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## **Doing family at the crossroads of organisations and private lives**

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# Doing Family at the crossroads of organisations and private lives

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*Karin Jurczyk, Maria S. Rerrich and Barbara Thiessen*

## 1 Introduction

The Corona pandemic and its consequences, with several institutional lockdowns of offices, schools, and care-institutions etc. provide copious material for a large number of family practices which were empirically reconstructed by numerous empirical studies during the last two years (for example O'Reilly/Green 2021; Langer et al. 2022; Zerle et al. 2022, see also Grunau or Pustulka et al. in this volume). The course of the pandemic can also be regarded as a case study for illustrating the concept of Doing Family by Karin Jurczyk and her colleagues “par excellence” (Jurczyk 2020). To mention just a few aspects: The repercussions of COVID 19 intensified the need to “do family” as “doing boundary” and “balance management” between organisations such as schools, homes for the elderly, the labour market and families. At the same time, the need of creating a sense of “we-ness” and “togetherness” intensified for those family members who couldn't meet physically because of travel and interaction restrictions and the risk of infection, for example grandparents and grandchildren. It became even more apparent that the family is not a separate entity but is linked to structural contexts in general and to organisations in particular in specific ways. On the level of agency, it became obvious that individuals are the ones who – through their doings – establish connections (or draw boundaries) between private life and organisations and compensate structural breakdowns if necessary.

In the following, we will illustrate how this takes place both on a theoretical and empirical level. First, we will outline the contours of the theoretical concept of Doing and Undoing Family. Second, to have a closer look at the crossroads of organisations and private lives, we will focus on the societal embeddedness of family practices in general and then on the interconnections between organisations, professionals and the family using an empirical example from the field of Early Prevention as an element of social work.

## 2 (Un)Doing Family – the concept

Knowledge about how family members ‘do’ family and what doing family means has increased. The work of scholars such as David Morgan with his pivotal book on “Family Practices” (1996/2011), Janet Finch’s concept of “Displaying Family” (2007) and Carol Smart’s “Personal Life” (2006) as well as numerous empirical investigations examining practices in micro-field studies (cf. Jurczyk/Ludwig 2020; Rönkä/Korvela 2009) stand out. Interestingly, the change from the “institutional to the agency paradigm” took place in English speaking countries much earlier than in German speaking ones (Schier/Jurczyk, 2007: 10). It was Kerry Daly (2003) who pointed out the short sightedness of family theories which ignore what happens in the everyday of families and are highly relevant for family members, e.g. time and space considerations, physicality and emotions. In “Family Connections“, David Morgan (1996) argued that family is constructed individually in its qualitative specificity and is what people ,do’ through their multiple practices. “In doing (people) create and recreate the idea of family” (Morgan 2011: 177). Additionally, he stressed that we should prefer the term ‘families’ to ‘family’ because of families’ diversity according to practices.

In her book “Personal Life“, Carol Smart (2007) agrees with Morgan’s understanding of families: a family is whoever counts him- or herself as belonging to it and belonging is the result of social negotiation processes (see also Bryceson/Vuorela 2002). She characterises families as having assumptions of personal interconnectedness, relationality and embeddedness and highlights the importance of emotions and memories. Going further than Morgan, she suggests using the term “Sociology of Personal Life” rather than “Sociology of Family” (Smart 2007: 28 f.) in order to prevent the reification of separating the public from the private and the white, heterosexual, middle class family from diverse ‘alternative’ families. According to her, ‘Personal Life’ takes place at many societal locations<sup>1</sup> – in contrast to the common understanding of family as happening in private spheres. Another milestone is Janet Finch’s well-known concept of “Displaying Family” (2007). She argues that the construction of personal constellations as something that is happening gives them special meanings and designations. Following her line of argument, families not only use internal practices to define themselves as families but need to be recognized by external ,others’ as such. So relationships need to be displayed in order to have social reality, though the intensity of the need for display will vary in different circumstances and over time. But whatever the circumstances, the core message of displaying is “These are my family relationships, and they work’ (ibid.: 73).

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1 This is close to the concept of Conduct of Everyday Life (Jurczyk/Voss/Wehrich 2016).

The concepts of Morgan, Smart and Finch all aim to de-essentialise and de-institutionalise family and to see it as the result of practices. By doing so, they contrast with the widespread functionalistic, normative and rational concepts of family, especially in German speaking family science and they are a crucial point of reference for the concept of Doing Family developed in Munich. All of them have contributed to various aspects of Doing Family. But there are not only important differences (see below)<sup>2</sup>, more significantly there was neither a coherent connection between these studies nor had conceptual dimensions been developed systematically. This is why we – the Group of Family Sociologists at the German Youth Institute in Munich (see authors in Jurczyk 2020, Jurczyk et al. 2014, Keddi 2014, Schier/Jurczyk 2007) – developed a detailed concept of doing and undoing family since 2007. It is not only strongly informed by the work of national and international family sociologists who followed a praxeological perspective on families. It is also and mainly referring to two sociological theories: the social-constructivist theory of “Doing Gender” and the theory of “The Social Conduct of Everyday Life” (“Alltägliche Lebensführung”)<sup>3</sup>:

- The ethnomethodological approach of Doing Gender underlines that gender is not a given or even perhaps natural category, but is constructed in socially and institutionally framed interactions (West/Zimmermann 1987). These processes of construction take place continuously but are contingent. For the doing family concept, we were lead to reject the assumption of the ‚natural‘ character of family and to highlight processes of social construction by interaction (Buschmeyer et al. 2020).
- The concept of the Social Conduct of Everyday Life conceptualises everyday practices in the context of economic, cultural and social resources and individual orientations. These significant daily practices aim to coordinate very different activities in various spheres of working and living with a specifically individual structured pattern of life conduct (Jurczyk et al. 2016). “The emphasis of the concept is on the fact that the system of life conduct is invariably *actively constructed*, *practiced* on an everyday level and *maintained*, as well as adapted, when neces-

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2 One difference is, while family relations and the adequate practices are in the core of Morgan's concept, Jurczyk et al. underline the relation between familial agency and societal structures. Another difference is Morgan's and Smart's insisting on the use of 'families' instead of 'family' while Jurczyk and others try to define some basic characteristics of a family but with gradual differences.

3 Luise Behringer, Karl Martin Bolte, Wolfgang Dunkel, Karin Jurczyk, Werner Kudara, Maria S. Rerrich, G. Günter Voß and Margit Weihrich were involved with the project group Conduct of Everyday Life.

sary.” (ibid., p. 46).<sup>4</sup> For the Doing Family concept, we learned to focus on daily practices and on the interlinkages of life conduct between relevant persons, to frame it within societal structures and to specify dimensions of doing (Jurczyk 2020a).

We cannot go into details here, but in the following will focus on the core aspects of the Doing and Undoing Family approach.

## 2.1 Core aspects of the concept of Doing Family

What is Doing Family? In a nutshell, the term means: one does not simply have a family, family is performative. One has to do it and there is a more or less conscious need as well as effort to become and to be a family. This has always been the case, but the necessity of ‘doing’ family has been and continues to be intensified by processes of enforced modernisation and late or reflexive modernity (Heaphy 2007), understood as de-traditionalisation, individualisation and as post-Fordism, i.e., the blurring of boundaries (Jurczyk 2020a: 34 f.; Jurczyk 2014: 122 f.). Increasingly, traditions about, whether and how to live family, when, where and with whom, have vanished, have eroded or at the very least have been called into question. Cultural and structural framings and norms remain important, but they are multifaceted and contradictory, and options for deciding what a family means for the individual have increased. As a result, the family is no longer a clearly defined and uniform societal and legal institution nor is it a given natural resource for individuals as well as for society. Instead, it is the result of a permanent process of doing family relations in everyday life as well as over the life-course, interwoven with societal structures.

In contrast to other approaches in family research such as functionalism, rational choice, family morphology, family values etc., this praxeological approach of Doing Family does not primarily focus on studying various family types or on exploring attitudes, analysing time budgets or spelling out societal functions and hermeneutic meanings of the family. Doing Family focuses on the processes of how families emerge and how they are ‘done’ through practices. And moreover, it raises the question of how family is produced as a specific system of personal relations. Despite the praxeological understanding of family that means we still need to specify how we understand family as a result or as an aim of such doings. As a working definition, we suggest that the core conceptual dimensions of a family are mutual and more or less reciprocal: care, reliability or at least the intention of reliability, intergenerativ-

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4 This approach has been further developed to a concept of familial life conduct, with a focus on coordinating and interweaving the different life conducts of family members (Jurczyk 2020a).

ity and privacy i.e., personal relationships in private contexts (see Jurczyk/Thiessen 2020: 122 f.).

That is to say we understand a family as a permanently executed practice centered on care obligations between generations in a private context. Accordingly, the concrete shape of a family can be contingent and fluid, there can be a multitude of families (Morgan 2011). This contrasts with concepts of the family as a 'norm' family, which assume heteronormativity, biological relationships, marriage and unilocality, i.e., living together in one household. We also distinguish two levels of producing a family: the level of organisation and the level of constructing identity of and within a family. On the one hand, at the level of organisational practices, there are all the activities that can be associated with "balance management". Some examples are the (potentially conflict laden) intertwining of the lives, interests, and needs of family members through coordinating and synchronizing individuals' lives in order to create family life, to find time to care and to have shared time for joint activities, as well as distributing rights and delegating duties. This includes creating boundaries between jobs, schools, care institutions, and the family – but interconnecting them as well.

On the other hand, at the level of identity, there is the symbolic construction of togetherness and corresponding practices (see also Groß in this volume). We can identify three ways doing this: First, social ties are created through processes of establishing family 'demarcations'. Individuals are included in and excluded from the group that is defined as a family (Nelson 2006), with varying constellations during the life-course. The question is, who is in and who is out, e.g., in step-families. Additionally, there is the understanding of oneself as belonging to a family adequately or whether this needs to be recognised by others. Second, intimacy and a feeling of belonging are constructed through the production of a sense of "We-ness" as defined by Galvin (2006): 'We are a family'. This can happen, for example, through sharing values, celebrating holidays the same way etc. Third, there are outward staging and/or performing processes and inward processes of reasserting the condition of being together and belonging together as a family. This is well-known as Displaying Family (Finch 2007) and includes the dimension of wishing to be recognized 'as' a family by others. Families that deviate from the current 'norm' family especially feel the need to prove they are functioning successfully as such. Some examples are foster families or families by adoption (Helming 2014; Bovenschen 2020) or queer families (Nay 2017) which display 'family' intensively.

Beyond this basic distinction of levels of the production of a family, there are several detailed dimensions of the Doing Family concept, which provide a close look into everyday life and are extremely helpful for empirical research (Jurczyk 2014: 129). Here, we can only touch on three of them. Using our doing family concept as an empirical program, they address different questions: Which dimensions of doing are focused? A distinction can be made between several dimensions of agency

such as the temporal, the spatial, the social, the medial, the dimension of significance, the emotional, the physical and the cognitive. These dimensions of action follow the approach of the Social Conduct of Everyday Life (see Jurczyk et al. 2016). How is Doing Family done? The mode of agency can be more or less routinised and/or ritualised, can change according to varying situations or can be casual. In this case, family issues must be decided anew as well as over and over again (ibid.). Who is the actor/who are the actors of Doing Family? These can be single individuals along their familial status according to gender and generation etc., subgroups such as siblings or grandparents and grandchildren, or the family group as a whole. Family can be a multi-local network and not simply the core family living together in one household, and it can include “elective or chosen relatives” (“Wahlverwandtschaften”) as actors. This allows us to think of families as concentric circles of caregivers and care receivers. One aspect of this is especially relevant for this article: the understanding of directly interacting professional or semi-professional caregivers as specific types of actors in the context of families. We call these interactions the co-production of family with other societal actors (see below).

## 2.2 The continuum between Doing and Undoing Family

By now it should be evident that by using the term Doing Family, we do not merely have the happy gathering of family members around the kitchen table in mind. Doing Family should not be misinterpreted as successful family, whatever success means, and as functioning or not functioning along societal requirements, as in Parsons’ structural-functional approach.

This is, first, because the production of family is always characterised by ambivalence (Lüscher 2012) on a range of closeness and distance. Care, whether for educating, for supervising, for meeting many needs, from loving attention to doing housework and much more, can be more or less successful and can be more or less associated with positive emotions such as trust and attachment. Doing Care can also mean shame and rejection (Klinger 2014; Brückner 2018). In general, relations can be lived more or less intensely and can change over time. Second, it is apparent that there are counter-movements of producing a family as a community: That is what we call Undoing Family, through practices such as actively forgetting and neutralizing relationships, targeted distancing or even dissolving relations (Kindler/Eppinger 2020). Third, domestic violence or at least severe conflicts and tensions can mark the ‘dark sides’ of family life. These harmful practices do not directly intend to destroy relationships. Sometimes they aim at just the opposite, at staying together – but through the use of power in unequal gendered or generational relations. Here, care can be the medium for the misuse of personal dependency. Such practices usually produce distance, disrupted, or at least unsettled relations.

We assume that family life typically takes place on a continuum of doing and undoing and that 'tipping points' between doing and undoing could be identified in empirical reconstructions. From a life-course perspective, family appears to be a gradual more or less of intense and reliable care-relations. In practice, these are dynamic and variable and include who is 'in' and who is 'out' of the family. Thus, belonging to the family can be independent of the formal kinship relation, for example as a grandparent, a nephew or a niece or a parent.

### 3 The embeddedness of family practices

Coming to the question of crossroads between family and organizations, one has to ask how doing family is embedded in and shaped through societal contexts and which scope of action such contexts leave for family actors. To understand Doing Family is more than simply reconstructing micro-processes of interaction. The family is merely one subsystem of society – albeit a decisive one because of its focus on care. There are many subsystems (such as the labour market, the welfare state, the legal system) that are interconnected. In other words, 'doing' takes place within the framework of complex societal institutions and corresponding organizations, and this is especially true given the conditions of late modernity (Heaphy 2007). We argue that by and large there is a lack of systematic theoretical understandings of these interconnections. To recognise them, we propose varying levels of analysis (see Jurczyk/Meysen 2020, S. 44 ff.).

First, and most generally, we follow sociological theories of "structure and agency" (Giddens 1988) and "subject-orientation" (Voß/Pongratz 1997; Jurczyk et al. 2016) which assume mutual influences between individual agency and societal organisations. We have demonstrated this in detail with the theoretical approach and empirical research on the Social Conduct of Everyday Life (Jurczyk/Rerrich 1983). One of the empirical fields was studying to what extent working time regimes determine the conduct of everyday life. We found that these structural conditions have to be appropriated individually (but also allow appropriation) and thus need to be understood in the entire context of an individual's everyday life and biography (Jurczyk 1993).

One has to take into account, secondly, that various spheres and actors are granted differing ranges of power, resources and thus influence. Social and medical services and professionals in education and social work are positioned in the powerful interrelationship between individual appropriation and agency on the one hand and social structures and legal regulations on the other. Their mediation work represents the functional core of public education and care activities in the modern welfare state. This complex mix of individual practices, professional guidance and state framing in the production of family can be captured more precisely with the



concept of governmentality (Foucault 2000). Foucault conceives of the coupling of forms of power and processes of subjectivation programmatically, in which technologies of the self and technologies of power are seen as interlocking practices (Foucault 2000: 50). The offer of social services and the professionals acting in them can be analysed precisely with the governmentality concept as a support as well as an active influence on the way of life and even more: as promotion of self-government and self-optimisation (Kessl 2005).

Third, a distinction must be drawn between differing layers of society, as Bronfenbrenner (1976) has done in his socio-ecological model of society. He distinguishes the micro, meso and macro levels and suggests a systematisation of relevant environments from the perspective of the child. He, too, concedes that these environments interact and overlap. For our understanding of 'crossroads', the meso level is the most direct and the most important one, as it connects networks, social, educational and health organisations (see below).

Fourth, and most useful, is Barbara Hobson's (2013) version of the 'capability approach'. It, too, takes the relevance of structures, organisations etc. as its starting point, but aims to understand the degrees of freedom of action. This concept builds upon Amartya Sen's work which provides a multidimensional framework for analysing individuals' unequal capabilities and the resources of people and their agency. Hobson, too, makes a distinction between 'layers of context', but, more interestingly, she introduces two mechanisms entailing experiences of agency that are crucial for transforming capabilities into real room to maneuver: These are the perceived scope of alternatives and the sense of entitlement.

All four theoretical approaches point out that agency is not simply determined by acting within structural frameworks such as organisations, even though these are highly relevant for Doing Family, but rather that families have considerable leeway to form what they make of these framings. And all of these approaches highlight the interdependency of subsystems. Families depend on the welfare state and the labour market economy, but they, too, depend on families, because without the provision of family care output, neither the administrative state nor the labour market can survive. This is especially relevant in family centred welfare-regimes, which assign most care work to families and thus substitute some of these services via low-level social security benefits.

With a social theory perspective, Doing Family can only be understood as embedded in powerful societal structures. A mere micro-sociological perspective is not sufficient, although the empirical reconstruction of personal relationality within these interdependencies and multiple layers of society is challenging. Beside the individual constellations, for options and variations of Doing Family, national specifics and historically developed relations between welfare state regimes, state regulations, civil society and family are decisive (Daly 2000). Thanks to increasing options of delegating privatized family work (such as raising and educating

young children or caring for other vulnerable family members) and cooperation with organisations such as kindergartens, schools, and residential homes, new combinations of familial and societal responsibility have emerged. Under these conditions, the embeddedness of Doing Family has to be concretised by a closer look at social and educational organisations that interconnect with the family and how this interconnection takes place.

#### **4 The interconnections between organisations, professionals, and the family**

Legal regulations, welfare state arrangements and labour market requirements, the power, needs and services of educational and care organisations for family members as well as the offers and guidelines of social work and other services provide the framework for the everyday lives of families. This is where the logic, demands and ‘*modi operandi*’ of various organisations come together. Furthermore, they are confronted with the “internal logic” of families which does not follow functional demands of being a ‘good family’ by producing well-educated children and employable and skilled labour.

It is important to note that the organisations themselves are by no means free to act according to their own philosophy, ethics, and norms of their tasks. This is mainly because they operate within the framework of social legislation, the local service structure, as well as the market economy and have to compete with other organisational care providers. The basic structure of the welfare state, i.e., the specific mix of the state, the family and the market, is crucial (Busemeyer et al. 2013). For example, social and educational organisations have to take time and money restrictions based on legal regulations into account. Nevertheless, they follow and incorporate norms about successful families, good parents (especially mothers) and good children (especially daughters). These influence and have an impact on how professionals of these organisations regard families and how they interact with them. Even so, these norms and the interrelationship between family and organisations change from time to time and depend, for example, on the welfare regime. But how do organisations come into contact and affect families in practice?

Professionals are the ones who usually translate organisational requirements and constraints into practices while interacting with families. As co-producers of the social, they operate at the interface of the private sphere and various public spheres, such as social and educational organisations (Jurczyk/Thiessen 2011). On one hand, organisations provide the framework for professional activity within social services. Professionals act and must act within the specifications of their organisations, such as the number of persons they have to care for or the time structures of schools or their religious perspectives and codices etc. On the other hand, professionals do not

merely act following the guidelines of their organisations as such. They, too, interpret and form how they interact with families. And they, too, follow their own interests, individual norms and values and – last but not least – the requirements and restrictions of their own daily lives, including their families. This can lead – in addition to clashes with the interests and values of the families involved – to clashes and contradictions between the requirements and expectations of the various spheres of professionals' lives.

The Doing Family approach is helpful for understanding these complex processes of interaction. Concerning a 'Making Family' approach and its differences to Doing Family, we argue: Social and educational organisations 'make' the family only on a meso level, they make it through cultural norms and hidden or outspoken values, given by legal regulations, by organisational rules, restrictions, and resources (e.g., for time and money). Professionals act as a link between their organisation and their clients, in their interactions they 'do', i.e., co-produce, family but they do not make it. In our opinion, in this context the term 'Making Family' only covers the aspect of professionals following (societal, legal, individual) specific norms about how a family ought to be. And it includes the power to decide about granting or taking away (financial, emotional, practical etc.) support through legal entitlement. But all of this has to be done in specific sequences, settings, and dimensions of practices. In the following we will illustrate this with one example – the field of early prevention in Germany, more precisely the interaction between midwives and family members.

#### 4.1 An empirical example: early prevention (Frühe Hilfen)

Since 2006, a child protection scheme called the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Program for preventing neglect of and violence towards infants and children (Sann 2008) has been established in Germany. Its objective is to help practitioners to identify risks and burdens in families sooner and more effectively and to provide appropriate support for families with a high risk of child neglect. Socially and educationally disadvantaged families are the main target group (Renner et al. 2018). Since the implementation of nationwide programs of early prevention, child care and education have been politically conceived as a shared private and public responsibility (BMFSFJ 2002). Rather than being seen as a 'natural' task of mothers they are now regarded as a task requiring special skills and competencies. Nowadays, social and health services work together to facilitate access to families, and the use of specially trained family midwives is of particular importance.

Implementing the principles of strengthening families' own resources and mobilising their self-help potential is perceived as crucial. But empirical studies have shown that the focus of 'strengthening strengths' in professionals' practice can occasionally shift to the transmission of expert knowledge as well as in unequal working

alliances between professionals and clients. One example is the ethnographic study by Rettig et al. (2017). They examined the professional activities of family midwives working with teenage mothers as the family actors being addressed. A central pattern of the interaction in the “doing” of midwives and mothers proved to be the production of motherhood (“mother in the making”, *ibid.*: 58 ff.) by family midwives. Citing the low level of education, problematic biographies (e.g., related to addiction) and the childbearing age of these young mothers, the family midwives were skeptical about their mothering skills. Rettig and her colleagues’ analyses identified few traces of shared situational production of motherhood and thus of family based on the strengths of these young women.. Rather, it was evident that family midwives’ interventions aimed at “making mothers” or “mothers in the making” (*ibid.*) according to their own concepts and presumably the concepts of their organisation as well.

This was evident in ambivalent interactions. On the one hand, the empirical reconstructions revealed how “reassuring, counseling and caring” for mothers enabled them to make motherhood possible and was open for the young mothers’ own needs as well (*ibid.*). This can be termed as Doing Family together, i.e., the co-production of family. On the other hand, they brought to light how family midwives conceived of themselves as “maternal midwives” whose central goal was to strengthen a mother-child dyad. This included the exclusion of fathers who were seen primarily as problem bearers and troublemakers (*ibid.*: 74). Here, the question of “who is in and who is out,” which is one essential aspect of Doing Family, was subject to significant intervention by the professionals. In another observational sequence, a family midwife attempted to steer the client’s training plans in a differing direction (from sales to a skilled trade, *ibid.*: 63), pointing out that employment and family tasks would then be more compatible. In doing so, the professional was not reflecting that she was interfering with the family’s ‘balance management’.

In processes such as these, care for and the upbringing of children are again stereotyped as female terrain (Thiessen 2012). Family midwives construct ‘family’ in their professional activities enforcing their patterns of interpretation on their clients (Rettig et al. 2017). The problem here is not only that clients experience themselves as incompetent yet again. Families’ genuinely own Doing Family practices and specific ways of creating “we-ness” may also be upset. This counteracts the central goal of early childhood intervention – supporting the parents’ educational and relational competencies in order to create secure attachments.

This brief example shows only some aspects of the complex practices of producing and co-producing family. The co-production of family by professionals influences the way Doing Family is carried out by family members and this is closely linked to social power relations. With the help of the governmentality concept, the intertwined Doing Family practices in co-production by family members and professionals can be deciphered even more precisely. Underlying each of these are (different) models of e.g. ‘good’ motherhood, each of which reflect performatively ap-

propriated and publicly negotiated models. A more intensive application of the Doing Family concept to the field of early prevention would allow for a deeper investigation of many other aspects, such as the organisational and symbolic production of family, the modes of action, the representation and staging of 'good' motherhood, the dimensions of time and space and much more.

## 5 Conclusion: toward a precise use of the Doing Family concept

To summarize our arguments, three aspects stand out. First, it is tempting to use the term Doing Family as a catchword for many things indiscriminately and, in doing so, to forfeit its analytical accuracy and content. We suggest that it is essential to spell out what is meant by the use of this term in its various dimensions and that the advantages of this concept will only come to light if one does so. This means much more than just claiming to look at 'family practices'.

Second, seen through the precise and focused lens of the Doing Family concept, family can be perceived as a fluid result of practices and their societal framings and, as such, as (1) changeable, (2) contingent, and (3) gradual. For this, the embeddedness of Doing Family is crucial. The result is a broad understanding of what a family is and can be. Also, within the programmatic framework of the concept one can reconstruct the diversity and contingency of family life empirically and in detail. Furthermore, one can avoid incorrect assumptions and generalisations about 'the' family.

Third, as we have seen through the midwife example, there is a crucial difference between Doing Family (that is the micro-sociological perspective of interaction) and Making Family (that is the meso-sociological perspective of framing and influencing by professionals authorized with decision making power and resources). Located between doing and making is the interaction between family members and professionals since it takes place at the level of micro-interaction. But by the same token, professionals represent and transport societal and individual norms and the expectations and requirements of their organisations. Using the Doing Family approach, one can reconstruct the power of organisations dealing with families as well as the dynamics, interactions, and conflicts between family members and professional actors.

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