

Intergenerational Ambivalence: Further Steps in Theory and Research

The article by Ingrid Connidis and Julie McMullin and the initiative of the *Journal of Marriage and Family's* editor provide an excellent opportunity to continue the discussion on the relevance of the concept of ambivalence for the study of intergenerational relations. Nearly 4 years have passed since Karl Pillemer and I (Lüscher & Pillemer, 1998) published our ideas on the topic in this journal. Connidis and McMullin take this article as their starting point and refer to it both approvingly and critically. I cannot always follow their critique, as I will show at appropriate points below. What counts most, however (and this is greatly to be applauded) is that all of us are interested in the further development of the approach.

Interestingly, insights into the ambivalence between parents and adult children can be traced back to the beginnings of human society, although the term itself was apparently first created only in 1910. In Greek mythology, some of the greatest sagas depict what we now refer to as ambivalence. The best known of these is the drama of the fateful relationship between Oedipus and his father. This theme is also found in modern literature. Franz Kafka's story *The Metamorphosis* or, more recently, Philip Roth's novel *American Pastoral*, are only two of many examples. Today, the term ambivalence is widely used. For example, we may hear adult children saying that they feel ambiva-

lent about placing their elderly father or mother in a nursing home.

The central question, then, is to determine what can be gained by using the concept in family research. I agree with Connidis and McMullin that the concept of ambivalence enables us to study intergenerational relationships with greater openness and it can help to accentuate the sociological perspective. To this end, the structural conditions of ambivalence should be given adequate attention. The authors mention gender inequality as a particular example, thereby providing a bridge to gender studies. Taking this a step further, I see the concept of ambivalence as well-suited to linking various disciplines that work on the "problem of generations" (Mannheim, 1928).

Ambivalence can be comprehended as a "sensitizing concept," as defined by Blumer (1969), giving "the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look." (p. 148). I would even maintain that the challenge of ambivalence lies in its ambiguities. I say this drawing on Levine's stimulating book, *The Flight from Ambiguity* (1986). The author provides a well-grounded argument that insight into the ambiguity of a concept is a motor for the development of new ideas. But in order for this motor to really function and propel us forward, conceptual determinations are indispensable. They are also the foundation for the formulation of specific hypotheses and for the development of research instru-

Humboldtstraße 15, 30131 Bern, Switzerland
(Kurt.Luescher@uni-konstanz.de).

Key Words: ambivalence, family therapy, gender, intergenerational relations, postmodernism.

ments. In this regard, few concrete suggestions can be found in the article by Connidis and McMullin. Of course they offer numerous examples but for research, systematic conceptual work is indispensable. This is where the scientific approach to intergenerational ambivalence differs from that found in literary works and everyday common sense.

STEPS TOWARD DEFINING AMBIVALENCE

In order to avoid a potential misunderstanding, I would like to make it clear that I do not intend to present an all-purpose or ultimate definition of ambivalence. That would be dogmatic. Because ambivalence is a concept that is discussed in many different contexts—from ordinary language to psychological and sociological research—we must attempt to isolate its major ideas and dimensions. For this purpose, it is most useful to turn to the brief yet many faceted history of the concept's scientific use.

As far as we know, the Swiss psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler (1857–1939) invented and first used the concept for the psychiatric diagnosis of negativism (1910) and subsequently as one of four core symptoms of schizophrenia (1911). He also argued in a comprehensive text that ambivalence is not merely a symptom of mental illness but can also be experienced and thus observed in everyday life. He distinguishes between affective and cognitive ambivalence and points out that the two are closely intermingled (Bleuler, 1914, p. 98). This text already contains a reference to ambivalence in intergenerational relationships (p. 103).

Freud first used the concept in an article on the theory of transference (e.g., in regard to a social relationship). Later he included it in his theory of the Oedipus complex, as is concisely and clearly demonstrated in his short essay *Some Reflections on Schoolboy Psychology* (Freud, 1914). Freud thus applied ambivalence to the analysis of an exemplary intergenerational phenomenon. Furthermore, he integrated the concept into his theory of drives, his work on mass psychology and ego analysis, his study on civilization and many other writings. From our perspective, we can say that he definitely regarded it as a link between individual and societal phenomena, the desirability of which is repeatedly emphasized by Connidis and McMullin.

After Bleuler and Freud, many authors working in the fields of psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, and family therapy began to study the concept of

ambivalence. The following quote from Knellisen (1978) aptly summarizes the partially controversial response to the concept: "After an initially strongly biologically conditioned orientation, it is increasingly being embedded in social relationships, in objective structures" (p. 129). This conclusion can also be drawn from the reception of the concept in sociology. An early awareness of ambivalence shines through in many of Simmel's writings, though he does not use this term to refer to it. Merton and the group of scholars with whom he worked on role analysis explicitly studied it as a concept, with reference to Bleuler (Coser, L. A., 1965; Coser, R. L., 1964; Hajda, 1968; Merton; 1976). Most recently, the notion of ambivalence appears explicitly or implicitly in theories of modernization and postmodernism, for example those of Beck, Giddens and Ritzer, as shown in detail by Junge (2000).

The history of the concept is particularly relevant because it suggests that dealing with ambivalence is connected to the constitution and development of personal identity. I draw this conclusion from the origin of the concept as an element of the diagnosis of schizophrenia and thus of a disorder that severely affects personality. More recently, ambivalence has been discussed as a symptom of the borderline personality disorder. From a different angle, the connection between ambivalence and identity is obvious if one considers the importance of intergenerational relationships for personal development in all stages of the life course.

The conceptual history also suggests that ambivalence should be understood as a consequence of competing perspectives oriented to one and the same object. Whereas it is likely that the object will be another person, it can also be the self. More abstractly, ambivalence can be ascribed to relationships. The emphasis is always on two juxtaposed yet dependent components, an understanding that is also supported by etymology: *Ambi* derives from the same root as *amphi*, for example, in the word *amphitheater*. This suggests the metaphor of two opposite parts constituting a whole, or of a unity.

Adding the temporal dimension, we can speak of polarized forces that cannot be fully reconciled within a limited or even an unlimited time span. Ambivalence can be experienced in situations in which a child cares for an elderly parent and it can also be seen in regard to the entire biographical history of the relationships between parents and their children. Such an interpretation can be made by the actors themselves, other persons,

therapists, or social scientists. Thus people can vary in the degree of their awareness of ambivalence. Ultimately, ambivalences are challenges to be responded to. In a very fundamental sense, contrary to what Connidis and McMullin say about our viewpoint, our perspective is genuinely action oriented and therefore dynamic.

To sum up: In order to exhaust the full potential of the concept of ambivalence and the underlying ideas for theoretically grounded research on intergenerational relations, it is desirable to explicitly name the major analytical and empirical elements of ambivalence. In view of the background of the concept's history, its acceptance in the social sciences, and the more recent debates on the subject, including Connidis and McMullin's contribution, I would like to propose the following definition: For purposes of sociological research on intergenerational relations, it is useful to speak of ambivalence when polarized simultaneous emotions, thoughts, social relations, and structures that are considered relevant for the constitution of individual or collective identities are (or can be) interpreted as temporarily or even permanently irreconcilable.

FURTHER ELEMENTS OF COMPREHENDING INTERGENERATIONAL AMBIVALENCE

Ambivalence offers us an opportunity to analyze how family tensions are dealt with without replacing one ideological position (e.g., harmony) with another (e.g., Marxist conflict theoretical). In this way, acknowledging ambivalence helps to overcome the simplistic idealization of family relations. From this point of view, it is clear that the notion of ambivalence must be distinguished from that of conflict. In regard to these considerations, Connidis and McMullin's views seem vague. In part, they equate ambivalence with and simultaneously distinguish it from conflict. However, I find it difficult to discern their criteria. For example, Connidis and McMullin state: "Society is more accurately characterized as based on conflicting interests than on consensus" (p. 559). This may be quite correct as an expression of a particular worldview but it is not an analytical point of view. If ambivalence is equated with conflict, then the advocates of the solidarity perspective might even deny that the concept of ambivalence has anything new to offer because it is possible to subsume conflict and thus also ambivalence under the solidarity perspective, namely as a sort of deviance or at least as a dysfunction. It is certainly

possible to interpret Bengtson's comments (2001, p. 12) in this sense. Lowenstein and Katz (2001) strive for a more differentiated integration of the two approaches.

In my view, an awareness of a temporary or enduring irreconcilability is an important feature of ambivalence and a fundamental difference from conflicts insofar as they have, or can have, definite solutions. If we regard ambivalence as conceptually prior to both harmony and conflict, then we can treat both as common ways of dealing with ambivalence. Such a view is based on the general proposition (or hypothesis) that ambivalence is both a possibility and a challenge of the *condition humaine* (the human condition), which is an understanding supported by the usage of the concept in social anthropology, literary criticism, aesthetics and theology as shown by the entry in *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Consequently, we hypothesize that people must live with ambivalence and they can cope with it in more or less competent, productive ways. People can even create ambivalences, as the works of writers and artists show. Deliberately constructing ambivalences can also be a strategy in social interaction. This possibility is another reason to view ambivalences both as chances and as burdens.

To this extent, as already stated, ambivalence is not necessarily negative but rather implies a task of structuring relationships that is more or less created by structural, situational, and personal conditions. In agreement with Connidis and McMullin, I see ambivalence as a bridging concept between social structure and individual action, made evident in social interaction and hold that its definition should relate to "structured sets of social relationships" (p. 559). However, in all these endeavors, because the term is also used in everyday language, special effort is needed to avoid comprehending intergenerational relations as being ambivalent in themselves. We should be aware of the pitfalls of the ontologization so popular in the social sciences. With this term I am referring to an understanding of a given social institution, especially the family, as a given natural phenomenon, which is often adopted in order to support normative judgments regarding its form or structure. This commonplace naive habit reinforces a view of ambivalence as undesirable in itself, a view of ambivalence as something negative to be contrasted with good solidarity.

Ambivalence should be comprehended as based on attributions and as an interpretation of modes of behavior, cognitions, and emotions.

These can be conditioned by social structures or can be located within them, a common theme in Connidis and McMullin's article. But how can this bridge be constructed for purposes of empirical research?

OPERATIONALIZATION

In trying to connect the individual person with the social structure using the concept of social relations, we made the astonishing discovery that, with very few exceptions such as Max Weber and Leopold von Wiese, the dimensions of this concept are seldom explicitly analyzed in sociological writings. For a long time it was overwhelmingly treated as a "natural," self-evident category. However, the development of the interdisciplinary social relations perspective has changed this (see Duck, 1997; Hinde, 1997).

In the course of these efforts, the insight emerged that social relationships are based on interactions that display a certain duration or consistency. They refer back to themselves and are thus recursive. On the basis of interactionist and pragmatic premises that I share with Connidis and McMullin, in the sociological analysis of relationships it seems reasonable to distinguish between two fundamental dimensions. One dimension consists of an individual as a subject, as shown by personal attributes. The other is structural or—as I prefer to label it—institutional. In its German usage (which seems to differ from the American), the latter implies embeddedness in a concrete social system such as the family. It is important that the subjective and institutional components are connected—that is especially obvious in the case of familial relationships. Both dimensions should be understood as not merely static but, rather, as dynamic. Before the background of these propositions, I regard it as inappropriate to label our perspective on ambivalence as psychological (p. 10). Connidis and McMullin's criticism is also inconsistent because in another passage they correctly state, with reference to personal communication, that I argue in terms of the analysis of roles and thus strive for precisely that combination of the microsociological and macrosociological viewpoints, which is important for them. Consequently, attention is paid to negotiation processes, as shown in our secondary analysis of intergenerational relations after divorce in later life (Lüscher & Pajung-Bilger, 1998—English summary found in Lüscher, 2000). This research formed the starting point for further efforts to op-

erationalize the concept. In regard to a two-dimensional model of social relations, we locate the following sources of ambivalence:

1. On the *personal dimension*, there is an opposition between similarity and difference, or dynamically stated, between personal approaching and distancing. For instance, parents may discover personality traits in terms of which their children are almost identical with them, although in other ways they are almost entirely different. Relationships are experienced subjectively between these two poles. Therefore, these two poles may be seen as generating ambivalence. For a neutral, yet dynamic, designation we have selected the terms *convergence* and *divergence*.
2. On the *institutional dimension*, it is possible to postulate a polar opposition between an insistence on the past social form or structure of relationships and a desire for dramatic change. Yet neither is fully realizable. For instance, although a child may choose a way of organizing its private life that is far different from that found in the family of origin, some connections to its childhood experiences may remain, be it only that they are seen as forming a negative background. As technical designations, the terms *reproduction* and *innovation* appear useful and they also constitute a dynamic polarized simultaneity.

It is possible to reach the same viewpoint by a different route. Many scholars who study intergenerational relationships, including those between parents and young children, consider the field of tension between autonomy and dependence to be central (e.g., Cohler, 1983). Many would also agree that this is a breeding ground for ambivalence.

In the tradition of sociological thinking, we can combine these polarized two-dimensional comprehensions of ambivalence to create a four-field scheme (Figure). This makes possible a further step in the operationalization of ambivalence, one that is heuristically and empirically fruitful, because each of the four fields can be interpreted as referring to a typical way of dealing with ambivalence. In other words, the conceptualization described above allows us to deduce a basic model of strategies for action and ways of organizing relationships. This is highly compatible with the idea of agency, which proposes a connection between subject and structure in regard to relation-

ships and action—a theme also found in Connidis and McMullin's article.

At first glance, this scheme may seem to resemble other models used in the field of family research (e.g., those of Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell, 1979 and of Beavers and Voeller, 1983). There may indeed be a certain degree of similarity. However, the other models do not refer to ambivalences, at least not explicitly. Stierlin (1975), whose work inspired our analyses, did not work out a conceptually based model for this purpose. This is also true of Rosenmayr (1983). The strongest affinity to our work is found in Simon (1998). His orientation is primarily therapeutic and psychoanalytic, whereas our concern is with the elaboration of a sociological and transdisciplinary perspective for purposes of research.

The assumptions underlying the proposed model can be summarized as follows: On the macrolevel of society, culturally acquired patterns for the structuring of intergenerational relationships can be distinguished. As general designations we offer the following terms: *solidarity*, *emancipation*, *atomization*, and *captivation*. These labels, but not the dimensions, may be modified if they seem too general or are understood as bound to a certain culture. On the microlevel, when parents and adult children interact and solve problems together in social situations, they use maxims of practical action. These must be discovered and identified through research. We offer the following initial suggestions based on our qualitative research, as cited above:

1. *Solidarity* refers to reliable support or the willingness of the generations to provide each other with services of a not necessarily reimbursable sort. This takes place with regard to authority but not in the sense of a one-sided exertion of influence and power. Rather, it is understood as representative action including empathy. The maxims of action can be characterized as attempts to *preserve consensually*. The members of a family feel committed to its traditions and get along with one another quite well. Thus, solidarity is comprehended as one possible mode to deal with intergenerational ambivalences, which in this case may be more covert than overt.
2. Where members strive for *emancipation*, actions predominate that support mutual emotional attachment (convergence) and openness for institutional change (innovation). Relationships between parents and children are organized in such

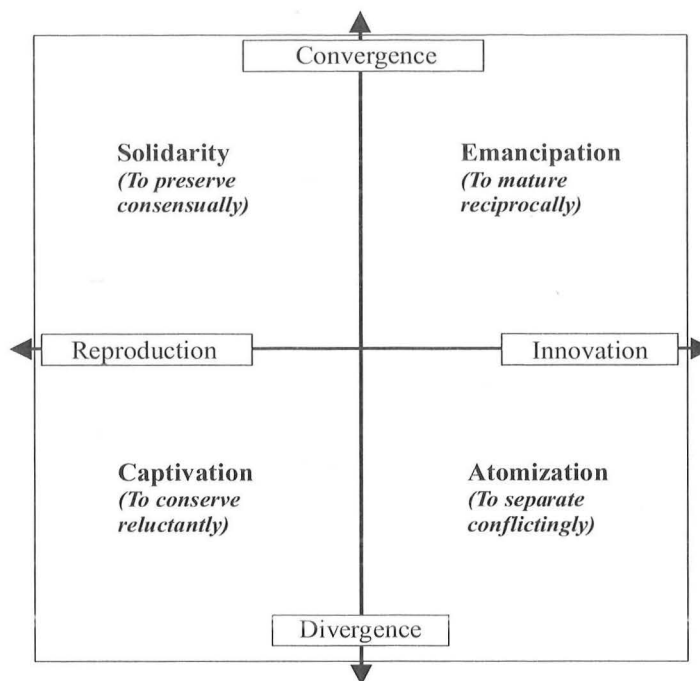
a way that the individual development and personal unfolding of all participants is furthered without losing sight of their mutual interdependence. This general setting contains a certain amount of direct, abstract commonality, pursued by efforts *to mature reciprocally*. Tensions may be discussed openly and temporary practical solutions may be regularly negotiated.

3. The term *atomization* takes into account that the cohesiveness of the particular family is no longer ensured by institutional ties and the subjective experiences of relational histories. The concept clarifies the fragmentation of the family unit into its smallest components, specifically the individual family members. Apart from the unalterable fact that the participants are parents and children, they otherwise have very little in common. Actions follow a line of *conflicting separation*. Yet an awareness of generational bonds remains.
4. *Captivation* designates cases where reference to the institution is used to assert the claims of one family member against another. A fragile relationship of subordination and superiority thereby arises in which moral obligations and moral pressure are used to exert power. Usually one generation (predominantly the parental), attempts by invoking the institutional order to assert claims on the other or to bind it in moral terms without, however, basing its demands on a sense of personal solidarity. The guiding maxim here is *to conserve reluctantly*. There are patterns used by members to instrumentalize each other.

RESEARCH ON AMBIVALENCE

The general hypothesis thus reads: The structuring of intergenerational relationships among adults is likely to demand dealing with ambivalences. Whether and to what extent this is the case in specific situations must be empirically assessed, taking into account two dimensions: the personal and institutional. The considerations presented above invite the use of different research techniques. In this text I must limit myself to a few illustrations. I will also omit a discussion of statistical methodologies (e.g., as provided by Maio, Fincham, & Lycett, 2000 or Thompson, Zanna, & Griffin, 1995); nor can I present research findings. I would like to distinguish at least three methodological approaches, which should preferably be combined:

FIGURE. PATTERNS OF DEALING WITH INTERGENERATIONAL AMBIVALENCES



1. As I have already mentioned, in today's world ambivalences are commonly discussed in everyday life. Thus one can ask parents and their adult children about their awareness of ambivalences in a more or less direct way. This has been done in various studies (Lüscher & Lettke, 2002; Pillemer, in press). We find that both parents and children feel torn in their relationships. Interestingly, preliminary results show that they do not evaluate this negatively. This finding confirms that dealing with ambivalence is an interactional task that often confronts people in their daily lives.
 2. Ambivalence can also be discovered indirectly. Subjects can be invited to characterize their relationships with polarized attributes presented in lists, such as warm or loving for convergence, indifferent or superficial for divergence. If the answers are contradictory, and thus both of two opposing attributes are simultaneously rated as applicable, we can transform them using statistical procedures into indicators of ambivalence. In the selection of the attributes we can include the institutional and subjective dimensions and can in this way relate the answers to the model. A different approach has been developed by Fingerman and Hay (in press). They too asked subjects about their relationships inside and outside the family, using the diagram by Kahn and Antonucci (1980), but they added a unique adaptation by also asking which people bothered them. In this way, researchers were able to locate and to codify mixed judgments and use them as indicators of ambivalence.
 3. Ways of dealing with ambivalences can be surveyed using the familiar technique of the vignette. Subjects are confronted with situations in which relational ambivalences appear. In our own work (Lüscher & Lettke, 2002) we have selected financial transfers between the generations. The responsibility to care for an elderly parent poses another potential dilemma. One can suggest coping behaviors derived from the maxims and strategies referred to in the model presented above.
- The proposed scheme has the limitations of all attempts at abstract systematization. However, because it is deduced from a theoretical conceptualization of ambivalence, the model reaches beyond inductive generalization, can lead to generic elaboration, and may be adapted to specific situations and family constellations. For instance,

Lang (in press) used the model as a coherent frame of reference for patterns of caring found in the data of the Berlin Aging Study. The proposed model may also lend itself to a dynamic reading, that is, in a given dyad ways of coping with ambivalence may shift from one strategy to another. This may happen, for instance, in the course of family therapy, or data on the life course may uncover different ways to cope with ambivalences at different turning points in family relations.

OUTLOOK

Taking the text by Connidis and McMullin as a point of reference, responding to their criticism, and reaffirming our shared conviction about the usefulness of ambivalence as a key concept for the study of intergenerational relations, I have briefly elaborated four points. First, the concept of ambivalence is an attempt to account for the simultaneous coexistence and opposition of harmony and conflict in intergenerational relations. Both are the consequences of inherent tensions between autonomy and dependence, love and hate, nearness and distance, as well as structural opposites such as reproduction and innovation. The experience of ambivalence and strategies for coping with it are of interest insofar as they are ultimately relevant for the development of personal identity (e.g., of the self and of agency). Second, ambivalences are not to be seen as negative or pathological but, rather, as part of the fundamental social task of linking the lives of successive generations. Third, the forces that create ambivalence must be grasped on all levels of the organization of social life: in situations, families, communities, businesses, and in society as a whole. Also, the experience of ambivalence in the micro-, meso-, and macrosystems of the ecology of human development are interconnected. Fourth, it is likely that we can discover systematic patterns of dealing with intergenerational ambivalences. Their roots may be found in cultural traditions and they are shaped by historical and situational circumstances as well as by personal agency. They are part of the basic rules, the *social logic* available to help people live in the context of social relations.

In the introduction I pointed out that the experience of ambivalence in intergenerational relationships can be traced back to antiquity, although the concept itself was only formulated at the start of the 20th century. Does this not suggest that ambivalence is more widespread in the gen-

eral population today and is more consciously perceived and experienced than in the past? The phenomenon of societal aging speaks for this assumption. It is now more important to explicitly structure, negotiate, and organize intergenerational relationships than in the past because the life span shared by successive generations is, in general, longer than in former times and larger segments of the population are experiencing ambivalence. This is one aspect of the rising diversity of private life forms. An awareness of this diversity, which is furthered by the omnipresence of television, has led to the deconstruction of the idealization of family relations as basically harmonious (Coontz, 2000). Last, but not least, the care of family members, as traditionally assigned to and imposed upon women, is no longer self-evident, accepted, and regarded as socially justifiable. In this way, a greater consciousness of intergenerational ambivalence and the changes in gendered roles are interwoven—a point where I fully agree with Connidis and McMullin. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to observe a related interest in ambivalence in the literature on gender. An excellent example is provided by Parker's (1995) work on motherhood and the concept also appears in literature that focuses on the contradictions of caring (Lorenz-Meyer, 1999).

Other topics point to links with postmodernism. In its sociological discussion, we find descriptions of the contemporary modal personality as driven by ambivalences, for which Bauman (1997) suggests the metaphors of the flaneur, the player, and the tourist. Ambivalences are also an important feature of Sennett's (1998) portraits of fragmented selves. More analytically speaking, postmodernism makes a strong point that the social world contains differences that can never be fully resolved, yet have to be lived with.

Two interrelated conclusions could be drawn from such an enlargement of the idea of ambivalence as basic to the human condition. We may search for its occurrence in other social relations, especially those found in intimate encounters and environments. This issue was treated conceptually by Smelser in his presidential address to the American Sociological Association (Smelser 1998) and empirically by Fingerma and Hay (in press). In this way, the fundamental and exemplary relevance of research on intergenerational relationships is being increased. This provides excellent opportunities to connect the field of family research to basic issues of contemporary social science. Given the attention paid to the concept of

ambivalence in literature and art, it may also be a vehicle for not only strengthening the professional and interdisciplinary quality of intergenerational studies, but also for widening intellectual horizons and advancing the discourse among disciplines.

NOTE

I would like to thank the following colleagues for helpful comments on drafts of this text: Brigitte Rockstroh (Konstanz), Bertram Cohler (Chicago), David Klein (South Bend), Frank Lettke (Konstanz).—Pamela Gorin Daepf and James Stuart Brice helped me in linguistic matters and Amelie Burkhardt as research assistant. Support for the research referred to came from the Fritz-Thyssen Stiftung. A major platform for debates on intergenerational ambivalence was provided by a German-American Transcoop-Network sponsored by the Humboldt Foundation, Cornell University (Ithaca, NY) and the University of Konstanz (Germany), which made possible the organization of two workshops. These activities will be integrated into Pillemer and Lüscher (in press).

REFERENCES

- Bauman, Z. (1997). *Flaneure, Spieler und Touristen* [Flaneurs, gamblers, and tourists]. Hamburg, Germany: Hamburg Edition.
- Beavers, R. W., & Voeller, M. N. (1983). Family models: Comparing and contrasting the Olson circumplex model with the Beavers systems model. *Family Process*, 22, 85–98.
- Bengston, V. L. (2001). Beyond the nuclear family. The increasing importance of multigenerational bonds. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 1–16.
- Bleuler, E. (1910). Zur Theorie des schizophränen Negativismus [Towards a theory of schizophrenic negativism]. *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift*, 18, 171–176; 19, 184–187; 20, 189–191; 21, 195–198.
- Bleuler, E. (1911). *Dementia Praecox oder die Gruppe der Schizophrenien* [Dementia praecox or the group of schizophrenias]. Leipzig, Germany: Deuticke.
- Bleuler, E. (1914). Die Ambivalenz [Ambivalence]. In Universität Zürich (Ed.), *Festgabe zur Einweihung der Neubauten 18* (pp. 94–106). Zürich, Switzerland: Schulthess.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism*. Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Cohler, B. J. (1983). Autonomy and interdependence in the family of adulthood. A psychological perspective. *The Gerontologist*, 23, 33–39.
- Coontz, S. (2000). Historical perspectives on family studies. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 283–297.
- Coser, L. A. (1965). *The functions of social conflict*. London: Routledge.
- Coser, R. L. (1964). Authority and structural ambivalence in the middle-class family. In R. Coser (Ed.), *The family, its structure and functions* (pp. 370–383). New York: St. Martins.
- Duck, S. (Ed.). (1997). *Handbook of personal relationships*. Chichester, England: Wiley.
- Fingerman, K. L., & Hay, E. (in press). Intergenerational ambivalence in the context of the larger social network. In K. Pillemer, & K. Lüscher (Eds.), *Intergenerational ambivalences: New perspectives on parent-child relations in later life*. New York: Elsevier.
- Freud, S. (1953). Some reflections on schoolboy psychology. In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 13, pp. 211–238). London: Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1914)
- Hajda, J. (1968). Ambivalence and social relations. *Sociological Focus*, 2(2), 21–28.
- Hinde, R. A. (1997). *Relationships. A dialectical perspective*. Hove, England: Psychology Press.
- Junge, M. (2000). *Ambivalente Gesellschaftlichkeit [Ambivalent sociality]*. Opladen, Germany: Leske+Budrich.
- Kahn, R. L., & Antonucci, T. C. (1980). Convoys over the life course: Attachment, roles, and social support. In P. B. Baltes, & O. C. Brim (Eds.) *Life-span, development, and behavior*. (pp. 254–283). New York: Academic Press.
- Knellessen, O. (1978). *Ambivalenz und Doppelbindung [Ambivalence and double bind]*. Salzburg, Austria: Dissertation obtained from University of Salzburg.
- Lang, F. (in press). The filial task in midlife: Ambivalence and the quality of relationships with old-aged parents. In K. Pillemer & K. Lüscher (Eds.), *Intergenerational ambivalences: New perspectives on parent-child relations in later life*. New York: Elsevier.
- Levine, D. N. (1985). *The flight from ambiguity. Essays in social and cultural theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lowenstein, A., & Katz, R. (2001, November) Theoretical perspectives on intergenerational solidarity, conflict and ambivalence: The Oasis study. In V. Marshall (Chair), *New approaches in the study of intergenerational relations*. Symposium conducted at the annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America.
- Lorenz-Meyer, D. R. (1999). *The gendered politics of generational contracts*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, England.
- Lüscher, K., & Lettke, F. (2002). L' ambivalence, une clé pour l'analyse des relations intergénérationnelles [Ambivalence, a key for the analysis of intergenerational relations]. *Retraite et Société*, 35, 2–30.
- Lüscher, K. (2000). Ambivalence: A key concept for the study of intergenerational relations. In European Observatory on Family Matters (Ed.), *Family issues between gender and generations* (pp. 11–25). Luxembourg: European Commission
- Lüscher K., & Pajung-Bilger, B. (1998). *Forcierte Ambivalenzen. Ehescheidung als Herausforderung an die Generationenbeziehungen unter Erwachsenen* [Forced ambivalences. Divorce as a challenge to intergenerational relations among adults]. Konstanz, Germany: Universitätsverlag.
- Lüscher K., & Pillemer, K. (1998). Intergenerational ambivalence. A new approach to the study of parent-child relations in later life. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 413–425.
- Maio, G. R., Fincham, F. D., & Lycett, E. J. (2000). Attitudinal ambivalence toward parents and attachment

- style. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26, 1451-1464.
- Mannheim, K. (1928). Das Problem der Generationen [The problem of generations]. *Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Soziologie*, 7(2), 157-185.
- Merton, R. K. (1976). *Sociological ambivalence and other essays*. New York: The Free Press.
- Olson, D. H., Sprenkle, D. H., & Russell, C. S. (1979). Circumplex model of marital and family systems: I. *Family Process*, 18(1), 3-28.
- Parker, R. (1995). *Mother love/mother hate. The power of maternal ambivalence*. New York: Basic Books.
- Pillemer, K. (in press) Ambivalence in parent-child relations in later life: Results from an exploratory study. In K. Pillemer & K. Lüscher (Eds.), *Intergenerational ambivalences: New perspectives on parent-child relations in later life*. New York: Elsevier.
- Pillemer, K., & Lüscher, K. (Eds.). (in press). *Intergenerational ambivalences: New perspectives on parent-child relations in later life*. New York: Elsevier.
- Rorty, R. (1988). Solidarität oder Objektivität? [Solidarity or objectivity?]. In R. Rorty (Ed.), *Solidarität oder Objektivität?* (pp. 11-37). Stuttgart, Germany: Reclam.
- Rosenmayr, L. (1983). *Die Späte freiheit* [The late freedom]. Berlin: Severin und Siedler.
- Sennett, R. (1998) *The corrosion of character*. New York: Norton.
- Simon, F. B. (1998). Beyond bipolar thinking: Patterns of conflict as a focus for diagnosis and intervention. *Family Process*, 37, 215-232.
- Smelser, N. E. (1998). The rational and the ambivalent in the social sciences. *American Sociological Review*, 63(1), 1-16.
- Stierlin, H. (1975). *Separating parents and adolescence*. New York: Quadrangle.
- Thompson, M. M., Zanna, M. P., & Griffin, D. W. (1995). Let's not be indifferent about (attitudinal) ambivalence. In R. Petty & J. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude strength. Antecedents and consequences* (pp. 361-386). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.