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“In a way, you’d like to move with them”

Young people, moving away from home, and the roles of parents

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“In a way, you’d like to move with them”:

Young people, moving away from home, and the roles of parents

This article develops a nuanced understanding of the role of parents when young people move away from home. The moving processes of young people have grown more temporary and reversible, and parents are increasingly expected to be involved in the lives of their children after they move away from home. This points to changes in the notions of parenthood, which have been described as “involved parenting”. Building on qualitative interviews with 36 Danish young people and their parents, the article contributes to differentiating this involved parenting by presenting a typology of parents’ practical and emotional involvement in the moving processes of young people, and the consequences thereof on the young people’s experiences of leaving home. The article identifies three principles for parents’ involvement in the moving processes of young people: “The bulging heart”, “The soft nudge”, and “The slammed door”. Whereas the first two principles relate to parents deeply involved in their children’s moving process, the third relates to parents who are far more distant. Despite the pervasive criticism of “curling parents” who are overly involved in the lives of their children, the article shows that leaving home is particularly difficult for young people of distant parents.

Keywords: youth, moving out, parents, transitions, boomerang generation

Wordcount: 7998

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Introduction

Every year, 90,000 Danish young people move away from home (Danmarks Statistik 2018). Moving their belongings and embarking on a daily life without their parents is a momentous step in the lives of most young people. On average, Danish young people leave home at the age of 21 (ibid). In spite of the relatively generous grants and subsidies available to young people from the Danish state, the rapidly rising costs of housing and increased materialistic demands of youth life have made it difficult for many young people to get by on their own. One third of Danish young people who live on their own receive financial support from their parents (Finans Danmark 2018), and just as many return to their parents' home to live for a shorter or longer period (Danmarks Statistik 2018). In the public discourse, there is talk of a "boomerang generation" (Berngruber 2015), reflecting more dynamic and complex moving processes in which young people alternate between a range of temporary housing solutions for a period of time, using their parents' home as a buffer until they establish a more permanent housing situation on their own (Sandlie 2011). This also points to changes in notions of parenthood, with a greater emphasis on parents' involvement in the lives of their children, including after they have moved away from home (Trondman 2013, Aarseth 2018). The move from the parental home is thus not understood as a linear, step by step transition along an inevitable path towards independence from one's parents (Woodman & Leccardi 2015). Today's parents are increasingly expected to be intertwined in the practical and emotional aspects of the lives of their young children; therefore, we need new perspectives on the relationships between young people and parents, the roles parents play in young people's moving processes, and how these factors affects young people's experiences of leaving home.

This article aims to develop a nuanced understanding of the role of parents when young people move away from home, and how this influences young people's perceptions of themselves and their capacities to live away from their parental home. Previous research has

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predominantly examined the changing patterns of young people moving away from home in the context of the changing transitions and life biographies generally emerging among today's young people (ibid). In this article, whose focus is on parenthood, we present a typology of the different ways that parents are involved in the moving processes of young people, and the appertaining impacts on the young people's experiences of leaving home. The article will shed light on changes in the notions of parenthood and demonstrate how these changes are practiced differently by different groups of parents. The article is based on a qualitative interview study involving 36 Danish young people and their parents, incorporating the perspectives of both groups on the role of parents in young people's moving processes.

Young people's moving processes and transitions

The process of leaving home has changed in the course of history (Jones & Wallace 1992). Though there have always been differences between the moving processes of young people from different social and cultural backgrounds, for much of the twentieth century young people tended to leave home in connection with employment or marriage (Beer & Faulkner 2011). The move was therefore more definitive in nature, as the young people to a greater extent established residence with a partner and formed their own family (Guldbrandsen 2002, Lappegård & Brunborg 2004). Since the late twentieth century, leaving home has generally become a more gradual and reversible process (Dommermuth 2009, Woodman & Leccardi 2015). The first move away from home is often to take up residence with other young people, and many young people move back home after some time, only to move out again later as part of a dynamic and iterative movement towards a finalized move away from home (Sandlie 2011, Danmarks Statistik 2018). These processes play out differently among different groups of young people. Whereas Ford et al (2002) distinguish between young

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people whose moving processes are planned and chaotic, Roberts (2013) argues that this polarized image overlooks the "missing middle", e.g. young people whose moving processes take place when "the right opportunity" arises in their social networks.

A wide range of social and cultural changes in the late 20th and early 21st century have caused these changes in young people's moving patterns. An increasing number of young people enroll in longer educational programs and the start-up costs of establishing a residence have increased in tandem with housing prices, forcing many young people through a series of temporary housing solutions before they are able to establish themselves with a family, children, etc. (Beer & Faulkner 2011).

Another impactful factor is the emergence of cultural notions idealizing free and unbridled youth, contributing to an extension of youth from a short transition phase between childhood and adulthood into a crystallized life phase in and of itself (Jones & Wallace 1992, Illeris et al 2009). This is further bolstered by the individualization of late modern society, which puts emphasis on change and a responsibility to recreate oneself throughout life (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002). According to Sandlie (2011), there has been a temporalization of people's life biographies in late modern society, whereby many processes previously confined to youth now recur and start over in new permutations. We can no longer view the events of youth life as predetermined steps in a linear progression towards ever greater independence and ending in adulthood (Woodman & Wyn 2015).

Changes in notions of parenthood

The less linear transition processes in youth life are also reflected in a transformation of parenthood and the relationship between young people and their parents (Lareau 2003, Vincent & Ball 2007).

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Gillis (2002) argues that families have become increasingly small, fragmented and temporary during the process of modernization of our societies, which has contributed to lifting social relations out of local contexts, including the uncoupling of families from households. As geographical distance has become an increasingly common condition in the lives of families, powerful imaginaries of close, cohesive and permanent families have developed. According to Gillis, these are not the families that we "live with", but the families that we "live by" (ibid: 2).

Imaginaries of closeness have also become increasingly important in the notions of parenthood. Trondman (2013) describes three shifts in what he calls "relationship grammar", i.e. the cultural rules and codes regulating the relationship between young people and their parents that have developed since the late twentieth century. The first of these shifts relates to distance: Although young people and parents increasingly live their everyday lives in different social and institutional arenas, there is a strong emphasis on intimacy and authenticity, which are supposed to bridge the distance between parents and children and give rise to closeness. The second shift relates to the hierarchy between young people and their parents. Whereas parents long were viewed as superior to young people, the relationship between young people and parents is viewed as increasingly egalitarian, which is closely linked to the last of the three shifts. According to Trondman, parents were long positioned as the acting subjects, while the young people were objects for this action. Today, Trondman argues, there is an increased emphasis on young people as active and decision-making subjects.

Combined, these three shifts comprise a transition towards notions of parenthood that are less about teaching young people to obey and adapt to a given set of rules or a given standard, and more about stimulating their formation as subjects and ability to exercise agency in their own lives (Aarseth 2018). This can be described as "involved parenting" (Forsberg 2009), where the focus is on the needs of the child and parenting is a matter of organizing things so that children can

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develop optimally and realize their potential. This parenting centers around the children but is managed by the parents, who must have a constant attentive eye on the child and maintain a readiness to support any of the child's initiatives that point in the right direction (Lareau 2000). As a consequence, the children are implicitly valued and involved in exciting projects with their parents but, conversely, they cannot escape from their parents' investigative eyes, nor their involvement (Stefansen 2011). Upon closer inspection, changes in the relationships between parents and their children are not only characterized by more proximity, more equality and more room for the child as a subject, as Trondman (2013) describes. It also appears to be a form of parenting with a distancing and monitoring eye on the child. The distance, the hierarchy and the understanding of the child as object – all of which have subsided according to Trondman – thereby appear to have remained intact in the new form of parenting.

However research also shows that there are differences in parenting practices across different social and cultural groups. Although involved parenting may have become a generally accepted ideal, Laureau (2003) argues that different social groups reconstruct this ideal in different ways. In continuation of Laureau, Cekaite (2018) argues that parenting in the middle and working classes embraces an individual view of the children, but that individualism varies across class. Thus, a "soft individualism" reigns among middle class parents. Under this ideal, parents are not to decide for or limit their children, but instead support the ability of the children to develop and express themselves – though with ongoing negotiation to nudge the children in certain expedient directions. The dominant ideal among working class parents is referred to as a "hard individualism", where standards and rules are seen as positive, and the hierarchy between child and parent is considered natural and beneficial. Individualism in this context means that children are encouraged to stand up for themselves and handle various situations without the monitoring and infiltration of their parents. Whereas soft individualism instructs parents to be more involved in the formative

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processes of their children to support their subjectivity and agency, parents who practice hard individualism are more inclined to set their children free to stand on their own two feet.

In a Danish context, there is almost no research on parenting in the moving process, and the existing studies build on a rather narrow focus (Gram et al 2015, Bengtsson & Mølholdt 2018). There is a dearth of research on the importance of parenting for the moving process, how it is practiced by different groups of parents, and how it impacts young people's processes of becoming in connection with the move.

Research design and methods

The article is based on a qualitative interview study of 36 Danish young people and their parents, whom we have followed over a period of 12 months during the transition from living with their parents to living on their own. In the interviews, we examine the challenges young people encounter in this transition, as well as the social, cultural and family relationships that impact how the young people handle these challenges. A central focus of these interviews is the relationship with parents, and how it impacts the young people's transitions to life on their own. We conducted the first interviews with the young people and their parents in mid-2017, right around the time of their move away from home, and re-interviewed them in late 2018. We interviewed them individually, but the thematic content of the interviews was very similar.

Although qualitative research does not operate under a stringent requirement to be representative (Staunæs & Søndergaard 2005), the aim was to compile a broad-ranging group of young people from various social, cultural and family backgrounds. We ended up with 17 female and 19 male informants with an approximate average age of 20.5 years. Prior to moving out, half of the informants lived with their biological parents, slightly fewer had divorced parents and lived with

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one of them in various family constellations, and three had one deceased parent. Most of them had one or two siblings. Their families were relatively equally distributed between upper middle class, lower middle class and working class. Seven of the informants had ethnic minority backgrounds: six came from non-western backgrounds and one came from a Balkan background. The young people came from both rural and urban regions, and most of them moved to one of Denmark's major cities.

We recruited the young people through educational institutions, dormitories and social media, and by use of the snowball method (Pedersen 1998). Some of them participated without their parents, as it would have distorted our data if we only interviewed young people who also wanted us to interview their parents. This would have barred us access to young people who had experienced conflicts and severed ties with their parents – young people we deemed essential to the study. A total of 97 interviews were conducted.

The interviews took shape as semi-structured qualitative interviews that bring out the informants' perspectives and narratives, while maintaining a certain thematic framework. In the first interviews, we asked about life in the parental home, the relationships and roles of the involved parties, the motives for moving, the moving process, and the young people's expectations of the new life situation on their own. In the second round of interviews, we asked about how things had gone, the new everyday life, challenges and problems, and how the relationship and roles of the involved parties had changed. The interviews lasted 45 to 120 minutes, and the majority were conducted in the home of the young people or parents.

The interviews were subsequently transcribed, anonymized and coded in Nvivo. In this article, we primarily draw on interviews from the first round, which deals with the involvement of parents in the moving process. The interviews were coded under the themes "moving process",

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"parenting" and "preparation and practicalities". Reading through the coded interviews, the analytical process was oriented towards identifying patterns and variations in the discursive representations of parenthood and parental practices in relation to the moving processes. The aim was to identify different patterns and positions in the empirical data, both among the parents and the young people (Haavind 2000).

A typology of parental involvement in the moving processes of youth

To achieve a differentiated understanding of the patterns and positions of parents when young people move away from home, in Table 1 we present a typology of three different principles of how the parents in our study are involved in the moving processes of young people: "The bulging heart", "The soft nudge" and "The slammed door".

Table 1: Parental involvement in young people's moving processes

Principle	*The bulging heart*	*The soft nudge*	*The slammed door*
Practical involvement	Controlling	Facilitating	Absent
Emotional involvement	Invading	Ambivalent	Dismissive
Consequence	Encapsulated process	Supported process	Unencapsulated process

The principles are based on the empirical representations of parents' practical and emotional involvement in the moving process, each of which is divided into three categories. In the analysis below, we begin by examining representations of the three practical forms of involvement, followed by the three emotional forms of involvement. Along the way, we discuss how they interact with

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each other, and the resulting impact on young people's perceptions of themselves and their capacities to live away from their parental home. However, since the three principles are based on patterns and positions derived from the empirical data material, they should be read as analytical categories that do not fully encompass the lived lives of the study participants, which are certainly more nuanced and ambiguous than what can be captured within the scope of this article.

Practical involvement

The controlling form of involvement

The majority of parents in this study express that they were personally responsible for their moving processes when they moved away from home in the 1980s and 1990s. "Back then parents weren't expected to take responsibility for my moving away from home," says Bodil, mother of 21-year-old Sofie. However, Bodil has played a radically different role in Sofie's moving process. She is one of numerous parents in our study who say that their children's moving processes were events involving the entire family, and where the parents have played a *controlling* role. Stine, mother to 22-year-old Poul, says:

> *"He moved at the same time that we had vacation. So we had time to help. We had a couple of pretty intense weeks of organizing all kinds of things, like what we needed to buy, the practicalities of the move itself, and what kind of moving truck? So everyone in the family was involved in all of this."*

Stine speaks of her son's moving process as a family event controlled by her and her husband. They were involved in the search for housing, and in preparations for the move they made to-do lists and generally maintained an overview of the moving process. They also paid the deposit, bought furniture and give their son a monthly subsidy, so he is able to afford his new student residence.

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Many of the parents in this category emphasize that their children want and need them to take control of the moving process. Take for example Anja, who, like Stine and her husband, managed the move of her 18-year-old daughter Louise. Anja found Louise's new residence, arranged for a trailer to move her belongings, and drove the car during the move. Anja stresses that she tries to get Louise to make her own decisions, but that Louise often wants and needs her mother to take control: "And [Louise] often asks: What do you think, mom?" says Anja, situating her control of the moving process as a response to Louise's needs and wishes. The orientation towards responding to children's needs and wishes characterizes this group of parents, who are concerned with *encapsulating* and protecting the children so that they are not exposed to insurmountable challenges, risks, etc. in connection with the move. This perspective is reiterated by many of the young people whose parents can be categorized as *controlling* in the moving process. 18-year-old Gustav talks about his moving process:

> *"I was in Sweden last weekend and while I was gone my mom packed by clothes... not because I said that she should do it, but because she could sense that there were a lot of things that needed to be done, and I was in Sweden... It was really nice that I could get help from them, because it would have been very difficult otherwise."*

Gustav found it difficult to work everything out in connection with the move, so his parents took responsibility for organizing and carrying out the move. They respond to his wishes and needs and solve the challenge for him.

The facilitating form of involvement

Most parents in the study say that they are involved in their children's moving processes, but they also emphasize that they are not *too* involved, and that they find it important to avoid becoming

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parents who, like the previously discussed category of parents, take over and are *controlling* in these processes. This sentiment is expressed by Steen, father of 21-year-old Sebastian:

> *"We aren't going to be the type of parents who write job applications and housing applications for our children. We want to support them if they come and ask for help, or if we can see that they are clearly close to committing suicide or something of that sort. But they have to have the opportunity to try some things on their own."*

Steen also wants to be there for his children, but he is attentive to holding back so that his son has the opportunity to manage the process in his own way. It is essential to this category of parents that they are present in the moving process in a way that *facilitates* their children's opportunities to handle things themselves and thereby to learn something new in the moving process. However, it is sometimes difficult for them to hold back. In the following, Sanne tells about her relation to her18-year-old daughter Ida:

> *"I really have to sit on my hands to make sure that I don't interfere and say, 'how about if I write a letter to the housing association' or 'do you want me to call the building manager', because, after all, she needs to learn to do those things herself (laughs)".*

Although parents in this category may have an impulse to take over and *control* the process, they are often attentive to ensuring that the children have the opportunity to try doing things themselves and learn in the process. Like the *controlling* parents, these parents tend to maintain a constant eye on their children and a preparedness to intervene if it appears that something is going wrong. These two parenting categories have a number of other things in common. Both categories comprise parents with different levels of education, parents who support and do not support their children financially, etc. The dividing line between the categories is that the *facilitating* parents generally do

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not shield their children from the challenges and risks that arise in the moving process, but rather attempt to *support* their children in the encounter with these challenges and risks, as they are attentive to the educational and formative aspects of allowing the children to do it themselves.

The children of these parents tell stories very similar to those of their parents. Twenty-three-year-old Amalie says of her mother:

> *"My mom is really good at saying, 'I want to support you, but you have to do it yourself'... whereas... my boyfriend's mother babies him a bit more. They're going on vacation this summer, and he's going with them, and so he needs a new passport. And she ordered it for him! That's where I think, no, you've got to do that your damn self."*

The children of *facilitating* parents also advocate a level of parental involvement where they keep an eye on the children and are involved in the moving process, but not too involved. Like their parents, these young people distance themselves from parents who take over and are controlling; they stress the importance of parents allowing their children access to the learning and formative aspects of the moving process and youth life in a broader sense.

The absent form of involvement

A number of the young people we interviewed are in a situation where their parents are largely *absent* from the moving process. They say that they have to do it all themselves: housing search, planning, budgeting, moving, furnishing, etc. This group is primarily composed of young people from working-class backgrounds, but there are also young people from middle-class homes. Some come from divorced families where the parents are still in crisis, others come from families where the parents refuse to accept their child's sexuality or other aspects of their identity, and still others come from ethnic minority families where the parents do not want them to move away from home before they marry. It is predominantly these young people who did not wish to facilitate contact

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with their parents for the purposes of this study, and therefore we rely solely upon their voices in this section. 19-year-old William speaks about his parents' lack of involvement in his moving process:

> Int.: *Your mother isn't involved in it at all. Is anyone else involved?*
>
> William: *No, actually, not at all. I pretty much do it all myself. I went down to the administration office to talk with them about getting a room, and take care of my budget, and so on. So there aren't really any adults holding my hand and guiding me through it all. I pretty much have to figure everything out myself.*

William has not had any contact with his father since his parents divorced, and his mother does not want her son to move away from home and begin living life as a homosexual man. William thereby has no support in his moving process and has to do it himself. Fortunately, William is quite resourceful and attempts to compensate by involving friends and acquaintances in the moving process. Twenty-three-year-old Jamil's family situation is very similar to William's. Jamil's father is deceased and his mother, who is originally from Morocco, is opposed to Jamil moving away from home. Jamil describes his move as follows:

> *"Finding your own apartment and starting from the very bottom, it was hard not having anybody to ask for advice. It made it much more difficult to find the help that was needed. It was very spontaneous [that I found my own residence]. I had a job delivering pizza and I drove by a sign that read 'We're building student housing here' [...] So I sent an e-mail and got a reply two weeks later saying 'We've reserved an apartment for you.' It was a bit surreal, and made me think, 'OK, what do I have to make sure to do now?'"*

The place Jamil finds is an expensive and small student apartment. He has a part-time job alongside his studies, but no savings. He contacts the municipality and gets a loan for the deposit, enabling

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him to move into the apartment. But to earn enough to pay for rent and other expenses, Jamil works so much that it affects his studies. When his employer goes bankrupt, Jamil has to move back home with the mother he finds overbearing and who was against his moving out in the first place.

As we have not spoken with the parents themselves, we only have the young people's stories about their moving process to examine the parental approach of these parents. In these narratives, the parents emerge as having fewer resources and, in many cases, different norms and values than their children. These factors lead to conflicts and severed ties, and the young people say that their parents are *absent* in the moving process. They are left to themselves, without the *encapsulation* seen among the controlling parents, and without the *support* that facilitating parents give their children. Young people with *absent* parents experience a sense of being all alone and *unencapsulated* as they singlehandedly tackle the challenges and risks they encounter.

Emotional involvement

The invasive emotions

In our interviews with parents, the narratives regarding the practical aspects of the young people's moving processes often led to discussion of the emotions experienced by the parents in connection with their children moving. In this respect, too, the parents can be analytically divided into different categories. In the first category, the parents sense that their children moving away from home is the right thing to do. However, they find it very difficult to let go of their children; this emotion often becomes so overpowering that they lose touch with the feeling that their children are doing the right thing. This dynamic is evident in Karsten, father of 20-year-old Gertrud.

> *"You lose a part of yourself when you've been fully responsible, or been close to a person who grows into an independent adult. When that person suddenly comes*

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> *to you and says, I'm moving out now, it really feels like you're being ripped in half. Because, in a way, you'd like to move with them and continue to be a very big part of your child's life. You also know that it's the right thing. That's the development. And so you sit back and think: Well, what about me? Am I done now? Was that that?" (laughs).*

Karsten points out that it is the right thing for his daughter to move away from home, but nonetheless it feels terribly wrong for Karsten himself. He is faced with having to be a parent and person in a new way, but has no idea how to do it. Other parents say that they cry in front of their children and have a hard time controlling their emotions, which causes shame and guilt.

The children of parents who speak of such emotions, are well aware of how difficult it is for their parents, whose emotions in many ways *invade* their moving processes and impact the start of their lives living on their own. Most of these young people have grown up with a close relationship with their parents, and they continue to care for them even as these emotions cast a shadow over their moving process. Laust, age 23, says:

> "*It's been me and my father in a big house, and we've spent a lot of time together. I think it has been difficult for him that she [Laust's mother] has been out so much. He has been very much alone, and I was a little worried about that when I moved. Because I wasn't home, you know? Not because I was supposed to compensate for my mother, but just so that my father wouldn't have to home alone in a big house."*

Even though Laust has moved to another part of the country, he frequently visits his parents to spend time with his father, and the two also communicate frequently on social media. Laust empathizes with his father and understands that his father misses him. This is true for many young people whose parents' emotions are very pronounced. For some of these young people, it is difficult to make room for their own emotions of joy and eager anticipation in connection with the move. As

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a result, they often experience feelings of irritation and frustration. But some of them express that they also feel somewhat trapped in their parents' emotions and they care greatly for their parents, so open conflicts and severed ties are rare.

Although there is no exact correlation between the parents whose emotional involvement can be categorized as *invasive* and parents whose practical involvement can be categorized as *controlling*, there is a significant overlap. In the case of parents with such an overlap, they are at risk of *encapsulating* their children in the moving process in two ways: by shielding the young people from the practical challenges and risks in the moving process, and by asserting their own feelings of loss and grief so forcefully that it burdens the young people's own emotions in connection with the moving process. Parents who both control the practical aspects and invade the emotional aspects of the moving process doubly encapsulate their children, resulting in parenting characterized here as a *bulging heart*: a form of parenting that intercedes in both the practical and emotional aspects of the moving process.

The ambivalent emotions

In the next emotional category we identified among parents in the moving process, the same emotional *ambivalence* as in the first category emerges as the primary characteristic. On the one hand, it is difficult for them that their children are moving away from home. On the other hand, it is also the right thing. Both of these aspects are felt by the parents in this category. The following comes from previously quoted Sanne, talking about her 18-year-old daughter Ida's move:

> *"It's not like I was cheering with glee about her moving away from home. It's strange to suddenly see the last child move out. And I've also thought: What are my husband and I going to do now? What are we going to talk about? But I'm really happy about it on Ida's behalf, because I believe it's the right thing to do. That is, I think it is an important step for her to take at this point in time."*

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As in the previous quote, the child's moving out causes a new orientation in the lives of the parents. It is experienced as difficult, but for this mother it is also the right thing, because she considers the situation from her daughter's perspective. The parents in this category are attentive to maintaining a focus on this feeling of rightness to prevent their emotions from dominating the process.

Just as the parents in the previous emotional category, the ambivalent parents soothe their feelings of loss through frequent contact with their children on social media and by having them come for visits relatively often. However, the day-to-day contact becomes largely digital and less tied to physical encounters, which can be difficult for the parents, even as they maintain a conviction that it is the right thing.

Just as the case with the children of parents whose emotions were categorized as invasive, children of ambivalent parents are well aware that their move away from home is difficult for their parents. 21-year-old Sebastian talks about his parents' emotional reaction to his move:

> *"I hadn't really been home that much for a period leading up to the move, but now I'm actually not there at all in their everyday life. I think my dad also finds it really strange. And it has given them time for some completely different things, but I think they just need to find their footing. And get used to it. And, of course, it has also been a huge change for me, but even more so, or at least as much of a huge change for them."*

The fact that it is difficult for the parents when they move away from home is also a part of these young people's narratives. However, Sebastian believes that his parents will find their footing once they have gotten used to the new life situation. He is therefore able to escape from the realm of his parents' emotions and think about himself and his own emotions.

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Although there is not a complete affinity between the parents whose emotions are *ambivalent* and the parents who are involved in the practical aspects of the moving process in a *facilitating* way, there is a significant overlap. In the cases where these two categories are combined, the parents appear to be *supportive* of the young people in two ways: By supporting them in the encounter with challenges and risks that arise during the move, rather than shielding them from these challenges and risks, and by balancing their emotions of grief and loss with a sense of rightness, giving the young people room to experience and explore their own emotions. When the facilitating and emotionally ambivalent parent categories combine, the resulting parenting in the moving process takes shape as *a soft nudge:* A form of parenting where the parents support the young people in both a practical and emotional sense, while also nudging them softly and gradually towards independently shaping their new lives.

The dismissive emotions

The last emotional category consists mostly of parents of the young people who would not provide us access to their parents, therefore we primarily have the narratives of the young people themselves. These young people describe their parents as *absent* in the moving process, and find that they are alone and *unencapsulated* in relation to any challenges and risks that may arise. These young people often speak of parents they find to be emotionally *dismissive*, i.e. parents who are either unwilling or unable to understand them and their feelings. 20-year-old Hans talks about his father:

> *It's the way that my father raised me: "My way or the highway". And there wasn't any option of communication at all. If I say, "I don't think this is working. It makes me sad, it makes me feel bad." Then the answer is: "Well, you can always move out. It's not my problem. You're an adult after all."*

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Hans's mother is deceased, and his story about his father is one of an authoritarian father figure who does not empathize with him. This is also reflected in Hans' moving process, which is marked by the father's *dismissive* emotions and the resulting lack of emotional contact between father and son. Hans initially moved to live with a friend in another part of Denmark, sleeping on her sofa. His ambition was to attend school there, but instead, he ended up returning to his hometown and moving from place to place, living with friends and acquaintances as he slid deeper and deeper into depression. When we interviewed him again six months later, he had finally found a room in a social housing development with the assistance of the municipality, which also arranged for psychological counseling to help Hans out of the depression.

Vincent, age 21, has a story much like that of Hans. A short time before Vincent moved away from home, he and his mother moved in to live with his mother's new husband, whose house has an annex in the backyard. The plan was for Vincent to live in the annex. But the stepfather did not want Vincent to come into the main house unless it was to eat or use the toilet. After an argument with his mother, Vincent abruptly moved into a room in another part of the country. But in the new residence he was not allowed to have any visitors, and he did not attend school or have a job, ultimately causing him to feel lonely and lost. After a longer period of time he got a job in the service industry, which changed his life situation. Whereas he previously felt rejected by his mother, he now travelled back to visit her and his stepfather to definitively say goodbye:

> *"I went over to visit her before attending a training course for my work. I thought 'Okay, I'll visit her now... I have no idea when I'll see her again.' Because I know that now that I have this job I won't need to be there anymore, especially since I don't even feel welcome, which I'm not. So I don't know how long it will be before I see her again." (Vincent, age 21)*

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For Vincent and other young people in similar situations, moving away from home is often characterized by pronounced conflicts and severed ties. They find that their parents are unwilling and unable to understand them. They feel *dismissed* by their parents and lack emotional contact with them. There is a division between these young people and their parents that we do not see among other young people. As the parents of these young people have also been largely *absent* from the practicalities of their moving processes, the move emerges as a definitive process in which the young people say goodbye to their parents and start a new life in which they are doubly *unencapsulated,* practically and emotionally alone. In these cases, the parenting in the moving process can be described as *a slammed door*: There is no access to the parents on any level. They experience that their parents are uninterested in them and cannot understand them. In our data material, these young people come from both working-class and middle-class backgrounds. Most of them are families characterized by conflicts and divisions, either between the parents or the parents and the children, which may relate to values, culture, etc.

Conclusion

This aim of this article has been to develop a nuanced understanding of the role of parents in young people's moving processes, and how this influences the young people's perceptions of themselves and their capacities to live away from their parental home. The practical and emotional categories of involvement presented in the analysis form a differentiated picture of today's parenting and parents' involvement in young people's moving processes. Among the parents we have interviewed, there appears to be an overweight of parents who practice what research describes as "involved parenting" (Forsberg 2009). However, through our analysis we have contributed to differentiating the understanding of "involved parenting" in relation to parenting in young people's moving

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processes. This includes parents who can be understood as controlling in the practical aspects of the moving process, as well as parents who facilitate the moving process for their children so as to maximize the formative and learning aspects of such a move. In both cases, the parents practice a child-centric and parent-controlled form of parenting (Lareau 2000). Thus, they have an observant eye on the children and a constant readiness to respond to their needs, even though they have different perspectives on the needs of their children and how they should respond to these needs. The controlling parents tend to encapsulate the young people to ensure as smooth of a transition as possible to living on their own, while the facilitating parents tend to support the young people in an effort to ensure they are able to grapple with the challenges and risks that arise during the moving process.

The analysis also indicates that parents who tend to be highly involved in the practical aspects of their children's moving processes typically also have a high level of emotional involvement in the lives of their children. A differentiation also emerges in this respect, as the parents who facilitate the practical moving processes often express ambivalence about their children moving away from home. Despite their personal feelings of grief and loss, they maintain a focus on the emotions and needs of their children. The parents who are controlling in the practical aspects of the moving process appear to be more inclined to get swept away by their own feelings of grief and loss, which ultimately invade the child's own experience in the moving process. Thus, contrary to the arguments of Trondman (2013), the centering around children that characterizes today's involved parenting does not unilaterally entail a greater orientation towards the children as subjects. In this category of parents, the children appear instead to be objects for the parents' own emotions, and their continuous focus on the children seems to result in an intertwining of parents and children that makes it difficult for the children to distance themselves from their parents' emotions, thereby impeding their own emotional experience in the moving process.

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The analysis also finds that not all parents are as involved in their children's moving processes as those mentioned above. Research in the field has argued that parents from different social classes have different resources for involvement in the lives of their children (Aarseth 2018, Lareau 2003). Cekaite (2018) thus argues that the "soft individualism" at the core of the academic literature's descriptions of involved childrearing is an ideal particular to the middle class. She writes that a "hard individualism" reigns in the working class, where children are more left on their own and are raised to take care of things themselves. In our analysis, we also see parents who are absent in the moving process and where the children must largely manage the process on their own. But in our analysis, these parents do not belong to a specific social class. The analysis does indicate a certain disproportionate share of working-class parents in this category, but it also includes middle-class parents. In many cases, these parents appear to be emotionally dismissive, and their children are thereby on their own both practically and emotionally, unencapsulated in the moving process.

The events in youth life are increasingly dynamic and reversible (Dommermuth 2009, Woodman & Leccardi 2015) and, as this article also demonstrates, leaving home is no longer a symbol of autonomy from the parents, who are expected to be closely involved in the lives of their children long after they have moved away from home. In this article we have explored how different forms of parental involvement influence young people's experiences of leaving home. Further research could explore how parental involvement patterns affect other aspects of young people's transitions to adulthood, and which challenges it creates for different groups of young people. The young people who stand alone and unencapuslated in their moving processes find their situation to be lacking and problematic. To them, it resembles a "slammed door" that has left them on their own in their efforts to establish goals and meaning in a new life phase. This abrupt independence stands in sharp contrast to the "bulging heart" and "soft nudge" principles underlying the two other forms of parenting identified in the analysis.

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In the public discourse in Denmark about "curling parents", the latter principle has been the subject of a virtual moral panic: How in the world will these young people develop subjectivity and agency when their parents are so deeply involved in their lives? In response, this analysis finds that leaving home is particularly difficult and challenging for the young people whose parents are not deeply involved in their lives. This indicates that, to some extent, today's individualized youth life (Illeris et al 2009) requires the presence of adults who are there for the young people and who can provide support and reflect with them when making decisions, planning for the future, and shaping and taking responsibility for their life projects. The young people whose parents are not present in this sense are individualized in the most absolute sense of the word. They are truly alone in their life projects, and our moral panic should be directed more towards their life situation.

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