least I'll mention the "National Curriculum Guidelines on ECEC" in Finland. The National Curriculum Guidelines on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland was published in September of 2003. It will "serve as a basis for local curricula implemented in the day-care centres and other forms of ECEC, such as family day care. The need for a national, argued pedagogical opinion in Finland is obvious. Especially the concern for the position of younger children has brought forth the topic of curriculum guidelines, which should stress the importance of education, information and care as whole for all children."¹⁵ Perhaps it could be useful to deal with this established recommendation.



figure 21 A typical shop for Children Toys

Overall it was not only the participation on the sessions at the conference but also the theoretical frameworks and the way of thinking which helped me to understand sociological discourses much better.

Inés Brock

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¹⁵ web-site

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