

## **Intergenerational ambivalence: beyond solidarity and conflict<sup>1</sup>**

*Kurt Lüscher and Andreas Hoff*

### **New challenges for theory and research**

Intergenerational family and kin relationships have increasingly become a focus of social science research since the 1980s. There are several reasons for this development, with the most frequently mentioned reason being demographic change. Changes in population structure, however, are embedded in broader social, economic and cultural changes and therefore specific attention should be paid to intergenerational relationships in family and society (as the title of this book suggests). However, these changes do not follow a linear trajectory. On the contrary, there are multiple contradictions and distortions that also refer to the meanings commonly ascribed to intergenerational relations. To put it simply: intergenerational relations can no longer be taken for granted. For example, a considerable number of women – and even more men – decide against parenthood, or become parents comparatively late in their lives. Separation, divorce, new family types and reconstituted families contribute to the increasing plurality of private forms of life. All these are expressions of accelerated and at the same time contradictory dynamics of post-modern lifestyles, which include intergenerational relations, both at the family and societal level. These circumstances present new challenges for the social scientific analysis of intergenerational relationships, such as covering the wide range of contemporary intergenerational relations.

Questions to be asked in this context include the following: are there any overarching concepts suitable for analysing the contradictory dynamics of intergenerational plurality in post-modern society? Are there theoretical concepts which represent people's day-to-day experiences but which nonetheless allow distance for reflection? Are there concepts suitable for challenging the pitfalls of intergenerational rhetoric<sup>2</sup>? These questions delineate the scope of this chapter. The concept of 'intergenerational ambivalence' will be proposed as an instrument for resolving these issues.

This chapter first provides a guide to the historical context in which the concepts of intergenerational solidarity and intergenerational ambivalence emerged, before supplying a brief conceptual history of intergenerational ambivalence. The next section of the chapter provides a comprehensive review of the intergenerational ambivalence discourse in the international research literature.

By contrast, the following section focuses on the conceptual advancement of intergenerational ambivalence. Beginning with a critical review of the 2002 debate on intergenerational solidarity, conflict and ambivalence in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family (JMF)*, the reader will be introduced to several more recent contributions that further develop the concept. In concluding, a brief outlook on the future is presented by proposing an elaborated understanding and definition of ambivalence.

### **'Solidarity' versus 'ambivalence' – the origins of a debate**

The emergence and popularity of theoretical concepts has to be seen in historical context. Some sociological concepts reflect their '*Zeitgeist*'. Therefore, the societal context in which the concept of intergenerational solidarity emerged and why it was received with such immense popularity will be outlined briefly. This insight is crucial for understanding (a) the motivations underlying the development of the intergenerational ambivalence concept, and (b) why the concept has often been perceived as a challenge or even a *threat* to the commonly accepted superiority of intergenerational solidarity, both as a theoretical notion and a private conviction. The latter may be the case because for many people ambivalence has a negative connotation; for others, it lacks the positive normative reference that the notion of solidarity has.

#### *Historical context*

During the 1980s, social scientists rediscovered the extended family. This can be seen as a backlash against the predominance of the idea of the married couple and their children as *the* family ideal of the 1950s and 1960s. The idealisation of this family image resulted from efforts to present the traditional division of labour of both sexes as a complementary relationship in which women accepted primary responsibility for raising children while men earned the family livelihood. This went hand in hand with a generalisation of trends in the American middle class that resulted in the growing popularity of an ideal image: the nuclear family living with a house and garden in suburbia. This image also influenced European sociology, which looked to American social science for orientation after the Second World War. American sociology was experiencing its heyday both nationally and internationally. However, the idealisation of the nuclear family also provoked criticism. This critique was partly based on empirical evidence showing that this ideal was not in line with the reality of family life in other social groups, for instance ethnic minority families or families in rural areas. In general, kinship relations beyond the nuclear family were somewhat underestimated. The extended family network gained importance again following the development of modern telecommunication technology, which allowed frequent contact to be maintained across wide geographical spaces. Finally, the student movement of the late 1960s voiced a harsh criticism of the moral idealisation of the family. The

books by Berger and Berger (1983) *The War over the Family* and Coontz (1992) *The Way We Never Were* represent the polarities of this controversy in the North American literature. A similar line of argument can be found in an edited collection by Lüscher, Schultheis and Wehrspaun (1988) entitled *The 'Postmodern' Family*, which documents reflections on these issues in the Continental European context.

However, the rediscovery of the extended family was not purely the result of an ideological controversy between elderly/middle-aged and younger generations about their normative convictions in general and family values in particular. Demographic change, particularly an extended lifespan and increasingly longevity, created new realities in American and European families. People could now safely expect to live healthy lives well into old age. As a consequence, grandparent–grandchild relationships have changed considerably, with grandparents being able to engage with grandchildren in more active ways and having the prospect of seeing their grandchildren growing up to have children of their own (great-grandchildren) (Hagestad, 1988; Szinovacz, 1997; Uhlenberg and Kirby, 1998; see also Chapter Nine). This followed the rediscovery of grandparenthood by American sociology in the mid-1980s (see, for example, the seminal work by Cherlin and Furstenberg, 1986; for France, see Attias-Donfut and Segalen, 1998). Moreover, there was mounting evidence on both sides of the Atlantic that grandparents had a stabilising role during times of crisis, such as the process of divorce/separation or when parents could not fulfil their parenting role – as illustrated by the example of 'custodian grandparents' (Fuller-Thompson et al, 1997; Drew and Smith, 1999; Ferguson, 2004; Harper, 2005).

#### *Solidarity vs ambivalence – alternative or complementary explanations?*

By the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of intergenerational solidarity (Bengtson and Roberts, 1991) had become the predominant one for explaining intergenerational relations in the family. The specific relationship between ageing parents and their adult children became the main focus of research on intergenerational relations – and almost exclusively articulated by sociologists.

The popularity of the solidarity concept was also fuelled by a mismatch between public rhetoric of intergenerational conflict, and empirical evidence showing that older people support younger generations substantially – both financially and by providing (grand)childcare (see, for example, Kivett, 1985; Attias-Donfut, 1995; Bass and Caro, 1996; Baydar and Brooks-Gunn, 1998; Silverstein et al, 1998; Kohli, 1999; see also Chapter Twelve). In short, intergenerational solidarity communicated a 'positive message' incorporating traditional family norms and values.

The availability of appropriate surveys, in particular longitudinal data, gave the impression that contemporary intergenerational relations could be described differently. The American sociologist Vern L. Bengtson and his research team at the University of Southern California have to be credited for much of the pioneering work on intergenerational solidarity. It was based on their 'Longitudinal Study of Generations', a multi-generational and multi-disciplinary investigation of families,

ageing, and social change that commenced in 1983. Based on this unique database, Bengtson and colleagues proposed a solidarity concept that explicitly outlined three (Bengtson et al, 1976) and later six plausible dimensions (Bengtson and Roberts, 1991) that could be measured in easily applicable ways.

However, this period of hegemony came to an end towards the end of the 1990s amid mounting criticism that intergenerational solidarity overemphasised the positive aspects of intergenerational relationships and overlooked the negative, conflicting ones (for example, elder abuse). Intergenerational conflict became a popular theme in public debates, particularly in reference to the metaphorical 'intergenerational contract' between the generation of contemporary workers and the current pensioner generation on which the welfare state of continental Europe rests. As reflected in the emergence of alternative approaches including intergenerational conflict (see also Chapter Eight), this situation was the trigger for introducing the idea of ambivalence into the debate.<sup>3</sup>

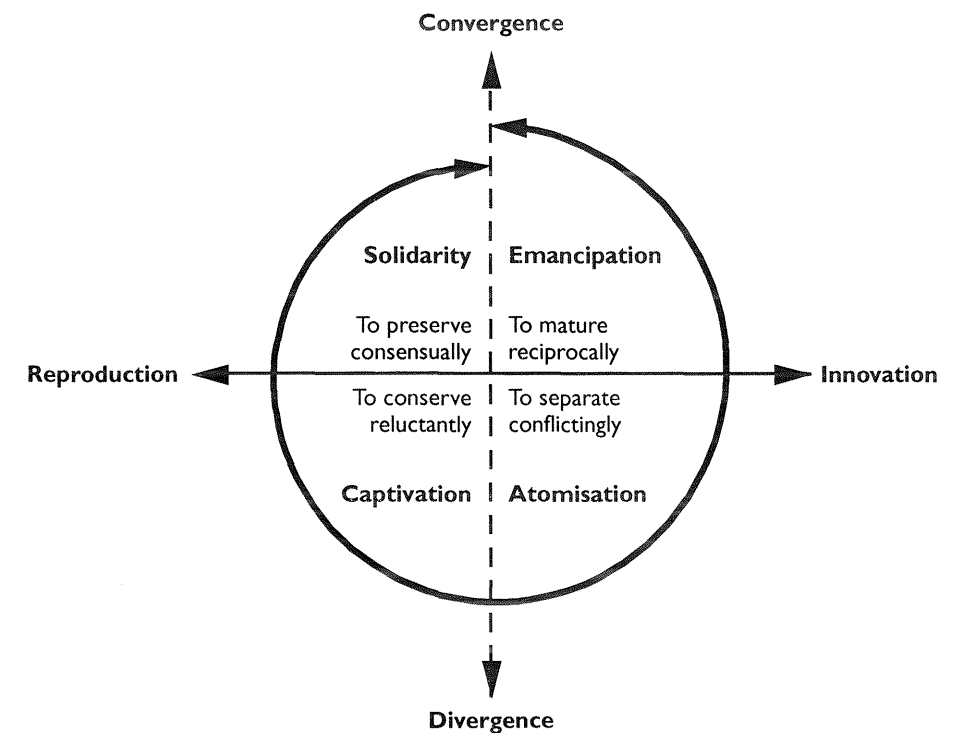
As early as in 1992 the Austrian family sociologist and gerontologist Leopold Rosenmayr (1992) pointed out that intergenerational family relations can be experienced as being ambivalent. However, the international academic debate on intergenerational ambivalence really took off with the publication of an article by Kurt Lüscher and Karl Pillemer in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* (Lüscher and Pillemer, 1998). They began by pointing out that there were two different – yet parallel – lines of argument in the academic literature for explaining intergenerational family relations in later life. The first stressed the importance of solidarity, as explained above; the other focused on elder abuse, which appeared to be in contradiction with solidarity. Lüscher and Pillemer (1998) argued that the notion of ambivalence would bring both lines of argument together by combining both the inherently positive and negative elements of intergenerational relationships. They proposed a general concept by using the term 'intergenerational ambivalence' in order 'to designate contradictions in relationships between parents and adult offspring that cannot be reconciled' (Lüscher and Pillemer, 1998, p 416). They also distinguished 'two dimensions: (a) contradictions at the level of social structure, evidenced in institutional resources such as statuses, roles or norms and (b) contradictions at the subjective level, in terms of cognitions, emotions and motivations'. This distinction was taken up by many others in the form of a juxtaposition between psychological and sociological ambivalence, having the advantage of plausibility. Yet it could be argued that the real power of the concept lies in its potential to connect both dimensions. This point – and the issue of an elaborated definition of intergenerational ambivalence – will be discussed further later in this chapter.

The next milestone in developing the ambivalence concept was a public debate on using the three alternative concepts for the study of intergenerational relationships: intergenerational solidarity, intergenerational conflict and intergenerational ambivalence. This discussion, in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, was initiated in 2002 by (then) editor Alexis Walker (see *JMF*, 2002, pp 557–601). In his contribution to the 2002 *JMF* debate, Lüscher suggested an analytical

module in the form of a *four-field diagram* (Lüscher, 2002, pp 588ff), based on work done by the Konstanz research group on 'Society and Family' (see Lüscher and Pajung-Bilger, 1998; Lettke and Lüscher, 2001). This proposal provided a method of connecting the institutional and the psychological dimension (as mentioned in the previous paragraph). The proposed module was later extended, in particular to underline the *dynamic* aspects of coping with ambivalences. These were modelled along two dimensions – subjective and institutional – and pictured as oscillating between two contradictory poles within each dimension: 'convergence' and 'divergence' depicted the subjective dimension, and 'reproduction' and 'innovation' represented the institutional dimension. Intersecting both dimensions resulted in four sub-dimensions: solidarity ('to preserve consensually'), emancipation ('to mature reciprocally'), atomisation ('to separate conflictingly') and captivation ('to conserve reluctantly').

In the revised module, it is hypothesised that 'solidarity' suggests concealing ambivalence by stressing common feelings, orientations and goals of belonging and togetherness. Ambivalences have not disappeared but here become latent.

**Figure 3.1: Intergenerational ambivalences: a dynamic model**



Spiral: Symbolising the dynamic temporal dimension

- - - - - Subjective (personal) dimension: Convergence vs. Divergence

————— Institutional dimension: Reproduction vs. Innovation

In contrast, 'emancipation' goes hand-in-hand with openly acknowledging ambivalences and accepting them as essential elements of relationship dynamics. This includes their potential to develop new forms of common action in socially creative respects. Those who pursue the pathways of 'atomisation' more generally deny the existence of ambivalences. Lastly, the mode of 'captivation' most likely goes together with a continuous struggle over ambivalences which often cannot be expressed adequately in words. As a result, the specific communication-pragmatic elements are given separate attention, enabling the analysis to be enriched from the meta-perspective of the sociology of knowledge. Several research articles have confirmed the usefulness of this module (for example, Lüscher and Lettke, 2004; Lorenz-Meyer, 2004; Rappoport and Lowenstein, 2007; Burkhardt et al, 2007; Letiecq et al, 2008).

Referring to the general literature on the concept of ambivalence, specifically its reception by Merton and Barber (1963), the present authors have carried out a thorough study from the perspective of this theory. Other crucial theoretical contributions to developing the ambivalence concept can be observed in Weigert (1991), Smelser (1998) and Junge (2000). Each of them refers to the history of the concept, commencing with the creation of the term 'ambivalence' by the Swiss psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler in 1910. Bleuler first defined the concept, associating it with the analysis of 'negativism', for example the incapacity that emerges when emotions, cognitions or volitions contradict each other (Bleuler, 1910, p 1). Soon thereafter he published an essay where he expanded the notion of ambivalence in order to include ordinary experiences (Bleuler, 1914). An overview of the history of this concept and its astounding reception in many disciplines as well as its inclusion in everyday language can be found in Lüscher (2009).

The contrast of ambivalence to solidarity (and vice versa) does not occur by chance. It results from a common understanding of 'ambivalent' being something undesirable. As a result, ambivalences are often concealed or suppressed. Yet the analytical understanding of ambivalence is different because ambivalence is a concept that enables researchers to focus on both conflict and solidarity at the same time. It actually allows researchers to consider conflict and solidarity within one and the same relationship, at the same time or in the same situation. Hence, both perspectives are sociologically of the same value.

### **Intergenerational ambivalence in the international research literature**

This section will provide an overview of the large number of research articles that have utilised the intergenerational ambivalence concept since 1998. Although intergenerational solidarity has remained popular in the research community, the 2000s are characterised by widespread acceptance of multiple theoretical approaches for explaining intergenerational relationships. Intergenerational ambivalence is one such approach. An impressive number of articles and chapters applying intergenerational ambivalence in research have been published over the

past decade or so. The present authors found more than 100 articles in a 'Web of Science' search covering the period between 1998 and 2011. A selection of these articles representing typical patterns of using the concept will be presented below. In particular, two phases have been observed in the application of the concept.

### ***Intergenerational ambivalence as an alternative to intergenerational solidarity***

During the first phase, which started in 1999 but extends until the present day, intergenerational ambivalence was seen as an alternative, opposing concept to intergenerational solidarity for the study of intergenerational relations. In this context, intergenerational ambivalence was discussed in relation to intergenerational family relations more broadly (see, for example, Lowenstein, 1999; Tesch-Römer, 2001; Daatland and Herlofsen, 2003; Katz, 2009; Silverstein et al, 2010). Most of these publications are characterised by an orientation towards traditional theoretical approaches, such as intergenerational solidarity. They discuss the ambivalence concept without applying it to their research (see, for example, Connidis, 2003a; Jacobs, 2003; Holdsworth, 2004; Shapiro, 2004; Stimpson et al, 2005; Daatland and Lowenstein, 2005; Steinbach, 2008). Unfortunately, the authors of these articles tend to employ the common understanding of ambivalence in its negative connotation, thus favouring the approach of seeing it in contradiction to solidarity.

This negative undertone of ambivalence can also be found in attachment theory where one out of four or five attachment styles between mother (or another primary caregiver) and child is described as 'ambivalent' (see also Chapter Five). Moreover, attachment theory tends to overemphasise the consequences of (mis) attachment during childhood. Yet ambivalences often emerge during adulthood in response to such childhood experiences, thereby resulting in new behavioural patterns. More recent attempts to link intergenerational ambivalence to attachment theory (Merz et al, 2007; Shemmings, 2006) indicate that a more balanced view is emerging.

### ***Broadening the range of the ambivalence perspective empirically***

Indications that a new phase has begun appeared in the early to mid-2000s. Intergenerational ambivalence was now being applied to empirical research, informing a number of hypothesis-guided research projects. Karen Fingerman's research group led the way in this respect, mainly by applying intergenerational ambivalence to variations of the parent-child relationship (Fingerman and Hay, 2004; Fingerman et al, 2006; Fingerman et al, 2008; Hay et al, 2007). Others used both the intergenerational solidarity-conflict and the intergenerational ambivalence model to test their respective predictive power (see, for example, Beaton et al, 2003; Lowenstein, 2007; Coleman and Ganong, 2008). Other publications included intergenerational ambivalence as a dependent or independent variable

(for example, Fingerman et al, 2006; Ganong and Coleman, 2006; Peters et al, 2006; Reschke et al, 2006; Burkhardt et al, 2007; Connidis, 2007; Duner and Nordstrom, 2007; Hay et al, 2007; Lowenstein, 2007; Pillemer et al, 2007; Ha and Ingersoll-Dayton, 2008; Letiecq et al, 2008; Lewis, 2008; Dolbin-MacNab and Keiley, 2009; Katz, 2009; Michels et al, 2011). In what follows, popular themes of study in recent research that uses the intergenerational ambivalence concept will be highlighted.

### *Parent–child relationship*

The initial aim of using the concept for studying parent–child relations in later life still attracts the most attention (see, for example, Lorenz-Meyer, 2001; Beaton et al, 2003; Phillips et al, 2003; Willson et al, 2003; Izuhara, 2004; Obradovic and Cudina-Obradovic, 2004; Spitze and Gallant, 2004; Perrig-Chiello and Höpflinger, 2005; Fingerman et al, 2006, 2008; Ganong and Coleman, 2006; Peters et al, 2006; Zygowicz, 2006; Burkhardt et al, 2007; Duner and Nordstrom, 2007; Hay et al, 2007; Coleman and Ganong, 2008; Ha and Ingersoll-Dayton, 2008; Birditt et al, 2009, 2010; van Gaalen et al, 2010). A sub-theme of the parent–child relationship was caregiving by adult children to their ageing parents (Jacobs, 2003; Willson et al, 2003; Obradovic and Cudina-Obradovic, 2004; Pridalova, 2007; Duner and Nordstrom, 2007). Other dimensions of intergenerational support exchange (financial transfers and instrumental, emotional or cognitive support) were also addressed in relation to intergenerational ambivalence (Izuhara, 2004; Lewis, 2008; White et al, 2008).

### *Gender perspective*

Other studies adopted an explicit gender perspective, focusing exclusively on the mother–daughter relationship (Fingerman, 2001; Roer-Strier and Sands, 2001; Martini et al, 2003; Reschke et al, 2006). According to Fingerman (2001), daughters are much more likely to experience ambivalence than their mothers. Pillemer focused exclusively on mothers' ambivalent relations with adult offspring (Pillemer and Sutor, 2002; Pillemer, 2004). Comparing mothers and fathers, however, Willson et al (2003) found no evidence that women experienced intergenerational ambivalence more frequently than men. Likewise, Ward (2008) as well as Ward et al (2009) compared mothers' and fathers' levels of ambivalence towards multiple children. They found that while mothers' relationships with their children were generally more positive, mothers and fathers did not differ in perceiving their relations towards their children as negative. The most diverse account of factors influencing mothers' ambivalence towards their adult children has been provided by Pillemer et al (2007), finding mothers later in life to be less ambivalent towards married children. Similarly, sharing the same values as well as poor health of the mother resulted in lower levels of ambivalence in the mother–child relationship. On the other hand, respondents reported higher levels of ambivalence towards

children with problems as well as children with whom exchange of support was perceived as imbalanced. Finally, King (2004) applied a gender perspective to the concept of intergenerational ambivalence in a theoretical and unique study of adolescence and creativity.

### *Grandparent–grandchild relationship*

Intergenerational ambivalence was also used to shed light on the grandparent–grandchild relationship. Some argued that this relationship is more likely to be governed by the 'intergenerational stake hypothesis' (Giarrusso et al, 1995; Hoff, 2007; see also Chapter Eight) due to this specific relationship being much less prone to tensions than parent–child relationships. Nonetheless, grandparent–grandchild relationships can also entail ambivalent characteristics (Kemp, 2004; Letiecq et al, 2008; Dolbin-MacNab and Keiley, 2009). Particularly in situations where grandparents assume a parental role – as custodial grandparents – intergenerational ambivalence can become a common feature (Letiecq et al, 2008). Ambivalences can result from the diverging loyalties grandchildren feel towards their grandparents vis-à-vis their parents (Dolbin-MacNab and Keiley, 2009; see also Chapter Nine).

### *Dissolving and reconstituted families*

Dissolving and reconstituted families arguably provide an ideal playing field for considering ambivalence. Parents are likely to perceive their relationship with stepchildren as more negative than their relationship with their biological children (Ward et al, 2009). Unsurprisingly, children of divorced parents are highly likely to experience ambivalence in relation to the absent parent, usually their father (Radina, 2003). The concept was also deemed to account for the variance between divorcees from different social groups (Connidis, 2003b) as well as for 'new family forms', including single mothers (Sarkisian, 2006) and gay and lesbian couples (Connidis, 2003a). Intergenerational ambivalence was also used to explain unresolved marital issues of middle-aged parents who reported that disagreements with their parents and parents-in-law had adverse effects on their marital relationship (Beaton et al, 2003). Widmer (2010, also Widmer and Lüscher, 2011) combined ambivalence with a configuration approach to the reconstitution of families.

### *Social structures*

One of the most contested areas was how to apply the concept to social structures. Following pioneering work by Connidis and McMullin (2002), a Singaporean research team (Teo et al, 2003) argued that intergenerational ambivalence can help to explain how social structures create tensions in intergenerational relationships and how these change over time. Others suggested that the interaction between

social structures and individual role norms created tensions (Willson et al, 2003; Turner et al, 2006). More research is needed to clarify the interaction between social structures, intergenerational relations and ambivalence.

### **Intercultural application**

Although the intergenerational ambivalence concept was initially developed in the context of Western societies, it has now begun crossing cultural boundaries. Recent examples from Singapore and Japan include studies on the potential of intergenerational ambivalence for explaining the rise in tensions between currently young or middle-aged children and their ageing parents, who expect care and reverence in line with traditional Confucian norms of filial piety (Teo et al, 2003; Izuhara, 2004). Further, the concept has been applied to explaining the situation of Turkish immigrants to the United States (Senyuerekli and Detzner, 2008) and Cambodian refugees (Lewis, 2008). Likewise, it has been used to analyse the predicament of Mexican migrant workers in the US and the difficulties they face in maintaining and supporting their families back in Mexico (Grzywacz et al, 2006). A very specific angle was chosen by a South African research project looking into changes in the mother–daughter relationship as a consequence of ‘religious intensification’ (Roer-Strier and Sands, 2001).

### **Summary**

Summarising this phase in the reception of the concept, each facet of ambivalence is becoming evident in the application to the various ways of living intergenerational relationships. Although there still appears to be some unease about stating the prevalence of ambivalent intergenerational relationships, the experience of ambivalence in these relationships is increasingly seen as ‘normal’. Ambivalence experiences are increasingly seen as *challenges* in lived intergenerational relationships. These in turn have been approached by employing the concept pragmatically.

### **Conceptual challenges and debates**

In this section articles that have contributed to the conceptual advancement of the intergenerational ambivalence concept will be discussed in more detail. The 2002 *JMF* debate on intergenerational solidarity, conflict and ambivalence had a lasting effect on the academic reception of the ambivalence concept. The first part of this section will elaborate on that reception, reflecting with hindsight on developments over the past decade. The second part is devoted to discussing several more recent theoretical applications of the intergenerational ambivalence concept.

### **Reflections on the 2002 *JMF* debate**

The first significant contribution to the intergenerational ambivalence debate that emerged following Lüscher and Pillemer’s (1998) article was the 2002 *JMF* special issue edited by Alexis Walker involving some of the leading scholars involved in theorising intergenerational relations. Criticising Lüscher and Pillemer (1998), Connidis and McMullin (2002) attempt there to advance the concept by linking intergenerational ambivalence to ‘critical theory’ and feminist thought. Although broadening the perspective in this way is very valuable, it is somewhat unfortunate that the authors did not provide a comprehensive justification for their position, such as making reference to the classical proponents of critical theory like Adorno, Horkheimer and Habermas. Critical theory has nonetheless shown substantial interest in the (damaged) subject, as expressed in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al, 1950). In that book, Frenkel-Brunswik identifies an inability to tolerate ambiguity that, in her point of view, is equivalent to ambivalence.

More importantly, Connidis and McMullin (2002) focus on ‘the interplay of individual action, human agency, and structured social relations’ (p 563). They ought to be commended for highlighting the crucial importance of social structures in constraining the individual’s negotiation of social relationships (Connidis and McMullin, 2002, p 558). But the link between intergenerational ambivalence and social structures is more complex than they suggest. While Connidis and McMullin (2002) maintain that ‘in practice, family members are too often left to deal with problems that are structurally created and that, therefore, can be solved only through fundamental change in structured social relations’ (p 566), in the present authors’ opinion the arena for resolving ambivalences cannot be restricted to the macro-level of social structures. The seminal article on agency by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) illustrates how the concept of agency can help to overcome this limitation. This applies particularly in temporal dynamics, that is, the dynamics of social situations and the interplay between subjective and social notions of time (see also Joas, 1996).

Furthermore, Connidis and McMullin’s (2002) line of argument implies a differentiation between psychological and sociological ambivalence. The present authors feel that this dichotomy – although it is plausible – distracts attention from the real potential of the ambivalence concept: its capacity for *connecting* the ‘social’ and the ‘psychological’ and thus overcoming the conventional opposition between sociological and psychological perspectives. Finally, the present authors also do not agree with their interpretation of ambivalence as a ‘burden’. If ambivalence is solely presented in that matter, the concept is used normatively and its analytical potential cannot be exploited. Nonetheless, Connidis and McMullin’s (2002) major contribution in highlighting the social-structural implications of the intergenerational ambivalence concept must be acknowledged.

Bengtson et al (2002) in their contribution to the 2002 *JMF* debate attempted to immunise their concept of intergenerational solidarity against criticism in various respects that will not be reviewed in detail here. In their article, they

admit that contradictory attitudes and behaviour are implicitly contained in their measures (Bengtson et al, 2002, p 571), but these were not really specified. Indeed, a measurement method which assesses something simply as 'applicable' and 'not applicable' is not suitable for grasping tensions between simultaneous contradictions within one and the same dimension. They also argue (from a position of assumed strength) that their intergenerational solidarity concept incorporates vital aspects of intergenerational ambivalence: 'Our perspective is that the recent advocacy of ambivalence as a central concept in intergenerational studies has provided an opportunity for the solidarity paradigm to widen its explanatory breadth' (Bengtson et al, 2002, p 573). They make it quite clear that, from their perspective, solidarity is superior to the rival concepts of intergenerational conflict and ambivalence. In spite of their generosity, they dismiss what is (in the view of the present authors) a crucial theoretical and methodological insight: only the ambivalence perspective enables the observer to see the *simultaneous* co-existence of those experiences that represent solidarity and conflict. It is precisely such a perspective that allows us to focus on the dynamics of negotiating relationships and to utilise the heuristic benefit of the ambivalence concept for a processual understanding of identity and agency.

Curran (2002) makes reference to caring processes in her contribution to the debate. This is reflected in her ad hoc definition of ambivalence as 'the simultaneous presence of both caring and uncaring feelings and behaviours' (Curran, 2002, p 579). She thereby indicates the relevance of 'agency'. Furthermore, she proposes accountability and embeddedness as mechanisms explaining the emergence of ambivalence, which might also help to account for the occurrence of social action and social change. Moreover, she recommends additional efforts to investigate and conceptualise the consequences of treating ambivalence differently.

### *Recent contributions to the systematic analysis of intergenerational ambivalence*

Despite the growing popularity of the intergenerational ambivalence concept in international research, conceptual advances have remained scarce in recent years. Contributions debating the usefulness of the concept support our view that it has an important potential for addressing more complex issues (Lüscher and Lettke, 2004; Scabini and Marta, 2006; Biggs, 2007; Pillemer and Suitor, 2008; Ward, 2008; Ward et al, 2008, 2009).<sup>5</sup>

In a critical comparison of the predictive power of both the intergenerational ambivalence and solidarity models, Biggs (2007) acknowledges the conceptual value of ambivalence as a 'mature' concept for studying intergenerational relationships – without panicking about the existence of conflict. He differentiates a 'psychodynamic approach' for explaining intergenerational relations by moving from the private to the public and, conversely, a 'social-structural approach' for explaining intergenerational relations by moving from the public to the private. This can be seen as an advance over the former 'psychological vs. sociological'

ambivalence dichotomy, one which takes into account the dynamic nature of ambivalence experiences. Biggs (2007, p 704) links the success of the intergenerational solidarity model to the emergence of a 'social gerontological approach' to solidarity underscoring 'the protective value of generations'. For him, that explains why Bengtson and colleagues overemphasised the 'integrative role of family structures' in their intergenerational solidarity model, as well as why the intergenerational solidarity concept has become so popular in the social gerontology community. Moreover, Biggs (2007) argues that, by linking the family-based lineage concept of generations with that of historical generations, Bengtson 'effectively eclipses conflict' (p 705) inasmuch as intergenerational differences are interpreted as social change. Furthermore, proposing solidarity as the main coping mechanism for families in times of crisis does not leave any space for conflict within the family.

Biggs consequently sees the emergence of intergenerational ambivalence as a reaction to the dualism of solidarity and conflict and as an attempt to overcome their rivalry. According to him, this returns intergenerational ambivalence to one of the origins of social gerontology: psychodynamic analysis 'which consists of becoming aware of simultaneously opposing emotions toward the same object and being able to live with it' (Lorenz-Meyer, 2001; cited in Biggs, 2007, p 706). He continues: 'Ambivalence does not, then, reflect indecision or paralysis but a mature step toward acknowledging a more complex world of multiple perspectives and emotional resilience'.

In an innovative application of the intergenerational ambivalence construct to the transition of an older parent from home care to institutional care, Rappoport and Lowenstein (2007) associate intergenerational ambivalence with feelings of guilt and shame. More specifically, they directly link the two core dimensions of experiencing ambivalence, the subjective and the institutional, with guilt and shame. While guilt and shame are distinct, they are also connected – something that also applies to the micro- and macro-levels of ambivalence (Rappoport and Lowenstein, 2007, p 16). They reason that 'guilt feelings can be viewed as an overt representation of a covert and hidden subjective ambivalence, specifically when having to make a decision whether to institutionalise a close ageing relative (for example, a parent) or when the onset of care-giving occurs. Feelings of shame can be used in specific care-giving situations as a representation of structural ambivalence ... Shame is well-suited for representing structural ambivalence, which has to do with social norms, while guilt is better suited for representing subjective ambivalence, which has to do mainly with personal feelings and thoughts' (Rappoport and Lowenstein, 2007, p 14; see also Chapter Thirteen).

Rappoport and Lowenstein (2007) do not only develop a convincing theoretical argument for associating guilt and shame with ambivalence but also test it empirically. However, they encounter some methodological challenges along the way, such as the difficulty of operationalising an underlying ambivalence. While they contend that guilt and intersubjective ambivalence are positively correlated,

they fail to measure this directly. Even though *guilt*, a term frequently used in ordinary language, can be measured directly, ambivalence cannot.

At the close of this chapter, an elaborated definition of intergenerational ambivalence consisting of several elements using the theoretical-methodological characterisation as a 'sensitising construct' will be proposed. Against this backdrop, it is useful to touch briefly upon a controversy between Ward, Deane and Spitze (2008) and Pillemer and Suito (2008) in response to an article by Ward (2008) published in the *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. There Ward suggested considering the multiple relationships between a mother and her children, concluding that '[t]here may be *collective ambivalence* entailed in mixed feelings across multiple children' (Ward, 2008, p 240). He argues further that this 'collective ambivalence' had a negative effect on mothers' well-being. Based on this conclusion, Ward argues that the scope of the intergenerational ambivalence concept has to be extended. In his view, this 'collective ambivalence' is 'more aggregate than structural' (Ward et al, 2008, p 397), suggesting that its indicators represent 'inconsistencies' rather than 'contradictions'.

The present authors would interpret Ward's argument as being that inconsistencies in the relationships between multiple children and their mother make the experience of ambivalence more likely. It is commonly assumed that the family system is normatively oriented towards 'harmony'. Inconsistencies are seen as contradicting this normative orientation and are thus interpreted as being ambivalent. The downside of Ward's approach is that it disregards the dynamic of oscillation between poles as well as its relevance for 'agency'. Pillemer and Suito (2008), by contrast, argue that ambivalence diminishes well-being. Yet the dynamic, pragmatic aspects and the openness of the ambivalence concept remain underdeveloped. This perspective is already visible in their theoretical discussion of the concept which is supposed to grasp the complexity of relationships (Pillemer et al, 2007). But that complexity is dynamic, paradoxical and contradictory in contemporary post-modern societies. It is constantly changing and often provisional – one of the reasons for the current popularity of the ambivalence idea. Regrettably, Pillemer and Suito (2008, p 395) restrict the concept: 'The most important single characteristic of ambivalence is a contradictory assessment or response toward the same object'. Thus, ambivalence is reduced to being a mere 'variable' that needs to be measured, that is quantified, when the relationship to the individual actor is not sufficiently illuminated. The same applies to experiences and processes in the search for meaning when these are confronted by polarity, contrariness and variation. Oscillation – that is the dynamics of dealing with contrariness – is not explicitly considered by them.

We find ourselves unable to agree with either Ward (2008) or Pillemer and Suito (2008). Instead, we view their arguments as confirming the need to explore the potentials of the ambivalence concept and establish an expanded definition for practical analysis. However, such theoretical work will not suffice. If we really want to formulate a new theoretical approach, we should consider why people experience ambivalence in the first place. Explaining this in detail, however, would

exceed the scope of this chapter. But for now we want to suggest, in line with current social science theory, what direction a fruitful elaboration might take.

### Where to go? Towards an elaborated understanding and definition of ambivalence

The review of the research literature in the previous sections demonstrates that the concept of intergenerational ambivalence has become a widely accepted framework for the study of intergenerational relationships. However, the concept's theoretical, empirical and practical implications and explanatory power needs further exploration to exploit its potential fully. For the sake of brevity, attention should be focused on the status of the concept and concerns for an elaborated definition. A number of authors – including the present authors (in earlier publications) – have suggested seeing intergenerational ambivalence as a 'sensitizing concept', referring to an idea by Blumer (1954) which is nowadays commonly accepted by sociologists, often in connection with explorative research designs and in qualitative methodology (see, for example, Mayring, 2002; Lamnek, 2005; Flick et al, 2007).

Blumer's intention (shared by the present authors) is to recall the virtue of curiosity and express a degree of scepticism towards the idea of thinking only in terms of standardised variables. This has been discussed elsewhere (Lüscher 2011a). Yet the notion of a 'sensitizing concept' – granted its pragmatic plausibility – is not fully appropriate for studying intergenerational ambivalence inasmuch as it overlooks the need for coherent theoretical foundations. To overcome this, these foundations can be elaborated by extending their horizon and thus seeing intergenerational ambivalence as an application of the broader idea of ambivalence and how it is used in other disciplines. These range from philosophy to political science and from post-modernism – as a perspective on present social and cultural conditions – to the analysis of past (and present-day) works of art, literature and music.<sup>6</sup> This perspective confirms the ubiquity of certain types of human 'experience'. The first is the common thinking in polarisations and their linguistic enhancement. It goes together with the second type: those experiences labelled as floating, oscillating and (perhaps most precisely) *vacillating* within temporally limited actions and interactions.

These in turn involve two elements frequently referred to in the study of intergenerational relations, such as tensions between autonomy and dependence, between freedom and control, between closeness and distance, between sympathy and disgust, and between (simultaneous) love and hatred. In daily life, they take on concrete form in tasks such as caring, sharing financial resources and struggling for one's 'fair share' of an inheritance. Hidden behind this is the awareness of fundamental differences, a major theme in post-modern and (post-)structuralist thinking. In addition, *vacillation* refers to the challenges of being faced with multiple options, that is, uncertainty. Dealing with the continuous and often contradictory dynamics of basic differences is associated with an ability to behave and to (inter)



act meaningfully. In other words, issues of 'agency' and capability are emphasised. As demonstrated above, these concepts are referred to (at least partially) in the study of intergenerational ambivalence.

However, the concept's full potential has perhaps not yet been uncovered. For the present authors, the three notions of polarisation (or basic difference), vacillation and agency are at the heart of the process of constituting the self or personal identity as well as dealing with its different facets. Interestingly enough, such references to identity formation can rarely be found in analyses of intergenerational ambivalence. This is surprising given the close analytical and empirical association between the organisation – and conduct – of intergenerational relations and processes of socialisation.<sup>6</sup>

If an attempt is made to integrate these – admittedly brief – considerations on the fundamental dimensions of ambivalence, a more elaborated definition can be offered for discussion: ambivalence refers to experiences that occur while searching for the significance of facts, events, other persons, social relationships, tasks and institutions as these pertain to facets of the self or personal identity and one's agency. These experiences thereby oscillate temporarily or permanently between polar contradictions in feeling, thinking, wanting, or social structures. These oscillations, in turn, can be asymmetrical or imbalanced, thus also reflecting the impact of power.

In conclusion, this differentiated understanding of ambivalence is suggested as a possible avenue for developing further the analysis of intergenerational relations. This is done in light of increasing acceptance for the perspective of intergenerational ambivalence. Much has been achieved already, yet the crucial theoretical, empirical and practical importance of the concept has only begun to flourish given the fundamental significance of intergenerational relations in human development, particularly in the context of rapidly ageing societies.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Kurt Lüscher gratefully acknowledges financial support provided by the "Cultural Foundations of Integration", Center of Excellence at the University of Konstanz, established in the framework of the German Federal and State Initiative of Excellence (see also: [www.kurtluescher.de](http://www.kurtluescher.de)). Much of the earlier work on this chapter was done while Andreas Hoff was Senior Research Fellow of the Oxford Institute of Ageing, University of Oxford (see also <http://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/people/andreas-hoff>). We would like to express our gratitude to Caroline Johnen and Stefanie Trautwein for her highly efficient editorial support and to David Brenner for his equally efficient assistance in correcting our Germanic English. Furthermore, we would like to thank the participants of the international workshop 'Changing Intergenerational Relationships as Europe and Asia Age' at the Oxford Institute of Ageing, University of Oxford, on 9–10 December 2010 for the inspiration they provided. Special thanks go to Sarah Harper and Kate Hamblin for organising the workshop – and to Bleddyn Davies for alerting us to the English concept of 'vacillation'.

<sup>2</sup> 'Intergenerational rhetoric' reflects the public discourse on how intergenerational relations ought to be lived and assessed. A characteristic of intergenerational rhetoric is its antagonistic attitude between idealisation (solidarity) and threat (conflict). Intergenerational differences are frequently dramatised, and metaphors are important elements of intergenerational rhetoric (Lüscher et al, 2010, p 27).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Marshall et al (1993) and the pioneering work by the French sociologists Roussel and Bourguignon (1976). The important contributions to the field by Attias-Donfut (1995, 2003) will be discussed later.

<sup>4</sup> Another important line of work on intergenerational ambivalence concerns methodological issues. These issues are beyond the scope of this chapter. However, an up-to-date review of relevant methods has been carried out by Suitor et al (2011). This review pays particular attention to the difference between qualitative and quantitative measures of intergenerational ambivalence (though they use an interpretation of the concept which is different from the perspective taken here). For an earlier review of methods, see Lüscher and Lettke (2004).

<sup>5</sup> Many articles contain (more or less systematic) references to key authors such as Bleuler, Freud, Simmel (who, however, did not use the term), Merton, and Bauman – to mention only a few. For the present authors' own recent attempts to locate and to apply the concept from an interdisciplinary perspective, see Lüscher (2009) and Lüscher (2011b).

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of this issue, see also the presentation of the concept of 'generative socialisation' in Chapter Four.

## References

- Adorno, T.W., Frenkel-Brunswik, E., Levinson, D.J. and Sanford, N.R. (1950) *The authoritarian personality*, New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Attias-Donfut, C. (ed) (1995) *Les solidarités entre générations [Solidarities between generations]*, Paris: Nathan.
- Attias-Donfut, C. (2003) 'Family transfers and cultural transmissions between three generations in France', in V.L. Bengtson and A. Lowenstein (eds) *Global ageing and challenges to families*, Hawthorne and New York: De Gruyter, pp 214–52.
- Attias-Donfut, C. and Segalen, M. (1998) *Grands-parents. La famille à travers les générations [Grandparents: The family across generations]*, Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob.
- Bass, S.A. and Caro, F.G. (1996) 'The economic value of grandparent assistance', *Generations*, vol 20, pp 29–33.
- Baydar, N. and Brooks-Gunn, J. (1998) 'Profiles of grandmothers who help care for their grandchildren in the United States', *Family Relations*, vol 47, pp 385–93.
- Beaton, J.M., Norris, J.E. and Pratt, M.W. (2003) 'Unresolved issues in adult children's marital relationships involving intergenerational problems', *Family Relations*, vol 52, pp 143–53.
- Bengtson, V.L. and Roberts, R.E. (1991) 'Intergenerational solidarity in aging families. An example of formal theory construction', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol 53, pp 856–70.

- Bengtson, V.L., Olander, E.B. and Haddad, A.A. (1976) 'The "generation gap" and aging family members. Toward a conceptual model', in J.E. Gubrium (ed) *Time, roles and self in old age*, New York: Human Sciences Press, pp 237–63.
- Bengtson, V.L., Giarusso, R., Mabry, B. and Silverstein, M. (2002) 'Solidarity, conflict, and ambivalence. Complementary or competing perspectives on intergenerational relationships?', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol 64, pp 568–76.
- Berger, B. and Berger, P.L. (1983) *The war over the family. Capturing the middle ground*, London: Hutchinson.
- Biggs, S. (2007) 'Thinking about generations: Conceptual positions and policy implications', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol 63, pp 695–711.
- Birditt, K.S., Fingerman, K.L. and Zarit, S.H. (2010) 'Adult children's problems and successes: Implications for intergenerational ambivalence', *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, vol 65B, pp 145–53.
- Birditt, K.S., Miller, L.M., Fingerman, K.L. and Lefkowitz, E.S. (2009) 'Tensions in the parent and adult child relationship: links to solidarity and ambivalence', *Psychology and Aging*, vol 24, no 2, pp 287–95.
- Bleuler, E. (1910) 'Zur Theorie des schizophrener Negativismus [Contributions to the theory of schizophrenic negativism]', *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift [Psychiatric-Neurological Weekly]*, pp 171–76, 184–87, 189–91, 195–98.
- Bleuler, E. (1914) *Die Ambivalenz [Ambivalence]*, Zürich: Schultheiss and Co, pp 95–106.
- Blumer, H. (1954) 'What is wrong with social theory?', *American Sociological Review*, vol 18, pp 3–10.
- Burkhardt, A., Rudolf, S., Brand, C., Rockstroh, B., Studer, K., Lettke, F. and Lüscher, K. (2007) 'Ambivalences in the relationship of parents towards their schizophrenic or substance dependent adult child: a comparison to their relationships with healthy siblings and to ordinary parent-child relationships', *Psychiatrische Praxis*, vol 34, pp 230–38.
- Cherlin, A.J. and Furstenberg, F.F. (1986) *The new American grandparent. A place in the family, a life apart*, New York: Basic Books.
- Coleman, M. and Ganong, L. (2008) 'Normative beliefs about sharing housing with an older family member', *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, vol 66, pp 49–72.
- Connidis, I.A. (2003a) 'Bringing outsiders in – Gay and lesbian family ties over the life course', in S. Arber, K. Davidson and J. Ginn (eds) *Gender and ageing: changing roles and relationships*, London: Open University Press, pp 79–94.
- Connidis, I.A. (2003b) 'Divorce and union dissolution: reverberations over three generations', *Canadian Journal on Aging*, vol 22, pp 353–68.
- Connidis, I.A. (2007) 'Negotiating inequality among adult siblings: two case studies', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol 69, pp 482–99.
- Connidis, I.A. and McMullin, J.A. (2002) 'Sociological ambivalence and family ties. A critical perspective', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol 64, pp 558–67.
- Coontz, S. (1992) *The way we never were. American families and the nostalgia trap*, New York: Basic Books.

- Curran, S.R. (2002) 'Agency, accountability, and embedded relations. "What's love got to do with it?"', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol 64, pp 577–84.
- Daatland, S.O. and Herlofson, K. (2003) "'Lost solidarity" or "changed solidarity": a comparative European view of normative family solidarity', *Ageing & Society*, vol 23, pp 537–60.
- Daatland, S.O. and Lowenstein, A. (2005) 'Intergenerational solidarity and the family-welfare state balance', *European Journal of Ageing*, vol 2, pp 174–82.
- Dolbin-MacNab, M.L. and Keiley, M.K. (2009) 'Navigating interdependence: how adolescents raised solely by grandparents experience their family relationships', *Family Relations*, vol 58, pp 162–75.
- Drew, L.M. and Smith, P.K. (1999) 'The impact of parental separation/divorce on grandparent-grandchild relationships', *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, vol 48, pp 191–215.
- Duner, A. and Nordstrom, M. (2007) 'The roles and functions of the informal support networks of older people who receive formal support: a Swedish qualitative study', *Ageing & Society*, vol 27, pp 67–85.
- Emirbayer, M. and Mische, A. (1998) 'What is agency?', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol 103, pp 962–1023.
- Ferguson, N. (2004) *Grandparenting in divorced families*, Bristol and Avon: Policy Press.
- Fingerman, K.L. (2001) *Aging mothers and their adult daughters: a study in mixed emotions*, New York: Springer.
- Fingerman, K.L. and Hay, E.L. (2004) 'Intergenerational ambivalence in the context of the larger social network', in K. Pillemer and K. Lüscher (eds) *Intergenerational ambivalences. New perspectives on parent-child relations in later life*, Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Ltd, pp 133–50.
- Fingerman, K.L., Chen, P.-C., Hay, E.L., Cichy, K.E. and Lefkowitz, E.S. (2006) 'Ambivalent reactions in the parent and offspring relationship', *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, vol 61B, pp 152–60.
- Fingerman, K.L., Pitzer, L., Lefkowitz, E.S., Birditt, K. S. and Mroczek, D. (2008) 'Ambivalent relationship qualities between adults and their parents. Implications for the well-being of both parties', *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol 63B, pp 362–71.
- Flick, U., Kardorff von, E. and Steinke, I. (2007) 'Was ist qualitative Forschung? [What is qualitative research?]', in U. Flick, E. v. Kardorff and I. Steinke (eds) *Qualitative Forschung* (5th edn), Reinbek: Rowohlt, pp 13–29.
- Fuller-Thomson, E., Minkler, M. and Driver, D. (1997) 'A profile of grandparents raising grandchildren in the US', *The Gerontologist*, vol 37, pp 406–11.
- Ganong, L. and Coleman, M. (2006) 'Obligations to stepparents acquired in later life: relationship quality and acuity of needs', *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol 61B, pp 80–88.

- Giarrusso, R., Stallings, M. and Bengtson, V.L. (1995) 'The "intergenerational stake" hypothesis revisited: parent-child differences in perceptions of relationships 20 years later', in V.L. Bengtson, K.W. Schaie and L.M. Burton (eds) *Intergenerational issues in aging: Effects of social change*, New York: Springer, pp 227–63.
- Grzywacz, J.G., Quandt, S.A., Early, J., Tapia, J., Graham, C.N. and Arcury, T.A. (2006) 'Leaving family for work: ambivalence and mental health among Mexican migrant farmworker men', *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, vol 8, pp 85–97.
- Ha, J.-H. and Ingersoll-Dayton, B. (2008) 'The effect of widowhood on intergenerational ambivalence', *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol 63B, pp 49–58.
- Hagestad, G.O. (1988) 'Demographic change and the life course: some emerging trends in the family realm', *Family Relations*, vol 37, pp 405–10.
- Harper, S. (2005) 'Understanding grandparenthood', in Johnson, M. (ed) *Handbook of age and ageing*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp 422–28.
- Hay, E.L., Fingerman, K.L. and Lefkowitz, E.S. (2007) 'The experience of worry in parent-adult child relationships', *Personal Relationships*, vol 14, pp 605–22.
- Hoff, A. (2007) 'Patterns of intergenerational support in grandparent-grandchild and parent-child relationships in Germany', *Ageing & Society*, vol 27, no 5, pp 643–65.
- Holdsworth, C. (2004) 'Family support during the transition out of the parental home in Britain, Spain and Norway', *Sociology*, vol 38, pp 909–26.
- Izuhara, M. (2004) 'Negotiating family support? The "generation contract" between long-term care and inheritance', *Journal of Social Policy*, vol 33, pp 649–65.
- Jacobs, T. (2003) 'Paying for informal care: A contradictio in terminis?', *European Societies*, vol 5, pp 397–417.
- Joas, H. (1996) *The creativity of action*, trs J. Gaines and P. Keast, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- JMF (2002) 'Symposium on ambivalence in intergenerational relationships', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol 64, pp 557–601.
- Junge, M. (2000) *Ambivalente Gesellschaftlichkeit [Ambivalent sociality]*, Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Katz, R. (2009) 'Intergenerational family relations and subjective well-being in old age. A cross-national study', *European Journal of Ageing*, vol 74, pp 79–90.
- Kemp, C. (2004) "'Grand" expectations: the experiences of grandparents and adult grandchildren', *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, vol 29, pp 499–525.
- King, V. (2004) *Die Entstehung des Neuen in der Adoleszenz. Individuation, Generativität und Geschlecht in modernisierten Gesellschaften [The emergence of innovation in adolescence: individuation, generativity and gender in modernized societies]*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Kivett, V.R. (1985) 'Grandfathers and grandchildren: patterns of association, helping, and psychological closeness', *Family Relations*, vol 34, pp 565–71.
- Kohli, M. (1999) 'Private and public transfers between generations: linking the family and the state', *European Societies*, vol 1, pp 81–104.

- Lamnek, S. (2005) *Qualitative Sozialforschung [Qualitative Social Research]* (4th edn), Weinheim: Beltz.
- Leticq, B.L., Bailey, S.J. and Dahlen, P. (2008) 'Ambivalence and coping among custodial grandparents', in B.J. Hayslip and P.L. Kaminski (eds) *Parenting the custodial grandchild: Implications for clinical practice*, New York: Springer, pp 3–16.
- Lettke, F. and Lüscher, K. (2001) 'Wie ambivalent "sind" familiäre Generationenbeziehungen? [How ambivalent "are" intergenerational relationships?]', in J. Allmendinger (ed) *Gute Gesellschaft? Verhandlungen des 30. Kongresses der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie*, Opladen: Leske + Budrich, pp 519–40.
- Lewis, D.C. (2008) 'Types, meanings and ambivalence in intergenerational exchanges among Cambodian refugee families in the United States', *Ageing & Society*, vol 28, pp 693–715.
- Lorenz-Meyer, D. (2001) *The politics of ambivalence. Towards a conceptualisation of structural ambivalence in intergenerational relations*, London: London School of Economics.
- Lorenz-Meyer, D. (2004) 'The ambivalences of parental care among young German adults', in K. Pillemer and K. Lüscher (eds) *Intergenerational ambivalences. New perspectives on parent-child relations in later life*, Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Ltd, pp 225–52.
- Lowenstein, A. (1999) 'Intergenerational family relations and social support', *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, vol 32, pp 398–406.
- Lowenstein, A. (2007) 'Solidarity, conflict and ambivalence: testing two conceptual frameworks and their impact on quality of life for older family members', *Journals of Gerontology. B – Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, vol 62, pp 100–7.
- Lüscher, K. (2002) 'Intergenerational ambivalence: further steps in theory and research', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol 64, pp 585–93.
- Lüscher, K. (2009) 'Ambivalenz: Eine soziologische Annäherung [Ambivalence: a sociological approach]', in W. Dietrich, K. Lüscher and C. Müller (eds) *Ambivalenzen erkennen, aushalten und gestalten*, Zürich: TVZ, pp 17–67.
- Lüscher, K. (2011a) 'Ambivalence – a "sensitizing construct" for the study and practice of intergenerational relationships', *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, vol 9, pp 191–206.
- Lüscher, K. (2011b) 'Ambivalenz weiterschreiben: Eine wissenssoziologisch-pragmatische Perspektive. [Exploring ambivalence in the perspective of a pragmatic sociology of knowledge]', *Forum der Psychoanalyse*, vol 27, pp 373–93.
- Lüscher, K. and Lettke, F. (2004) 'Intergenerational ambivalence. Methods, measures, and results of the Konstanz Study', in J. Pillemer and K. Lüscher (eds) *Intergenerational ambivalences. New perspectives on parent-child relations in later life*, Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Ltd, pp 153–79.
- Lüscher, K. and Pajung-Bilger, B. (1998) *Forcierte Ambivalenzen. Ehescheidung als eine Herausforderung an die Generationenbeziehungen unter Erwachsenen [Forced ambivalences: divorce as a challenge for intergenerational relationships among adults]*, Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz.

- Lüscher, K. and Pillemer, K. (1998) 'Intergenerational ambivalence: a new approach to the study of parent-child relations in later life', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol 60, pp 413–25.
- Lüscher, K., Schultheis, F. and Wehrspaun, M. (1988) *Die "postmoderne" Familie. Familiäre Strategien und Familienpolitik in einer Übergangszeit* [The "post-modern" family: family strategies and policies in a time of transition], Konstanz: Universitätsverlag.
- Lüscher, K., Liegle, L., Lange, A., Hoff, A., Stoffel, M., Viry, G. and Widmer, E. (2010) 'Generations – Intergenerational relations – Generational politics: a trilingual compendium', Bern, Switzerland: SAGW (available at: www.kurtluescher.de).
- Marshall, V.M., Matthews, S.H. and Rosenthal, C.J. (1993) 'Elusiveness of family life. A challenge for the sociology of aging', in G.L. Pladdox and M.P. Lawton (eds) *Annual review of gerontology and geriatrics*, New York: Springer, pp 39–72.
- Martini, T.S., Grusec, J.E. and Bernardini, S.C. (2003) 'Perceptions of help given to healthy older mothers by adult daughters: ways of initiating help and types of help given', *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, vol 57, pp 237–57.
- Mayring, P. (2002) *Einführung in die qualitative Sozialforschung* [Introduction to qualitative social research] (5th edn), Weinheim: Beltz.
- Merton, R.K. and Barber, E. (1963) 'Sociological ambivalence', in E.A. Tiryakian (ed) *Sociological theory, values and sociocultural change. Essays in honor of Pitirim A. Sorokin*, London: The Free Press of Glencoe, pp 91–120.
- Merz, E.-M., Schuengel, C. and Schulze, H.-J. (2007) 'Intergenerational solidarity: an attachment perspective', *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol 21, pp 175–86.
- Michels, T., Albert, I. and Ferring, D. (2011) 'Psychologische Ambivalenz in Eltern-Kind-Beziehung [Psychological ambivalence in parent-child relationships]', *Diagnostica*, vol 57, pp 39–51.
- Obradovic, J. and Cudina-Obradovic, M. (2004) 'Psycho-social prerequisites for the care of the elderly', *Croatian Journal of Social Policy*, vol 11, pp 177–92.
- Perrig-Chiello, P. and Höpflinger, F. (2005) 'Aging parents and their middle-aged children: demographic and psychosocial challenges', *European Journal of Ageing*, vol 2, pp 183–91.
- Peters, C.L., Hooker, K. and Zvonkovic, A.M. (2006) 'Older parents' perceptions of ambivalence in relationships with their children', *Family Relations*, vol 55, pp 539–51.
- Phillips, J., Ogg, J. and Ray, M. (2003) 'Exploring conflict and ambivalence', in A. Lowenstein, and J. Ogg (eds) *OASIS. Old-age and autonomy: The role of service systems and intergenerational family solidarity*, Haifa: Center for Research and Study of Aging, pp 193–226.
- Pillemer, K. (2004) 'Can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em. Parents' ambivalence about their adult children', in K. Pillemer and K. Lüscher (eds) *Intergenerational ambivalences. New perspectives on parent-child relations in later life*, Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Ltd, pp 115–132.
- Pillemer, K. and Suitor, J.J. (2002) 'Explaining mothers' ambivalence toward their adult children', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol 64, pp 602–13.

- Pillemer, K. and Suitor, J.J. (2008) 'Collective ambivalence. Considering new approaches to the complexity of intergenerational relations', *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol 63B, pp 394–96.
- Pillemer, K., Suitor, J.J., Mock, S.E., Sabir, M., Pardo, T.B. and Sechrist, J. (2007) 'Capturing the complexity of intergenerational relations: exploring ambivalence within later-life families', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol 63, pp 775–91.
- Pridalova, M. (2007) *Caregiving daughters and caregiving sons*, Brno: Masaryk University Brno.
- Radina, M.E. (2003) 'Daughters of childhood parental divorce and their relationships with their fathers in adulthood', *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, vol 38, pp 61–81.
- Rappoport, A., and Lowenstein, A. (2007) 'A possible innovative association between the concept of inter-generational ambivalence and the emotions of guilt and shame in care-giving', *European Journal of Ageing*, vol 4, pp 13–21.
- Reschke, K.L., Manoogian, M.M., Richards, L.N., Walker, S.K. and Seiling, S.B. (2006) 'Maternal grandmothers as child care providers for rural, low-income mothers', *Journal of Children and Poverty*, vol 12, pp 159–74.
- Roer-Strier, D. and Sands, R.G. (2001) 'The impact of religious intensification on family relations: a South African example', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol 63, pp 868–80.
- Rosenmayr, L. (1992) 'Sexualität, Partnerschaft und Familie älterer Menschen [Sexuality, partnership and family among the elderly]', in P.B. Baltes and J. Mittelstraß (eds) *Zukunft des Alterns und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung*, Berlin: De Gruyter, pp 461–91.
- Roussel, L. and Bourguignon, O. (1976) *La famille après le mariage des enfants* [The family after the children marry], Paris: PUF.
- Sarkisian, N. (2006) 'Doing family ambivalence. Nuclear and extended families in single mothers' lives', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol 68, pp 804–11.
- Scabini, A. and Marta, E. (2006) 'Changing intergenerational relationship', *European Review*, vol 14, pp 81–98.
- Senyuerekli, A.R. and Detzner, D.F. (2008) 'Intergenerational relationships in a transnational context: the case of Turkish families', *Family Relations*, vol 57, pp 457–67.
- Shapiro, A. (2004) 'Revisiting the generation gap: exploring the relationships of parent/adult-child dyads', *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, vol 58, pp 127–46.
- Shemmings, D. (2006) 'Using adult attachment theory to differentiate adult children's internal working models of later life filial relationships', *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol 20, pp 177–91.
- Silverstein, M., Giarusso, R. and Bengtson, V.L. (1998) 'Intergenerational solidarity and the grandparent role', in M.E. Szinovacz (ed) *Handbook on grandparenthood*, Westport, CT: Greenwood, pp 144–58.

- Silverstein, M., Gans, D., Lowenstein, A., Giarusso, R. and Bengtson, V.L. (2010) 'Older parent – child relationships in six developed nations: comparisons at the intersection of affection and conflict', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol 72, pp 1006–21.
- Smelser, N.J. (1998) 'The rational and the ambivalent in the social sciences', *American Sociological Review*, vol 63, pp 1–16.
- Spitze, G. and Gallant, M.P. (2004) "'The bitter with the sweet". Older adults' strategies for handling ambivalence in relations with their adult children', *Research on Aging*, vol 26, pp 387–412.
- Steinbach, A. (2008) 'Intergenerational solidarity and ambivalence: types of relationships in German families', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol 39, pp 115–27.
- Stimpson, J.P., Tyler, K.A. and Hoyt, D.R. (2005) 'Effects of parental rejection and relationship quality on depression among older rural adults', *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, vol 61, pp 195–210.
- Suitor, J.J., Gilligan, M. and Pillemer, K. (2011) 'Conceptualizing and measuring intergenerational ambivalence in later life', *The Journals of Gerontology. Series B*, vol 66, no 6, pp 769–81.
- Szinovacz, M.E. (1997) 'Grandparents today: a demographic profile', *The Gerontologist*, vol 38, pp 37–52.
- Teo, P., Graham, E., Yeoh, B.S.A. and Levy, S. (2003) 'Values, change and intergenerational ties between two generations of women in Singapore', *Ageing and Society*, vol 23, pp 327–47.
- Tesch-Römer, C. (2001) 'Intergenerational solidarity and caregiving', *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, vol 34, pp 28–33.
- Turner, M.J., Young, C.R. and Black, K.I. (2006) 'Daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law seeking their place within the family. A qualitative study of differing viewpoints', *Family Relations*, vol 55, pp 588–600.
- Uhlenberg, P. and Kirby, J.B. (1998) 'Grandparenthood over time: Historical and demographic trends', in M.E. Szinovacz (ed) *Handbook on grandparenthood*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp 23–39.
- Van Gaalen, R.I., Dykstra, P.A. and Komter, A.E. (2010) 'Where is the exit? Intergenerational ambivalence and relationship quality in high contact ties', *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol 24, pp 105–14.
- Ward, R.A. (2008) 'Multiple parent-adult child relations and well-being in middle and later life', *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol 63B, pp 239–47.
- Ward, R.A., Deanne, G. and Spitze, G. (2008) 'Ambivalence about ambivalence: reply to Pillemer and Suitor', *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, vol 63B, pp 397–98.
- Ward, R.A., Deanne, G. and Spitze, G. (2009) 'The more the merrier? Multiple parent-adult child relations', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol 71, pp 161–73.
- Weigert, A.J. (1991) *Mixed emotions: Certain steps toward understanding ambivalence*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

- White, D.L., Walker, A.J. and Richards, L.N. (2008) 'Intergenerational family support following infant death', *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, vol 67, pp 187–208.
- Widmer, E. (2010) *Family configurations*, Surrey, Burlington: Ashgate.
- Widmer, E.D. and Lüscher, K. (2011) 'Les relations intergénérationnelles au prisme de l'ambivalence et des configurations familiales. [Intergenerational relationships in the perspective of ambivalences and family configurations]', *Recherches familles*, vol 8, pp 49–60.
- Willson, A.E., Shuey, K.M. and Elder, G.H.J. (2003) 'Ambivalence in the relationship of adult children to aging parents and in-laws', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol 65, pp 1055–72.
- Zygowicz, S.D. (2006) *Interpersonal complementarity and intergenerational ambivalence: Parent-adult child relationships*, Arizona: Arizona State University.

# INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

European perspectives on family  
and society

Edited by Isabelle Albert and Dieter Ferring

2013

Bristol: Policy Press

