Call for Papers

Call 7

Multilocality and Generations

The predominantly place-bound family structure of the 20th century, characterised by direct progeny, has developed towards a „multilocal multigenerational family" in the 21st century. These days, families are non-place-bound networks, distributed among several households, of persons linked by descent, marriage or civil partnership. Parents, children, (great)-grandparents, grandchildren and further natural as well as social relatives are linked across household boundaries and places of residence (Bertram 2002: 526). Even separation or divorce do not necessarily imply the end of familial relations, such as between children and parents living apart, or between grandchildren and grandparents, but often entail a diversification of the family network and the places where family life occurs.

Multilocality is also determined by generations of adult family members living apart. This influences intergenerational support. It is evident that grandparents, but also other persons from the familial environment, are very important with regard to childcare, generally as a supplement to institutional care, and in particular in the event of illness and at unusual times and occasions (Bertram 2011, p. 40). On the other hand, multilocality also has a negative impact on the help that grown-up children can provide for their ageing parents.

Familial community is created by co-presence in terms of spending time together". Yet lack of shared time, large distances and the costs required to surmount them limit the scope for and the quality of familial interaction under the given conditions (Schneider et al. 2014, p. 174).

Familial and intergenerational relations change under the paradigm of multilocality, but what are these changes like? How and when are spatial distances surmounted in order to maintain family relationships, and what are the chances offered by modern communication technologies and technical progress – does virtual togetherness replace co-presence? How is intergenerational help being organised across distances, and how are services substituted when they cannot be performed by family members? What kind of networks are formed to supplement familial care? What is the role of occupational mobility requirements in this context?

References:
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