Family Time Negotiations

in the Context of Nonstandard Work Schedules

Families, Relationships and Societies

Muotoiltu: suomi

Mia Tammelin, Johanna Mykkänen, Eija Sevón, Minna Murtorinne- Lahtinen, and Anna Rönkä

Introduction

> *"Our family schedules are like a rubber band that is wound up to the max. Everything is so tightly scheduled. [...] I work irregular shifts, and my husband works 24/7. [...] Sometimes I wonder what would happen if something were to come up unexpectedly. I don't know. "*

The above quote is a story of daily life told by a mother of two children aged six and seven. Their family time is characterized by tight scheduling, and requires negotiations within the family as both parents work nonstandard work schedules. The quote illustrates that family time is not only about how the time is used, but also about the timing, coordination, and the predictability of the time. In this family, unexpected temporal demands mean reorganizing daily life.

Daily life is about habitual and routinized actions (Southerton, 2013: 340–341). The responsibility for organizing family schedules is ultimately seen as a private problem (Daly, 2002: 338), although societies differ in their responses to temporal demands, including those of parental nonstandard work schedules. Finland is among the few countries in the world to have publicly organized day-and-night care for children under school age, but families still rely on the familial care of children (Verhoef, et al

2016). Therefore, in addition to societal policies, families need private arrangements to cope with the various schedules of daily life.

In order to control time, people have adopted the language of time management along with various time management strategies (Adam, 1995; Hochschild, 1997). Time negotiations are used as a tool to knit individuals' schedules together, since a shared life (Daly, 1996) is built on shared decisions and practices, and is affected by both private and public calendars (Thomas and Bailey, 2009). Within families maintaining routines requires coordination, which is gendered. Time coordination is often performed by women; they have the ultimate responsibility for the family's daily routines (Southerton, 2011).

The focus of this study is time negotiations in the context of non-standard work schedules. Our first research aim was to analyze the focus of time negotiations in the family in the context of nonstandard work schedules. Our second research aim was to analyze gender differences using focalization (Genette, 1972, 1988); our analysis concentrates on the roles taken in time negotiations from the perspective of gender.

Nonstandard work hours

The requirement of 'just-in-time' production leads to more work being done during evening, weekends and nights, as well as to time 'on call' (Presser, 1995; Supiot, 2001). Nonstandard working hours are defined as hours worked outside the 9 to 5 working day and the 5-day working week (Presser, 2003). Traditionally, this has meant shift work in factories. However, nonstandard hours are currently typical in the expanding service sector; what was once non-standard is becoming standard. Therefore in a great many families at least one member works non-standard hours in Finland and in the EU generally (Parent-Thirion et al, 2007).

Non-day schedules mean that family members schedules are not synchronized, thereby disrupting family time (Brannen, O'Connell and Mooney, 2013). The literature on families, time and work is vast, but the number of studies specifically on the timing of the work is scarce and mostly quantitative. These quantitative studies carried out in the U.S and Australia have shown that nonstandard working hours have various negative consequences for family life, such as work-to-family conflict (Liu et al, 2011), poor family functioning, partnership and parenting problems (Jekielek 2003, Strazdins et al, 2004, 2006), as well as problems with childcare (Strazdins et al, 2004). This negative image has been challenged by more positive findings on the impact of nonstandard work schedules on family life both in the U.S and in Europe. Parents may take advantage of non-standard schedules to manage their childcare needs (Presser, 2003), while working nonstandard hours allows family routines to be maintained during

the daytime (Mills and Täht, 2012). Qualitative research on the topic, however, is scarce and our study contributes to filling this gap.

Although the timing of work is important, its meanings for families are mediated by other dimensions of time (time autonomy and tempo) and other work characteristics, such as social relationships at work. Henly, Shaefer and Waxman (2006) interviewed low-income mothers of young children working mostly nonstandard hours in the retail sector in the U.S. Their research interest was in the process by which working schedules were set, negotiated and changed in retail organizations. They found that employees' opportunities to exercise control over their work schedules were very limited. Some supervisors have the task of mediating the employer's policy, according to which they may be able to facilitate or may be obliged to constrain employee involvement in deciding their working hours (Hughes and Parkes 2007; Geurts et al, 2009). Other dimensions of working time are also important. Length of hours defines the hours one spends at work, and a high working tempo (i.e. feelings of hurriedness) combined with long hours and hurriedness, is easily transmitted to family life (Green, 2006). Time autonomy in turn allows individuals to arrange a schedule which better accommodates their various needs, both work-related and in private life (Bianchi and Milkie, 2010). These different dimensions of time define the way work is experienced.

Family time and routines

In any family there will be number of activities that must be performed, such as taking children to school, practicing hobbies, preparing meals and doing household tasks. Maintaining a fulfilling family life entails that the family members spend time together, or 'face-time' (Strazdins et al, 2004, 2006). Families build a shared belief system in their ongoing interaction. This belief system modifies and constrains the options that are available to individual family members, i.e. the mother might be more bound to the demands of time in the family than the father (Anderson, Bechhofer and Gershuny, 1994).

Family form is important, as it structures family time. For example, dual-earner couples are particularly prone to difficulties with time due to the number of schedules which need to be coordinated (Gallie and Russell, 2009). Single parents in turn may have fewer schedules, but the sole responsibility for coordinating them (Nockolds, 2015). For many parents, lack of time for non-work-related activities can lead to "time starvation", meaning that there is simply not enough time left over for the most meaningful tasks in life (Tubbs, Roy and Burton 2005; see also Daly, 1996; Hochschild, 1997). Another difference is based on resources, such as the financial resources and social networks available to the family. Economically poor families may not have the same range of alternatives at their disposal as wealthy families, who are able to

outsource care and domestic responsibilities. These structural factors create inequalities between families (Fagan, 2001).

An important aspect of family life is the repetition of daily and weekly rhythms, i.e. routines (Zisberg et al, 2007). Southerton (2013) argued that routines and daily practices are closely interlinked with temporality in three different ways. First, time can be seen as a finite resource for routines, and thus diverse routines and practices 'compete' for time and slots within the day, week or month. Second, routines and practices produce temporal demands of their own, which in turn mean temporal coordination with other people and routines. Routines coordinate and organize various activities in time, space and interpersonal interaction (also Zisberg et al, 2007). Third, societal and collective time conditions people's personal temporalities and routines. The intensification of time and temporal acceleration, resulting from loosened collective temporalities and increased pressure on people to do more, demands heightened coordination of daily routines (Kremer-Sadlik and Paugh, 2007; Southerton, 2011 2013). Further, in the recursive relationship between routines and temporalities cultural, institutional and group-specific values and dispositions also affect what and how routines are performed (Southerton, 2013).

Moments in the day are not all perceived in the same way, nor is the time that is located at different moments in the day similar. Differences occur in the number of activities taking place, as well as in the emotions connected with them. Employed

parents must continually strike a balance between time at work and time at home, and thus it can reasonably be argued that present-day parenting is heavily centred on the question of time. The cultural imperative of "good" parenting is to spend time with children. This imperative, along with the growing number of dual-earner families, has led to a belief that the quality of time can compensate for loss in the quantity of time. Working parents feel constant guilt over having too little time for their children. (Milkie, et al, 2010). Furthermore the criteria for "good motherhood" and "good fatherhood" are different; and this too affects perceptions of time (Adam, 1995).

Parents, then, coordinate and manage time to secure time with their children. How time is coordinated depends on generation (Daly, 1996) and gender (Adam, 1995). Children have agency, and sometimes the family's schedule is organized around the children's schedules, for example, their hobbies (Brannen, O'Connell and Mooney, 2013).

Gendered time and gendered responsibilities

Women in Finland are largely expected to have one foot firmly in the private sphere and the other in the public sphere (Oinonen, 2013), and while men have come closer to the private sphere (Eerola and Mykkänen, 2013), their relationship to work and the public sphere has remained markedly stable (Lewis, Brannen and Nilsen, 2009). The actions of

women have been described as "weaving" (Garey, 1999), meaning that they plan, coordinate and negotiate all the family's schedules (see also Lowson and Arber, 2014), including day-care, and juggle all the arrangements of daily life.

Time coordination is often performed by women, who often have the ultimate responsibility for family life, care (Davis, 1987) and the organizing and coordinating of daily routines (Nomaguchi, Milkie and Bianchi, 2005; Southerton, 2011). Adam (1995) argued that because women's use of time is shaped by having enough time and having enough flexibility to deal with the needs of the children and family, and because the demands of care and household work are unpredictable, women in particular have a need for 'open-ended time'. Although men are taking on a greater share of responsibility for and involvement in childcare, their responsibility for household duties does not yet match that of women (Aassve, Fuochi and Mencarini, 2014; Bonke and Esping-Andersen, 2008).

Ideologically, from a gendered perspective, women are in a disadvantaged position in negotiations over free time as they are seen to be are more responsible than men for the wellbeing of their children and spouse (Laurijssen and Glorieux, 2013). Earlier studies have shown that the time men spend with children is negatively related to their work schedules especially if the schedules are demanding (Hall, 2005; Maume, 2011). From a gender neutral perspective, women and men alike are seen as experiencing similar time pressures and occupying a similar role in time negotiations

(Nomaguchi, Milkie and Bianchi, 2005). In the case of nonstandard work schedules, it has been suggested that these could lead to role reversal. In other words, fathers working nonstandard hours are likely to assume more domestic and care responsibilities, for example, spend more time with children, than fathers working regular day-work (Linnenberg, 2012; Maume, 2011; Maume and Sebastian, 2012). This line of thinking supports the time availability argument, although there could well be a qualitative difference between spending time and bearing the ultimate responsibility for family routines and time coordination. In light of the centrality of time in present-day parenting, we focus, in this study on the family time negotiations.

Data and analytical strategy

The interview data were collected as part of the research project 'Families 24/7'. The one-to-one semi-structured interviews with employed parents were conducted in spring 2013 in Finland. The interviews covered a wide range of themes with a focus on work, family life and child wellbeing; they involved parents with at least one child aged 0–12 years, and the sampling focused on families where one or both parents worked nonstandard hours. Most of the 47 interviewed parents had originally voluntarily participated in the project survey and expressed willingness to participate in the qualitative interviews. However, some of the participants (three women and ten men)

were recruited via word of mouth. This strategy was used to recruit more male participants. Recruitment of the survey respondents was conducted through childcare facilities located in different areas of Finland, labour unions and a work organisation. All names of participants or their family members used in this paper are pseudonyms. The interviews were recorded and fully transcribed.

The 47 interviewees comprised 31 women and 16 men. They were on average in their mid-thirties (range 24–46) and most had two children (range 1–4). Most (34) participants were coupled, but 13 were single mothers. Most of the coupled participants were married (26), but eight were cohabiting couples, and three of these cohabiting participants lived in living-apart-together (LAT) families.

Our sample included both blue- and white-collar workers, and parents who were self-employed. All interviewed parents were affected by nonstandard work schedules, whether their own or a partner's. Nonstandard work hours were defined in a broad sense to include besides day-time work, those who regularly worked evenings (18.00–22.00), nights (22.00–06.00) or on weekends. All the single mothers worked nonstandard hours. The coupled participants worked nonstandard schedules, except two, and among the 19 couples, the partner also worked nonstandard hours. Furthermore, ten partners were in regular day work, one was a student, one was unemployed and three were stay-at-home parents, who took care of the children at home.

The analysis began with content analysis (e.g. Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). In the first phase, each researcher read through the data, paying special attention to the descriptions of the extent and focus of the time negotiations. In particular, we analysed the of nonstandard work schedules in time negotiations. After individually constructing their preliminary codes and after careful discussions about the most important themes, the research team agreed on a coding scheme (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). See Figure 1 for an example of the construction of the empirical theme.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

In the second phase, were read for focalization (e.g. Bleeker, 2005) and to some extent modalization (Biber et al, 1999) to grasp the parent's voice, possibilities and limitations, and gender-perspectives on time negotiations. The analysis hence concentrates on the text verbatim. We use the term 'focalization' as a replacement for 'perspective', and more specifically the 'internal focalization' which refers to the point of view of the narrator (Genette, 1972, 1988). The focalization approach revealed how the mothers and fathers talked about the negotiation process, that is, whose point of view is dominant, whose voice or perspective is heard in a story, and what it means when one perspective dominates another (see Bal, 1997, 142–150). It also revealed the interviewees' desires, abilities, expectations, intentions, presuppositions and anxieties (Bleeker, 2005;

Quigley, 1999). Modalization, in turn, focused on who had power and volition over time and what the fathers and mothers reported about the modalities related to time, i.e. who has to, wants to, can or is able to make suggestions and decisions (Biber et al, 1999). The meanings and expressions we paid attention to in the data are as follows: (modal auxiliaries): ability (can/could), permission (may/might), obligation (must/ought to), and volition (will/would), possibility (may/might) (Chalker and Weiner 1994). These analytical concepts and examples are presented in table 1.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Focus of time negotiations in the family: everything is negotiable?

Our first research aim was to analyze the focus of time negotiations in the family in the context of nonstandard work schedules. Three categories of time negotiations were identified: 1) routines; 2) unexpected time obligations; and 3) family ideology and practices. Below, we discuss these findings.

Routines

Daily rhythms and routines were shaped by time obligations (Roy, Tubbs and Burton 2004, 171), some of which were time-bound, i.e., actions that cannot be postponed, and others that were less urgent. Theoretically everyday routines, tasks and personal needs

are time-bound, yet they become an object of time negotiations among couples who work nonstandard hours. Routines and rhythms of this kind included the timing of sleep and childcare, for example. One couple, Susan and Mark, who both worked evenings, had negotiated fixed days during the week for sleeping in during the morning. Susan reported: *"We have this practice that on Saturday mornings Mark can sleep late, as long as he wants, and I get up with the children, and on Sunday mornings I get to sleep"*.

Childcare and related routine tasks were a central focus of negotiation. Parents raised issues such as taking children to the crèche or their hobbies, and how to organize childcare, especially on Sundays or at night. Sundays were difficult for organizing care as they were generally seen as free time. Molly worked in religious services, and typically this mean Sunday work and very scattered hours. She explained that asking friends for help with her child was tricky. Molly explained: *"Then it is that it is difficult. Because they are such odd hours when I need help. Like late on Friday night. Or asking friends, how is your Sunday morning, could I bring the child to you? I know they work a normal week, and that Sunday morning is meant to be peaceful."*

Also other routines such as mealtimes and household work were negotiable. This not only concerned temporal organization or whose responsibility it was, but also the underlying ideology. Paula explained that having meals at home was not something

their family did every day. Rather they were flexible: "*Some days, we have meals at home, and sometimes not at all. But we always go through this the previous day*".

Overall, maintaining family routines was difficult, especially when the working hours varied from one day to another. Maintaining routines required careful coordination of time. Elise explained: "*In our family, we carefully decide when and who does what and how we do these things*". Some families lived a carefully managed and coordinated life, where each activity was planned beforehand: "*The calendar is God!*" exclaimed one mother.

Managing multiple and overlapping time-bound activities was particularly tricky for single parent families who must prioritize and make strategies to cope with them. Maya described how she has solved one daily problem, namely walking the dog early in the morning while her daughter is sleeping. She explained "*Anna* [daughter] *knows that before the morning shift I quickly walk the dog before she wakes up. I close the gate upstairs so that she can't fall down the stairs. I would hate to wake her up when she can still have one more hours of sleep.*"

Nonstandard work hours, especially shift work, meant that negotiations with friends must be done weeks in advance. For example Ian, who worked in services operating mostly during evenings and nights, reported that when his wife wants to see her friends: *"...Then it has to be fixed weeks beforehand, because I have work schedules fixed for weeks ahead."*

Some families used very flexible or reactive scheduling, while others wanted to carefully coordinate and maintain their schedules. The attitudes towards time between families varied greatly and thus it is possible to speak of a family's time culture, i.e. of a perceived and agreed attitude toward time and routines.

Families' practices and routines needed re-evaluation in the transition phases, such as starting school or organizing daily life during and after a divorce. These events have been conceptualized as 'habit discontinuity' (Southerton 2013, 340). The transition from pre-school (with a 24/7 care possibility) to school was problematic for many non-standard workers. At that point, the family's practices had to adapt to the situation in which the child's care was no longer secured via municipal day-and-night care. Schools and after-school care operate during the day-time. A single parent, Sally, described her alternatives when her child went to school: "*I am planning to move* (to a city close to her parents and a new boyfriend) *because my options are either to quit my job and move, or to take an au pair.*"

Unexpected time obligations

Unexpected time obligations needed negotiation in their temporal ordering and sequencing. Unexpected events, such as falling ill or the postponement of work schedules, triggered re-negotiations. A dual-earning couple, Eve and Peter, who were both shift workers, reported that when their child fell ill they negotiated between

themselves whose shift was better paid and went through what they represented as, a rational decision-making process. The parent who was on the better paid shift went to work while the other stayed at home.

Many of the unexpected events called for negotiations with the workplace as well. Supervisors had a crucial role in negotiations at work (see also Henly, Shaefer and Waxman, 2006). Sue, who worked in 24/7childcare, explained that she had an agreement with her supervisor to work as many day shifts as possible, because of her husband's continuous work-related travel. Some combinations of shifts were particularly difficult, such as an evening shift followed by a morning shift.

While many working parents had some room to negotiate on the timing of their work with their supervisors and workplaces, employer flexibility in meeting employee needs should not be overemphasized. In reality, many employees worked as scheduled with no attempt at time negotiations, regardless of how their working hours fit into their family's schedules. Tracy put it like this: "*I feel bad that I can't always be there to put my children to sleep or be there when they get up. There might be long periods when I feel that I don't see them at all.[..] I didn't choose these hours. It is the opening hours that define work schedules. In a small town like this there are very little alternatives when it comes to jobs.*"

Family ideology and practices

Time negotiations also concerned the ideology underlying family life and parenting, which affected the family's willingness to ask for help from others. The interviewees explained that family schedules were a target of judgmental remarks by relatives and friends; it seemed as if having family schedules that differed from the norm in terms of complexity made the family ideology, and how family routines were organised, morally questionable. One mother described this: "Many people bemoaned that it's terrible that you take your child to day care overnight, but it was a tiny day care centre, and my child was used to going there and I remember she didn't ever cry when we went there." She continued by talking about her friends: "Occasionally I've been criticised by many friends, that you abandon your children if you do something like that, and have you thought about it and such. It'd be almost better to be unemployed at home than to have shift work. But there are others who understand. It depends whether the other person is in the same field or not. If the other person is in a different field and a different working rhythm, then not... I feel it's that kind of judging, judging of motherhood, that you are such a mother." Thus, mothers' choices, behaviour and use of time were criticised and questioned in particular.

Some informants reported that for this reason they were reluctant to ask for help. This was also a cause of stress. Lisa said *"I get help, but it always comes with the same nagging about our schedules"*. Another mother, whose description was highlighted in

the beginning of the study, explained that she never calls for help from grandparents because of the moralization from them. The interviewee stated that the moralization and "nagging" had caused them to prefer to negotiate schedules within the family, placing even more pressure on the parents to deal with the schedules and responsibilities without any outside help from the family.

Focalization in family time negotiations: women in charge, invisible men?

The second aim of our study was to analyze the roles taken in time negotiations from the perspective of gender. The main focus of our analysis was to examine how mothers and fathers spoke about the time negotiations and whose point of view was dominant. We were also interested in what fathers and mothers would say about the modalities related to time. To achieve these objectives, the data were re-read through the lens of focalization.

We found three clear perspectives: *I*, *we* and *spousal*. First, the *I* perspective concerned what the interviewee him/herself had done or thought. The second, the *we* perspective referred to oneself, but this also referred to others besides the spouse, as will be explained later. The third, the *spousal* perspective, referred to the partner's point of view as reported by the interviewee.

I -talk was largely used by women when describing time negotiations and coordinating family schedules. It seems that time negotiations and coordination were predominantly the lot of women, although it should be noted that the actual implementation of the tasks was different from their coordination. This was concretized, for example, by Maria, who said "*I want to make sure that everything is running smoothly*". She said that this was her wish and responsibility, and that her nonstandard work schedules did not affect this. Bearing the ultimate responsibility for time coordination was not, however, only a wish, but also a must, something perceived as having to be done. Erica, whose husband worked away from home for several weeks at a time, followed by extended periods at home, described her domestic responsibilities and scheduling with repeated use of the word "must", as in *"It's me myself, who must think of everything, for example when to call the doctor"*. She then continued, "*you can't help it. You just have to accept that."* Often *I*-talk was linked to one's will or desire, and was explained by reference to a clear sense of the "right" direction. There were also many "must" or "have to" expressions, which implied inevitable external events that could not be changed. Many women and men did not question the traditional gender roles; instead, they talked about family and work-situations as if it was self-evident that women took the main responsibility with no mention of their husbands. This implies that the father is invisible in families' time negotiations.

We-talk was used by both men and women. It varied based on the family form, and who was/were included in 'we'. Many cohabiting parents used '*we*-talk'; they reported that they negotiated and decided things *together*. In this way they 'drew' the other spouse into the story, and explained and thought about family matters through the lens of the other, and through the whole 'couple unit'. This kind of talk can be related to 'we-ness', which implies a sense of closeness and the (moral) desire to be together as a family (Rogers-de Jong and Strong, 2014).

We-talk emerged in many ways and was sometimes used alongside *I*-talk, while others relied on it throughout the interview. For example, Sue said that she wanted and needed to discuss time with her husband several times a day: "*We call, we call many times a day, a lot, everything on the phone*". She continued: "*Always, when his schedule comes, we see how we'll work it out.*"

We-talk also referred to the close social environment. For example, Tracy spoke about time negotiations with co-workers and day-care staff, not with her husband. She said, "*We make the timetable with the children's hobby teacher, so I can continue working outside home and my kids can keep up their hobbies. This way the puzzle fits together.*" Jacob conveyed his spouses' voice when he described that it is part of their daily life to organize life in a way that follows their working schedules: "*We are so used to…* (following the work schedules)".

Besides *we*-talk Tracy's citation also draws attention to her use of *I*-talk. She said, "I can continue working" and "my kids". She continued, saying that "*I have to keep a tight grip on the ropes...so that everything doesn't fall apart*." According to this mother, fitting together the puzzle of daily life required that her to take full responsibility. This did not necessary mean that her husband, or men in general, are reluctant or unable to take the same responsibility.

The third perspective, *spousal*-talk, was typically adopted by men who spoke of their partners as bearing the ultimate responsibility. These men described their daily family-life through their spouse's eyes, her decisions and her experiences, such as what she thought about their actions, behaviors or thoughts and how she moralized about them. For example, Brian stated, "*Sometimes my wife says, that I give in too easily to the children*", and Will stated, "*My wife thinks that I should come home earlier*". Analyzing the narratives on time negotiations showed a clear difference between men and women in the position they took. Women, especially single mothers, who were responsible for time coordination and negotiations, used mostly *I*-talk, while men, more than women, used *spousal*-talk. No gender difference was observed in *we*-talk, although the mothers referred more to other actors (such as day care, grandparents), while the fathers' *we*-talk referred mostly to their spouse.

Summary and Conclusions

The overall aim of our study was to analyze time negotiations in families where one or both parents work nonstandard work hours. All in all the analysis showed that the timing of working time is an important structural aspect influencing family life. This was clearly seen in the testimonies of families working nonstandard hours: While routines are the core of maintaining family life (Southerton, 2013; Zisberg et al, 2007), among families working non-standard hours the self-evident nature of these activities was loosened. Routine became non-routine and was subject to negotiation. Consequently daily life required careful planning and coordination.

It is noteworthy that the organization of time negotiations in the context of nonstandard working time prompted moralization and judgmental remarks, even from close relatives. This restricted the parents' possibilities to arrange their daily family life with the help of other people, extending the burden of negotiations between the couple or, especially in the case of single mothers, with child care professionals and workplaces. Similarly, researchers studying childcare for nonstandard hours (Jordan, 2008; Statham and Mooney, 2003) have noticed that public childcare to cover nonstandard working hours sometimes stimulates negative feelings and moralizing comments among childcare workers. In her dissertation Jordan (2008) found that in particular not sleeping at home and not having a family dinner were subject to

moralizing comments. Parents felt guilty about not being with their children during these sensitive hours, and many of them expressed their sentiment that childcare during nonstandard hours was not an accepted societal norm. Although in Finland parental work and public childcare during nonstandard hours is widely accepted, the mothers and fathers in our study described in detail that their use of time and scheduling was judged by those around them. This bred a reluctance to ask for help, even when it was desperately needed. The added stress of contending with the negative perceptions of childcare was clear.

Some studies (e.g. Linnenberg, 2012; Maume and Sebastian, 2012) on nonstandard hours have indicated that working such schedules results in role reversal. However, our study shows that the traditional gender differences continue to hold: The interviewed women made it clear that they have the responsibility for the family schedule. *I* -talk was largely used by women when describing time negotiations and coordinating family schedules. The analysis of modalities implies that women had more power over the schedules of daily family life, but also that they were obliged to engage in negotiation and coordination. Bearing responsibility for the whole family's time negotiations and taking into account the shared interest and need for (family) time, the mothers were obliged to take into account diverse family members' schedules and needs. The mothers were subjected to family time negotiations and coordination at the expense of control over their own time. The men, in turn, could more easily withdraw

from this negotiation and coordination responsibility, and thus, had more power over their own time use.

The women in this study used *I* -talk when describing their role as coordinators and planners of family time (see also Lowson and Arber, 2014), which in some studies has been described as "weaving" (Garey, 1999). Thus, even though modern masculinity espouses a gender equality-perspective in the family, abstaining from some male privileges, and promoting their wives' careers and personal development (Bjørnholt, 2011), it nevertheless seems that women coordinate and negotiate time. Mothers seem to do the coordination-job at the expense of their own time. Why is this? In the first place, the cultural norms of family life are difficult to change. This refers to the notion that some men understand a commitment to paid work as a way to be a responsible parent, while contributing to parenting is optional, whereas for mothers this is not seen as an option (Ladner, 2009, 301; McLaughlin and Muldoon, 2014). Another explanation proposed by Kulik and Tsoref (2010) is that women's evaluations of their husband's involvement in child care are the dominant factors causing the division of responsibility.

Earlier research on nonstandard work schedules and family life has reported mixed findings. One reason for the mixed findings might be, as seen in this study, that work schedules affect family time in many ways which calls for a careful analysis. Issues such as the overall family schedules, and importantly, the partner's hours also need to be taken into account. Furthermore families differed in their access to care

resources. Some had grandparents living nearby, while others had given up trying to find help, had no financial resources to pay for care or did not want to ask for care from them.

The study has a few limitations that should be mentioned. Many of the interviewees spoke at length about child care arrangements and negotiating care arrangements and less about other time commitments or activities such as their hobbies. This could be seen as either a strength or a limitation of the study. On the one hand, we obtained detailed information about the often- difficult problem of combining nonstandard working hours with the family's time needs. On the other hand, we failed to obtain rich descriptions of other possible time-consuming activities.

The study reveals topics for further research, such as the power relations of the partners. Here, the focus of the study was time negotiations within families working nonstandard hours. In these families, work scheduling varies which requires coordination. However, it is outside of the scope of this paper to analyze in more detail, for example, who has the power to negotiate and who lacks the power e.g. to present the topics to be discussed and decided within a family. It might be that the lack of negotiation is a sign of not having power to negotiate, not a sign of not needing to do so. Furthermore discussing the power at the workplace, i.e. worker – supervisor – relations

and the organization's culture, would provide further insight into the topics of this study.

Another interesting topic for future research would be to analyze the time culture of a family, and how this relates to the ideals of parenting and of family life in general. Our study showed that some families were committed to maintaining routines and spending time together, even when it is labourious. Furthermore it seems that *we* –talk is more visible among the couples who have a shared commitment to maintaining family time and who have more equal role in negotiations.

What then is family time like in the context of nonstandard working hours? It can be concluded that nonstandard work hours produce a daily life that amplifies the coordination and orchestration of activities, almost like the carefully designed work process of a restaurant (Fine, 1990).

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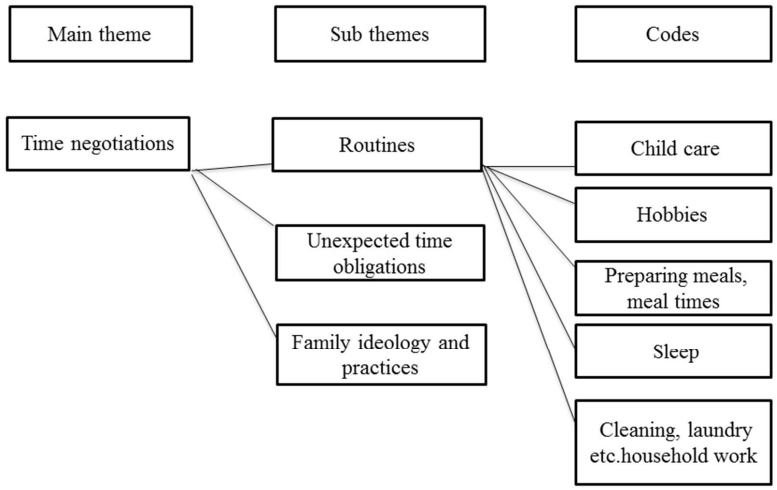

Figure 1. An example of the construction of the empirical theme.

Table 1. Summary of method focalization and modalization with empirical examples.

Method	**Examples of the data**
Focalization = whose point of view: who sees, speaks or experiences? - Internal, subjective telling, i.e. who is 'part of the story'?	**I-talk** *"It's me myself, who must think of everything…"* **We-talk** *"We call, we call many times a day…"* **Spousal-talk** *"My wife think that I should come home earlier"*
Modalization = who has the power and volition to do? - Ability (can/could), - Permission (may/might), - Obligation (must/ought to), - Volition (will/would), - Possibility (may/might)	*"I feel bad that I **can't** always be there…"* *"You **may** go tomorrow…"* *"You just **have to** accept that."* *"I **want to** go to the gym…"*