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Developmental precursors of autonomy and relatedness

discursive practices in childhood and autobiographical self-constructions in young adulthood

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5

The focus of this chapter is on the relationship between child development and socio-cultural context from a discursive practice approach. It addresses the central and constructive role played by language in the forming and structuring of self and identity. Specifically, it aims at investigating how communicative practices in early family conversations can be considered as reflecting cultural models that will also become evident in the narrative self in adulthood. Our intention is to identify developmental precursors of identity formation with regard to the dimensions of autonomy and relatedness. In doing this, we hope to contribute to the understanding of the dialogical relationship between culture and self.

We will first give a theoretical outline of the interplay between self, narrative, and culture from a developmental perspective, followed by some empirical evidence from a longitudinal study to support our claim. We will conclude with a discussion of the presented data in light of the dynamic nature of culture and self over the lifespan.

The narrative nature of the self

The central role of narrativity for human psychological functioning has been widely acknowledged within the past two decades and is gaining increasing importance in the field of psychology (McAdams, 2008). As humans, we interpret events around us in terms of connections and relationships in order to make sense of our experiences and to create meaning. This allows us to achieve a sense of structure and order in the course of everyday activities and to get on in everyday life. The primary medium through which we do this is language, more specifically narrative (Carr, 1986). Narrative enables us to imbue life events with a temporal and logical order, to tie events together in a seamless explanatory framework. It is the connections or relationships among events that constitute the meaning and coherence of our experience. This is true for mundane everyday conversation (Ochs & Capps, 2001) but also, and particularly, for autobiographical narratives. Autobiographical narratives, moreover, serve to constitute identity and a sense of self by the construction and internalisation of self-defining stories (Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001; Bruner, 1990; McAdams, 2008). It is through autobiographical narratives that an individual brings separate 'stories' together, takes them all as 'mine', and establishes connections among them (Carr, 1986). This is the way we make sense of our lives, and provide reasons for our acts, as well as the causes of experiences (Sarbin, 1986). The constitution of the self in terms of unity, coherence and consistency across time is achieved by situating oneself in the past, present, and future through autobiographical narratives (Straub, Zielke & Werbik, 2005). One can say that it is through autobiographical narratives or "life stories" that we become conscious of ourselves: the "I" becomes objectified as the "me" (Morris, 1934). The "me" is then a narrative construction of my past experiences.

Autobiographical narratives are never a mere recapitulation of events in chronological order; they imply a selection of events that are told and the interpretation of the connections or relationships of these events with others. Based on Ricoeur's notion of 'plot', for instance, Mishler (2006) argues that meaningful connectedness among episodes is actively constructed by the narrator for a specific purpose. It is the ending of a story that primarily determines how a story is

plotted or constructed. In other words: by looking backwards from the present, life stories are constructed in a way that allows the narrator to make sense of who he is today after what has happened to him in the past (Mishler, 2006, p. 36). The events that are chosen to be told in a life story are selected in the light of the *overall* narrative. As such, life stories serve a specific purpose and are a means by which identities are socially constructed (e.g. Crossley, 2000). Autobiographical narrations therefore have been closely linked to the self in terms of 'narrative identity' and can be conceived of as constituting the self (Bruner, 1990; Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001).

Language, from this viewpoint, cannot be conceived as merely referential, e.g. as a representation of some inner attitude or cognition. Rather, language is considered as a social practice by which we perform an action and constitute social reality. Similarly, the self is not conceived of in essentialist terms as an 'entity' inside people's minds; rather, a conceptualisation of the self is promoted "which sees it as inextricably dependent on the language and linguistic practices that we use in our everyday lives to make sense of ourselves and other people" (Crossley, 2000, p. 9). Self-stories are hence not only forms of representation but also socio-cultural practices. They are constructed in social interactions with others to achieve social and interpersonal objectives. When people tell of their personal experience the point of the story is not so much to recount the event but to show how the narrator has made that event into something in his or her life (Miller, Fung & Koven, 2007). Narrative identity from this ontological perspective, then, is an interactional achievement and hence located not inside a person but between persons. While there are versions of the self that are constantly reconstructed across contexts, there are also aspects of the narratively constructed self that are of a more stable nature and that may be told again and again throughout the person's life. These two aspects do not need to be considered in opposition to each other; rather, the self-constructions achieved in everyday interactions over the lifespan can be considered as a *process* by which we come to see the self as stable (Quigley, 2001). Moreover, this does not mean that narrative identity is merely a 'psychological construction'; there is sufficient empirical evidence that the brain's neurobiological mechanisms can alter as a result of

different social environments and discursive practices (Harré & Gillet, 1994, quoted in Quigley, 2001).

The socio-cultural embeddedness of narratives

Narrativity serves to create meaning. Narratives are, however, not produced by isolated individuals; rather, they are formulated through cultural meaning systems that are transmitted and mediated across generations. “How a narrator selects and assembles experiences and events so they contribute collectively to the intended point of the story – the ‘why’ it is being told, in just this way in just this setting” (Mishler, 2006, p. 37) crucially depends on the cultural norms and values of what a ‘good’ story of one’s life should look like. We are surrounded in our everyday life by broader cultural narratives and narrative genres of how to tell a life story. As individuals construct their life stories they draw on the stories they have heard before and hence create their stories in a dialogical relation to such cultural genres. This is in line with Bakhtin’s understanding of how (cultural) ideologies shape the use of language: in constructing a meaning of the world, an individual always draws upon the languages, the words of others to which he or she has been exposed. Language thus is never neutral but “tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293). These contexts are subject to socio-historical change as are cultural knowledge and language practices. Ideas, expressed in language, are hence always located outcomes of social and historical processes. This in turn has consequences for narrative self-construction. Slunecko and Hengl (2007) bring this to a point by stating that symbol systems such as language preexist the individual who grows into them and is transformed by them into a member, a reflection, and an embodiment of that culture. Hence, language ‘owns’ us; it structures thinking and feeling; it even provides us with formats of subjectivity. We are in this sense always the results of processes, which lie above and beyond us, since we, as individuals, do not choose our cultural and linguistic formats and imprints (p. 47).

The point we want to stress here is that autobiographical narratives are not only individual constructions but inextricably social, cul-

tural, and historical. They are tools to construct the self and as such the self that is constituted through narrative is intimately linked with the social and cultural lives of the communities studied.

Narrative identity as a result of individualisation in Western societies

Some authors argue that constructing identity through autobiographical narratives is itself a cultural phenomenon typical of modern Western societies. They argue that macro-structural changes within the past decades have a crucial impact on the self-identity and agency of individual subjects. Drawing on Charles Taylor's book *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Taylor, 1989), for example, Crossley (2000) argues that in earlier times, people lived in 'unchallengeable frameworks' of meaning which made 'imperious demands' on them. What was considered to be 'good' was pretty much set in stone and taken for granted. The decline of fixed traditions, and the loss of power of societal institutions, in particular religious institutions, through an increasing secularisation, has led to a worldview in which what is considered to be good has to be defined by the individuals themselves. This has led to the 'disembedding' of the society's ways of life so that identities can no longer be defined to the same extent by social group membership. As a consequence, modern individuals are forced to produce, stage, and compose their biographies themselves and to find coherence of the self through actively constructing autobiographies (Giddens, 1990; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1994). According to Taylor, this has led to an 'inward' turn with regard to defining one's identity and to a modern Western notion of self that is constituted by self-reflexivity and self-control (agency): individuals are now forced to 'explore' and 'search' for the self in order to find their identity, and this is primarily achieved through autobiographical memory. The contemporary internalised concept of the self is defined by unity, coherence and consistency over time which is achieved through the construction of autobiographical narratives. In a similar vein, Bruner and Weisser (1991) have argued that the more self-conscious, more agentic self-accounting within Western societies accompanies the turn to narrative and auto-

biographical narration for identity construction. Narrative identity can thus be said to be a state of consciousness and self-awareness which has emerged as a result of modernisation (see chapters 7 and 8, this volume, for findings that support this claim).

Autonomy and Relatedness as panhuman cultural dimensions of the self

The emphasis on agency or autonomy prevailing in Western middle-class societies thus needs to be seen as a socio-historical development. At the same time, we want to stress here that autonomy is not to be understood as an exclusive alternative to relatedness but as standing in a dialogical relationship to it. In line with Kagitçibasi's (2005) family change model, we conceive of autonomy and relatedness as two panhuman needs (see Kleis, this volume, for a similar approach). The emphasis of the one over the other is to be understood as a consequence of the socio-cultural requirements of a specific society. This implies not only socio-historical changes due to urbanisation and economic development but, along with these, changes to the prevailing socialisation practices and the function of the family. An emphasis on relatedness over autonomy is considered to be functional in rural agrarian societies with low levels of affluence but is also seen in urban low socio-economic status (SES) contexts, where intergenerational interdependence is necessary for family livelihood (Kagitçibasi, 2005, p. 410). With urban lifestyles and increasing affluence, material interdependence between generations decreases, because elderly parents need no longer depend on the economic support of their adult offspring. Particularly with greater affluence, higher levels of education, and alternative sources of old-age support in Western middle-class societies, dependence on adult offspring turns out to be unnecessary and even unacceptable; thus, children are brought up to be independent and self-sufficient. The autonomy of the growing child is not seen as a threat to the family livelihood over the family life cycle but is highly valued (Kagitçibasi, 2005, p. 411). Families in formerly traditional societies experiencing the influence of modernisation do not materially depend on their children any more; nevertheless, psychological interdepend-

ence, as closely-knit selves, continues, because it is ingrained in the culture of relatedness and is not incompatible with changing lifestyles. According to this model, what emerges in these societal contexts is the 'autonomous-related self'. In a similar vein, Keller (2007) argues from an eco-cultural perspective that caregiver practices and beliefs are embedded in larger cultural models of autonomy and relatedness which will ultimately lead to distinct developmental pathways of the self.

The dimensions of autonomy and relatedness (or 'agency' and 'communion' as originally labelled by Bakan, 1966) have also been identified as two general contrasting tendencies in life stories by a number of researchers (e.g., McAdams, Hoffman, Mansfield & Day, 1996). Life stories vary for instance with regard to the importance given to achievement, self-enhancement, and self-determination (qualities that closely correspond to the need for autonomy) as well as with regard to the importance given to intimacy, connectedness and prioritising the well-being of the community over one's own interests (qualities that closely correspond to the need for relatedness). (See also Rudberg & Nielsen's notion of 'sociological' versus 'psychological' genres of narratives as expression of socio-historic change over three generations in chapter 8.)

In a similar vein, various studies have provided evidence of culture-specific emphasis on autonomy and relatedness in adults' autobiographical memory as an expression of culture-specific self-construals (Conway, Wang, Hanyu, et al., 2005; de la Mata et al., this volume; Demuth, Abels & Keller, 2007). There is also evidence that autobiographical life stories follow a cultural script (Habermas, 2007). In a study comparing earliest childhood memories among Euro-American and native Chinese college students, Wang (2001) found elaborated, specific, emotionally charged and self-focused memories in the Euro-American middle-class sample, whereas in the Chinese sample the remembered narratives were brief, general, emotionally unexpressive, and relation-centred. She relates these differences to the culture-specific forms of self-construals. Some researchers relate this cultural specificity to discursive practices that people participate in during the course of their socialisation. Wang and Spillane (2003), for instance, found that Euro-American and East Asian families show different patterns and tenden-

cies when conversing with their children about the shared past, reflecting different orientations that focus on either autonomy or relatedness. They further argue that such differences, in turn, appear to have long-term consequences for the development of autobiographical memory.

Developmental precursors of adult narrative identity

If we want to understand the developmental aspects of cultural forms of self, expressed in (autobiographical) narratives, it is of course of primary interest to look at participation in routine discursive practices during childhood. If the self is to be considered as the result of narrative construction, and if this narrative construction is the result of accumulated experience of discursive interactions and co-constructions of social reality, then we need to look at the communicative practices prevailing in everyday family life during childhood.

The family can be considered the site of ‘proximal processes’ (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) through which the self develops in interaction with the socio-cultural environment (see also Bruner, 1990). It is primarily through repeated narrative practices within the family that children gradually learn and integrate intersubjective experience about themselves, the parent, and their interrelatedness as well as about the social environment and the role they play in this environment (Miller et al., 2007). By narratively co-constructing mundane everyday interactions, caregivers provide the child with a framework for making sense of their experience; they also provide the child with linguistic resources for constructing social meaning and thus lay the pathway for later narrative self-construction. Since caregivers’ communicative practices are themselves embedded in broader cultural models, they function as mediators of culturally appropriate ways of narrative self-construction.

A number of cultural developmental psychologists and psychological anthropologists have shown how cultural knowledge is mediated through caregiver-child communication. It can be demonstrated, for example, how children gain access to a cultural understanding of norms and transgressions (Pontecorvo, Fasulo & Sterponi, 2001) and of one’s role as a participant in interactions (Fatigante, Fasulo & Pontecorvo, 1998), as well as to a culturally appropriate sense of self and

identity (Forrester, 2002; Miller et al., 2007) based on parents' discursive strategies. Chinese Taipei mothers have been found to use narrative patterns that index a high asymmetry between parents and children (Miller, Sandel, Liang & Fung, 2001) whereas Euro-American middle-class mothers use narrative patterns that foster the child's self-esteem (Miller, et al., 2001), independence and autonomy (Fasulo, Loyd, & Padiglione, 2007; Sirota, 2006), as well as close intimacy (Sirota, 2006). In contrast, Italian parents in Rome use discursive strategies that emphasise interdependence among family members (Fasulo et al., 2007). Schröder et al. (in press) provide evidence that cultural models of autonomy and relatedness find their expression in maternal talk about shared past events with their young children as well as in the communicative participation of these children.

Chen and colleagues (2005, quoted in Miller et al., 2007), by following up on the development of a Taiwanese boy, show how cultural models are discursively mediated by caregivers in early childhood and how they reappear in the child's communicative patterns some years later. These findings support the suggestion that narrative practices within the family in early childhood may be seen as precursors of the child's narrative identity later on in life. The development of narrative self in adulthood can thus be traced in two ways: at first, mainly through the language to which we are exposed in childhood, and later, through our own linguistic choices in narrating autobiographical experiences (Quigley, 2001, p. 148). Our claim here is that both narrative practices within the family of origin and autobiographical narratives later on in life are heavily informed by the prevailing cultural models of self and self in relation to others.

Mealtime conversations as 'cultural sites of socialisation'

A particularly fruitful approach to the study of parent-child communicative practices within Western societies has been the study of family mealtimes (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1997; Ochs & Shohet, 2006). While regular shared family mealtimes might not exist in all societies and across all historic time, they can be said to be a regular and highly valued practice in today's European and North American middle-class fami-

lies. Larson, Branscomb and Wiley (2006), for instance, argue that the idea of mealtimes as special occasions for family togetherness in the United States developed starting in the mid-nineteenth century as a consequence of urbanisation and industrialisation and as a symbol of achieving middle-class status. While there are certainly differences in length, specific activities, and the meanings and co-ordination of activities during mealtimes across families and sub-cultural groups, mealtimes can be said to constitute recurring meaning-laden activities, or 'practices', in modern European and North American middle-class contexts. In most Western middle-class contexts of the 20th century, mealtimes constitute a significant and regular part of family life. A recent large-scale interview study in Germany (Deutsch, 2008) shows that, in light of the challenges modern families have to face today, the performance of family life ("being family") through regular activities and rituals such as family dinner becomes increasingly important. They are social events that follow certain organisational principles and will be enacted with more or less the same participants (Blum-Kulka, 1997). Family mealtimes in these cultural contexts therefore have an element of replicability and allow comparison across families. They are not only an arena for sociability and enjoying family togetherness but are made up of dense social activity in which children are engaged in cultural practices and learn the meaning of these practices (Larson et al., 2006). They constitute regular mundane caregiver-child interactions and therefore provide special opportunities for young people's socialisation into family and broader cultural values. Cultural understandings of how to conceive of oneself and self in relation to others become especially evident in the way family interactions are enacted and reaffirmed. Ochs and Shohet (2006, p. 42) state:

"Who participates in which kinds of communicative practices during mealtimes is linked to historically rooted ideologies and practices. In addressing children's socialization into mealtime communication, it is important to consider both norms of appropriate mealtime communication and the social positioning of children in mealtime communication."

Moreover, the presence of multiple family members as a 'reference group' may further contribute to children's perception that their family's mealtime practices represent normative reality (Ochs & Shohet, 2006). Family mealtimes can therefore be considered as "pregnant arenas for the production of sociality, morality, and local understandings of the world" (ibid, p. 35) and a site for the socialisation of children into their roles as competent members of society.

The cultural organisation of family mealtimes is discussed by a number of studies. Ochs and Taylor (1995), for example, show how children acquire an understanding of gender identity and gender hierarchy through family narrative interactions at mealtimes. Middle-class parents in the U.S. have been found to construct mealtimes in terms of the nutritional aspects and socialise children into eating 'healthily' by providing rewards (dessert) (Ochs, Pontecorvo, & Fasulo, 1996), and to structure mealtimes and overtly express conflict (Martini, 1996). Mealtimes of Japanese American families, in contrast, have been found to be less structured and more relaxed, and to involve less overt conflict than in the Anglo families (Martini, 1996). These differences were explained by contrasting cultural emphasis on family harmony versus individual expression. Vietnamese village families were found to socialise their children into displaying respect by chastising them for lapses in their comportment such as failing to sit still and be attentive (Rydsrom, 2003 quoted in Ochs & Shohet, 2006). Italian parents in Rome were found to emphasise food as pleasure in conversing with children and to use talk about food to link family members across generations, including family members no longer alive (Ochs et al., 1996). Children's participation in family meals as ratified participants has been found to be typical of Western white middle-class families (Blum-Kulka, 1997) and can be related to the cultural convention of treating children as quasi-equal partners.

An interesting aspect of family mealtimes is their function with regard to the dimensions of autonomy and relatedness. On the one hand, conversations during mealtimes belong to the genre of mundane talk that is not explicitly directed towards a specific goal other than sociability. As Blum-Kulka (1997) states, "the focus of such conversation seems to be on the *building of rapport* rather than on the transmission of infor-

mation" (p. 36, our emphasis). On the other hand, they bring together persons who stand in socially asymmetric power relations: the parents whose responsibility is to guide and teach the child, and the child in the position of the novice. It is thus largely in the control of the parents how much *autonomy* is accorded to the child. Within this particular configuration of power and social relatedness, parents need to balance what they consider to be a child's appropriate need for autonomy with what they consider a parent's responsibility for actively structuring the interaction. Family mealtimes therefore provide an excellent avenue for studying the cultural mediation of autonomy and relatedness.

In Western middle-class families subscribing to a socialisation model of autonomy, parents might feel uncomfortable in exerting direct control with their children and therefore use mitigating devices such as politeness strategies. Schieffelin and Ochs (1998) have argued, for instance, that Western middle-class mothers of young infants use self-lowering (e.g. simplified speech) as well as child-raising strategies (e.g. acting as if the child were more competent than his behaviour would indicate) to reduce the competence differential perceived between the adult and the child. Similarly, Blum-Kulka (1997) argues that while speech acts of control are common in any caregiver-child interaction based on the asymmetrical power relationship, the degree of politeness in the discourse of parental control is directly linked to the broader cultural models of child socialisation and the relative weight given to independence versus involvement.

Israeli parents have, for instance, been found to use more direct speech acts of control around the dinner table and follow a model of interdependence and involvement compared to Jewish American parents who use more speech acts of control which reflect their concern with the child's autonomy and independence as prime values of socialisation (Blum-Kulka, 1997).

Similarly, Estonian and Latvian middle-class mothers have been found to show a more controlling conversational style towards young children during mealtimes than Swedish and Finnish (Tulviste, 2004) as well as U.S. middle-class mothers (Junefelt & Tulviste, 1997, 1998). Compared to Estonian (Junefelt & Tulviste, 1997, 1998) and Chinese immigrant parents (Wang, Wiley & Chiu, 2008), U.S. mothers used

more praise during dinner interactions. Chinese-immigrant parents used praise strategies adhering to parental expectations which promote an interdependent self, whereas Euro-American parents used praise strategies adhering to child-initiated behaviours supporting the development of an independent self.

The existing evidence thus suggests that children's participation in shared meals is an important means of mediating cultural understandings of the self and self in relation to others. It can be expected that cultural self-understandings with regard to autonomy and relatedness may also become evident in narrative self-constructions later on in life. Although the literature on child socialisation is replete with arguments that communicative practices are the main tool to mediate cultural norms and values, empirical literature on the long-term developmental influences of narrative practices on self formation is scarce and hence has failed to convincingly support this theoretical contention.

What is more, the majority of prior research on autonomy and relatedness is based on cross-cultural study designs. Little attention has been given to the fact that autonomy and relatedness are dimensions of variation in any given socio-cultural group (but see Keller, Demuth & Yovsi, 2008; Raeff, 2006). In the following, we address this issue by discussing findings from a longitudinal study that was conducted in South Germany.

Autonomy and relatedness in early family communicative practices and autobiographical narratives later on in adulthood

The data on which our analysis is based stems from a larger longitudinal study which was originally conducted from 1977 to 1986 with a group of middle-class families in the city of Mainz and surroundings from the time of the birth of their first child up to when the target child was 9 years of age. Part of the original study was the analysis of family dinner interactions when the target children were 3 years old. The participants were re-contacted in 2004/2005 at the age of 27/28. Our aim was to identify possible developmental precursors in the construction of the individual personal life stories that may account for

the relative emphasis on autonomy and relatedness during the course of development. For this purpose, we conducted biographical narrative interviews with the now-adult participants, and also reanalysed the early family dinner interactions of the same participants. As a third step, we related the discursive patterns of the family interactions with narrative self-constructions in young adulthood.

Dinner conversations in early childhood

The dinner conversations were recorded between 1980 and 1981. A total of 30 families participated in the study. At the time of the assessment of dinner interactions, all families consisted of father, mother and the target child. Some families also included a younger sibling or a grandparent. A fieldworker videotaped each family in their homes during dinner times. The fieldworker was present during the video recordings but interacted only minimally with the participants once the videotaping began. The interactions were transcribed verbatim.

In examining the dinner conversations, we focused on specific dimensions of parental communication that can be connected to the concepts of autonomy and relatedness. A coding scheme (table 1. next page) was developed based on an initial phase of inductive coding as well as on a variety of codes used in previous studies (Blum-Kulka, 1990; Keller, 2007):

The coding scheme comprised the categories 'Directness of control', 'Evaluations', 'Child's compliance', 'Autobiographical structuring', and 'Individual vs. Socio-centeredness' with a number of sub-codes assigned to each category (see table 1). The logic of the coding scheme is that parents predominantly following the model of autonomy would use more indirect strategies of control, such as negotiations, decisive utterances and mitigated commands in order not to threaten the child's self-esteem, whereas parents predominantly following the model of relatedness would use more direct control strategies. In a similar vein, parents predominantly following the model of autonomy might praise the child more often and focus more on the child's inner states and experiences, thus focusing on the individuality of the child, whereas parents predominantly following the model

tilføjet next
page

Category	Code	Description
Directness of control	Unmitigated command	Direct command in an imperative form
	Mitigated command	Direct command using mitigating devices such as politeness markers (e.g. "please") or terms of endearment (e.g. "honey")
	Decisive utterance	Command formulated as decision (e.g. "you can eat this now")
	Negotiation	Negotiating the child's preference or formulating a requirement that the child needs to fulfill first
Evaluations	Praise	Positive appraisal of the child
	Critique	Negative appraisal of the child
Child's compliance	Compliance	Child complies with parent's command
	Non-compliance	Child does not comply with parent's command
Autobiographical structuring	Past events	Talking about past events that occurred either earlier in the day or some time in the past
	Future events	Talking about any future events
Individual vs. socio-centeredness	Inner states and experiences	Talking about the child's personal traits, talents, feelings, thoughts, preferences or intentions
	Social rules	Talking about social conventions

Table 1 Coding Scheme

of relatedness might criticise the child more often and refer to social rules, thus emphasising proper conduct and heteronomy. Finally, parents predominantly following the model of autonomy might have a stronger tendency to structure the child's experience in a biographical way by referring to past and future events (Demuth, 2008), while parents predominantly following the model of relatedness might focus their talk more on the here and now. The coding scheme was applied to all transcripts of the dinner conversations. Codes were assigned per occurrence and were not mutually exclusive.

A factor analysis revealed the following cluster of discursive strategies¹:

- Factor 1 *Autobiographical structuring* (25.4%) (comprising the codes "past events" and "future events")
- Factor 2 *Egalitarian strategy* (21.9%) (comprising the codes "negotiation", "non-compliance", and "praise")
- Factor 3 *Hierarchical strategy* (16.9%) (comprising the codes "mitigated command", "critique", and negatively "compliance")

In light of the small number of participants, the results need of course to be considered with care. However, there is no way of going back in time to increase this number. In any case, we think that the analysis of these data remains useful and that the findings carry relevance for the present study.

Biographical-narrative interviews in young adulthood

24 of the now-adult children could be recontacted and agreed to participate in an interview study on their lives. Participants were visited at home at a time that was convenient for them. After explaining the aim and the procedure of the study, the participants were asked to tell their personal life story from their individual perspective. The interview form was based on a combination of the "narrative-biographical interview" (Schütze, 1983) and the "problem-centred interview" (Witzel, 2000). The interview started with the prompt "*I would now like to ask you to tell me the story of your life. Please feel free to simply*

tell what happened in your life up to this day. You may feel free to take as much time as you like, and to tell as many details as you like. For me everything that you find important is interesting". When the end of the story was marked by a coda, a second, semi-structured part of the interview followed based on guidelines. The participants were asked to narrate further details on specific aspects relevant to the study which had not or had only partly been covered by the life stories (e.g. importance of their family, role of friends, colleagues and relatives, importance of self-enhancement and personal career). The interviews lasted between 1-3 hours and were tape recorded and transcribed. The interview data was then analysed based on Grounded Theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and the following typology of developmental pathways constructed from this analysis (Figure 1, next page).

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Space does not allow us to present the findings in detail here (the reader is referred to Demuth, Keller, Gudi, & Otto, in prep.). The main features of the various developmental pathways that we were able to identify can however be summarised as follows:

1. Participants who constructed their life stories in a way that emphasises close and stable relationships, and who gave priority to social relationships over their professional career, followed one of the following two patterns:
 - a) Their lifestyle can be seen as a *continuation* of the lifestyle of their parents of origin whom the participants experienced as very supportive throughout childhood and adulthood. The parents provide a role model of a satisfactory life embedded in closely-knit social relationships and traditional structures. There is strong cohesion of the local community; family members take responsibility for each other and the younger family members support the older ones. There have been few ruptures in the lives of the participants and hence little need to change things in life. What shines through the life accounts of the participants of this type is a preference for continuity and conformity over risk. We refer to this type of developmental pathway as 'functional relatedness'.

As one participant formulates:

Family of Origin

The developmental pathway of ,functional' relatedness

Ressource function: family experienced as supportive

Family Values: social connectedness, local rootedness, cultivation of traditions

Exemplified Lifestyle: actively fostering close and stable relationships

Largely **no ruptures**, stable flow of life; **transitions** (e.g., change of school) **buffered** by continuity of important close relationships

Transitions/Ruptures

Identification with parental values
Priority of family and social relationships over (professional) self-realization

Security-orientation, stable social networks

The developmental pathway of ,dysfunctional' relatedness

Ressource function: family not experienced as supportive

Family Values: rigid social expectations

Exemplified Lifestyle: unstable relationships

Ruptures/transitions (e.g., change of school, parent's divorce) **without „social buffer“**

Opposition to parental values
Priority of family and social relationships over (professional) self-realization

Substitute for emotional deficits

The developmental pathway of ,autonomous relatedness'

Ressource function: family experienced as supportive

Family Values: social connectedness, autonomy and self-determination

Exemplified Lifestyle: actively fostering relationships, professional self-realization

Ruptures/transitions (e.g., change of school, parent's divorce) **buffered** by supportive close relationships, self-initiated changes in life

Identification with parental values
compatibility of **family and social relationships** on the one hand, and (professional) **self-actualization** on the other hand; self-enhancement on the basis of **stable social networks**

The developmental pathway of 'compensatory autonomy'

<p>Resource function: family only partially experienced as supportive</p> <p>Family Values: autonomy and self-determination</p> <p>Exemplified Lifestyle: partly relational conflicts</p>	<p>Ruptures/transitions (e.g., change of school, parent's divorce) lead to conceiving oneself as different from peers, self-initiated changes in life</p>	<p>Striving for autonomy as compensation</p> <p>Priority to (professional) self-actualization over relationships, but increasingly realizing the importance of relationships</p>
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The 'autonomous-ambivalent' developmental pathway:

<p>Resource function: family not experienced as supportive</p> <p>Family Values: responsibility for parents (inverted roles), autonomy and self-determination</p> <p>Exemplified Lifestyle: relational conflicts, professional self-realization</p>	<p>Ruptures/transitions (e.g., change of school, parent's divorce) have largely to be dealt with on ones own, no „social buffer“ self-initiated changes in life</p>	<p>Opposition to parental lifestyle</p> <p>Ambivalence between striving for autonomy on the one hand and responsibility for the family on the other hand</p>
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Figure 1 Typology of developmental pathways



“That really is, I think, what is really important for me. I am so to speak deeply rooted. I cannot imagine at all to – that’s why we also built a house here [...] – I cannot imagine at all to move away from here, if possible to the town in XY or something like that. No way! Wild horses couldn’t drag me there. No way! See, I have the firefighters here, I have built a house here now, I have all my friends here. Well, some of them live in the surroundings but that’s OK, well, by and large they all live nearby. Well I would by no means want to leave from here, right.” (03:748-752)

- b) Their life style can be seen as in *opposition* to the life style of their parents whom the participants experienced as not supportive throughout childhood and adulthood. Participants in this group also construct their life stories centrally around relationships and report a strong emphasis on relatedness. However, they had not taken over these values from the family of origin; rather the strong orientation towards giving priority to relations over personal interests, especially founding one’s own family, was rooted in the reported failure of the family of origin to fulfill their emotional needs in childhood. They experienced their childhood as being ‘left on their own’, and as ‘not getting sufficient attention from their parents’. Other friends, their partner and their own children serve as a substitute family. We refer to this developmental pathway as ‘dysfunctional relatedness’.

As one participant reports:

“the ideal family, that is really what, uhm, what I would like to have and what I try now to have at least with my own family, what I maybe did not have in my family with my parents, I mean, to build that now in the family and, uhm, well, I mean, I would say that is really, at the moment – the children and my husband are what, what is important to me. To have your own time or your own interests and time for you is what so many people say [...]

That's not what I miss – to go to the movies or take a bath or something, but to have time with (name of husband), to have time to talk for twenty minutes with him on the sofa or to lie in bed in the evening without having someone else there. And that, THAT is what I miss.” (19:142)

2. Participants who constructed their life stories in a way that emphasised both close and stable relationships as well as self-realisation and autonomy, especially in their professional career (see also Rudberg & Nielson's findings referred to as “relational individualism”, this volume), followed a different pattern: they described their family of origin as a rich source of both emotional and material provision. The family is mostly characterised by stable relationships and strong cohesion; close family relationships were actively fostered. At the same time, the parents actively encouraged autonomy already early in childhood such as free choice and personal responsibility for one's decisions. They also provided a role model of autonomy and relatedness through their own lifestyle. Life trajectories could be handled relatively well because there are other people serving as a ‘social buffer’. Participants report that they to a large extent identify with the way their parents combined relatedness and autonomy. We refer to this developmental pathway as ‘autonomous-relatedness’:

“Well, in my family [...] simply the way people live together in the family, I mean for example, we have certain family traditions which I continue to practise in my marriage. [...] And I think this is indeed something that has had a strong influence on me. For instance, that we always had lunch together, uhm, since my father's office was in the basement and he came up for lunch every day [...] and because my granny still lived with us [...] and that of course makes a great difference, when the grandmother lives in the house, and the parents are basically always around, and I think that there were certain values that got conveyed through that. And in situations, like

when I moved to (name of city), I was in a way unsecure, but somehow on the other hand not so completely, not COMPLETELY lost". (02:75)

3. Participants who constructed their life stories around topics of self-realisation and autonomy did in a way consider relationships as relevant. A clear priority was given, however, to independence. They differed insofar as the *female* participants of this group showed a high ambivalence between wanting to live a very autonomous life on the one hand, and being hindered by feeling a strong responsibility for their family on the other, whereas the *male* participants have lived a very autonomous lifestyle but experience a certain ambivalence in that they have reached a point in life where they realise that relationships might be more important than they had thought previously. The two subgroups can be described as follows:

- a) Participants report that their own needs in childhood and adolescence were not met by their parents/family. What is more, very early in life they had to take over the role of an adult and be responsible for their family. Participants report that autonomy was already encouraged in childhood, e.g. by granting the child room to develop their own interests; they were, however, also strongly forced to become very independent and autonomous from early on due to the specific family situation. In adulthood, they explicitly distance themselves from their parents' lifestyle because they do not want to make the same mistakes themselves. Their strong desire for independence and freedom can be considered a counter-reaction to a co-dependent relationship to their parents. Yet they still feel compelled to take care of and be responsible for their family of origin, which is expressed in an ambivalence between striving for autonomy and being there for the family. We refer to this developmental pathway as 'ambivalent autonomy'.

"I uhm on the one hand very much love to be free, on the other hand, I am also very strongly bound to this region, uhm, also to my mother. This is a very difficult relation-

ship. In a way very good, we often go on vacation together. But there is always this disease [referring to the mother's alcoholism], which is in the back of my mind. Uhum, that is somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand I would love to travel all the time and move to different places, but something is always hindering me." (39:161-165)

- b) Other participants who construct their life stories around topics of self-enhancement and autonomy can be said to have developed a striving for professional achievement which has priority over relationships. The participants emphasise neither the lack of emotional support of the family nor a strong cohesion within the family, although it becomes clear that their needs were not fully met during childhood. Independence and self-reliance were fostered from early on. What the participants of this group have in common is an experience of 'being different' or 'inferior' to peers which led them to strive for excellence. Their strong desire for a professional career which has priority over relationships can hence be considered as compensation for early childhood experiences. We refer to this developmental pathway as 'compensatory autonomy':

"What kind of values are important to me? Well, professional success in any case, but more because of a striving for security and respect. THAT is important to me." (08:341)

Relating developmental pathways to early family communicative practices

Since we were interested in possible developmental precursors in early socialisation strategies for the self expressed in narrative accounts later on in adulthood, a third step was to relate the findings from the analysis of the dinner conversations to the typology derived from the interview analysis. For this purpose, the distribution of factor scores was calculated for the 3 interview types (subtypes were not considered separately here).

DEVELOPMENT OF SELF IN CULTURE

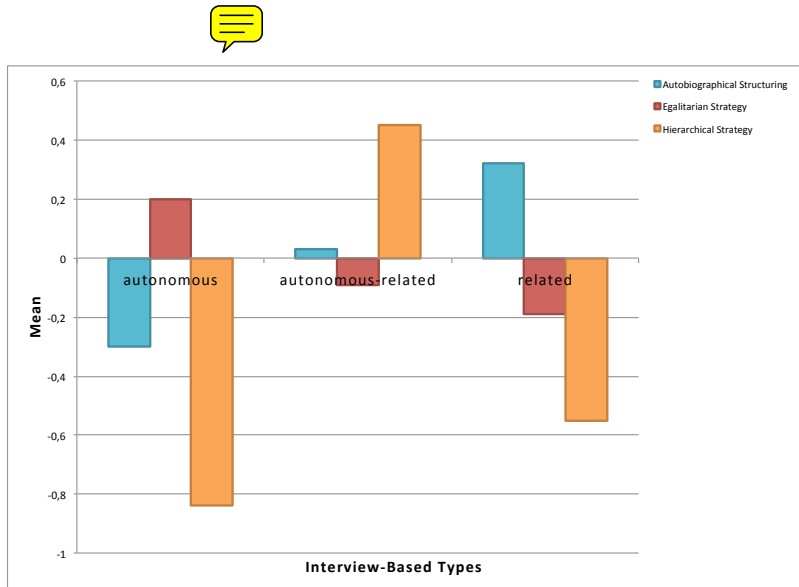


Figure 2 Distribution of Means of Factor Scores

Parental egalitarian strategies during dinner conversations were above average in the later 'autonomous' group of 27/28 years old participants and below average in the later 'related' group. Hierarchical strategies were above average in the later 'autonomous-related' group and below average in the two other groups. Autobiographical structuring was least prominent in the later 'autonomous' group, and most salient in the later 'related' group. This pattern becomes even clearer when we compare only the occurrences of reference to past events (as opposed to the occurrences of either past or future events). Figure 3 (next page) shows the distribution of means across the three groups:

While this finding is striking at first glance, when looking at the *content* of what was said we found that most comments referred to 'shared past events'. The focus was hence more on the joint social activity than on the individual experience of the child and is in line with our argumentation.

Overall, the findings suggest that the children of our study who grew up in family environments which grant a great deal of autonomy to the child, as expressed by social practices such as negotiation of interests, praise, and allowing for non-compliance, were likely to incor-

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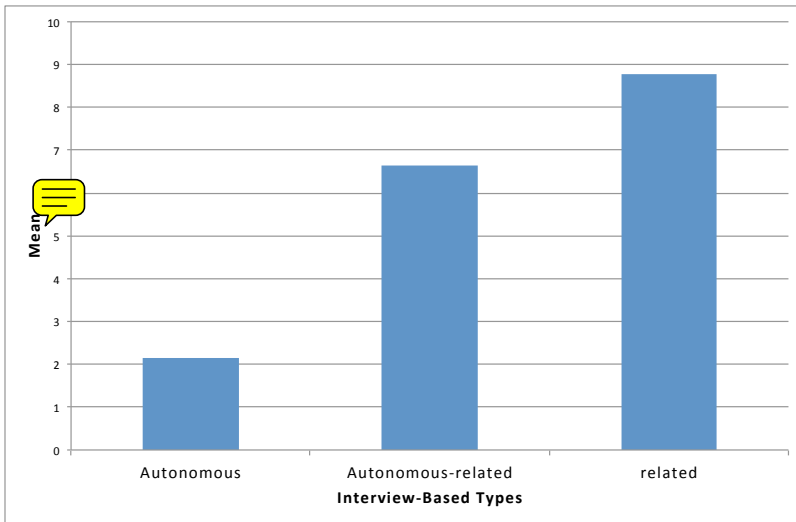


Figure 3. Means of “past events” across the three groups

porate a cultural model of autonomy in the expression of their later life narratives. Children in our study who grew up in family environments whose discursive practices focused on shared experiences were more likely to construct life narratives that go along with a cultural model of relatedness. Those children of our study whose family interactions were more hierarchically structured, as expressed by commands and critique whereby commands were mitigated by politeness strategies and terms of endearment, were likely to produce life narratives in adulthood characterised by a blending of autonomy and relatedness.

While these findings should of course not be understood in terms of a simple one-to-one relation between specific discursive strategies during dinner conversations and later developmental outcomes, they point to a broader interconnectedness of the cultural orientations of autonomy and relatedness expressed by parents’ discursive practices and the later narrative constructions of their children.

This leads us to a more general point that we want to stress here: the present analysis of the dinner interactions was based on content analysis and focused primarily on the parents’ talk. In order to do justice

more fully to the complexity of social interactions and to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural meaning that is co-constructed in the flow of the interaction, a more fine-grained and sequential microanalysis following conversation analytical procedures would be necessary. Such an analysis could provide us with a better understanding of the value systems that are mediated in parent-child interactions. Nevertheless, the evidence reported above shows clear systematic variations of socialisation strategies that can be related to the different types of developmental pathways derived from the interview analysis.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the relationship between cultural models reflected in early family dinner interactions and those reflected in biographical narratives of the children of these families later on in young adulthood. It has aimed at identifying developmental precursors of identity formation with regard to the dimensions of autonomy and relatedness. While we were able to find systematic variations in the way the young adults described their way of having become the person they are today, especially with regard to whether the family of origin was experienced as a source of support and to whether and how trajectories and ruptures were experienced, the relationship between early communicative practices within the family and self-constructions in the adult life narratives was less clear. Discursive practices in family interactions certainly point to broader cultural ideologies that go beyond the here and now situation, and the study of these discursive practices provides us with valuable insights into how cultural worlds are constructed in everyday interactions. However, we need to consider the dynamic nature of culture (Valsiner, 2000). Following an open systemic approach, and conceiving of culture as a process of mutual constitution of the person and the social world and a constant process of semiotic mediation, a person is not conceived of as a passive recipient of cultural values but as an active participant who can 'distance' him- or herself from the concrete activity setting through reflecting upon the context of which he or she is a part. He or she does so by considering the context of the past, imagining the con-

text of the future and taking the perspective of other persons (Valsiner, 2000, p.51). Thus cultural values are analysed and reorganised into personally novel forms before they are internalised. This occurs in the process of adapting to novel circumstances of life, which becomes necessary with the ongoing changes in society and is a lifelong process. The study of early socialisation practices hence allows us to gain valuable insights into a certain part of the lives of the individuals we study that took place at a certain time in history. We need to be careful, however, not to draw premature conclusions about the expected continuation of their developmental pathways. Nevertheless, we hope we have been able to demonstrate that the study of narrative practices is a fruitful avenue for studying the dialogical relationship between culture and the development of self and identity.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1 Four of the twelve codes showed high cross loadings. These codes were excluded and a new factor analysis computed.

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