



Resistance to normative biography in narrative (re)construction of educational trajectories and learning lives

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Research methodology

- Biographical narrative research;
- professional identity development and educational trajectories;
- 14 female and male teachers at university colleges in Norway;
- Age of participants: 37-67 years old;
- 2015 December.

Biographic narrative research

- the **discursive** constitution of the social,
- clarify the interconnections between the **personal and social**
- lives of individuals, as well as their **life trajectories** and **subjective experiences**
- to link **macro and micro** levels of analysis

Late modernity and biographising

- **Reflexive modernities** – individuals are no longer guided by tradition and fixed scripts
- Biography as a specific type of subjectivity, a **reflexive project** (Giddens, 1991).
- **Biographising** becomes a normal human activity, contributing to the **maintenance of identity**
- To understand and **construct the self**, recognise and understand **opportunities**, to make **right choices**.
- Giddens and Beck write on that without link to gender.

Women and reflexive modernity

- **Reflexive modernities** – individuals are no longer guided by tradition and fixed scripts
- Modernisation and individualisation – impact on gender identities
- Late modernity as a **rapture with ascription**
- **Collapse of ascription** that organised **the gender division of labour** – individuals can exercise free will and make decisions
- Do I want be a husband/ wife. A farther/mother, and if so, how? What part of me I want to devote to work, family, marriage, parenthood, or anything else?
- **Instability** which affects **private and public spheres**
- **Earthquake** shakes gender identities



Women's biographical paths

- Increasing centrality of work in women's biographical paths
- Salaried work increased **,double-presence' model**, where family and work become parallel paths
- Working became a right/duty
- During the 1980s, The 'typical' path implied reconciling **family (marriage, motherhood) and work**
- **Typical path** - sphere of acceptance

Biographical narrative research in educational sciences

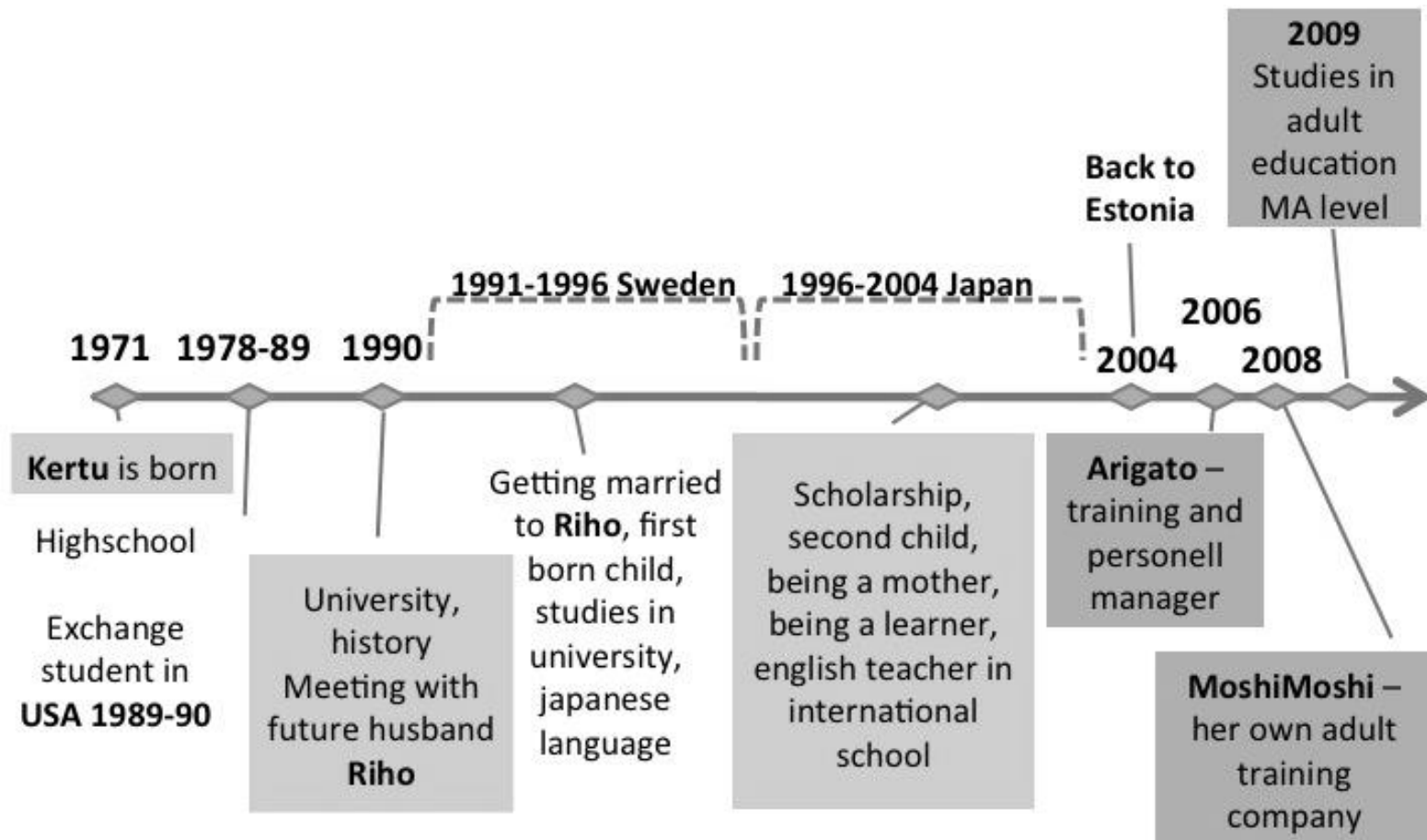
- Studying processes of lifelong learning
- **Learning lives**
- How **educational biography and trajectory** intertwine with **life trajectory**
- **Educational biography** reflects an interaction between learning processes in different contexts of formal, non-formal and informal learning and social processes.
- **Educational biography** reflects learning in environments besides formal education institutions (general education, vocational schools and higher education institutions) – learning in family, community, enterprise, informal networks, virtual world of social networking) (West, 2011)

Educational biography and learning

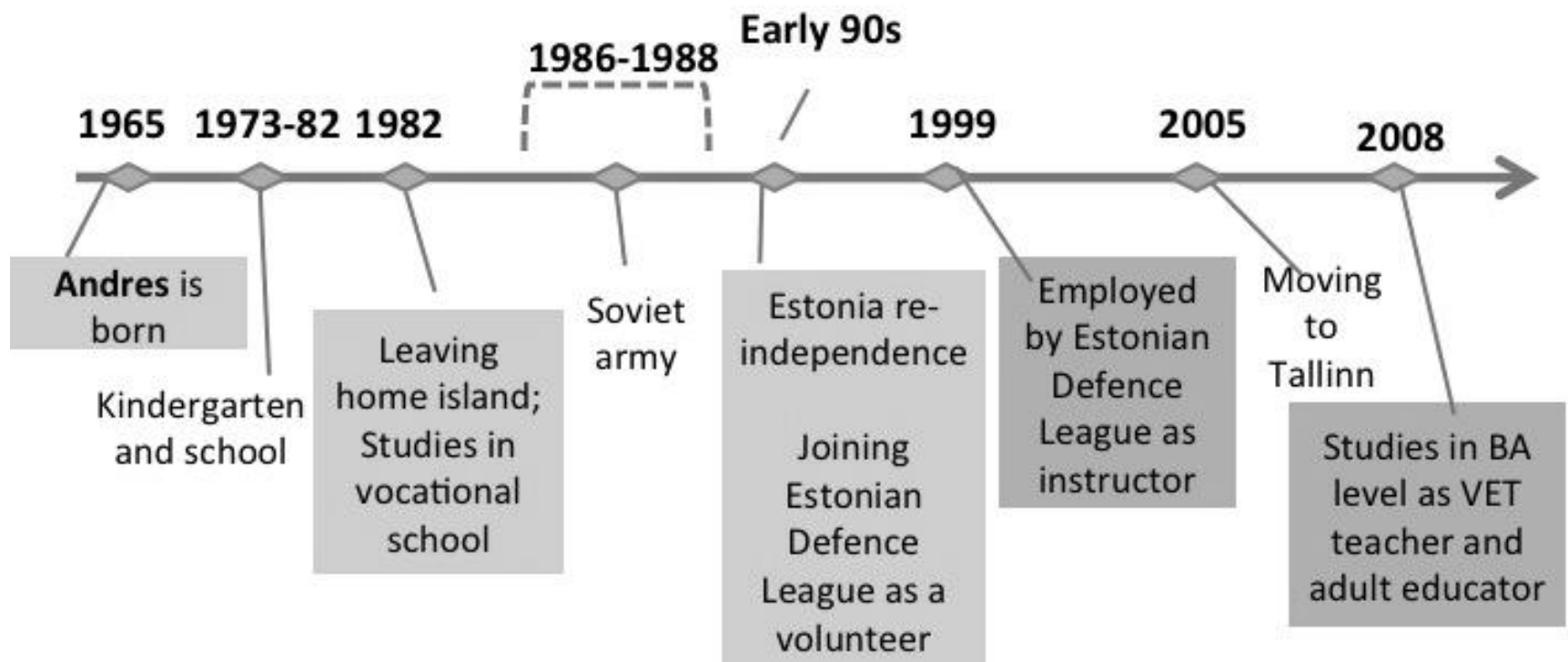
- Learning happens during social interaction and under conditions of **transformation of social structures**
- How individuals combine **learning, work, personal life, formal and informal education** and how it leads to **conflict, pressure, feeling of uncertainty and lack of confidence**
- How events and situations in life (social and geographic mobility, acquired skills and competences, interruption of work activity due to illness, maternity, unemployment etc.) intersect with various **social and economic processes, structural changes.**



Educational trajectory and learning path of Kertus (Joggi and Gross, 2012)



Educational trajectory and learning path of Andres (Joggi and Gross, 2012)



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Educational biography and learning

- How individuals build their lives and social identities, design their life plans and life projects around learning, employment and careers.
- How such factors as social characteristics and social identity (for example, gender identity), social and economic capital, family predetermine decisions and life plans, choices of educational journey.
- Main constituent part of life journey of a modern individual is formation of social identity throughout entire life, which manifests as interaction between the factors of social class, family life, gender, work activity, learning

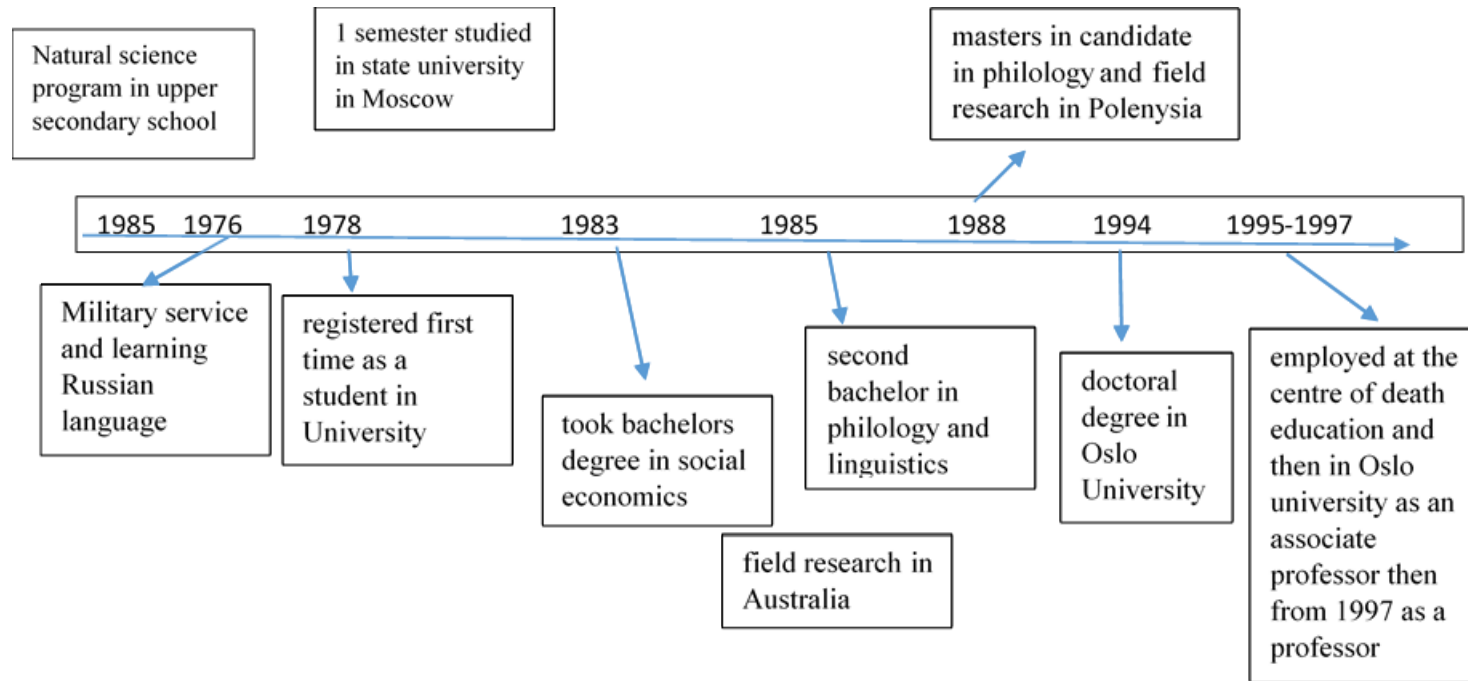


Results

- Dominant discourses formed by social structures (including families);
- Career development as a professional;
- Interrelation between horizontal and vertical segregation in academic work.



Learning trajectory (from research data)



Dominant discourses formed by social structures

- Family and social status influenced educational trajectories of the research participants.
- As higher family status was (as more educated parents were), as more it was expected from the interviewees to become the members of „prestigious“ professions (lawyers, engineers, doctors, economists, politicians).



Career development as a professional

Women/females were more influenced (and felt pressure) by the dominant discourses and families while choosing profession and studies.

Some of the professions such as:

- “anthropologists”, “developmental studies” (travel, danger, insecurity, unpredictability)
- “historians”, “teachers”,

were treated by the dominant discourses as professions without future, without financial perspectives to support yourself .

At the same time males had more freedom to choose their educational way and professions, they were not pressed by the dominant discourses, and often their choices were different and less pressure from the society.



Interview data:

- *“As my mom is a lawyer and my father is a civil engineer, so they thought when I started studying history, what are you gonna do with that? How you gonna earn the money? And my friends became lawyers, business women and men. Some of them psychologists. Most of them took economic and law studies, so I was a freak, studying history, but I think I have compensated taking economical history, which I was not really interested. I was thinking about doing Development studies, but my mother would have cried I think, are you going to Africa, being ill? I had to start in University. You are not going to start teacher education, you have to go to University. I felt it that way. Still my mom, when I was working in the secondary school, lower secondary school from 13-15 years pupil, my mother was saying when are you going to get yourself a proper work? This is not a proper work. So these days I think she can accept, high school lecturer, but still she thinks I am a teacher.” (Nanna, 44)*



Interview data:

- *“I really was so interested in Social Anthropology, it was regarded as very strange, that you can’t get any jobs. In my family people were lawyers so it was expected that I would study law, so I even started studying law, but I was in the field where I had no interest...After starting one year studying law, I started doing physiotherapy, course that was really wise and safe in a way, you can always get a job and to support yourself. And I was thinking I didn’t really want to become a physiotherapist, but it was safety.. I finished physiotherapy and I had a boyfriend and he was studying so we needed some kind of money to live, so I started working to support us. My husband, I was married by then, he finished his studies he said now its your turn to do what you really want to do, so then I have started studying Social Anthropology” (Kristin Merete, 59)*



Interview data:

“I remember my teacher said who among you are becoming to be teachers and I was the only one who said that I will be a teacher and I everyone just laughed course they wanted to be lawyers, economists, maybe someone politician, but they wanted to earn a lot of money, that was the main culture within youngsters” (Nanna, 44).



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Interview data:

“I was in a Natural science program in upper secondary school so I did different from my pairs choosing to learn languages as my study option in the military. Then I also did different choice, course I thought I would be an economist, so I studies economics for 3 years, which was also different that my pairs did. And then when I choice to tranfered myself into linguistics, that was also something that was not done by anyone else. So I always feel I did my choices not because it was fashionable, but that was what I wanted to do” (Arnfinn, 55);



Interrelation between horizontal and vertical segregation in academic work

- Positions in Universities are treated more prestigious than in University colleges and schools;
- these positions are dominated by males, which makes it hierarchical and difficult for females to be equally treated with men.
- Males professionals are more relaxed about their job position and professional development.



Interview data:

- *“I am very glad that I have an identity that comes from teaching at school. One of the best part of the community here (University college) is that it is very easy to ask for help. So many very skilled people here and I know whom to ask, for instance, about Norwegian history I can ask Jon, about politics, I ask Torjei, about geography I ask and I know whom to ask. And they are always helping. Compared to what I know from the Oslo university here it is easier to say I didn't know, I didn't managed. Here as well we are half and half with men and women nearly and that makes it fruitable way of discussing things. After I finished the studies at the University, I was working three months in department of economical history, which was business history and department was very masculine and it was very hard to say that you don't know something and don't know where to read, it was looked as weakness, but here is different and you can not know everything, here you can read this book and we discuss afterwards, so its totally different culture comparing here and the University, there are two different stories. The school culture is more like this, it is easy to ask for help and say that the class was really rubbish and my teaching wasn't good and you can share success and failures and they will laugh with you not of you.” (Nanna, 44)*

