

Families, Social Capital and Migration in Time and Space:

**An exploration of strategies of getting by and getting ahead in
comparative context – Germany and Britain**

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Introduction

What are the resources that family members can access through their social networks, and do these mean that they are aiming to 'get on' and/or 'get ahead' in life, or are they focusing on 'getting by' in difficult circumstances? What sort of 'family life' are they living with or working towards – is there a sense of 'core' family or one that is part of an extended network? Are such ties dense or loose in nature?

In this Working Paper, two research teams who are investigating aspects of families and social capital in Germany and Britain, amongst different migrant and settled, and ethnic/racial and social class groupings, bring their work into dialogue around such questions. Through case study analyses we explore whether it is possible to draw universal lessons about the material and social resources, and family images and networks, available to families regardless of national and local context, or whether variable experiences and understandings are rooted in various levels of context.

There are a number of meanings of family in play in our work, conceptually and empirically, including the extent to which family, as a set of solidarities that exist between people who are related to one another through ties of biology, law or social convention, overlaps with that of household, in terms of people living together under one roof and the associated division of labour and distribution of resources.

Equally, we are using some comparative and contrasting meanings of 'migration' in relation to time and space. While migration conventionally is associated with moving across space geographically within chronological time, in the East German context there has been a form of migration within a static physical context, in the form of a rapid migration in social, political and symbolic context that equates to a transformative time shift.

The team at Kassel University has been involved in a research cluster that – over a period of three years – investigated social capital in deindustrialised former East Germany. The project based at Kassel University focussed on the strategies of 'getting by' and 'getting ahead' in a period of sustained rupture that started in 1989. Mainly through in-depth interviews, but also through long term participant observation, the researchers examined family strategies of (re)vitalising social capital in response to the simultaneity of post-socialist transformation, deindustrialisation, and fragmented globalisation of the environment in which family members lived. In carrying out this work, the team faced the question: to what extent are these patterns of family social capital unique to the transformative East German experience, and/or to what extent can they be generalised across other settings in Europe? The Kassel team, therefore, was interested in comparing their work with the London South Bank team in order to see if there were any resonances with their findings.

The London South Bank University team has conducted a programme researching family change and processes of social capital in mainland Britain through in-depth interviews with parents and other family members about the resources that they draw on and provide locally, nationally and

transnationally. As they discuss below, their interest, conceptually and empirically, was to explore issues concerning various forms of diversity in the material and social resources that family members draw on and create across a range of social and geographical context.

The Kassel team's study then is the starting point for this cross-national comparison, with the London South Bank team's work as a counterpoint. Together, we (the teams) are able to bring rich, descriptive, case studies of particular families from each of our research programmes to explore whether the Kassel team's findings about the implications of migration for families' social capital and the project of family life are applicable broadly across context, or are entirely dependent on specific circumstances and social location.

After each of us has laid out the particular conceptual issues concerning families, social capital and migration that have informed and been informed by each of our programmes of work, we then explain the details of our research programmes, from the specifics of research samples and methods to the wider welfare regimes and social contexts in which our work is situated.

These explanations are followed by the in-depth comparison of family case studies typical of the material from the two programmes of work. The first set of four cases are drawn from the German study focusing on the families that people are living with and by, followed by cases from the British study that address, respectively, migration and transnational families, and resources for families where there has been no migration. The Working Paper then concludes with some reflections on messages from this cross-national comparative endeavour, about the relationship between social capital and migration in families, and their relationship to 'getting by', 'getting on' or 'getting ahead'.

1.1 Families and social capital: issues for the German team

We now turn to the issues that informed the Kassel University research team's work, in the Germany context.

Arguably, it is part of the human condition to transcend the confines of the 'here and now' of everyday routine. Meaning in general, ambition and hope in particular, are intrinsically part of social reality. One can dream of a different life or at least one can try to make things better than they are. As Bauman (2001: 2) puts it, every cultural entity aims for 'not just living in society' but 'living happily'. In this view, an irresolvable ambivalence results from the incompleteness of human identity, which always needs to become in the horizon of open possibilities and never just is. Generally, there will always be a tension between the lives told and imagined on the one hand, and the lives actually lived on the other. More particularly, this chasm might turn out to be productive, thus providing a crucial means of getting by or even of self-transformation. But it might also turn out to be a source of frustration and disappointment if the chasm widens (cf. *ib.* 140ff).

While thus the human condition is posed as always incomplete and in need of identification of realistic life projects, it would also seem that in times of precariousness and insecurity the search for anchors that can hold these projects comes to fore more clearly. For some commentators, the family seems to be one of those 'stable orientation points' for moral guidance 'that are nowadays increasingly short in supply' in what Bauman (2000: 6ff.) has described as 'liquid modernity'. On the one hand, it is argued that, while occupational careers do not lend themselves any longer for biographical attachment, and while attachment to locality and neighbourhood seem counterproductive in the light of demands on personal mobility, family seems to be the last reference point for long term plans and commitments. On the other hand, it is said to be increasingly difficult to say what family actually is amidst those changes. Some would even argue that family, next to community, has turned into a 'zombie category' (Beck 2005). In this view, as in real life it becomes more and more hard to sustain, the more 'family' becomes alive as an imagined project. But what is image and what is reality here? Was the family as a cohesive, locally grounded and housed milieu ever a lived reality for most people even in the so called Western world? If it ever was, perhaps in the 1950s and 1960s, then some would say that processes of social and geographic mobility, cultural individualization and flexibilization of work have eaten away on it. And yet, others assert that the image of the nuclear family with a traditional gendered division of labour is, more than ever perhaps, an anchor of dreams and ambitions, not just for governance but also in everyday culture.

There have been several attempts to further contextualize and ground these rather general thoughts on the link between the real and imagined family. Notably Gillis' (1996) work offers a useful entry into the problematic. He emphasizes the role of cultural images and societal ideals of 'good (family) life' in the everyday reproduction process of families. He also draws our attention to the often neglected time dimension within these processes in that he highlights the ambivalent role of an idealized past and future for the mundane here and now. In sum he argues that there is an increasing chasm between the meaning of family as a group of people one lives with on the one hand, and as an imagined entity we live by.

The distinction between the family lived by and the family lived with does not equate with the difference of real and imagined. Hess and Handel (1971) in their *Family Worlds* highlight the role of coherent family images for the maintenance of family as a milieu. For them family is not just an interplay between the real and the imagined, but the family image itself contains real (roles, norms) and ideal (hopes, dreams, projections) components that need careful balancing. The family image is crucial in that it provides the gravitational pull that balances out the centrifugal power of individualized life trajectories. It may well be that both real and ideal components of family life have become, or indeed been revealed, as more diverse, encompassing and flexible since Hess and Handel put forward their arguments. Nonetheless, it may be that family imagery can act to galvanize a sense of common membership that binds across distance and in periods of absence. From Hess and Handel's perspective, family is always a transcendence of the here and now insofar as it contains a disjuncture between the actual and the (hidden) potential (not yet realized ambitions, suppressed identity aspects of individual members etc.). For them, the family image then stabilizes the actual family in at least two ways: it postulates norms for the here and now (things done and not done), and it articulates hopes for the future (a kind of symbolic rehearsal for and projection of the family's continuity into the future).

In sum, such arguments claim that the interplay between the ways the family is organized as a practical everyday milieu on the one hand, and how the images that are part of these organizational processes on the other, are themselves socially constructed and reproduced.

From the perspectives discussed above, it is not surprising that family should frequently resurface as an island of worldly rootedness and symbolic stability in times of social change and liminality. Schelsky (1960) pointed towards the crucial role of family as a means for upwards mobility in post-war Germany, in particular for the millions of refugees who suffered from dislocation and enforced mobility. For the Anglo-American context, Young and Willmott (1957) as well as Sennett (1970) have delivered arguments for the significance of families for social stability in times of industrialization and urban renewal against the backgrounds of post-war London and the Chicago of 1872 -1890 respectively. Nonetheless, Sennett (1970: 229ff.) does say that it remains largely unclear whether the intensification of family ties in times of crisis means indeed the contraction towards the core family unit, or if not on the contrary the extended family functions as effectively, if not more effectively, under those circumstances. He also feels that it remains a disputed issue as to whether the stabilizing function of the family in times of instability actually means providing the means 'to meet the world' or rather implies 'fleeing from it' (ib. 207).

Most recently such issues have resurfaced in the debate on social capital – a concept that is explained in more detail in the next section on the issues for the British team. While it seems to be undisputed that family is the most fundamental form of social capital, there remains debate as to whether it is best associated with the bonding or the bridging form and capacity of social capital. As explained further below, conventionally it is held that in its bonding capacity family is a means to 'get by' while in order to enable family and/or its members to 'get ahead' it needs to enhance its bridging capacity (see also Edwards 2004 for a summary). While this is a very general formula, periods of crisis and change may provide a vivid testing ground for the interplay between the bridging and bonding capacity of families. Moreover, under circumstances of social pressure the link between bridging/bonding family strategies and living by/with families may be highlighted. When family lives are affected by periods of increased social change and mobility, this might lead to a break down in self-orientation, reversal of expectations of the future, and might eventually even trigger a radically new definition of the life situation. This may then shed a yet again different light on the question of the real and the ideal in family life. Here the notion of 'symbolic identity' may be of particular interest. On the one hand the symbolic identity of a family, based on past credentials and future identity claims, might prove useful as a strategy of getting by in times of material and symbolic hardship (status decline). On the other hand the imagined identity is a fairly precarious construct that might have devastating consequences, if moving towards pretence and the fictional, and if put to the test by individual members of the family or the outside world.

If this is the case, forms and modes of families 'living by' are an important aspect of their social capital. The images and ideals of the 'living by' mode may be crucial for families' capacity to invoke common norms, commit to a shared project, and foster a sense of mutual obligations.

By linking the bonding / bridging problem in social capital theory with the living by / with issue in family studies, the Kassel University team aims at making a contribution towards greater

reflexivity in what otherwise has developed into catch all phrases. Already in Sennett's (1970: 218f.) early study on families in industrializing Chicago there is the claim that most of the time 'mobile family' or 'modern family' are used as empty phrases. And it seems that there is 'lack of context', both in regional as well as historical dimension, as far as research towards the actual functioning of family is concerned. Rather than seeing the family as an unchanging island in a world of flux, it may be better understood as a milieu that works 'under a certain set of conditions, subject to change as those other conditions'. For the social capital part, as a more recent category that nevertheless has enjoyed enthusiastic reception as a /the new and upcoming concept in social sciences, a similar line of argument can be made. Already early on in the social capital debate Portes (1998: 1, 21) has referred to the 'excessive extension of the concept (that) may jeopardize its heuristic value'. The 'high degree of transferability' (Field 2003:137), not just between the social sciences but between science and policy agendas too, has not necessarily benefitted the empirical adequacy nor theoretical robustness of the social capital concept. Often the overgeneralized use of the concept goes hand in hand with underplaying the social and material contexts in which social networks develop and in which material and symbolic resources are generated (Franklin et al 2007; Lewandowski 2007). It would seem that, despite initial enthusiasm, the concept is in need of empirical investigation that fosters its contextualization as well as benefitting its theoretical robustness.

1.2 Families and social capital: issues for the British team

Delving more deeply into social capital conceptualisation and contextualisation has been a key feature of the London South Bank University's work in the British context. Indeed, social capital has been a key concept in British policy making as well as internationally. This has been both stimulated and accompanied by academic debates internationally about its definition, measurement and analytic value. Enhancing social capital is presented as an effective and innovative way of dealing with social exclusion and declining political engagement, and other difficult social issues in contemporary society resulting from globalisation and individualisation, such as the sort of issues that formed concerns for the German team's project. Different theorists emphasise slightly different constituent features, but generally, as a concept social capital refers to the way that people connect through social networks and common values within these networks – basically, who we know and what we do for each other. A range of reasons have been put forward as to why the concept of social capital has come so rapidly to the fore in recent years. A key one in the context of the discussion here relates to conceptions of contemporary as undergoing radical social change. Contemporary life is marked by a pervasive sense of concern about the condition of society and uncertainty about what will be encountered in the future. In this context, the idea provides intellectuals and politicians concerned with what they regard as the disintegration of families and communities, with an opportunity to take action that will redeem society (Arneil 2006).

New right and conservative thinking sees 'the family' as both a norm and an idea, but as under threat. Social change is happening – for the worse. In particular the 'breakdown' of the

'traditional' nuclear family with breadwinner father and homemaker mother, and the concomitant rise of a range of diverse family forms (e.g. single mother, cohabiting, step, same-sex) are regarded as bringing social fragmentation and disorder in their wake, most recently captured in slogans about 'Broken Britain'. Particular class and ethnic groups are implicitly found in the description of family structures posited as deficient in social capital; such as White working class families, African-Caribbean mother-headed households, large Bangladeshi and Pakistani families, and so on.

From this perspective, social capital as the glue that holds society together is being undermined by the supposed breakdown of families and communities. Yet, certainly in the UK, the broad span of empirical research does not support ideas of selfish individuals whose family lives are falling apart. Rather, caring and commitment are in evidence (Deacon and Williams 2004; Jamieson 1999; Williams 2004).

Further, what is missing from the mainstream picture are issues of power (Edwards 2009). The divisive and oppressive side of family and gender relations, such as an unequal division of labour and domestic abuse, is ignored. Social capital theories also obscure the complexity and ambivalence of family life in general. Gendered and cultural expectations can place oppressive constraints on people's social behaviour. Indeed, women are central producers of social capital through their gendered social position as family and community carers and networkers, yet this very social positioning and consequent social capital generation is in itself problematic in reinforcing a gendered division of labour (O'Neill and Gidengil 2006).

Another constituent of the breakdown of social capital is supposed to be geographical mobility. In particular, migration and transnationalism are often directly linked with a decline in social capital for the families concerned and the communities they leave behind, as well as the ones they then settle in. Work in the social capital field argues that migration means that family members break with the social capital they had available to them in their context of origin, no longer able to access it or for it to be of any use to them, and unable to generate replacement social capital of value in their new context, while their presence in the receiving community introduces diversity, fracturing shared communal values and behaviour (Coleman 1990; Leigh and Putnam 2000). In contrast, another body of literature on transnationalism does not equate geographical mobility with the loss of social capital but rather with its recreation in new forms appropriate to their changed circumstances, with migrant families maintaining their original social capital in different ways as well as building new social capital rich networks (Levitt 2001; Goulbourne et al. 2010).

The networking and exchanges involved in social capital raise complex issues of identity and affiliation in what scholars refer to as its bonding and bridging forms, respectively homogeneous and heterogeneous. Coleman's work on social capital, for example, was largely concerned with advocating a reciprocal and consensual social world characterised by a bonding social capital based on ties between adults and children living in the same sort of (nuclear) family, with the same sorts of values, and participating in communities made up of networks of these families (1988, 1990). Other social capital theorists are concerned with bridging across social difference rather than an analysis of how those divisions are accumulated, transmitted and maintained. Putnam (2000) describes the bonding form of social capital as based on homogeneous ties of

trust and reciprocity between 'people like us', reinforcing exclusive identities, and restricted to enabling people simply to 'get by'. In his view, bonding social capital seldom generates the sort of social capital used more widely in a society. Outward-looking, co-operative, bridging social capital enables people to 'get on' in life and fosters social inclusion. Putnam sees a link between the two posited forms of social capital: the more bonding in a society in terms of stable nuclear families, the more bridging across class and ethnicity outside of those families that will occur.

Basing assessments of bonding and bridging social capital on fixed socio-demographic characteristics hardly speaks to issues of identity. In relation to ethnic ties, for example, this is potentially essentialist, and conceptually often conflates and collapses distinctive categories of race, ethnicity and national identity (Anthias 2007; Goulbourne and Solomos 2003). A fixed boundary is drawn between bonds existing within a group and bridges that exist between groups with no acknowledgement of how these boundaries may be flexible and changing, depending on time, location and audience. For transnational families, for example, networks can flow and be valued and maintained across national boundaries as well as across and within generations, which may represent bonding and bridging social capital at the same time.

In the light of these assessments then, social capital theorising and application tends towards the ahistorical, asocial and acultural.

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Having respectively set out the particular conceptual issues concerning families, social capital and migration that have informed and been informed by the German and British teams' programmes of work, we now turn to the details of those research projects.

2. The German and British Projects

2.1 Families networks in societies of getting by, University of Kassel project

The Kassel project is designed to shed light on the family as the most crucial seed bed of social capital in times of social rupture and discontinuity. Based in the East German former industrial city of Wittenberge, the study aims at revealing basic strategies of life conduct when family members have to mobilize extra resources in order to (re)adjust their social capital in a moving target situation of ongoing institutional change.

Wittenberge is located half-way between the metropolitan regions of Berlin and Hamburg. Since 1989 the situation here has been characterized by heavy post-industrial shrinking and a thinning out of civil society due to large scale out migration. What can be observed is a complex intersection of post-industrial change in the economic infrastructure, post-socialist transformation of the institutional matrix, and a slow adjustment of everyday mentality. State led programmes of local and regional revitalization have so far failed to show the desired results. This further enhances the feeling of disorientation and the tendency towards a survivalist mentality amongst local people.

Thus people find themselves in a society of 'getting by'. By this we refer to a society in which cumulative social change (post-socialist transformation, reunification, europeanisation, globalisation) has produced a rupture within the institutional setting of society thereby leading to a devaluation of human and social capitals. This results in a bottle-neck situation of muddling through in the here and now. People have to redevelop a sense of stewardship of their lives.

Based on qualitative (semi-structured) interviews with families, the project aims at revealing the patterns of family based social capital that tend to be mobilized in such a situation of continuous societal indetermination. So far twenty interviews have been conducted in a first period of intense field work. In these interviews the family reveals its genuine ambivalence. On the one hand it is a persevering milieu that, based on the bio-social nature of its bonds as well the communicative and complex character of its personalized interaction, tends to provide stability for its members. On the other hand it is a social institution that should make its members autonomously fit to engage in wider society. To grasp this inbuilt ambivalence we have fallen back on the metaphor of 'bonding and bridging'.

Families in Wittenberge are under particular pressure in this respect. On the one hand families are under obligation to stabilize broken biographies. Due to post-socialist development, but more so due to near complete deindustrialization, almost all inhabitants have experienced the cascading interplay of loss of economic capital (due to deindustrialization and changing property laws), loss of cultural capital (due to loss of status and devaluation of qualification), and loss of social capital (due to loss of work-related networks and thinning out neighbourhoods and friendship networks caused by heavy out migration to West Germany). Here the family seems to be in demand as the stabilizing and bonding milieu. At the same time there is the prevalent

discourse of 'Abwanderung' (out migration) overarching local and regional culture: if you are fit and mobile you should find work elsewhere in Germany, most likely West Germany. Thus family is equally in demand as a bridging institution that provides infrastructure and emotional support for those commuting to work elsewhere in Germany on a daily or weekly basis. But there is not just a spatial dimension involved here. After the radical rupture in social capital after 1989 there is intense re-evaluation and revitalization of weak and strong ties going on. Some families are quite successful by relying almost entirely on a bonding strategy (as with migrants in other contexts). Other families show a strong tendency towards dispersed ties and activities in order to maintain the family household, thereby almost overstretching the family as a milieu. We have attempted to capture this in the metaphoric contrast of 'fortress' vs. 'capillary strategies'. However, throughout the interviews we find family emphasized as the network that people tend to rely on most, and as a milieu that helps to maintain values such as reliability and unconditional solidarity when the world around them has become increasingly unreliable. However, we are still wrestling with the question, is 'bonding social capital' just a recipe for bad times, or can it also provide the seed bed for innovative life conduct in more stable times? And relatedly, could it be that 'bridging social capital', mostly regarded as blueprint for getting ahead, is counter-productive in times of enduring societal liminality?

Social system of the GDR and its dis/continuity

For a better understanding of the context of our case studies, elaborated below, a brief note on the social system of the former GDR and its implications for families is given, followed by a review of the consequences of the reunification for families.

The social system of the GDR was workplace-centered. Engler (2002) describes the GDR as an "arbeiterliche Gesellschaft" which means, that "work is the only possibility to legitimate life" (Engler 2002: 155). Being a member of the working class was enough to feel included and powerful, even if political power never really was in the hands of working class people but in those of the party leaders. Leisure time was organised around the workplace as well and people spent a lot of time within their "collective". Therefore, key functions of the family such as socialization, child care, providing for spare time activities etc, were taken over, partly at least, by public institutions. Family politics were geared towards supporting core families with two working adults and two children, and the nuclear family was overrepresented until the late eighties (Gysi/Meyer 1993). Women and men were treated equally, but underneath the patriarchal organisation of care-work was not touched. Women were still considered responsible for domestic work and child care, and they often dealt with it after they came home from work in the afternoon (the so called "Second Shift"). The issue of emancipation was officially considered as "solved" because of equal opportunities concerning work. Full employment of men and women was a reality, unemployment or "social failure" was virtually unknown (Engler 2002).

The role of the family in the GDR is discussed in two ways: either as providing a niche for non-political intimate openness (Huinink 1995), or as a functionalised institution which was chosen by people mainly for practical reasons. Founding a family meant a lot of benefits for daily life – e.g. getting your own flat as a new family (Schneider 1995). How the significance of the family

changed after the reunification was observed in several studies with different results: Studies from the early nineties revealed that family now was regarded as both supporting in times of unemployment and as cumbersome in times of reorientation (Franz/Herlyn 1995). Szydlik observed that intergenerational solidarity has declined minimally after the reunification because of the possibility of more differentiated life-styles (Szydlik 2000). Concerning gender-roles, three possible scenarios are discussed: Baerwolf sees evidence of a process she calls "west-germanization" (= Verwestdeutschlandisierung) which means that attitudes have already changed towards women being the only ones responsible for child-care and household (Baerwolf/Thelen/Grätz 2006). Others regard women's high activity rate in Eastern Germany as proof of women's still existing desire for economic independence, while others see this "desire" as a consequence of employment uncertainty and therefore as a necessity rather than a freely made choice. Völker proposes a more differentiated view. There are multiple frictions that influence how gender roles change, therefore they should not be treated as a social structure category but relational to other structure categories (Völker 2004; 2007).

Context: the Wittenberge society of getting by

In this context the project was not only interested in how former GDR cities deal with the outcome of German reunification. The context is more general: how do communities deal with the extensive change from an industrial society to a "new" or "other" kind of society which is not clearly outlined yet? Although we regard the socialist past as mental baggage, which still influences the conduct of life, we do not see it as the main factor of action. We therefore did not label the current state of society as "post-socialist society", but as a "society of getting by". This term was not chosen to indicate existential conflicts, but to describe conditions of uncertainty and "living from day to day", without the prospect of long term planning in terms of professional career or local attachment.

This however, is most of all a question of mental rather than material hardship. After the Fall of the Wall, former GDR-institutions were modified to institutions on the West German model. This on the one hand meant the implementation of one of the most sophisticated welfare regimes in Europe. On the other hand this institutional setting was undergoing transformation towards post-fordist conditions as well (Land 2003). Therefore the labour market policy is not suitable for today's high rates of structural unemployment. Social integration in eastern Germany today is partly characterized by 'secondary integration', which means that public employment schemes provide most of the jobs (Alda/Hauss/Land/Willisch 2004). Even though social security is comparably high, people feel like they have been left behind. Despite material support, it leaves a lot of people with the mental luggage of prematurely disrupted or finished careers and broken biographies.

To examine how this post-socialist baggage and the demands of the society of getting by is influencing family life, we chose the city of Wittenberge for a field study. Wittenberge is indicative of many cities where a sudden deindustrialisation after the Fall of the Wall modified or even undermined the whole structure of life. Before 1989, Wittenberge was an industrial town with four main factories. During that time the self-perception of the majority of the citizens of Wittenberge

was that of being part of an attractive regional urban centre. After 1989, the citizens were forced to change this self-perception: the work-centred society lost its work and owing to that, the narrative of being part of an attractive, lively city, came to an end as well: three companies had to close down within one year, and about 9.000 people lost their jobs. There followed a big wave of 'out migration' from Wittenberge to other parts of Germany that were more economically robust. From once 36.0000 inhabitants in the late eighties, only 19.000 live in Wittenberge today and forecasts anticipate 13.000 for the year 2020. Social and cultural capital became worthless, since the constitution of everyday-live changed completely. These days, the people of Wittenberge are kind of sick of being investigated: Researchers had come before and had characterised Wittenberge as "Verliererstadt" (loser-city). They had called Wittenberge the "apocalypse of East-German troubled cities" (Kil 2002: 12). The first conclusion before having even started the real research then was that the people of Wittenberge always had to deal with a rather negative image of their city, which often they even believed in themselves.

A note on method and fieldwork

In the context sketched above, the project "Family networks in societies of survival" was interested in how families as a source of social capital arrange their lives in an environment which is characterized by emigration, a high rate of unemployment and a lack of positive prospects. The project's goal was to examine the new family arrangements that people "invented" by living them. The question of whether families function as a source of "bridging" social capital or as a source for "bonding" social capital focussed our interest in particular. Bridging social capital was defined as linking heterogeneous groups. When starting the project, this was principally defined as allowing family members to move away from the family, both spatially and mentally. Bonding social capital describes the contrary, which means keeping family members near and within homogeneous groups.

As noted in the introduction to this Working Paper, the Kassel University project was embedded in a cluster of five universities and research institutes. Each project focused on a different aspect of life in Wittenberge. In addition to our exploration of families, other projects looked at community, administration, charismatic figures, and so on. All of the projects, however, aimed to research the role of social capital in times of radical social change in different milieux (in clubs, in the political administration of the city, in allotment gardens, etc.).

In order to get a clearer idea of what life in the declining city of Wittenberge actually means, the researchers moved to Wittenberge, lived there, and maintained an office in the middle of the town for more than two years. Since researching in a deindustrialised area through living amongst the people was at the core of the Kassel team's project, the press compared their work with the legendary study *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal* by Marie Jahoda, Paul Felix Lazarsfeld and Hans Zeisel (1933; English ed. 1971: *Marienthal: The Sociography of an Unemployed Community*). As we show below, our findings from this contemporary project do not really have much in common with the results of the study of a deindustrialising small town in Austria 75 years ago. Nevertheless, there are some similarities in methodological approach. First of all, we did a lot of participant observation: we went into the pubs, schools, local parliament, kindergarten and

any other places where we thought 'this is where the action is'. Over the period of a year we kept ethnographic diaries, taking notes about daily routines and special events such as the mayoral election or a night watching football in our neighbour's apartment. All of this was intended to provide us with a detailed and saturated picture of our field: Wittenberge.

As well as this embedded participant observation, we conducted interviews with family members in their home environment. The interviews were semi-structured. Those with married and unmarried couples all started with the same 'narrative impulse': 'How did you get to know each other?' We would start our interviews differently with lone mother families, for example by asking the mother what had changed with the birth of their first child. The interviews are of different lengths, lasting from one to almost four hours. After the interviews were transcribed, we analysed them using the 'objective hermenutic' method (Oeverman 1983). Based on this interpretive work, we wrote portraits of families based on the main characteristics related to our bonding and bridging social capital concerns. In order to cross-check our first interview findings, we then went into a primary school in Wittenberge and asked the pupils to write essays about their wishes, hopes and dreams for their future family life.

Initially we had four family types to examine, all identified by the principle of maximum contrast. The first two forms were households where three generations lived together, contrasted to a single-mother household; the other two family-types concerned families who have left Wittenberge for another region contrasted to families who stay residentially in Wittenberge but work elsewhere and therefore commute (daily, weekly or even more rarely). The analytical contrasts behind this were: firstly, the maximum contrast of mobile and local families for discussing the strain between a mobility imperative and the requirement of family situatedness. Secondly, we chose the contrast between East and West to examine how relocated families come to an arrangement under new conditions and in the new context and how people staying in Wittenberge differ from them.

A note on findings

After having analyzed our four entry cases by questioning them about bonding and bridging we came to the following preliminary finding: the bonding aspect played a major role even in families that do not have to cope with the outcome of unemployment. 'Contraction' was one of the main attributes of almost all families we spoke to. This tendency was strongest within families who still had something to lose, which means those who were not yet affected by unemployment or emigration. These families conducted themselves like islands midst an unfriendly environment, considering the "outside-world" as threatening. This attitude is accompanied by an exaggerated fear of "social pollution" and therefore they attempt to avoid contact with people who live under precarious conditions, combined with strong resentment against people less advantaged.

But also less well-established families tried to separate themselves from others in order to feel superior. Interestingly, (self-)worth is still strongly linked to values of the "arbeiterliche Gesellschaft"/Fordism even by young people who have never experienced the GDR version of it in person.

The second major attribute of Wittenberge families turned out to be 'extension'. 'Extension families' try to live a life based on networks of friends and acquaintances. They join clubs together, live an active social life and try to benefit from their networks as much as possible: they regard 'knowing people' as useful for getting ahead. This approach leads to a tendency to instrumentalise relationships outside the family.

Overall then, families in Wittenberge could be divided into those with contraction strategies, and those with extension strategies. The difference between the family strategies of contraction and extension cannot simply be equated to 'having friends or not having friends', or producing bonding or bridging social capital for that matter. Rather, the two strategies contain both types of social capital. On the one hand, some families contract to avoid contact with the outside world. Although this may appear contradictory, they do so in the hope that this enables their children to move on to somewhere better. Teaching their children norms and values that fit them for the world that starts outside of Wittenberge is a means of attempting to overcome the city in which they live. In other words, encouraging strong bonding tendencies is preparing children to leave.

On the other hand, 'extension families' do not necessarily use their networks to bridge over to new shores. Often they foster them solely for the purpose of getting by from day-to-day, and to close off other – unwelcome – segments of Wittenberge society. Thus, what applies to social relations within families also seems to apply to the social contacts outside of them: in times of rupture and change it appears that social relationships are looked to in terms of functionality rather than affectivity. In other words, networks have to work rather than provide a romantic sociality that reaches out to the 'other'. Families have to come to terms with these new cleavages in the reality and meaning of bonding and bridging social capital.

Our case studies indicate that both family strategies have their limits if pursued in isolation rather than complementary effort. While extending can potentially lead to an overstretching of the family milieu, contracting carries the danger of entangling family members in a precarious balance that can potentially implode. It seems that the magic formula lies in keeping the elasticity of family bonds going. In a bottleneck situation as posed by the cumulative period of change described above, emotional support and attachment is as important as flexibility in terms of shared routine and mutual obligation. Family members have to find a strategy of emotional and social availability that aligns with the demands of absence and presence in a mobile society. We have found families getting by in a mode of disentanglement in proximity, which insist on living together yet hardly communicate and have lost hold of shared dreams and ambitions. On the other hand, we have families getting ahead with forms of mobile availability where people are quite inventive in making the burden of hyper mobility a shared one.

For this Working Paper, the four families discussed in the comparison of case studies in section 3 were chosen to further elaborate on these strategies and their implications.

2.2 Families and social capital, London South Bank University project

The Families and Social Capital research programme

The Families and Social Capital ESRC¹ programme of research explored the value of the concept of social capital for the understanding of family change, and to consider how family change affects social capital. It involved ten core empirical projects and a similar number of additional, associated research studies. These were organised around three main issues that have been at the forefront of discussion about the posited fragmentation of family and life and decline in community cohesion conjured up by mainstream social capital debates: the implications of increasing ethnic diversity, changing structures of education and employment, and the nature of intimate relationships. Together these projects charted and analysed people's lives – in a broad rather than narrow sense, as both lived in and across households, within and across communities and localities, and in its individual and collective aspects. They covered the life course, from children and young people, through parents, to older people, looked at issues of race/ethnicity, social class and gender, and encompassed local, national and transnational contexts. The range of methods we used included secondary analysis of quantitative data, primary surveys, in-depth interviews, group discussions, participant observation, visual techniques, and reviews of policy, theoretical and research literature.

The political context for our programme of research was and is an emphasis on civil society, an expectation that people will take personal responsibility for planning and meeting their own needs and bettering themselves, and a concomitant stress on their choices as consumers of welfare provision. These ideas give primacy to the economic or political effects or outcomes of family and social relationships, and thus the need to counteract damaging changes in families and communities is part of this policy paradigm (Franklin 2007). Attention moves away from economic and social injustice, and redirects attention to families and culture as the focus of policy intervention. Turning to the development of social capital in the civic sphere as a solution to perceived contemporary ills draws on a conception of social inclusion that is linked to social mobility, combined with ideas around the economic competitiveness of individuals, families, communities and the nation. Policies are then concerned with providing the rights and conditions for individuals, families and communities to become socially mobile and take advantage of economic competitiveness, over-riding more politically challenging concepts and agendas such as poverty, social inequality and racism. Ironically, however, policies and practice-based initiatives that promote social mobility can further embed social divisions and resource inequalities, at odds with initiatives to promote social cohesion and build social capital.

As noted above, the Families and Social Capital programme of research was able to pursue these issues through a number of different projects, each addressing various aspects of the inter-relationship between the dynamics of family change and processes of social capital in different circumstances and localities. We identified material from two particular projects to act as a comparative counterpart to the Kassel team's study described above. One was a project on African-Caribbean diasporic identities that explored family, friendship, community and diasporic

¹ The Families & Social Capital programme of research was funded by the United Kingdom's Economic and Social Research Council between 2002 and 2007, under award reference number M570255001. For a full report of the programme see http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/families/ESRC_Group_report.pdf.

networks, how these were related to ethnic identities, and bonding, bridging and linking social capital in different contexts, and the value gained and utilised. The other was a project addressing parenting resources, involving a comparison of mainstream and critical ideas around social capital, the links between social and other capitals, the relationships with gendered and classed networks of receipt and provision of support, and the different types of social capital involved. We describe the context, aims and methods of these two projects below.

The 'Caribbean Families, Social Capital and Young People's Diasporic Identities' study

The Caribbean Families project examined Caribbean young people construction of ethnic identity and the role of family and social networks as important bonding and bridging social capital resources in this process. The study recognised that the relationship between family networks and ethnic identity in the young people's lives was shaped by complex and intersecting factors of 'race', gender, globalisation, migration, transnationalism, and of course the everyday reality of living in a multicultural society.

The project is situated in a time when New Labour policy debates were preoccupied with interrogating the changing nature of Britain at the turn twenty-first century and the implications of an increasing pluralised society for civil society (Parekh, 2000). These debates expressed widespread concern about the 'weak' social capital of particular migrant and minority ethnic communities (e.g. African-Caribbean). There were also concerns that the inward-looking, clannish nature of other groups (e.g. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) restricted their full integration and active participation in a wide range of associational life. In this context it was argued that rising racial tensions in a number of northern British towns between gangs of white and Asian British youths, which took place in the summer of 2001, was the direct consequence of some ethnic minority and migrant communities' comparative failure in forming 'bridging' networks with other racial-ethnic groups to resolve common concerns around poverty, social exclusion and marginalisation (Ousley, 2001; Faulkner, 2004; Runnymede Trust, 2004). At a broader level, therefore, the Caribbean Families project was concerned with understanding some of the underlying structural issues experienced by diverse migrant and minority ethnic families, whilst also revealing the changing dynamics of family life as a result of migration and settlement in Britain.

Of central importance in the project was the recognition that family relationships are sustained and developed between family members living in different parts of the world and across nation state boundaries. Drawing on qualitative interviews with Caribbean young people and their family relationships, the project provided rich empirical evidence of how shared identities and values, networks of trust and reciprocity, and 'caring for' and 'caring about' family members, operate within local communities and transnational contexts. During 2003-2005 in-depth un/semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 Caribbean young people (aged between 16 to 30 years old), and 50 of their kinship/family members across all age groups. Typically these young people were the offspring and grandchildren of the first-generation migrants who arrived in Britain from the early 1950s, and thus were referred to in the analysis as second and third generation Caribbean young people. However, there were also a small number of young people who were 'newcomer' migrants (12 in total), who had arrived and settled in Britain over the past ten years. The fieldwork interviews took place in a number of locations in Britain: London, Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham, as well as the Caribbean: Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and St. Kitts and Nevis. The interview model used with the young people and family members encouraged generational shifts and patterns to emerge in relation to social capital and ethnicity. The interview

questions focused on the areas of family and kinship relationships, friendship networks, neighbourhood and community participation, education, employment, social and leisure activities in order to examine how Caribbean young people's social networks are a resource they draw on to pursue various goals. A second and smaller phase of interviews took place in 2007 with 18 second-generation young adults who had undertaken 'return' migration to their parents' homeland as a result of their cultural ties to the Caribbean and experiences of social exclusion and racial disadvantage encountered in Britain (Reynolds 2010).

Emerging out the analysis was the importance of transnational networks, which extend beyond geographical boundaries, in shaping family relationships. A general feature of Caribbean family relationships is that individualism is a dominant aspect. There exists greater autonomy for individuals to choose their lifestyles, family forms and living arrangements. This is reflected in the diversity of family structures and relationships (e.g. single parent, mother-centred, 'visiting father' families), and the heterogeneity of racial and ethnic identities that is common in Caribbean families (Reynolds 2002, 2006a, 2007). Despite this individualised understanding of family ties and networks, it was readily apparent that those interviewed continued to be strongly embedded in their extended family relationships and networks, which stretched beyond the geographical confines of nation states. These transnational caring networks also worked to reinforce ethnic identity and cultural belonging (Reynolds 2006b; Reynolds and Zontini 2006; Zontini and Reynolds 2007). The Caribbean young people and their family members were able successfully to sustain their transnational family connections and engage in transnational family and caring practices within this individualised framework, individually and collectively, because the individualised self is understood as relational and situational to others within their networks. It is also significant to highlight that the historical incidences of forced and voluntary economic migration have created more fluid, 'loose', dynamic and diverse forms of Caribbean family networks and household patterns. The 'looseness' of these family networks work to maintain reciprocal caring relationships between family members left behind and those family members who migrated elsewhere in search of better opportunities. Migration to Britain by the first generation migrants, and indeed 'return migration' by the second generation offspring and subsequent generations to the Caribbean demonstrates processes of 'getting on', characterised by intra-generational social mobility (Reynolds 2010). In both contexts, it was evident that family members used their existing networks in their country of origin/settlement as a social capital resource with which to build new bonding and bridging links, which facilitate this process of inter/intra generational social mobility.

The 'Resources in Parenting' study

The Resources in Parenting project took place in the context of a strong policy interest in family. The advent of the New Labour government in 1997 pushed parenting practice to the centre stage of the social policy curriculum where it has remained ever since. The notion that the state has a responsibility to help people make a success of parenting for the sake of the wider community has been broadly accepted across the political spectrum, reflecting concerns about the perceived consequences of social change. Transformations in contemporary family relationships and in particular, increases in cohabitation, divorce and separation, lone parenting and people living alone, have been viewed as destabilizing family values and identities, and undermining the practice of good parenting (Edwards and Gillies 2004). Yet good parenting is viewed as the mainstream of civil society, fostering and transmitting crucial values to children which protect and reproduce the common good. Further, in this view, how parents bring up their children and

regulate their behaviour, and the choices that they make on their behalf (such as which school they should attend), is firmly linked to children's life chances and future social mobility. According to the UK government, children who are parented well are better able to negotiate the risks and opportunities which characterise new post-industrial economic landscapes (Gillies 2008). The UK policy response has centred around attempts to enforce a normative consensus on 'parenting good practice' through a widening of access to advice and guidance on childrearing.

This specific pedagogic approach to the development of sanctioned and consensual parenting norms and practices implicates broader concerns about the existence and generation of social capital, as a policy framework for theorising and promoting social resources. Our study sought to explore these issues in more depth by examining the micro processes of everyday family life focusing in particular on the resources that are available to parents of children aged between 8 and 12. The framework for the project conceptualised parenting resources in terms of social, economic, cultural, emotional and environmental capital, centring on social connectedness, material and financial status, values and dispositions, and levels or types of emotional investment in children. It involved both extensive survey and intensive interview data collection, using a particular perspective on the relationship between the different sorts of data. In the first phase of the research a large scale survey was conducted among parents of children aged 8 to 12 with the aim of exploring publicly expressed attitudes to parenting support (reported in Edwards and Gillies 2004). This was followed up in the second phase by theoretically sampled in-depth interviews to examine parents' actual day to day practices. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 25 mothers and 11 fathers from a wide range of 27 households across England and Scotland (see Edwards and Gillies 2006 for further details of the research design) and it is data from this later phase that forms the case studies discussed in this paper.

In this second phase of our study we sought to compare the social capital theories of James Coleman and Pierre Bourdieu using a particular methodological and analytic strategy. We explicitly drew on features of Coleman's categorisation of levels of social capital in order to sample for this stage, focusing on his notion of high and low social capital families. From this perspective the category of high social capital is limited to a homogeneous 'core' family form characterised by two biological parents with a working father and a mother at home caring for no more than 2 children, and dense ties. The family should have lived in the same area for some time and be on a middle range income and have no more than two children. According to Coleman this domestic arrangement maximises social capital, ensuring that children receive full time attention from a primary care taker, while reciprocal social relationships are maintained outside of the family with parents seeking and receiving help through their social networks. Conversely, Coleman's category of low social capital encompasses a range of less traditional family circumstances including lone parents, parents who are both in full time employment, families reliant on welfare benefits and high income families whose financial status has freed them from reciprocal commitments.

In contrast, the content and analysis of the in-depth interviews with parents was influenced by Bourdieu's conception of the interdependence of social and other capitals. Our intention was to contrast Coleman's predefined and formulaic assignment of social capital on the basis of household structural characteristics with Bourdieu's more dynamic and contextual approach.

Bourdieu's ideas see people as deriving their social capital from their membership of a group such as a family, through material and symbolic exchanges that produce obligation and mutual recognition of that group membership. For him, social capital is inevitably shaped by the material, cultural and symbolic status of the individual and family concerned, continually transmitted and accumulated in instrumental ways that act to produce and reinforce social inequalities. Consequently our interviews with parents focused on a broad range of issues including time, money, locality, children's health and development, practical aid, schooling, and kin and other social networks. Our subsequent analysis of this data sought to address the interaction between social and other capitals in the resources that parents can draw on and give.

A note on findings

Key findings from the Families and Social Capital programme of research that we take forward in our case studies in section 3 below (e.g. Edwards and Gillies 2004; Gillies and Edwards 2006; Goulbourne et al. 2010; Henderson et al. 2007), include fresh evidence of the presence and strength of social connections between people, on local, national and transnational levels. Trust, reciprocity and obligations are part of most people's everyday family and community lives, not all of which are able to be captured by mainstream social capital models. These connections, however, embody gender, race/ethnicity and class differences. Family connections and their associated social capital are organised and maintained predominantly by and between women, whether occurring locally, transnationally or across generations. Networking and exchanges raise complex issues of identity and affiliation. While they tend to concentrate within ethnic groups, they can also operate across them. Material inequalities are reproduced in the types of social capital that people generate and access rather than transcending them.

Indeed, bonding and bridging social capital are involved in perpetuating these inequalities. The constitution of bonding and bridging social capital can be fluid through time and space, and even indistinct, encompassing changing identities and affiliations around relationships with family and friends, and locations in community neighbourhood, city, region, country. Bonding social capital is indeed about being embedded in dense and intensive networks of family and friends. Our research confirms that it is solidarity-based and provides the obligation and commitment-based practical help and emotional support to people that enable reciprocal day-to-day survival. But it also has drawbacks. Bonding social capital subjects relationships to pressures of intense hopes and emotions, and is unlikely to provide any wider benefits beyond the everyday negotiation of disadvantage. In contrast, bridging social capital is concerned with individuals instrumentally building relationships that preserve and accumulate relative social advantage. The strengths of this form of social capital are that it is aspirational in terms of social mobility, and ensures maintenance of and access to further resources. Importantly though, bridging social capital also has drawbacks. Crucially, it is concerned with neutralising or offsetting ongoing obligations, disengaging from the reciprocity, solidarity and trust that are key components of social capital. This bridging form of social capital was most evident among middle class people in our studies, or people from working class, low income and minority ethnic backgrounds who were aspiring to 'get out to get on'.

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We now move from these explanations of the remits and contexts of the research projects through into some of the rich and in-depth material that was collected as part of them. We present sets of family case studies, each comprising examples of families drawn, first, from the German project, and then contrasting comparative cases from the British projects.

The Wittenberge case studies focus on families by and with: times of radical change foster an ambivalent relationship towards the dreams and ambitions that normally give a sense of meaning and stability to mundane everyday life. On the one hand they help to get by in times when there seem to be little hope of a better future. On the other hand they tend to get crushed under the straining battle of muddling through. In line with the bonding and bridging issue this raises the question whether families fall back on traditional images of family or open themselves to family live experiments?

The family case studies from the British projects are typical examples from the respective projects that then play off the key issues for the Wittenberge project and cases, to consider:

1. Migrations and transnational families. Where migration refers to movement through space as well as time, what does this mean for family relationships and the material and social resources that family members are able to access and use?
2. Remainings and resources. Where families have not migrated, to what extent are everyday social capital practices and networks shaped by the resource privileges or constraints associated with social class position?

3. Comparison of Cases

3.1 Four cases from Wittenberge: mobilities of 'by' and 'which'

The Petke family – renormalizing the family dream

The 'Petke' family has been struck hard by the deindustrialization after 1989. Both partners lost their jobs, and found it difficult to regain employment in Wittenberge. However, they were determined to stick together as a family. To get by they adopt a fordist family model across distance: Mr. Petke commutes on a weekly basis to work in Hamburg while Ms. Petke looks after the house and supports their daughter in the final year of her A levels. This is a time that stretches everyone to the limit, also because there is extreme gratification denial during the week. They sense the inflicted trajectory in terms of health hazards and emotional costs, but never doubt that this is temporary distortion of their 'true' family life. After their daughter completes her A levels and moves to Berlin, Ms. Petke joins her husband in Hamburg, they find a flat, she eventually makes a temporary job a permanent one – it looks as if they have managed to re-root and can 'start living again'.

They seem to support the retraditionalization thesis. The unproblematic falling back into the arrangement of male (mobile) bread winner and supportive wife (both in terms of emotional care as well as additional incomes) provides them with the compass to get through a tough period of transition. That there are cleavages towards socialist ideology anyway (especially on his side), might have helped towards easily slipping into a retraditionalized arrangement.

With the re-traditionalising of gender arrangements, the Petke family seems to become more and more self-sufficient. They do not know much about their neighbours and they do not have any friends in Hamburg, except for a few people who also moved from Wittenberge to Hamburg and who work in the same company as Mr. Petke. This fact seems to support our thesis, that the Petke family 'transplanted' a new and small Wittenberge into the suburb of Hamburg. As in the Wittenberge of the old days, there is in its Hamburg version again a small network of workplace contacts that complements the (almost) complete contraction of life into the nuclear family.

The Gruber family – chasing after the dream family

The 'Gruber' family is a trucker family. In order to maintain their 'homestead' in Wittenberge, Mr. Gruber does the laborious and hypermobile job of a transeuropean truck driver, while Ms. Gruber holds down a part time job and looks after the two kids. They both realize that this gendered division of labour during the week takes its toll on partnership and family, and is not something to be pursued indefinitely into the future (sensing the 'trajectory'). For the time being, and in the face of the bleak situation in Wittenberge, they are 'getting by' via maintaining a clear distinction between week and weekend. Weekdays are real and yet 'unreal' (i.e. that which in the

long run has to change), while weekends are the temporary celebration of 'real' family, but clearly perceived as 'holiday' (cycling, long breakfasts, communicating), i.e. time off from the '(un)real world' during the week.

Here things are not so clear cut as far as the post-socialist 'baggage' is concerned. On the surface it looks like what the Grubers are 'doing' is retraditionalization. He feels responsible to provide the income via hypermobility, while his wife keeps the local and emotional base of family life. Yet two things do not quite fit the picture. On the one hand he is involved in keeping the emotional balance of the family by more or less directly intervening in it on a daily basis via new means of communication. In turn his truck is itself a symbolic extension of the family home (arrangements). On the other hand there seems to be a transcendence of all the (re)tradtionalized arrangements for the duration of the weekend.

The Grubers, in their late twenties/early thirties, have realised that most of their generation has already left Wittenberge and that they are the 'leftovers'. Because of this and the fact that the family is incomplete during the week, they do not tend to socialize much during the week, while weekends are kept for family. Michael Gruber describes as his 'best friend' a person who lives in Arhus, Denmark. This man is also the godfather of Michael's oldest son. As matter of fact, however, they have not seen him for more than three years now, and the contact via telephone and e-mail is rare too. Michael Gruber's wife, Jacqueline, says she has not got any friends in Wittenberge either, although she is living and working there every day of the week. Further, they do not have a very close relationship with their parents. In consequence Jacqueline struggles and suffers as a quasi-single-parent during the week.

The Hase family – when normality gets brittle

For the 'Hase' family it seems nothing has changed after 1989. Both partners have stayed on in their jobs in Wittenberge's (left over) industry and state service sector. Their son has got a job in the same factory in which his father has climbed the ladder into middle management. None of them faces the prospect of immediate redundancy. However, none of them is really happy either. They realize acutely that their life is a dream that is too good to be true amidst the Wittenberge reality that surrounds them. However, only the son of the family articulates his unease verbally and in action, rejecting his parents' trajectory of social climbing, and instead drifting into an extended present (taking each day as it comes, as effort at work won't pay off in the long run anyway).

They seem to represent the possibility of a continuation of socialist family arrangements into the here and now. At the level of daily interaction and arrangements they seem to live a pretty harmonious and partnership oriented life, as it was typically stressed by socialist morals. Below that however we see a level of gendered arrangements, namely male bread winning and a full time working housewife, as was also typical for the socialist family. The continuity of job careers never gave any need for seriously questioning this socialist arrangement, which nevertheless through the polarization of income structures after 1989 (before there should have been only marginal differences in income between the two) made for a retraditionalized model: male bread

winner (main income as manager) vs. supportive income (kindergarten nurse). Could this be a case for 'continuity within' vs. 'discontinuity from outside'?

The Hase-family seems to represent a continuous life course, which is less and less the norm in the context of Wittenberge. This fact is recognised by the family too and so they avoid the public spaces in Wittenberge because they are afraid to come into contact with the 'losers' in the city. When Ms. Hase drove us back to our office in the main shopping street of Wittenberge, after we had finished the interview with her and her son, she told us: 'I haven't been in that street for more than two years now.' It's not surprising, for the street that she was referring to has an unemployment rate of approximately 50-60 per cent.

The Sauer family – women's networks in the search for 'Mr Right'?

The Sauer family is an extended family network that stretches the social construction of 'family'. Mrs. Sauer is living with her children, her parents and some female neighbours in an extended community of "getting by". In the former GDR, Mrs. Sauer started out on an average life-course: with her husband and the three children she lived and worked in the industrial city Schwedt. After the fall in 1989 she made several attempts to revitalize the core family ideal: she got divorced, re-married and got divorced again. Together with her children, she then returned to her birthplace Wittenberge, and has been unemployed ever since. Though women dominate the current getting by network, absent men are really important. The women still long for the 'proper' family they never reach – for men in the shrinking city are unable to live up to their expectations, because they tend to drink, get involved in pub brawls, or betray their wives. In short, men are losers, life doesn't work with them but doesn't work without them either.

The women agree in their denial of an abstract image of "the state" yet yearn for social recognition which they feel they do deserve because of their compliance with official demands: Mrs. Sauer has two qualifications and yet cannot find a job, while her oldest daughter has had three children in times of a declining birth-rate. Both feel a right to get acknowledgement for their socially valuable "activity", and both do not want to accept their actual lives as unemployed welfare recipients.

By articulating their right to a different life, they affiliate to experiences of the former GDR, when the state provided jobs, education and enough money for basic consumption. The absence of state-provided normalcy (job, childcare and recognition) causes anger and bitterness instead of self empowerment. The Sauer 'family' remains offended and secluded in their little network of marginalized people refusing to give in to the (so perceived) unfair state-policy.

3.2 Migrations and transnational families: two cases

The Harris family – extending across generations

Beverley and Winston have been together for thirty-two years and married for twelve years. They have three children, a son Anthony (age 28); twin daughters Jade and Renee (age 13) and a granddaughter (age 2). Beverley and Winston are both university educated. Beverley works local government in a senior managerial post. Winston is a director of a national organisation in the voluntary sector. Jointly their annual income is within the £100,000-120,000 income bracket. The family live in a 5-bedroomed detached house, in an affluent suburb bordering South London/Surrey. All of the houses on the quiet cul-de-sac street are either detached or semi-detached housing which are privately owned/rented. They describe their neighbourhood as being 'visibly white and middle-class', and their neighbours are middle-class professionals. Their eldest son was privately educated and their youngest daughters are also attending privately funded secondary school.

Beverley and Winston were childhood friends, attending primary school together in Guyana, their original country of origin. Within the context of Guyana, Beverley's family would be defined as having a typically middle-class background. Both of her parents were college educated, and employed in middle-class occupations (as a school teacher and engineer). Following migration to England, Beverley's parents still continued to hold middle-class values and aspirations for their children, despite them working in conventional working-class occupations (dinner-lady and building foreman). Beverley academically excelled in school, gaining the required qualifications to apply for university. Beverley holds a graduate and postgraduate degree in housing administration. Winston in contrast, comes from a poor working class background. However, he was motivated to put himself through night-school and part-time university study to gain a graduate degree in business and finance.

Beverley and Winston re-migrated back to Guyana for a short period of time during the 1990s. This was at a phase in their life when they were considering leaving England 'for good' for a 'better quality of life'. This is important to note because it has influenced their parenting and childrearing practices (see below), and also the way in which they were able to develop kinship and friendship networks in both locations. Beverley describes her relationship with her parents and siblings as 'close'. She visits her parents 2-3 times a week and has regular contact with her siblings, including a brother that emigrated to Canada. Beverley's immediate circle of friends is exclusively black/mixed-race and female. She met her female friends through secondary school, university, and the netball club (of which she is a member). Beverley does not have close friends at work but there are people that she is 'friendly with', and this group of people tends to be ethnically-mixed and both men and women. Friendships with parents at her children's schools have disappeared as her children have got older and more independent. Beverley does not rely on her friends for practical support (eg, childminding, shopping etc) but feels they are important in providing emotional support to her. In the UK, Beverley and Winston do not share the same circle of friends, although there are friends of Winston's that she socialises with on social occasions (birthday parties, weddings, Christenings etc). Likewise Winston does not socialise with her close friends, except for special family-orientated occasions. Winston has a wider, multi-racial and more diverse circle of friends, who are mostly male. However, his two close friends in Britain he knew from his high-school days in Guyana. Winston tends to socialise in public spaces (eg pubs, winebars and local leisure centre) and rarely, if ever, invites his friends to the family home (the exception being his two childhood friends). In Guyana, however, Winston and Beverley

established a joint circle of friends, who they still keep in contact with via telephone, email, Internet, and also regular visits 'home'.

Their eldest son, Anthony, does not live at home with his parents and siblings but he lives relatively near-by (approx 30 minutes travel time) in a less prosperous but ethnically diverse suburb of South London. Anthony lives with his partner and daughter. Anthony reflected that his parents' 'race-conscious' approach to childrearing was instrumental in him developing racial awareness and ethnic identity at a very young age. When Anthony was a small child his entire family relocated to Guyana after his father accepted a work in a senior government post there. During this time Anthony completed his formative education in Guyana. When the family (re)migrated back to Britain during the mid-1990s he was sent to a privately-funded secondary school in an affluent area of Surrey, where he was the only black child in his year group. Anthony has an ethnically diverse circle of friends and his 'best friends' are Asian and Greek-Cypriot. His family background provided him with the confidence to develop multi-ethnic networks of friends from a position of being embedded in his Caribbean heritage and ethnic identity.

The Phillips family – shifting intra-national

Michelle, 39, is a lone-mother with two children, Levi (age 9) and Imani (age 5). Originally from Jamaica, Michelle migrated to England with her parents during the early 1970s when she was a very small child. Michelle has no memories of her early life in Jamaica. Michelle has five younger siblings who were all born in England. Following migration to England, Michelle and her parents firstly settled for a short time in Manchester with family members of Michelle's father, before later relocating to a working-class ethnically mixed suburb in North-West London. Michelle's dad has since re-married and moved back Manchester, close to his family. Her mother continues to live in the family home in North-West London.

Michelle has various part-time jobs. For example, she is an artist and although this is not her main source of income, she would describe this as her primary occupation. She also works part-time as an art teacher and receptionist at a local adult community college. In addition, two afternoons a week she works at her daughter's school as a classroom teaching assistant. Michelle lives with her two children in a 2-bedroomed housing association maisonette in an ethnically diverse working-class neighbourhood in East London. The street that she lives on has a combination of maisonette flats and terraced houses which are social housing, privately-owned or privately-rented. The neighbours she describes as being 'in a similar situation to me', which is predominately working-class low-income households. Michelle's annual income is within the £11,000-20,000 bracket (excluding the receipt of family tax credits and related state welfare benefits). Michelle's children are by two different fathers. Her oldest child's father lives in Manchester. She does not see or have much contact with him, although he periodically sends money and birthday gifts for his son. However she regularly sees her daughter's father (Gregg). They have an intimate relationship but do not live together. Michelle is very close to Gregg's extended family. Her best-friend is Gregg's sister (Angela), and she is God-daughter to Angela's teenage daughter. Michelle and Angela live on neighbouring streets and they see/speak to each other every day. They provide a range of support to each other from practical assistance with

shopping and childcare, taking/collecting children to and from school, financial support to more emotional forms of support (eg. attending hospital visits with Angela when she was experiencing health-problems). Michelle describes Angela as her 'sister and soul-mate' and 'second mum' to her children. Other than Angela, and Gregg, Michele does not have any close friends. Whilst she would like to have more friends to socialise with, and not rely so much on Angela and Gregg for support, she feels that a lack of time, natural shyness and memories of the trauma of being bullied at secondary school makes it difficult for her to establish close bonds to people and make friends.

Michelle visits her mother every other weekend by public transport out of a sense of obligation but she does not describe their relationship as being a particularly close one. None of Michelle's siblings live in London – they have all emigrated to other countries where there are extended kinship networks: Belgium (Brussels); Jamaica, USA (New York and Miami). Michelle is closest to her brother living in Brussels. She sometimes takes her children to visit him there but a limited income means that she is not able to do this as often as she would like. She is not close to her other siblings, and most of the contact and news about them is done through her mum. Michelle has never been back to Jamaica, the parental homeland, but Michelle's mother has taken her grandchildren on visits there on three occasions. Michelle believes her children's visits to the homeland are important in helping them to develop confidence and a sense of self from a young age. Michelle's believes her own negative schooling experiences and childhood insecurities about her racial identity have held her back in life. Michelle left school with no qualifications and prior to her current employment moved between a series of low-income jobs in the retail sector. During a short period of re-location to Manchester, she developed a 'love of art' and decided to attend a further education college where she gained GCSE and 'A' level qualifications in art. Michelle's ambition is to become an art-teacher in secondary school and to provide support and help to school children who are experiencing victimization and bullying. She is considering applying to college to study for a certificate in education but she does not feel ready to do so yet. Despite (or because of) her own negative experiences of schooling, Michelle has middle-class aspirations of academic success for her children. For example, she is considering the option of applying for a scholarship for her son to a privately funded grant-maintained school, or if this fails, then sending her son to Jamaica to complete his secondary schooling, where she believes he would have more chance for academic success compared to attending a state-funded comprehensive school in her local area.

3.3 Remainings and resources: two cases

The Graham family – resources for getting by

Ted and Denise Graham are married with a 10 year old son, Liam. They rent a small two-bedroom property from a housing association in a Northern industrial town. Ted works long shifts Monday to Saturday as a cleaner in a local shopping centre earning around £15000 annually, while Denise cares full time for Liam. Denise grew up locally and, though her mother recently died

of cancer, her father and three brothers live close by. Ted grew up in another town. His father died when he was a child and he rarely sees his mother or his sister. Like Ted and Denise, their neighbours are largely working class people with the market research profiler ACORN describing their street as comprised of people with very little education and low incomes who enjoy horseracing and bingo.

Both Denise and Ted have a close relationship with Denise's father (a retired porter) who lives three doors away, but the help and support provided is highly reciprocal. Denise took a primary role in ensuring her father coped with the loss of her mother, helping him with cooking, cleaning and washing. Her father does not perceive it to be his role as a man to provide childcare support (except in an emergency), but has access to a car and often give lifts or picks things up for them. Denise and Ted cannot afford to run a car and rely on Denise's father to help them with the weekly shopping or to take Liam to doctors' appointments. Denise's three brothers are painters and decorators and have often helped out in the house with DIY and mending things. Denise sees less of her brothers now because her father's new girlfriend has caused a family rift, but she remains close to their wives. Denise has a strong, reciprocal support network of friends and neighbours. Most have children attending the same school as Liam, and Denise has relied upon their help when she has been unwell. Denise also helps out, providing unpaid childcare for a friend's 18 month old little girl four mornings a week. Denise also looks after her elderly neighbour and another elderly lady further up the street (Ted is sent round if they need light bulbs or fuses changed). Denise has one particularly close friend who she relies on for emotional support and counts as part of her family. They help each other out with childcare, lend and borrow small sums of money, and tell each other things they wouldn't tell their husbands.

The Ryder family – resources for getting on

Fiona and Colin Ryder are married with an 8 year old daughter, Amber. They own a large semi-detached house in a prosperous semi rural area in South East England. Colin is a manager at IT firm in the City and brings home a relatively high wage, while Fiona cares full time for Amber. Both Colin and Fiona grew up within a five mile radius of where they now live. Their parents live relatively close to them, as do Fiona's brother and sister and Colin's two sisters. Their neighbours are largely middle class professionals, with ACORN describing the street in which they live as a prosperous suburb where people tend to have high incomes, be highly educated and read broadsheet newspapers.

Fiona has a good relationship with her mother (a retired teacher) and her father a (retired managing director). She visits them regularly, relies on them for childcare support and has borrowed large sums of money from them in the past. Fiona also has a close relationship with her sister (a piano teacher), who regularly babysits for Amber and provides her with discounted piano lessons. Fiona has a more distant relationship with her brother (a headmaster), but sees him regularly at family gatherings. Colin's relationships with his family members are distinctly less close and are for the most part managed by Fiona. They make a family visit to Colin's mother (a housewife) and father (a retired engineer) once a week and while they often babysit for Amber, arrangements are made through Fiona. Unlike the Graham's the Ryders appear to have few

family obligations beyond maintaining regular contact with family members. The financial help they have received from Fiona's parents was not attached to any conditions beyond eventually paying it back, and they readily assume that grandparents would naturally want to take a regular childcare role.

In the past Fiona had maintained a relationship with one of Colin's two sisters (a teacher), but contact dwindled as her children grew older. They see Colin's other sister only at family gatherings organised by Colin's parents. Colin and Fiona are friends with two couples (with children of their own) who live close by and they often socialise together as a group. Fiona and the other two mothers meet regularly and provide emotional support, and occasional babysitting. Practical support obtained through, or provided to these social contacts was associated with a sense of reciprocity, but the Ryders commonly neutralised obligatory relationships by transforming them into a monetary exchange. For example, Fiona's pays her sister to provide Amber with piano lessons, albeit at a discounted rate. Furthermore, when financial difficulty forced a close friend to return to work after having a baby, Fiona helped out with childminding for an agreed low fee.

The Ryders have also cultivated useful social contacts in relation to Amber's school. Unusually there is no Parent Teachers Association at the school, but Fiona acts as a classroom volunteer twice a week helping other to children read. In addition, both Fiona and Colin regularly attend events organised by the school. These visits have enabled them to develop useful contacts and access relevant information relating to Amber's education. The relatively loose social capital networks accessed by the Ryders are particularly well suited to securing their daughter's educational advantage in that they contain a number of education professionals, including Amber's own teachers.

3.4 Issues in play

Relevant to all the family case studies that we have presented above – and which are typical of each our projects – are a diverse and complex interplay of issues around two core axes in the social capital that family members create, negotiate, access or avoid:

- core / extended families
- dense / loose ties

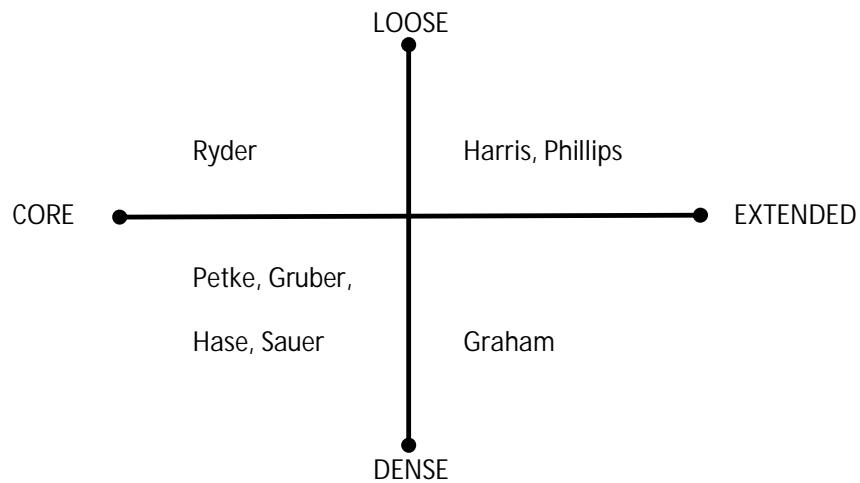
As the figure below illustrates, in the Wittenberge context of migration in transformative time, the family case studies (Petke, Gruber, Hase and Sauer) have a strong tendency towards family relationships of dense ties, retrenched to a core of parent/s and children, with little turning to others outside the family. In a context of migration in both space and time that is the key experience of the transnational family case studies (Harris and Phillips), however, family networks can be extended across the national and international context in a loose fashion. And where families have not experienced migration in either time or space, in the British context, class

comes to the fore as shaping the experiences of family resources and ties. For a working class family (Graham), the family relationships are extended to encompass friends while the ties involved are dense. In contrast, for a middle class family (Ryder), family relationships may be centred on a core of parents and children, but useful networks are quite loose.

In our concluding chapter we take these ideas of core/extended families and dense/loose ties further, to consider their significance for access to social capital that enables getting by, getting on or getting ahead in different social contexts.

Figure:

Family case studies located in the core/extended family and dense/loose ties framework



4. Conclusions: Getting By, Getting On or Getting Ahead?

Our purpose in this Working Paper has been to bring together our respective pieces of research in Germany and Britain to explore possibilities for drawing out lessons about the material and social resources, and family images and networks available to family members. We have done this in the context of a mainstream capital literature that lauds the nuclear family as the foundation of social capital, that poses types of social capital – notably bonding and bridging – as fixed and applicable regardless of context, and that usually treats resulting outcomes of access to and use of these types of capitals as transferrable lessons regardless of time and space.

A key and crucial message from our comparative endeavour, however, is that types of social capital, their substantive processes around families and network ties, and the outcomes of these processes, cannot be generalised regardless of context. The mainstream social capital debate, and its associated ideas about getting by, getting on and getting ahead, move in empty space. In contrast, our comparative exploration reveals these processes and outcomes as far more complex and shifting within and between different locations and social groups.

The Wittenberge context clearly indicates this embeddedness of social capital strategies both in space and time. The period of radical change during the 1990s can be seen as an opportunity window in which social positions and networks were increasingly in flux. All was possible, but also all was in doubt. In this situation people had a chance to reposition themselves within society and its network structure. People, generally more familiar with collectivistic modes of daily life, now had to decide with whom to develop strategies of muddling through or even to get ahead. The contraction towards the core family in this situation turned out to be a generalizable pattern. However, while this contraction in some cases meant the almost exclusive reliance on bonding social capital within the family, this needs further differentiation. In some cases bonding meant indeed extreme local entrenchment; in others it triggered new forms of (over)stretching social bonds across translocal settings. Interestingly enough, both strategies could lead to success or failure. By this we do not imply a normative categorization. Rather, we found that successful family strategies in times of rapid social change first of all mean that the families are able to regain a sense of stewardship. If a family manages to bundle material, social, and symbolic resources, whether locally or translocally, and effectively pursues a shift from getting by to getting on, they achieve this stewardship. This does not necessarily imply a gain in social status according to social stratification.

With the new millenium, the opportunity window in the transformation society more or less closed. The institutional set up was re-established, biographies and networks realigned to the new societal and political frame. We would argue that under these circumstances we can observe an involuntary transformation of strategies of getting ahead into strategies of getting by. People have aligned with the situation, readjusted dreams, ambitions and projects, and subsequently got a realistic sense of achievement. In Wittenberge society this means a fragmentation between two societies of getting by. One referring to mainstream society, still relying on the bundled effort of family to retain social status and position on a comparatively high level. The other referring to the

Wittenberge of the excluded, relying on transfer money. Thus getting by in the one hand means sustaining the middle class status achieved during the 1990s, while in the other, getting by indeed means more and more daily struggle in terms of material survival.

Overall then, we found it difficult to maintain a congruency between the dualities of bonding and bridging social capital in relation to 'good' and 'bad' or 'progressive' and 'conservative'. Instead we maintain that our cases reveal the strategy of bonding social capital as a strategy with a variety of facets both in terms of its spatial and its social dimensions, that in the end makes a straight forward contrast to bridging social capital almost pointless. However, it has also to be said that the bonding strategy pursued by families in Wittenberge has as its smallest common denominator the focus on family as a means of retaining social status, not the getting ahead in society as value in itself. In other words, while we highlight the importance of bonding social capital as a means to regain social stewardship in times of radical change, we are aware of the limits this sets for alternative forms of solidarity and civil society.

The transnational families project from the British programme of research shows further complexities of context. Getting ahead, getting on and getting by become interwoven, and take on different forms depending on geographical location and perspective, and across time and generations. In the context of the Caribbean, family members are usually in a situation of getting by and this is often the primary reason for migrating, with the intention of getting ahead. In the British context, these migrants may still live lives of getting by and understand their current situation in this way. But in relation to their past lives in the Caribbean they are getting on and wanting their children to get ahead, and that is how they are perceived by family back in the Caribbean. In this context, getting by, getting on and getting ahead cannot be understood outside of the specific interplay of space and time: space being the different locations of the Caribbean and Britain in which lives are experienced and compared, and time being mobility (geographical and social) across generations. In many ways this is a common migrant narrative. The networks that the members of these families draw on in their transnational experience are not core and dense ties, relied upon in an effort to get by as in the case for the Wittenberge families although each have experienced change. Nor are they non-existent. Rather their loose networks extend and are drawn upon across national and international contexts. It is the complexity of this migration experience that is missing from the generalisations about the relationships between families, network ties and social capital in mainstream assertions about social mobility.

And what about where there is no migration in time or space, either in the form of the transformative shift in social, political and symbolic context that forms the East German experience, or the movement across the globe within chronological time that is the transnational family experience? Getting by and on or ahead is still not a simplistic set of categories. Social class comes to the fore as a feature shaping the experiences of family ties and resources. In Britain, working class families may be living in a similar situation of getting by as the Wittenberge families, attempting to live their lives within an impoverished environment and few resources. But this does not necessarily lead to a strategy of retrenchment to core and dense family reliance. While dense ties are also a feature of their family lives and networks, these are extended to encompass reciprocity with friends and others in their community for mutual daily survival. In some contrast, middle class families have greater material resources, and their preoccupations

are likely to be with getting on and getting ahead. Here, family may form a core of ties, but networks are looser, drawn upon as and when necessary or required in a discerning and instrumental fashion in pursuit of maintaining privilege and status, and investing in children's social mobility.

The start of the intellectual journey that underlies the cross-national collaborative between our two research teams began with a search for a common statement that we could make about the sorts of social capital strategies that family members pursue and experience in times of constraint. The more we came to know about the contexts that each of us had been researching, the more we realised that such an overarching, universal and general, finding was impossible – and indeed, that that in itself was the common statement and contribution that we were making.

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