

Modern family life: new patterns of parent-child relationships

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A just conducted survey on the social networks and family life of the 35-year-old inhabitants of Denmark is presented. A questionnaire was especially designed to elucidate how the respondents in their daily life handle the conditions for establishing togetherness in radically modernized welfare states. This presentation concentrates on those of the respondents that live in a family and have children. Special attention is focussed on what the data convey about the character of the parent-child relationships in contemporary modernity.

The results indicate two social processes, each the shadow of the other, seem to be in operation: a tendency towards accentuated individualisation, on the one hand, and an intensified need for social belongingness, on the other hand. In the junction between these tendencies the child appears to be given a position as the core of the family, in most cases attracting their parent's full emotional attention and concern.