



Call for Papers for an *ephemera* Special Issue on:

## Organizing the family

Issue Editors: Peter Svensson and Terese Anving

If one takes an interest in politics and organization, few organizational forms are better suited for study than the family. Classically conceived as the private and intimate backstage of life, the sphere within which we rest and recuperate as a means of preparing for our performances in the public world, the family is, to a large extent, today understood as something *constituted within* the nexus of the public/private intersection (Rubin, 1986). The family, in this sense, is much more than a biological category defined by blood relations and generational sequences. It is much more fruitfully conceived of as a phenomenon comprised of a complex set of organizational forms, values and ideologies that, in many respects, transcend the boundaries between the private and the public, the household and the state, the individual and the social. The family, accordingly understood, is an object of governmentality, just like any other. As Nikolas Rose succinctly puts it:

The modern private family remains intensively governed, it is linked in so many ways with social, economic, and political objectives. But government here acts not through mechanisms of social control and subordination of the will, but through the promotion of subjectivities, the construction of pleasures and ambitions, and the activation of guilt, anxiety, envy and disappointment. (Rose: 1989: 213)

Thus, the family as a private, public issue is not only restricted to repressive and direct forms of control, such as fertility control and family planning as discussed by McFarlane and Meier (2001). We must rather, as Rose suggests, see in the family the very ‘emblem of a new mode of government of the soul. Each normal family will fulfill its political obligations best at the very moment at which it conscientiously strives to realize its most private dreams’ (Rose: 1989: 213). The idea and institution of the ‘normal family’ is here thus understood as the autonomous fulfillment of political obligations.

Althusser (2001) famously conceived of the family as one of the ideological state apparatuses that alongside other ideological state apparatuses, such as the church and the school, fulfilled the purpose of reproducing capitalist relations of production. The construction of the nation state and its economy has indeed been contingent upon the kind of stability and predictability offered by the family institution (Diamand, 2000). In the family, new citizens are raised, trained and socialized in order to become well adjusted and responsible (and responsive) members of the community.

Along this line of investigation, the family has also been taken as a quintessential example of the way in which domestic relations have become more and more industrialized (Hochschild, 1997) and, even, as an opportunity to utilize this increasing industrialization of the private context for the sake of industrializing the family realm itself (Gilbreth, 1927, 1928).

In addition to the conception of the family as a macro-political apparatus, fulfilling social, economic and political functions, it can also be appreciated as an arena of everyday micro-politics - a site within which gender and patriarchy undergoes constant negotiation and reproduction. The most obvious example is perhaps the ways in which gender roles and authoritarian relations are played out and normalized in the everyday organization of the family. More to this, the family is a burning political topic in its own right. For political parties family policy is often one of the primary areas for heated debates (see e.g. Durham, 2001). For the feminist movements, for instance, the family has been an urgent topic for debates and struggles (e.g. Friedan, 1997; Somerville, 2000; Thorne and Yalom, 1992).

And so, as one of the most politically charged and, at the same time, ubiquitously naturalized contemporary organizational forms, it is our contention that the family merits theoretical as well as empirical attention within organization studies. Given the arguments outlined above, the editors of this special issue call for papers that explore and discuss the organization 'the family' in more detail.

Possible broad topics for articles, reviews and notes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Leadership and the family
- Organizing and managing the family
- Gender and sexual identity in the family
- Governmentality and the family
- Biopolitics and family (e.g. family planning, fertility control)
- Ideologies of the family
- The family experts (psychologists, counselling, life style magazine columnists)
- The local accomplishments of the family (in dinners, traditions, rituals)
- Family and the idea of the collective
- The family and the crisis of capitalism
- Family and production
- Family and consumption
- Representations of the family in media, popular culture, advertising

### **Deadline for submissions: 30 June 2010**

Deadline for submission is 30 June 2010. All contributions should be submitted to Peter Svensson: [peter.svensson@fek.lu.se](mailto:peter.svensson@fek.lu.se).

Please note that three categories of contributions are invited in this call: articles, notes, and reviews. Information about these different types of contributions can be found at: <http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/call.htm>. Contributions will undergo a double

blind review process. All submissions should follow ephemera's submissions guideline, available at: <http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/submit.htm>.

## About the editors

**Peter Svensson** is an associate professor at the Department of Business Administration, Lund University, Sweden. His research interests include: marketing work, knowledge production in business life, marketing/management knowledge, and the marketization of everyday organization of life.

**Terese Anving** is a doctoral student at the Department of Sociology, Lund University, Sweden. Her PhD-project focuses on the attitudes and strategies of families with small children when it comes to food, mealtimes, and shopping.

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