



European Sociological Association
RN13 *Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives*
Interim Meeting 2025

Plurality of Families: Forms, Relationships, Experiences

TED University, Ankara
September 10-12, 2025



European
Sociological
Association



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SOCIOLOGY

Last Updated: 01.10.2025

Day 1 – Wednesday, September 10, 2025		
12:00 - 13:00	Registration	
13:00 - 14:30	Session 1.1 Parenthood I D028	Session 1.2 Fertility and Reproduction D032
14:30 - 15:00	Coffee break	
15:00 - 16:30	Session 2.1 Parenthood II: Motherhood D028	Session 2.2 Family Policies D032
16:30 - 18:00	Keynote Speaker #1: Anna-Maija Castren <i>Intimate Futures: Reproductive decision-making and the pluralisation of family life</i> D Building Multi-Purpose Hall	
18:00 - 19:00	Welcome Reception	
Day 2 - Thursday - September 11, 2025		
09:00 - 10:00	Registration	
10:00 - 12:00	Session 3.1 Parenthood III: Fatherhood D028	Session 3.2 Migrant and Refugee Families D032
12:00 - 13:30	Lunch break	
13:30 - 15:00	Session 4.1 Defining and Defying Families D028	Session 4.2 Gender and Families D032
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee break	
15:30 - 16:30	Session 5 Poster Presentations D Building Foyer	
16.45 - 18:15	Keynote Speaker #2: Nükhet Sirman <i>Governing Hearts and Minds: The Creation of the Traditional Family</i> D Building Multi-Purpose Hall	
18:30	Conference Dinner	
Day 3 - Friday - September 12, 2025		
09:00 - 10:30	Session 6.1 Transnational Families D028	Session 6.2 Families across the Life Course D032
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break	
11:00 - 12:30	Session 7.1 Alternative Families D028	Sessions 7.2 Family Caregiving D032
12:30- 13:00	Coffee break	
13.00-13.30	Closing Ceremony	
14.00	City Walks	

Day 1 Wednesday, September 10, 2025		
13:00 - 14:30	Session 1.1 Parenthood I Chair: Maria Letizia Bosoni Location: D028 1. Social Relationships and Mental Well-Being: On the Relative Importance of Parenthood, Couple Relationships and Friendships Inga Laß & Ferdi Botha 2. Parenticon as Parental Panopticon: Conceptualizing Parental Surveillance and Autonomy for Adult Children in Prolonged Co-residence with Parents Alim Irmak Mete 3. Forms of Parenthood and Social Inequality in Hungary between 2001-2022 Judit Monostori & Szabó Laura 4. Families at the Margins of the State: Consensual Non-Monogamous Parenting in the UK and Brazil Antonio Cerdeira Pilao & Christian Klesse	Session 1.2 Fertility and Reproduction Chair: Nadja Milewski Location: D032 1. Implications of perceived infertility for partnership quality Jasmin Passet-Wittig, Arthur Greil & Julia Mcquillan 2. Climate Change Concerns and Men's Reproductive Choices in a Pronatalist Context Ivett Szalma & Adrienn Bognár 3. Factors Influencing the Reproductive Intentions of Women and Men in Partnerships: A Comparative Analysis of Czechia and Poland Eva Waldaufová
15:00 - 16:30	Session 2.1 Parenthood II: Motherhood Chair: Inga Lass Location: D028 1. A Comparative Study on Instamoms in Türkiye: Ante and Post Pandemic "Instamomity" Burcu Asena Salman 2. Financial Mothering and Intergenerational Narratives on Money by Finnish Women Armi Mustosmäki, Petteri Eerola & Hilma Möttönen 3. Mothers' Agency and Navigation of Expert Advice in Türkiye Zehra Zeynep Sadıkoğlu 4. Maternal Political Activism in Parental Movements: A Case of "Mothers for LGBTQ+ Children"	Session 2.2 Family Policies Chair: Katarzyna Suwada Location: D032 1. Family-Related Online Discourses in the Context of the Amendment of the Hungarian Child Protection Law Éva Perpék & Ágnes Győri 2. Family Poverty, Institutional Contexts and Adaptative Strategies. A Qualitative Research Study on Families Receiving Basic Income Support in Germany Christian Gräfe 3. How Does Work Affect Family Well-Being? The Familens Model for the Assessment of Family-Work Relationship in the Italian Context

	Lina Sumskaite & Ieva Bisigirskaitė	Maria Letizia Bosoni, Sara Mazzucchelli, Matteo Moscatelli & Elisabetta Carrà 4. Class and Regional Inequalities of Childcare Arrangements in Germany Ayhan Adams
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Day 2 Thursday, September 11, 2025		
10:00 -12:00	Session 3.1 Parenthood III: Fatherhood Chair: Ayhan Adams Location: D028 1. Caring Fathers in the Global Context: Introduction to the Book Petteri Eerola, Katherine Twamley, Henna Pirskanen & Pedro Romero-Balsas 2. Gender Role Attitudes, Perceptions of Parenthood and Father's Parental Leave Use in Finland Johanna Lammi-Taskula, Johanna Närvi, Miia Saarikallio-Torp, Anneli Miettinen & Ella Sihvonen 3. Fathers on the 'Night Shift'? Understanding Caring Fatherhood through Parents' Interpretative Repertoires of Night-Time Care Petteri Eerola, Armi Mustosmäki & Henna Pirskanen 4. Syrian Refugee Dads in the UK: Gendered Practises of 'Involvement' Tina Miller & Esther Dermott 5. Hegemonic, caring or hybrid fathers? The case of Polish fathers of adult children in 'empty nest' Magdalena Żadkowska, Radosław Kossakowski & Bogna Dowgiałło	Session 3.2 Migrant and Refugee Families Chair: Maria Letizia Bosoni Location: D032 1. Exploring Consequences of Unsettling Events in the Relational Sphere: Family and Personal Lives of Young Lithuanian and Polish Migrants in the UK in the Polycrisis Era Paula Pustulka, Irma Budginaite-Mackine & Agnieszka Trąbka 2. Negotiating Family Roles: Women in a Turkish-German Mosque Community Can Yasemin Okay 3. Union Formation among Refugees: A Gender Comparison of Eritreans and Syrians in Germany Nadja Milewski & Kraus Elisabeth K. 4. The Story Behind the Wedding: Piety Codes in Union Formation among Turkish Communities in Denmark Petek Onur 5. Pluralizing Parenthood: Navigating Family Practices Among Chinese Migrant Families in Portugal Yaqun Li
13:30 - 15:00	Session 4.1 Defining and Defying Families Chair: Paula Pustulka Location: D028	Session 4.2 Gender and Families Chair: Inga Lass Location: D032

	1. Transformation of the Normal? Doing Family in Co-Parenting-Families Marlene Resch 2. What is Family? Public Concepts of Family and Family Members in Hungary Fruzsina Albert, Boglarka Herke & Ildiko Husz 3. Stay-at-Home Fathers in Hungary: Understanding the Barriers and Motivations Éva Sztáray Kézdy & Drjenovszky Zsófia	1. Gendered Power Relations and Father's Use of Parental Leaves in Poland. Hybrid Masculinities Perspective Katarzyna Suwada & Kurowska Anna 2. Gendered Burdens of Post-Disaster Recovery: Transformation of Households after the February 6, 2023 Earthquakes and Women's Experiences Aysima Çalışan & Gülçin Con Wright 3. Young Girls and Family: Struggles and Strategies Tugce Ozdemir 4. "I Really Wanted to Marry a Woman": Sexual Identity among Tongzhi Born in the 1960s and the 1970s Yuan Zhong
15:30 - 16:30	Session 5 Poster Presentations Location: Do Foyer 1. A Typological Proposal for Blended Families: The Significance of Parenting and Siblingship Beyond Conventional Criteria in Shaping Blending Levels Matteo Zani 2. "Gugli Gugli Go Away!": An Autoethnographic Exploration of the 'Refusal' Pattern in a Radical Islamist Family" Hanne Betül Ateş 3. Plurality of Families and Pet Ownership: A Biopolitical Assessment Başak Daban & Cenk Umur 4. Family Life, the 'Outside World' and the Self: Intergenerational Transmissions, Intimate Lives and Multiple Pathways to Adulthood among North African Migrants' Descendants in Italy Alessandra Turchetti & Sveva Magaraggia 5. "Non-Reflexive" vs. "Self-Conscious": Two Ways of Thinking about Adult-Sibling Relationships Irina Kretser 6. Gender Stereotypes and Their Role in Maternal Burnout in Belarus and Sweden Olga Novash	

Day 3 Friday, September 12, 2025		
09:00 -10:30	Session 6.1 Transnational Families Chair: Irma Budginaite-Mackine Location: D028 1. Intergenerational Relationships in Polish Transnational Families in Germany Zuzanna Kapciak 2. Transnational Childhood Experiences and Adulthood Trajectories: A Linked Lives Perspective Gintė Martinkėnė, Irma Budginaite-Mackine & Sigita Kraniauskienė 3. Doing Family in the Transnational Context: War-induced Family Arrangements Mariya Shcherbyna & Tetiana Havlin 4. The Impact of Family and Intimate Life Experiences on Migration Decision-Making of Turkish Highly Skilled Women Selenay Kaşkaya	Session 6.2 Families across the Life Course Chair: Jasmin Passet-Wittig Location: D032 1. The Impact of Parental Loss on Fertility Intentions: A Life Course Perspective Samira Beringer 2. Home as a Relational Space: Family Dynamics and Housing Vulnerabilities in Contemporary Italy Sara Nanetti 3. Tracking Ambivalence in Family Definitions at Different Stages of the Family Life Cycle Paula Pustulka & Małgorzata Sikorska 4. Coping with Failure in Second Chance Education. How Young Adults Negotiate Pro-longed Transition into Adulthood and the Familial Influence of their Career Hatice Altındal
11:00 - 12:30	Session 7.1 Alternative Families Chair: Paula Pustulka Location: D028 1. Single Women Living with Animals: Human-Animal Relationships as an Alternative Family Form Esra Gedik 2. The Experience of Being a Prisoner's Family Dilek Almas 3. Roots and Rise: The Role of Family in the Social Mobility of Roma in Turkey Ali Egi	Sessions 7.2 Family Caregiving Chair: Katarzyna Suwada Location: D032 1. Who Takes Care of the Elderly When We Leave? Negotiating Care in Transnational Families in the Nordic-Baltic Region Irma Budginaite-Mackine, Maarja Saar, Charlotte Melander, Anna Wojtynska, Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir, Svitlana Odynets, Gintė Martinkėnė & Iryna Huliuk 2. Women's Informal Caregiving for Older/Disabled Family Members and Self-Rated Health in Turkey Gülçin Con Wright & Hazal Swearingen 3. Social Capital and Caregiving: A Gender Perspective on Support Networks in Italy

	4. A Scoping Review on the Well-being of Childless Women in Older Age Ivett Szalma & Judit Takács	Lucia Boccacin, Sara Nanetti & Marco Carradore
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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Intimate Futures: Reproductive Decision-making and the Pluralisation of Family Life

Anna-Maija Castrén



Anna-Maija Castrén is Professor of Sociology at the University of Eastern Finland. She has published widely on the diversification of contemporary family lives and personal relationships, on family understandings, and on trajectories to family and parenthood. Her methodological expertise is in qualitative social network analysis and the (con)figurational perspective. Most recently she has studied the families of Finnish babies born outside hetero marriage, and her ongoing project focuses on young adults' intimate futures in Finland, Portugal, and Scotland in the context of global crises. Anna-Maija is the first editor of *The Palgrave Handbook of Family Sociology in Europe*, published in 2021.

Sept. 10, 2025

16:30 - 18:00

D Building Multi-Purpose Hall

Governing Hearts and Minds: The Creation of the Traditional Family

Nükhet Sirman



Nükhet Sirman is a retired anthropologist who has taught in the Department of Sociology, Boğaziçi University. She has worked and published on diverse issues such as the structure of family forms, feminist movements in Turkey, nationalism and the constitution of the modern family, the concept of honour and honour crimes, gender studies and violence against women, methodologies of oral history, studies on affect and emotions, popular culture, and TV series. She is an expert on qualitative research methods. She has also been a feminist activist throughout her academic career, starting from the Thursday Group in Ankara, and going forward with KA-DER, Amargi, The Women's Initiative for Peace, and Feminist Solidarity for Disaster Relief. Since 2019, she has been working in Dissensus Research as a founding member and a methodology expert. The firm specializes in research on what can be called difficult topics such as violence against women, abortion and experiences of childbirth, harassment and mobbing in the performing arts, and the like.

Sept. 11, 2025

16.45 - 18:15

D Building Multi-Purpose Hall

PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025	4
SESSION 1.1: PARENTHOOD I	4
<i>Social Relationships and Mental Well-Being: On the Relative Importance of Parenthood, Couple Relationships and Friendships</i>	4
<i>Parenticon as Parental Panopticon: Conceptualizing Parental Surveillance and Autonomy for Adult Children in Prolonged Co-residence with Parents</i>	5
<i>Forms of Parenthood and Social Inequality in Hungary between 2001-2022</i>	6
<i>Families at the Margins of the State: Consensual Non-Monogamous Parenting in the UK and Brazil</i>	7
SESSION 1.2: FERTILITY AND REPRODUCTION	8
<i>Implications of Perceived Infertility for Partnership Quality</i>	8
<i>Climate Change Concerns and Men's Reproductive Choices in a Pronatalist Context</i>	8
<i>Factors Influencing the Reproductive Intentions of Women and Men in Partnerships: A Comparative Analysis of Czechia and Poland</i>	9
SESSION 2.1: PARENTHOOD II: MOTHERHOOD	10
<i>A Comparative Study on Instamoms in Türkiye: Ante and Post Pandemic "Instamomity"</i>	10
<i>Financial Mothering and Intergenerational Narratives on Money by Finnish Women</i>	11
<i>Mothers' Agency and Navigation of Expert Advice in Türkiye</i>	11
<i>Maternal Political Activism in Parental Movements: A Case of "Mothers for LGBTQ+ Children"</i>	12
SESSION 2.2: FAMILY POLICIES	14
<i>Family-Related Online Discourses in the Context of the Amendment of the Hungarian Child Protection Law</i>	14
<i>Family Poverty, Institutional Contexts and Adaptative Strategies. A Qualitative Research Study on Families Receiving Basic Income Support in Germany</i>	15
<i>How Does Work Affect Family Well-Being? The Familens Model for the Assessment of Family-Work Relationship in the Italian Context</i>	16
<i>Class and Regional Inequalities of Childcare Arrangements in Germany</i>	17
THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 11, 2025	18
SESSION 3.1: PARENTHOOD III: FATHERHOOD	18
<i>Caring Fathers in the Global Context: Introduction to the Book</i>	18
<i>Gendered Framings of Responsibility for Care and the Availability of Leave Policies for Fathers in Global Perspective</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Gender Role Attitudes, Perceptions of Parenthood and Father's Parental Leave Use in Finland</i>	18
<i>Fathers on the 'Night Shift'? Understanding Caring Fatherhood through Parents' Interpretative Repertoires of Night-Time Care</i>	19
<i>Syrian Refugee Dads in the UK: Gendered Practises of 'Involvement'</i>	19
<i>Hegemonic, caring or hybrid fathers? The case of Polish fathers of adult children in 'empty nest'</i>	19
SESSION 3.2: MIGRANT AND REFUGEE FAMILIES	21
<i>Exploring Consequences of Unsettling Events in the Relational Sphere: Family and Personal Lives of Young Lithuanian and Polish Migrants in the UK in the Polycrisis Era</i>	21
<i>Negotiating Family Roles: Women in a Turkish-German Mosque Community</i>	21
<i>Union Formation among Refugees: A Gender Comparison of Eritreans and Syrians in Germany</i>	22
<i>The Story Behind the Wedding: Piety Codes in Union Formation among Turkish Communities in Denmark</i>	23
<i>Pluralizing Parenthood: Navigating Family Practices Among Chinese Migrant Families in Portugal</i>	24
SESSION 4.1: DEFINING AND DEFYING FAMILIES	26
<i>Transformation of the Normal? Doing Family in Co-Parenting-Families</i>	26
<i>What is Family? Public Concepts of Family and Family Members in Hungary</i>	26

<i>'No Matter Gay, Straight': Wage Disparities and Career Trajectories of Transgender Individuals in Spain</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Stay-at-Home Fathers in Hungary: Understanding the Barriers and Motivations</i>	27
SESSION 4.2: GENDER AND FAMILIES	29
<i>Gendered Power Relations and Father's Use of Parental Leaves in Poland. Hybrid Masculinities Perspective</i>	29
<i>Gendered Burdens of Post-Disaster Recovery: Transformation of Households after the February 6, 2023 Earthquakes and Women's Experiences</i>	30
<i>Young Girls and Family: Struggles and Strategies</i>	31
<i>"I Really Wanted to Marry a Woman": Sexual Identity among Tongzhi Born in the 1960s and the 1970s</i>	31
SESSION 5: POSTER PRESENTATIONS	33
<i>A Typological Proposal for Blended Families: The Significance of Parenting and Siblingship Beyond Conventional Criteria in Shaping Blending Levels</i>	33
<i>"Gugli Gugli Go Away!": An Autoethnographic Exploration of the 'Refusal' Pattern in a Radical Islamist Family"</i>	34
<i>Plurality of Families and Pet Ownership: A Biopolitical Assessment</i>	35
<i>Family Life, the 'Outside World' and the Self: Intergenerational Transmissions, Intimate Lives and Multiple Pathways to Adulthood among North African Migrants' Descendants in Italy</i>	35
<i>"Non-Reflexive" vs. "Self-Conscious": Two Ways of Thinking about Adult-Sibling Relationships</i>	36
<i>Gender Stereotypes and Their Role in Maternal Burnout in Belarus and Sweden</i>	37
FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 12, 2025	39
SESSION 6.1: TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES.....	39
<i>Intergenerational Relationships in Polish Transnational Families in Germany</i>	39
<i>Transnational Childhood Experiences and Adulthood Trajectories: A Linked Lives Perspective</i>	40
<i>Doing Family in the Transnational Context: War-induced Family Arrangements</i>	40
<i>The Impact of Family and Intimate Life Experiences on Migration Decision-Making of Turkish Highly Skilled Women</i>	41
SESSION 6.2: FAMILIES ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE	43
<i>The Impact of Parental Loss on Fertility Intentions: A Life Course Perspective</i>	43
<i>Home as a Relational Space: Family Dynamics and Housing Vulnerabilities in Contemporary Italy</i>	43
<i>Tracking Ambivalence in Family Definitions at Different Stages of the Family Life Cycle</i>	44
<i>Coping with Failure in Second Chance Education. How Young Adults Negotiate Pro-longed Transition into Adulthood and the Familial Influence Of Their Career</i>	45
SESSION 7.1: ALTERNATIVE FAMILIES.....	47
<i>Single Women Living with Animals: Human-Animal Relationships as an Alternative Family Form</i>	47
<i>The Experience of Being a Prisoner's Family</i>	47
<i>Roots and Rise: The Role of Family in the Social Mobility of Roma in Turkey</i>	48
<i>A Scoping Review on the Well-being of Childless Women in Older Age</i>	48
SESSIONS 7.2: FAMILY CAREGIVING	50
<i>'Doing Families' Within and Between Households. Emotional Support and Care Provision in Face of Demographic Ageing</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<i>Who Takes Care of the Elderly When We Leave? Negotiating Care in Transnational Families in the Nordic-Baltic Region</i>	50
<i>Women's Informal Caregiving for Older/Disabled Family Members and Self-Rated Health in Turkey</i>	50
<i>Social Capital and Caregiving: A Gender Perspective on Support Networks in Italy</i>	51

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

Session 1.1: Parenthood I

Social Relationships and Mental Well-Being: On the Relative Importance of Parenthood, Couple Relationships and Friendships

Inga Laß¹ & Ferdi Botha¹

¹ Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne

Background: Research has repeatedly shown that social relationships are generally beneficial for mental health. However, less is known about the relative importance of different types of social relationships – such as partner, children, and friends – in explaining mental well-being and about the mechanisms through which these associations operate. Using longitudinal data on Australian adults, we posit the following research questions: (1) How do social relationships affect mental health? (2) What is the relative importance of different types of social relationships for mental health? (3) What are the mechanisms underlying the effects of social relationships on mental health?

Theoretical Framework: Social relationships provide individuals with social support and are protective against major stressors. Social ties can directly impact mental well-being by fostering integration of the individual into a broader social network. The instrumental and emotional support provided by such relationships can also improve mental well-being by acting as a protective factor against life stressors.

Methods: We use data from 23 waves of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey (covering the period 2001 to 2023) to investigate the association between social relationships and mental health. Our sample consists of 304,003 observations from 33,017 respondents aged 15 years and over. We apply fixed-effects regression models to investigate the relative importance of three types of relationships: Couple relationships, parenthood, and the perceived number of friends. Furthermore, we estimate fixed-effects structural equation models to investigate the mechanisms linking social relationships and mental health. We focus on four potential mediators: Feelings of loneliness, emotional support (i.e., having someone to confide in), instrumental support (i.e., having someone to help if needed), and frequency of socialising with friends and relatives. We run separate models by gender and control for age, educational level, employment status, full-time studying, region, income and period.

Empirical Findings: Living with a partner and having many friends is associated with better mental health among both men and women. Men benefit the most from a couple relationship, whereas for women, friendships are almost as beneficial for mental health as having a partner. By contrast, being a parent does not significantly affect mental health for women, whereas it is associated with significantly worse mental health outcomes among men. In terms of mechanisms, the mental health benefits of having a partner are mostly attributed to a reduction in loneliness. The mental health benefits of friendships also mostly operate through less loneliness, but greater instrumental support and (to a lesser degree) emotional support is also of relevance. By contrast, the negative effect of parenthood on mental health is partly attributed to increased feelings of loneliness, less instrumental and emotional support, and less socialising.

Contributions: The study shows that couple relationships and friendships are both effective protective factors against loneliness and mental ill-health, whereas the challenges of parenthood can aggravate mental health problems. The findings highlight the need to develop appropriate ways of fostering broader social relationships and to support parents at risk of developing mental health issues.

Parenticon as Parental Panopticon: Conceptualizing Parental Surveillance and Autonomy for Adult Children in Prolonged Co-residence with Parents

Alim Irmak Mete

Department of Sociology, TED University

Parenting children across the life course presents a myriad of challenges that are affected by the major societal transformations. What it means to parent a child in digital age is significantly different than the parenting dynamics of the past. Digital presence and activities of young children may have dictated parents to adopt new practices. While existing research heavily focuses on parents' digital surveillance of their young children, the impact of parental face-to-face surveillance on co-residing adult children remains largely unexplored.

Different than current digital focus, adult children in prolonged co-residence with their parents may find parental face-to-face surveillance to be more pressing than the digital. The home is a physical space built to construct the inside, different from the outside. In the private sphere only the closest are allowed entrance, so the familial surveillant gaze lands directly upon body and mind of everyone inside.

The immediacy of the co-residing parental gaze on adult children is reminiscent of a child learning to see themselves through the eyes of a generalized other; thoughts, actions, and decisions are filtered through the disciplinary, persistent, and systematic parental gaze on, for example, food preferences or sleep schedules. In some cases, parents co-residing with their adult children may have trouble allowing the children the normative transition to adulthood and letting go of their role as guides to their children regardless of age or gender. Lack of breakthrough life transitions such as the adult children getting married or moving out of the household may be interpreted as justification for continuing parental practices. To better understand this phenomenon, characterized by the immediate spatial and temporal presence of parental surveillance, I propose the concept of the “parenticon”.

“Parenticon” addresses the unique dynamics of face-to-face parental surveillance on adult children co-residing with their parents, and its impact on their autonomy. The hierarchy in the panopticon, where the guardian surveils the prisoners without being noticed, is reminiscent of the hierarchy between the parents and adult children where surveillance is regarded as a parental right. In parenticon, the home serves as the physical space in which surveillant actions are meant to discipline. And just as the panopticon was designed as an ideal prison to produce docile bodies, so it can be argued that the presumably safe space of the family home may act as an unwitting disciplinary setting where the actualization of the autonomous self is disrupted.

This study aims to 1) underline the immediacy of face-to-face surveillance as an important factor affecting autonomy and suspending adulthood in adult children living with their parents, 2) propose the term “Parenticon” as an analytical tool to better grasp the unique characteristics of parental surveillance on adult children residing with their parents, 3) address the gap in this literature by providing a systematic literature review on parental surveillance of children across the life course with a Foucauldian theoretical framework. By doing so, not only the parental surveillance for adult children will be discussed but also it will seek to discover the ways in which the autonomy of adult children is realized.

Family life structures and their changes over individual life courses are linked to social inequalities, suggesting that social status plays a key role in shaping family forms. Certain dimensions of socioeconomic status (SES), such as educational attainment, can be seen as selection factors for various aspects of demographic behavior, which then influence family structures. However, family structures themselves can also generate social inequalities, including differences in wealth, income, health, and, for families with children, differences in children's outcomes. This study examines whether the relationship between educational attainment—a key element of social status—and family structure characteristics, particularly parenthood, has strengthened over time in Hungary, a country that has experienced an increase in inequalities along several dimensions in recent decades. We extend the traditional focus on cohabiting families by also including parents who live apart from their children. We also include step-parenthood in our analysis, extending the scope of classical family structure studies that have already identified links between SES and types of families with children. Our analysis uses comprehensive census data from Hungary for 2001, 2011, and 2022. Our findings show that in all three study years, parents with lower levels of education were more likely to have a non-intact parental role. Over time, the association became stronger, with an increasingly close relationship between low educational attainment and non-intact parenthood, and between higher educational attainment and intact parenthood from 2001 to 2022. In addition, as non-intact parenthood becomes more closely associated with lower educational attainment, it may contribute to widening inequalities in other dimensions, such as children's outcomes. The dissolution of parental relationships gives rise to different forms of parenthood, which are also influenced by the social status of parents. Furthermore, there are significant gender differences in the prevalence of different types of parenthood and their association with educational attainment. As children typically remain with their mothers after divorce/separation, we examine whether SES is associated with the likelihood of entering new relationships or forming stepfamilies within non-intact female parenting statuses. Our 2001 findings are in line with several other international studies, which show that highly educated mothers are more likely to enter into new relationships and form stepfamilies. However, there is a turning point in the trends over time: while mothers with less education were less likely to form stepfamilies in 2001, they were more likely to do so in 2022. This significant change may be related to changes in Hungary's socio-economic context, including the global economic crisis, which affected relationship formation in the late 2000s. This is consistent with the sharp decline in marriage rates around the 2010s. Conversely, post-2010 family policies in Hungary strongly promoted union formation, especially marriage, which had a significant impact on the less educated. For fathers in non-intact families, our models show that those with lower educational attainment are more likely to take on the role of stepfather and live in stepfamilies with their biological children than to take on the role of separated father. This finding differs from other international research, which would expect higher educated fathers to be more likely to enter into new relationships after the dissolution of their previous partnerships and to take on the role of stepfather. This relationship weakens in 2011 but strengthens again in 2022, mirroring the trend for mothers. In 2022, mothers and fathers with less education are more likely to enter new relationships than in previous years. In conclusion, while non-intact parenthood has become more closely associated with lower educational attainment over time, the specific form of non-intact parenthood that emerges is more varied according to SES, and the patterns differ between the years studied.

Families at the Margins of the State: Consensual Non-Monogamous Parenting in the UK and Brazil

Antonio Cerdeira Pilao ¹ & Christian Klesse ¹

¹ Department of Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University

This paper explores family and kinship practices emerging from Consensual Non-Monogamies (CNMs), such as open relationships, polyamory, and relationship anarchy. While CNM studies have established themselves as an innovative research field, CNM parenting remains underexplored in academia, legally non-intelligible, and marginalised. With rare exceptions, monogamy remains the sole juridically recognised form of conjugal union in Europe and the Americas. Research indicates that multi-parenthood (MP)—raising children in constellations beyond the traditional couple model—is particularly stigmatised, vulnerable, and lacks adequate legal provisions. Despite discrimination and legal marginalisation, CNMs often form lasting family bonds through multiparenting practices.

Unpacking the complex interplay between law and family practices, this paper investigates novel kinship relations by focusing on the 'legal consciousness' of those engaged in CNM and MP in the United Kingdom (UK) and Brazil. Drawing on 30 in-depth interviews conducted in both countries, the research examines the experiences, care arrangements, and legal awareness of CNM individuals involved in parenting activities.

Through a comparative framework, this study explores how national legal frameworks and cultural contexts influence family formation and parental roles. Brazil's legal recognition of multi-parenthood, contrasted with the UK's strict adherence to dyadic parenting norms, offers a crucial backdrop for analysing legal influences on everyday parenting practices. It also reveals how CNM parents navigate different institutional constraints through strategies of resistance and adaptation.

Rather than portraying CNM practitioners as passive victims of legal and institutional prejudices, this research employs legal consciousness as a tool to show how understandings and meanings of law circulate within social relations, resisting assumptions about the causal effects of legislation on well-being and family formation. It focuses on how CNM parents exercise agency by interpreting and navigating legal constraints and (lack of) access to resources, mobilising, circumventing, and resisting harm and discrimination. It thus sets out to study the 'state signatures', i.e., the ways norms and laws are brokered, negotiated and put into action. The study also draws on pioneering work on sexual regulation and the legal consciousness of lesbian and gay populations in the face of multiple legal transformations, applying its critical potential to CNM and MP research.

This research is part of the project Families and Kinships in the Margins of the State: Consensual Non-Monogamies and Multi-Parenthood in the United Kingdom and Brazil (FAKIM-CNM), funded by UKRI through the MSCA-Horizon Europe guarantee.

Session 1.2: Fertility and Reproduction

Implications of Perceived Infertility for Partnership Quality

Jasmin Passet-Wittig ¹, Arthur Greil ² & Julia Mcquillan ³

¹ Family and Fertility, Federal Institute for Population Research

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With increasing age at first birth, the number of couples experiencing infertility is rising. Recent studies suggest that one in five women faces infertility during family formation or extension. The experience of infertility can act as a significant stressor for partnerships, potentially influencing relationship quality in the short term and contributing to relationship dissolution in the long term. This study focusses on the short-term effects of infertility on partnership quality. Because the quality of intimate relationships matters for couples' fertility behaviour, specifically for changes in fertility intentions, it is important to understand how infertility affects couples. Existing research suggest that gender might play a role in how individuals cope with infertility-related strain.

Using data from the German Family Panel (pairfam), this study examines how perceived infertility is associated with relationship satisfaction, perceived instability, and ambivalence in partnerships. Analyzing three measures allows one to test whether the association between infertility and relationship quality is similar for multiple dimensions of relationship quality. Unlike patient samples, which are often used to study the psychosocial implications of infertility, using data from a population survey ensures representativeness and allows for comparison to an appropriate control group. In pairfam, all participants are asked about the perception of infertility for themselves and their partner, thus it is possible to differentiate whether the female, the male partner, or both perceived infertility. We analyze 13 panel waves with linear fixed effects panel models and separate models for couples in which the respondents are women and respondents are men.

Prevalence of infertility is 5.4% for men and 6.0% for women. Infertility is more commonly perceived for only one partner rather than for both. Multivariable analyses show that perceived infertility is associated with reduced relationship satisfaction, and increases instability and feelings of ambivalence. Own infertility is not associated with partnership quality. There is evidence of for gender differences: for women perceiving their partner as infertile has a stronger association with relationship quality than their own, but for men the association is stronger between perceived infertility and relationship quality when infertility is perceived for both partners.

Climate Change Concerns and Men's Reproductive Choices in a Pronatalist Context

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Numerous studies have shown that concerns about climate change may influence reproductive decisions (Helm et al., 2021). While most research has been conducted in Anglophone countries, studies in Central and Eastern Europe have also yielded distinct findings (Szalma & Szczuka, 2024). However, existing research has predominantly focused

on women of childbearing age, leaving the impact of climate change concerns on men's reproductive decisions largely underexplored.

This study examines the extent to which climate change concerns influence men's reproductive choices in a pronatalist country such as Hungary. Since 2010, Hungary has pursued a pronatalist family policy based on generous financial support for middle-class, heteronormative families. However, these policies have not proven successful, as prospective parents have more complex needs beyond financial incentives. Could men's views on climate change shape their reproductive decisions, and if so, how? To explore this, we will conduct 25 semi-structured interviews with men aged 20 to 50, who have at most one child, between January and March 2025. Preliminary results indicate that younger generations experience significant anxiety due to climate change, yet they still consider parenthood important.

Factors Influencing the Reproductive Intentions of Women and Men in Partnerships: A Comparative Analysis of Czechia and Poland

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The current demographic changes in many European countries, characterised by declining fertility rates and increasing uncertainty in family decision-making, call for a deeper analysis of the determinants of fertility intentions. This study examines the factors influencing the fertility intentions of women and men in partnerships in Czechia and Poland, focusing on the impact of socio-economic conditions, value orientations and perceived uncertainty on individual reproductive strategies.

The theoretical framework of the study is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and the Traits-Desires-Intentions-Behaviour model (Miller, 2011), which provide robust analytical tools for interpreting the mechanisms of reproductive decision-making. The analysis is based on data from the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS-II) for Czechia and Poland, which allows for a systematic comparison between the two countries. Factor analysis is used to identify key dimensions of uncertainty, value orientations and socio-economic characteristics, which are then modelled using multinomial logistic regression. The analysis focuses on the likelihood of different reproductive strategies, ranging from low (no or one child) to high (three or more children), with the two-child model serving as the reference category.

A comparative approach to the Czech Republic and Poland is methodologically justified, given their some shared historical and geopolitical experiences, but significant differences in family policy, religiosity and socio-economic conditions. While the Czech Republic is characterised by a higher degree of secularisation and more progressive family policies, Poland remains deeply rooted in Catholic values and more conservative family norms, which may significantly shape individual reproductive aspirations.

Preliminary results suggest that perceived insecurity, particularly economic and relationship insecurity, significantly reduces the likelihood of planning children in both countries, although to different degrees. In the Czech context, reproductive strategies appear to be more flexible and responsive to individual socio-economic conditions, whereas in Poland cultural and normative factors play a dominant role. The findings also point to the importance of education - the better educated are more likely to plan their families according to the normative two-child model, while younger cohorts show greater uncertainty.

This study provides new insights into the dynamics of reproductive decision-making in times of increasing uncertainty and contributes to the broader debate on the effectiveness of family policies in the Central European region. The findings can serve as a basis for the development of targeted demographic strategies aimed at supporting the realisation of reproductive aspirations.

Session 2.1: Parenthood II: Motherhood

A Comparative Study on Instamoms in Türkiye: Ante and Post Pandemic "Instamomity"

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The COVID-19 pandemic has changed social lives and social media usage globally due to lockdowns. The number of internet users had increased by 2,4 million in Türkiye between 2019 and 2020, ranking Türkiye the fifth in social media usage worldwide. Besides, the pandemic has changed parenting practices, mainly mothering, due to the whole family staying home. During this period, Instamoms became even more popular because mothers needed more advice on child care and essential products they would buy online that they had no chance of trying. Daily help could not be hired, and neither could the elders assist. Instamom is the nickname given to a mother on Instagram, producing digital content as a pseudo-profession using the status of (usually biological) “mother.” I conducted a research study between 2019 and 2021 for my doctoral dissertation on Instamoms in Türkiye to examine the prominent patterns produced in terms of content by these digital tribes: social media mothers and their followers. Five years have passed since this study, and now we have new norms, never letting us return to the “normal” of the era before the pandemic. Through this time, Instagram has gained additional features like story, music, reels, live streaming, and such, which rendered content creators freer and sometimes making the online data unreachable for us as researchers. Therefore, this study aims to investigate to what extent “Instamomity” is sustainable and the dynamics that cause apparent changes in the previous patterns. The study has two phases: preliminary research was completed by April 2021, before the world returned to normal from the COVID-19 pandemic. Netnography and semi-structured interviews were employed as methods. Fifteen Instamoms residing in Türkiye with more than two thousand followers, whose accounts are actively used to share their suggestions or critiques on mothering and who are less commercial (not directing to shopping links in each post), were interviewed. These fifteen accounts were analyzed qualitatively, mainly focusing on the captions produced verbally and semiotically of uploaded images. Their interaction with their followers in the comments section was analysed as well. In the second phase of the study, I will use the preliminary research findings to compare the most recent Netnographic data supported by a survey to the previous available Instamoms. This is to conduct a qualitative analysis on whether the accounts are still active with their original names, their posting frequencies, themes, and concepts. Additionally, more contemporary and popular Instamom accounts and trends were analyzed. The findings reveal a significant increase in techniques to raise engagement under the posts as well as advertisements and links to the shopping platforms. This study provides an understanding on the sustainability and transformation of the accounts of mothers who are considered digital authorities of motherhood, which is an identity open to criticism due to its requirements being culturally and patriarchally controlled, as well as located somewhere between the holy and sinful.

Financial Mothering and Intergenerational Narratives on Money by Finnish Women

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Parenting culture studies and family sociologists have made extensive research on contemporary ideals on parenthood, especially intensive motherhood, revealing cultural constructions that highlight how optimal child development requires constant engagement and oversight from mothers. These ideals are often connected to a booming market for parenting advice, products, and services targeting variety of areas of their lives (e.g. health, emotional development). Recently we have witnessed a proliferation of parenting advice on children's financial education, especially on social media. Also in Finland, the context of this study, several female financial influencers advise mothers of different socio-economic backgrounds not only to think and talk about money and act on money in new ways, but to save and invest for their children and to raise a new generation of financially savvy children. Combining perspectives from parenting culture studies, family sociology on intergenerational relations and economic sociology, this presentation focuses on this recent financialized cultural turn, with the aim of studying how these idealized images of mothering influence mothers' lived experiences, practices and behaviors. The study is based on interviews of Finnish mothers (N=25) conducted at the end of 2024 and early 2025 in the project "Smart women love money – Reconfigurations of femininity and motherhood in financialized welfare state". The project invited mothers to talk about their relationship to money, family finances and children's financial education.

Our aim in this paper is to scrutinize how Finnish mothers produce intergenerational narratives on money and parenting by narrating on 'financial mothering', i.e. their attitudes, practices, behaviours, and strategies to child-rearing through intergenerational socio-economic conditions and relations. We do this by applying narrative methods, that is, we understand our informants' accounts not just reflecting their own thoughts and experiences but also cultural ideals and wise ways to handle and manage money and how these are reflecting the family socio-economic position and aspirations. In the data, mothers reflected their "money stories", i.e. broadly the socio-economic conditions and the financial education practices in their own childhoods and what kind of values and practices they are passing on to their own children (such as discussing money, teaching thriftiness and "proper" consumption, emphasizing the value of work and diligence, etc.). We will present the main intergenerational narratives identified in the data and discuss them in relation to the current financialized cultural conjuncture.

Mothers' Agency and Navigation of Expert Advice in Türkiye

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This study explores how middle-class Turkish women perceive the concept of being a "good mother" within a context-specific version of intensive motherhood and how expert advice intertwines with their maternal identities. Using a phenomenological approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three groups of 12 mothers, categorized by their children's age ranges (0–6, 7–12, and 13–18), all residing in Istanbul. The findings reveal that

the paradigm of intensive motherhood in Türkiye is rooted in a long-standing emphasis on women's sacrificial maternal roles. However, since the 1980s, socioeconomic, demographic, and cultural transformations have encouraged middle-class Turkish mothers to move away from hierarchical parenting styles, instead embracing more nuanced, child-centered, and risk-conscious approaches. While expert advice on mothering has long existed, experts' portrayal of mothers as incompetent but the main managers of risks in the child's life course has turned child-rearing into a structured project and making "trust in experts" an ethical standard. Additionally, the diversity and contradictions in contemporary expert advice require mothers to engage in greater reflexivity and decision-making. My in-depth interviews revealed that middle-class Turkish mothers consider the mother-child bond, especially in the early years, essential for secure attachments in adulthood. They see maternal sensitivity as protective, viewing the absence of intensive care, calm explanations, and quality time—regardless of the number of children—as a risk to the child's healthy development. In this regard, the mother's role is framed as a technical task centered on the child's well-being. As children grow, while good communication remains important for the mother-child relationship, priorities shift toward education. Mothers view themselves as responsible not only for fostering academic achievement but also for creating an environment where their children can acquire dispositions aligned with their lifestyles and realize their potential. The agency middle-class mothers exercise in shaping child-rearing attitudes and making educational choices serves as a culturally embedded resource for the reproduction of lifestyles and class distinctions. However, they are not passive recipients of expert advice, but rather, they selectively engage with and navigate expert advice and intensive motherhood in everyday life. Consequently, they reflexively (re)construct their mothering practices in a logic in which the subjective well-being of the mother and the child is sought to be brought together, drawing on their mothering experiences and the availability of conflicting expert advice. In other words, whereas their tendency to identify with the paradigm of intensive motherhood becomes ambivalent over time, they act according to a model in which they self-monitor the difference between their own well-being and the best interests of their children.

Maternal Political Activism in Parental Movements: A Case of "Mothers for LGBTQ+ Children"

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The LGBTQ+ community in Lithuania faces significant challenges due to institutionalized homophobia and the absence of legal protections (Tereškinas et al. 2023). Same-sex couples cannot register partnerships or marry (Maslauskaitė 2023), and the Protection of Minors Act until recently restricted access to LGBTQ+ information. Despite a 2019 Constitutional Court ruling granting residence to foreign same-sex spouses, hostility persists (Ruzaitė 2023). Political progress on same-sex partnerships remains stalled with recent parliamentary debates failing to produce results.

In 2015, first emotional support group for parents of LGBTQ+ children started. This group eventually evolved into the NGO "Mothers of LGBTQ+ Children", officially established in 2021. As the organization's name suggests, very few fathers actively participate in its activities. Research indicates that mothers tend to be more engaged in parent organizations for LGBTQ+ children than fathers (Sullivan et al., 2020).

While Lithuania, as other CEE countries, is often criticized for its weak civil society (Baca 2022), grassroots activism around family issues, particularly parental movements, has been a

notable force of civil society (Fabian and Korolczuk 2017). Maternal activism typically appeals to traditional constructions of motherhood for political leverage (Kispeter 2009). In response to these challenges, the organization “Mothers for LGBTQ+ Children” was founded by Rasa Račienė. Račienė gained national attention for her solo protest outside the Presidential Palace, advocating for her LGBTQ+ daughter (Bisigirskaitė, forthcoming). Transitioning from activism to politics, Račienė was a parliamentary candidate in the October 2024 elections, endorsed by the Liberal Party. Her campaign promoted progressive policies, including the implementation of equally shared parenthood. A transition that could be described as a transition into political motherhood (Mhajne and Whetstone 2017).

Applying discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews with representatives from the organization “Mothers for LGBTQ+ Children” will be discussed: What primarily drives parents to advocate for their children (Schlehofer et al., 2021)? Eleven interviews were conducted by the first author between February 2024 and January 2025, including eight interviews with mothers involved in the organization and/or emotional support group, one with a father, and two with support group supervisors. The working hypothesis of the presentation is that progressive actors (like Račienė) in contemporary Lithuania adopt strategies, commonly used by populist movements, to enhance their political visibility and influence.

Session 2.2: Family Policies

Family-Related Online Discourses in the Context of the Amendment of the Hungarian Child Protection Law

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Background

The life of families and households is regulated by the state through numerous laws, decrees, and institutions. The Ninth Amendment to the Fundamental Law of Hungary (22 December 2020) conveys a clearly defined concept of the family, explicitly stating that family relationships are based on marriage and the parent-child bond, with the mother being a woman and the father being a man. The amendment of the Fundamental Law led directly to the amendment (May 25, 2021) of the Child Protection Act (XXXI of 1997). The amendment introduced stricter penalties for those committing 'paedophile crimes', limited adoption exclusively to heterosexual married couples, stating that adoptive parents can only be a married woman and a man. The amendment also stipulated that the sexual education of their children should be the exclusive right of parents, and public education cannot be aimed at promoting gender reassignment or homosexuality.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this presentation is to analyse the family-related online discourse surrounding the amendment to the Hungarian child protection law. We seek to answer the following questions: how was the legal amendment received? What emotional tones and political orientations characterised the reactions? What were the main overarching themes, with particular focus on government-critical content?

Data and methods

The analysis is based on a database of publicly available online sources (N = 2,230). Web scraping was conducted using the Talkwalker social media monitoring tool, covering content published between 1 December 2018 and 30 November 2021. Technical filters included Hungarian language and geolocation settings. The collected content was first coded and analysed based on type, sentiment, and political orientation. Subsequently, content analysis was applied to identify the main overarching themes.

Results

The results indicate that online discourses are politicized, with political opinions present in more than half of the content. While the majority of the political content is critical of the government, a significant proportion of pro-government statements is also evident, with one in three pieces of content falling into this category. Furthermore, one in ten content items expresses criticism of the opposition and the European Union.

In general, the amendment to the law mainly generated negative emotions and wording. Negative sentiment, ironic tone, sarcasm, and criticism of the government were particularly prominent in the comments of lay users on social media platforms. Some of the government-critical discourse was directly related to the amendment of the law, while other parts went far beyond it, reflecting the broader Hungarian social and political context. Many users emphasised that the amendment was a false flag and pointed out its homophobic, human

rights-violating, irrational, absurd, and contradictory nature. The lack of any social or professional debate or consultation before the amendment was also highlighted. Finally, user comments on social media platforms clearly called for the development of the child protection law and the improvement of the child welfare and protection care system.

Family Poverty, Institutional Contexts and Adaptive Strategies. A Qualitative Research Study on Families Receiving Basic Income Support in Germany

Christian Gräfe

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Background & objective:

The family is a primary level of coping with poverty, and is embedded in social control institutions of the welfare state, such as social assistance, basic income support and labour market activation policies. However, institutional involvement as a key dimension of family life on a low income is an under-researched area in the sociology of families.

The paper discusses interaction effects between family dynamics and institutional contexts based on a qualitative research study on families receiving benefits and services of basic income support ("Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende") in Germany. In the German basic income support system, mothers and fathers in financial hardships are addressed by activation services to take up a job quickly after the birth of the child.

Under investigation is (1) how family life in poverty is framed by basic income support rules/ procedures and services in employment agencies/ "jobcentres" (information, counselling, placement in vocational training or work), (2) what strategies do parents develop in their interaction with basic security institutions and jobcentre staff?

The paper originates from the explorative research project "Families receiving basic assistance in Germany. Interaction effects between relationship structures and institutional contexts in 'poor families'" funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG, duration: 2021-2023).

Methodology and theoretical framework:

The analysis draws on biographical interviews with 14 couple and lone parent families receiving Unemployment Benefit II (Arbeitslosengeld II), and 23 expert interviews with employment agency staff. Methods of objective hermeneutics and Grounded Theory are used to analyse the interview data.

Theoretically, the paper refers to multi-institutional involvement (Paik 2021) and families' adaptive strategies which are used as sensitising concepts.

Results:

The findings reveal the complexity of families' strategies in using basic income benefits and in dealing with jobcentre staff. Idealtypical adaptive strategies of parents are presented: strategies of concealment: concealing family circumstances from jobcentre staff, refusing job offers and the perception of the jobcentre as an anonymous institution; strategies of personalised interaction: personalised interaction with staff who acknowledge family circumstances; learning strategies. Learning the informal rules of basic income support and signalling cooperative attitudes in encounters with jobcentre staff.

It will be shown how strategies react to institutional regulations and constraints on the one hand and critical life events in family life (illnesses of parents and children, work-family conflicts, unemployment, separation) on the other. Further, ambivalent consequences of mothers' and fathers' strategies with view to gender inequalities will be presented.

Conclusion:

In general, the results show an 'institutional mismatch' between families' life worlds and social control institutions of the welfare state: Basic income support institutions are unable to take into account the complex circumstances of families. They prove to be 'blind' to family crises and life world complexities. As a consequence, institutions reinforce the constraints associated with family poverty.

How Does Work Affect Family Well-Being? The Familens Model for the Assessment of Family-Work Relationship in the Italian Context

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In today's context, characterized by rapid transformations, the need for increasing integration of roles, time and space, the challenge of balancing parenthood with work becomes increasingly demanding. New theories on family-work reconciliation suggest the possibility of generating well-being not only for individual workers but also for personal relationships, primarily within the family (Manzi, Mazzucchelli 2020; Agrawal, Mahajan, 2021). Moreover, it seems increasingly relevant to take a broad view of the family, which includes different structural configurations and a plurality of needs, such as childcare and/or elder care, geographical mobility, and health.

The integration of work and family time and space requires attention to the diversity that characterises personal and family paths and histories, and traditional solutions may not always be suitable answers.

In this context, the FamILnes represents a model for assessing the impact of policies and interventions on family wellbeing. It is a model inspired by American experiences, imported into Italy by a group of researchers from the Catholic University of Milan (<https://centridiateneo.unicatt.it/studi-famiglia-familens>), who, with the appropriate changes, have developed a tool for assessing the impact on families of corporate practices/initiatives (Carrà, Moscatelli, Ferrari 2024).

The rationale behind this work is that the positive integration of the family and work dimensions produces benefits for both workers and their families as well as companies, according to a win-win logic.

This contribution presents a tool called the Family Impact Checklist based on 6 key objectives to promote family well-being: Empowering families, Promoting family stability, Promoting the quality of family relationships, Valuing family diversity, Actively involving families, Promoting family networks. The tool was administered in 2024 to a representative sample of 360 Italian companies, highlighting the presence of a culture aimed at promoting the reconciliation and well-being of employees and their families, with a focus on the principles of responsibility, stability, diversity and relationships. Companies have a lower impact on the ability to actively involve families and promote family networks

In particular, the principle of diversity was considered very relevant: overall the items record positive averages, companies value to organize meetings and moments of sharing to deepen and explore the topic of diversity also in relation to minority groups as well as supporting a more inclusive language..

This is an innovative study, not only because, for the first time, it tries to measure the effects of work (of company policies) on family relationships, but also because it allows for the creation of a tool that has both a cognitive and a transformative objective for those who fill them out as tools for self-assessment of their work, stimulating them to adopt a careful approach to the effects on family relationships.

Class and Regional Inequalities of Childcare Arrangements in Germany

Ayhan Adams

Institute of Social Sciences, Osnabrück University

Childcare is becoming increasingly important with the rising number of two-earner and single-parent households and the social need to integrate women in particular into the labour market. In the German context, a legal entitlement to a childcare place for children from the age of one was introduced in 2013. This led to implementation problems, as daycare centre capacities were not expanded quickly enough. The school and daycare centre closures during the Covid-19 pandemic brought the issue even more to the surface. After the pandemic, the unplanned cancellation of childcare due to staff shortages appears to be a particular problem for working parents, at least in Germany.

On this basis, the article uses German longitudinal data from pairfam and the DJI Childcare Study to analyse the extent to which types of childcare and their reliability differ in different socio-economic and socio-spatial contexts among working parents with children aged between one and six. The basic assumption is that parents with higher socio-economic capital choose more reliable childcare arrangements, leading to greater inequalities, especially in urban areas. It is already known that disadvantaged families have a lower preference for using childcare services, but at the same time have a higher unmet need for childcare (Schmitz et al. 2023). This is also reflected internationally (Petitclerc et al. 2017). In addition, on average significantly more has to be paid for childcare in urban centres, while it can be assumed that family networks for childcare exist more in rural areas. An increased short-term cancellation of childcare creates new inequalities with regard to the compatibility of work and family life.

Initial results from descriptive analyses and path models show relevant class-specific and regional differences in the use and availability of certain types of childcare in Germany over the last ten years. Further, the results indicate that the type of daycare is linked to satisfaction with the childcare arrangement and that wealthier households use more financial resources for childcare.

Thursday - September 11, 2025

Session 3.1: Parenthood III: Fatherhood

Caring Fathers in the Global Context: Introduction to the Book

Petteri Eerola ¹, Katherine Twamley ², Henna Pirskanen ³ & Pedro Romero-Balsas ⁴

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In recent decades, research in family sociology, gender studies, and masculinity studies has shown that men's fathering practices have been undergoing a slow but steady transformation toward more caring, intimate, and emotionally engaged ways of being a father. Despite a significant increase in studies on caring fatherhood practices, substantial gaps remain – for example, regarding fathers' care outside the Global North, children's perspectives on fathers' care, and fathers of older children. These and other gaps in existing research are addressed in the open-access edited volume *Caring Fathers in the Global Context* (edited by Petteri Eerola, Katherine Twamley, Henna Pirskanen, and Pedro Romero-Balsas; published by Bristol University Press in June 2025), which offers new perspectives on fathers' care and care-oriented masculinities in contexts that have largely been overlooked by previous research.

This panel features presentations based on chapters from the volume, illustrating the diverse ways in which care is present in the lives of fathers and their children across different social, cultural and policy contexts. At the same time, it highlights the persistent constraints – such as gender ideologies and father-exclusive policies – that may still limit fathers' deeper involvement in care. This opening presentation provides an overview of the edited volume, setting the stage for the subsequent presentations. It discusses key gaps in sociological research on fathers' care and how both the book and this panel contribute to bridging these gaps.

Gender Role Attitudes, Perceptions of Parenthood and Father's Parental Leave Use in Finland

Johanna Lammi-Taskula ¹, Johanna Närvi ¹, Miia Saarikallio-Torp ², Anneli Miettinen ² & Ella Sihvonen ³

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This paper examines the role of attitudes in fathers' take-up of parental leave. We analyse fathers' perceptions of gender roles, fatherhood and intensive parenting in relation to their use of different types of leave (birth-related leave, father's quota, shared parental leave). We understand parental leave as an opportunity for caring fatherhood.

Based on multinomial regression modelling of survey data collected among fathers of small children in Finland in 2022, we found that attitudes matter in the use of shared parental leave; fathers' caring attitudes increase the use, while traditional gender role attitudes decrease it. We found no association between attitudes and father's quota use. Furthermore, perceptions of intensive parenting were not associated with fathers' use of any type of leave.

This abstract is submitted to be included in the panel Caring Fathers in the Global Context.

Fathers on the 'Night Shift'? Understanding Caring Fatherhood through Parents'
Interpretative Repertoires of Night-Time Care

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This chapter provides a new perspective on caring fatherhood by analysing interpretative repertoires produced by Finnish fathers' and mothers' to enable or constrain fathers' care during the intimate, 'hidden hours' between late evenings and early mornings. In addition, interpretative repertoires for sharing night-time care are also explored. Qualitative interviews with Finnish fathers (n = 8) and mothers (n = 23) of children under 6 years old collected in 2022 were analysed as an empirical data. As a result, barriers, enablers and shared childcare practices constructed on biological, individual/situational, work-related and institutional repertoires were identified. The study is part of the multidisciplinary research project The Parental Night Shift: Gendered Inequalities in Night-time Care (2022-2027) funded by the Kone Foundation.

Syrian Refugee Dads in the UK: Gendered Practises of 'Involvement'

Tina Miller ¹ & Esther Dermott ²

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Drawing on longitudinal interview data, this chapter describes the experiences and practices of Syrian refugee fathers who have moved to the UK. We describe how men's accounts of fathering are enacting a version of contemporary involved fathering through care-work associated with their children. This includes both the doing and managing of care activities and therefore produces an intimate involvement in the minutiae of everyday caring practices. However, we also note how the fathers strongly rejected any ideal of involved fatherhood that reflected 'equal and similar' parenting between mothers and fathers. Indeed, their involved care practices were largely undertaken because of a lack of options, including primarily their own inability to engage in paid work, or to draw on a community of mothers/women for childcare as they would do in Syria. In contrast to the apparently 'progressive' trope of involved fatherhood which is often described as a contemporary ideal in the Global North, these men had radically changed their practices but not their longstanding, culturally embedded views about parenting roles and masculine practices. We argue that by focusing on minoritized fathers in a period of transition, further insights are gained into the relationship between fatherhood and masculinity. This abstract is submitted to be included in the panel Caring Fathers in the Global Context.

Hegemonic, caring or hybrid fathers? The case of Polish fathers of adult children in 'empty nest'

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Polish men born in the 1970s are part of a generation whose fathers were either absent or adhered to traditional parenting roles. As fathers themselves, they face the challenges of navigating the systemic transformation into a post-communist country and the rapid changes in the labour market alongside the de-hierarchisation of family relations and increased demands for active parenting. In the presented study, we conducted research with 40 Polish fathers whose adult children have left the family home to identify the various types of fatherhood they exhibit. Based on qualitative interviews with Polish fathers, our analysis is guided by two key concepts of fatherhood: caring and protective. We also delve into the role of negotiation and reconstruction throughout the life course, which significantly influences these relationships. We aim to fit into the discussion on types of fatherhood in terms of historical changes in fatherhood and to demonstrate how the significant life event affects the trajectory of fathers' lives the reconfiguration of their paternal roles and how they navigate their relationships with their adult children.

Session 3.2: Migrant and Refugee Families

Exploring Consequences of Unsettling Events in the Relational Sphere: Family and Personal Lives of Young Lithuanian and Polish Migrants in the UK in the Polycrisis Era

Paula Pustulka ¹, Irma Budginaite-Mackine ² & Agnieszka Trąbka ³

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³ Institute of Applied Psychology, Jagiellonian University

This paper adopts and expands the concept and framework of unsettling events (Kilkey, Ryan 2021) to explore how young Lithuanian and Polish migrants to the UK narrate their experiences of the spillover effects of the polycrisis. Looking at two interlinked macrostructural events, namely the Brexit process and the global Covid-19 pandemic, we explore whether and how the political crises shape the narrative about personal relationships, (transnational) family lives and the sense of belonging.

The analysed data stems from the 'CEEYouth: The comparative study of young migrants from Poland and Lithuania in the context of Brexit' project, specifically interviews and asynchronous exchanges with 77 migrants, collected over the five waves of a qualitative longitudinal study. The study began during the post-Brexit referendum negotiations (2019) and ended during the pandemic (2021). Data analysis spanned three stages, i.e., a thematic approach focused on relational and subjective unsettlement, followed by cross-national validations and longitudinal analyses to discern the effects of Brexit (retrospectively and presently) and the pandemic (in vivo accounts) in migrants' personal lives.

For this presentation, we briefly highlight the material, relational, and subjective dimensions of unsettlement, yet we particularly spotlight the role of personal relationships, family and transnational bonds in the narratives pertaining to uncertainty and (un)belonging. We highlight the conditions under which relational anchors - partners, children, friends, kin members back home - made the interviewees feel less unsettled by the upheaval of the Brexit referendum's results and pandemic. Equally, we also show contrary examples in which relations - with family, friends and other members of personal networks - increased the sense of unsettlement in migrants' lives.

The paper's main contribution is the practical application of the unsettling events framework to personal and family lives of migrants in a direct manner, along with leveraging the potential of longitudinal and comparative research designs in family studies. Bringing together micro and macro perspectives, the study can inform future analysis of family life during polycrisis.

Negotiating Family Roles: Women in a Turkish-German Mosque Community

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This paper examines how women in a Turkish-German mosque community in Germany negotiate family roles, relationships, and expectations within a religious space. Drawing on six months of ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation in Quran courses, women's talks, and other activities inside and outside of the mosque, this study explores how

the mosque serves as both a site of continuity and adaptation in navigating changing family dynamics.

The mosque functions as a religiously legitimized space for women's socialization and leisure, where they share experiences and navigate changing socio-economic realities. While the mosque does not actively drive shifts in gender roles, family structures, and social expectations, it provides a space where these transformations are negotiated.

In the community, while traditional gendered expectations persist, women articulate new understandings of marriage and employment. Employment, for instance, is framed not only as a financial necessity but also as a safeguard against divorce, widowhood, and 'unreliable' husbands. Discourses of female self-sufficiency emerge, yet these transformations are not framed as a departure from cultural and religious norms but rather as part of an ongoing negotiation within them. Rather than rejecting established frameworks, women engage in reinterpretations that allow them to navigate shifting family roles while maintaining a sense of religious belonging.

The mosque plays a crucial role in this process by offering a space where these evolving dynamics are discussed, validated, and absorbed into collective understandings of family life. It provides continuity while allowing for transformation, reinforcing religious and cultural identity even as socio-economic conditions and personal aspirations shift. Through participation in mosque activities, women sustain a sense of connection to their faith and community, integrating change in ways that align with their religious and cultural values.

By situating this study within broader discussions of family plurality, this paper challenges static portrayals of Turkish-German Muslim families and contributes to scholarship on how religious spaces function as arenas of both stability and transformation in shaping contemporary family life.

[Union Formation among Refugees: A Gender Comparison of Eritreans and Syrians in Germany](#)
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This study explores union formation patterns among refugees in European destination countries. Gender patterns in migration processes and in migrants' family formation are a growing research field. We contribute to this literature by examining refugees.

People who have been forced to leave their countries of origin are an understudied population in family-sociology, mainly due to a lack of suitable quantitative data. The great majority of internationally displaced persons settle—most of them permanently—in neighbouring countries. Yet, the number of people arriving in and settling in more distant countries has been rising. These increases, along with recent survey data collections, now allow for systematic, quantitative-empirical investigations of family dynamics, such as union formation processes, in refugee populations in European destination countries.

Theoretical considerations are derived from frameworks on union formation in migrant groups. Moreover, we pay attention to the role of migration patterns because previous research demonstrates specific characteristics of refugee migration. For refugees, the possibility of leaving may involve forced separations from family members and limited control over the events of the migration journey, so that their migration experiences differ from those of migrant families who have consciously opted for separation. Forced migration

may take months or years, “en route” being a process rather than a single event. Refugees’ journeys may involve enduring stays in transit countries accompanied by life-threatening dangers and insecurity about their final destination. Moreover, this process is often accompanied by reconfigurations in intergenerational relationships, gender roles, and gender relations at the destination, which may also affect partner selection and family formation behaviour.

The context of our study is Germany, one of the major destination countries for refugees and asylum seekers in Europe. We focus on individuals from Eritrea and Syria, for which Germany is the main destination. By the end of 2023, 972,460 Syrians and 84,010 Eritreans were registered in Germany, with the majority holding recognized refugee status. Specifically, we draw on data from the quantitative survey Forced Migration and Transnational Family Arrangements – Eritrean and Syrian Refugees in Germany (TransFAR), collected in 2020. This survey, with approximately 1,450 completed interviews (half Eritrean/half Syrian, half women/half men), is nationally representative of recent refugees from two major countries of origin of forced migrants to Germany.

Our analytical strategy is threefold: First, we describe the patterns of union formation from five years before arrival in Germany to five years after arrival using sequence analysis techniques. Second, for those who arrived as single, we carry out Kaplan-Meier estimates and multivariable event-history analyses on the transitions to a first union after arriving in Germany. Third, we study the characteristics of the partner (i.e., co-ethnic or not; residing in Germany or elsewhere).

Our results show important gender differences in the timing of union formation, with women experiencing faster transitions, while overall union formation rates are rather low. Furthermore, women of both origins form new unions almost exclusively with co-ethnics residing in Germany, while men also start interethnic relationships with partners in Germany or co-ethnic relationships with partners residing outside Germany.

The Story Behind the Wedding: Piety Codes in Union Formation among Turkish Communities in Denmark

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Wedding rituals and celebrations are critical life-cycle events that showcase piety and cultural identity, often enhanced by aesthetic preferences. This paper emphasizes their importance within the context of the Muslim diaspora. The image of migrant Muslims in Danish media and political debate tends to bring forward issues of the spread of radical Islam, low levels of integration, victimized Muslim women and immigration policies. Besides, academic studies on the largest Muslim minority group, the Turkish migrants, have been relatively limited in number and mostly neglected the transformation of cultural and religious norms and practices and their meanings for these communities. This paper is based on a research project that aims to enlarge the research field by investigating the dynamics and diversity of performative activities and aesthetic expressions of piety in Turkish couples’ stories that lead to their marriages and wedding celebrations. It firstly asks how the codes, norms, and symbols of piety among Turkish communities in Denmark regarding gender roles and femininities are changing in union formation practices. The second research question asks about the role of aesthetic concerns as a means of reflecting piety, femininity and gender norms. It offers new knowledge about the entanglement of ritual conventions, transnational influences, and Scandinavian culture and social life for the Muslim diaspora. It first examines

the changing meanings of gender roles and femininities and concepts of female honor, modesty, piety and morality in union formation processes. Secondly, it analyses the role of aesthetic concerns in expressing piety, femininity and gender norms in wedding rituals and celebrations. The research is based on qualitative methodology, which includes in-depth interviews with couples, observations of wedding rituals and celebrations, visits to bridal shops, and the collection of visuals from personal albums, social media, and memory objects. The interlocutors are selected from big cities in Denmark, namely Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Odense, as well as from several provincial towns to represent the diversity of the Turkish communities. The analysis highlights the increasingly complex intersections of family values, religious norms, emotions, and the influences of Danish society and culture. Factors such as memories and images from Turkey, transnational diaspora trends, generational differences, urban-provincial differences, social class, educational factors, and immigration policies shape the stories behind the weddings. The research sheds light on a trend that while higher levels of education and interaction with the majority culture trigger changes in understandings of ideal gender roles and femininities, wedding rituals and celebrations remain vital for maintaining family and community bonds. The expansion of the wedding market and its connections with the homeland provide a rich milieu for the diversity of aesthetic expressions.

Pluralizing Parenthood: Navigating Family Practices Among Chinese Migrant Families in Portugal

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The transnational migration of Chinese families to Portugal has led to the transformation of family structures, relationships, and parenting practices. This study explores the plurality of family experiences among Chinese migrants by examining how mobility reshapes parenting approaches, gender roles, and intergenerational care dynamics. While migration fosters social and economic mobility, it also presents challenges requiring adaptive strategies in family life.

Theoretically, this research is framed by transnational family studies and intersectional perspectives, which analyze how migration, ethnicity, and gender intersect to shape family life. It critically engages with dominant discourses that reinforce heteronormative and patriarchal family ideals, offering insights into how Chinese migrant families negotiate cultural expectations in both their home and host societies. This study moves beyond rigid binaries of ‘traditional’ versus ‘modern’ parenting, highlighting the hybrid and evolving nature of caregiving practices in transnational contexts.

Methodologically, this research employs qualitative approaches, including in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations with Chinese migrant parents and their children in Portugal. The data collection explores parental aspirations, educational strategies, emotional and financial support, and the role of extended kin networks in child-rearing. Particular attention is given to how parents balance integration into the host society while maintaining cultural heritage and fulfilling transnational familial obligations.

Findings reveal that Chinese migrant parents in Portugal adopt diverse and dynamic parenting strategies that blend Confucian principles with Western child-rearing ideals. While some families adhere to ‘tiger parenting’ models emphasizing academic excellence, others adopt more flexible approaches that prioritize children's happiness and well-being. Additionally, migration shifts traditional gender roles, with women increasingly engaging in

economic responsibilities and men participating more in childcare. However, these shifts remain shaped by structural inequalities and cultural expectations, affecting how care and authority are negotiated within families.

This study contributes to contemporary discussions on family plurality by illustrating the fluid and adaptive nature of parenting among migrant families. It challenges monolithic representations of Chinese parenting and underscores the significance of contextual factors in shaping family practices. By situating Chinese migrant families within broader debates on transnationalism, gender, and family diversity, this research expands sociological understandings of how migration reshapes familial relationships and caregiving models in contemporary societies.

Session 4.1: Defining and Defying Families

Transformation of the Normal? Doing Family in Co-Parenting-Families

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Elective co-parenting, in which parents intentionally opt out of romantic partnerships to organize parenthood within the framework of cooperative arrangements or friendships, offers a unique lens for examining shifting social norms and evolving family constructs (Jadva et al. 2015, Segal-Engelchin et al. 2005). Although still quantitatively marginal, this family form represents a significant expression of social transformation, providing valuable insights into the future of family diversity. The project “Transformation of the Normal? Doing Family in Post-Traditional Family Forms in Bavaria” examines the formation, negotiation, and self-conception of these families at the intersection of everyday practices, norms, and law.

This contribution presents the methodological framework and theoretical foundations of the project while offering first insights into its preliminary findings. Using qualitative methods, including narrative interviews with co-parents and their children (Reczek 2014), the study investigates the practices, routines, and negotiations through which family life of co-parents and their children is organized. A central premise is that family, no longer a given, must be actively created and maintained in contemporary contexts (Morgan 2011, Jurczyk et al. 2014). This dynamic is especially pronounced in co-parenting families, where the absence of established role models necessitates intentional and creative approaches of doing and displaying family (Finch 2007, Herbrand 2018, Wimbauer 2021).

The research explores how these families shape their daily lives, addressing questions such as: How do co-parents negotiate shared parenting duties? What norms and practices guide their collaboration? How do they manage external expectations and societal perceptions? In addition, the study explores how policymakers and institutions perceive and engage with co-parenting families. This includes identifying systemic barriers and areas for improvement in legal, social and political frameworks.

By focusing on the everyday practices and structures of co-parenting families, this contribution aligns with the conference's emphasis on the plurality of family forms, relationships, and experiences. By centering on elective co-parenting, it offers a critical exploration of how families are formed and sustained outside traditional paradigms. The research enriches sociological understanding of family diversity and contributes to broader discussions on inclusive policy-making for post-traditional families.

What is Family? Public Concepts of Family and Family Members in Hungary

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The rise in the proportion of family forms other than the heteronormative nuclear family, the increasing importance of multigenerational and collateral kinship and friends, the

intertwining of kin and non-kin relationships, the emergence of optionality in the level of commitment in close family relationships, or the recognition of pets as family members are increasingly breaking the boundaries of the functionalist views of the family. Despite this, the heteronormative, nuclear, conjugal family continues to have a distinctive significance in academic discourse and in everyday life. However, little is known about the actual family concepts of the population. Would the image of the family among members of a given society really be so uniform? To what extent do non-nuclear family formations fit in? Who are considered close family members? What factors explain the population's family concepts? In this paper, we explore these questions in Hungary, which provides a particularly interesting context due to the strong political support for the conservative family ideal.

In spring 2021, we conducted a face-to-face representative survey among the Hungarian adult population to explore their concepts of family. We asked respondents which forms of cohabitation they considered to be families, and we measured who are considered close family members by the respondents, and whether they consider a close friend, a housemate, or a pet to be a close family member in addition to various kinship ties.

The results show that there is a strong consensus only on the acceptability of the heteronormative, conjugal, nuclear family. However, the overwhelming majority (at least 87% of respondents) also consider one or more other forms of cohabitation based on parent-child relationships (mosaic, single-parent family) as family. As regards childless cohabitation, for the majority of the population (80%), commitment to a relationship is sufficient in itself to be considered a family, whether it is marriage or a partnership. However, only around half of the respondents consider rainbow families as a family.

The public distinguishes between biological and foster children: the former are more likely to be considered close family members than the latter, and the same is true for biological parents vs. foster parents. In the parent-child concept of family, the issue of cohabitation seems to be secondary: the child (or, on the other hand, the parent) is considered a close family member even if the generations no longer live together, if the child (also) has his/her own family. A close friend was considered a family member by only 18% of respondents, while pets were considered a family member by 29% of the population. These results suggest that the concept of 'family of choice' is alien to the vast majority of the population (if interpreted more broadly than same-sex families). Preliminary results from multivariate analyses show that the concepts of family are less explained by demographic and more explained by attitudinal variables.

[Stay-at-Home Fathers in Hungary: Understanding the Barriers and Motivations](#)

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Parental roles have changed significantly in recent decades. Internationally, and in Hungary, there has been a shift away from the father being the sole breadwinner in the family, while the mother takes on the main caring responsibilities. More and more fathers are getting involved in domestic tasks. The social and individual redefinition of the father's role is creating opportunities for the father to take on the role of primary caregiver in the family. Several previous studies and analyses have shown a number of individual, micro- and macro-level positive social impacts of fathers staying at home with their young children. Active involvement of fathers can make a significant contribution to work-life balance of parents,

increase individual and family well-being, and also have a positive impact on father-child and parent-child relationships.

For decades, the Hungarian family support system has also made it increasingly possible for men to play an active role in child-rearing in the years after birth. Parental leave is available to men and women under the same conditions. However, the relevant statistics show that, although increasing, the proportion of families in Hungary in which the father stays at home for longer or shorter periods with the child as the main caregiver, while the mother becomes the main breadwinner, is still relevantly low.

While the share of men on parental leave has increased more than tenfold in the last 10 years to 15%, this increase can be partly explained by a change in legislation in 2014 and 2016 that allowed them to work while claiming family benefits. In other words, the increase is partly due to the emergence of men working while claiming benefits. Thus, the groups of stay-at-home fathers and fathers on parental leave do not necessarily overlap in Hungary.

In our presentation, we will discuss the conceptual difficulties of SAHFs in the Hungarian context, and will also address the question of what factors keep the proportion of fathers who actually stay at home with their children relatively low in Hungary. We also describe the motivations and considerations that despite all this lead some fathers to decide to stay at home with their children.

To answer our research questions, we use a mixed methodology, summarising the experiences of previous studies and analysing the results of 14 focus groups with university students, as well as interviews and questionnaires with 31 stay-at-home fathers and their partners.

Our main findings suggest that among the possible social, cultural, economic, value system, and other factors, the main barriers to fathers' involvement in childcare at home are traditional attitudes towards gender roles, the gender pay gap, the maternal gatekeeper phenomenon, concerns about career ambitions, and the lack of incentive policies (e.g. father's quota). In addition, feelings of incompetence and a lack of knowledge also prevent fathers from participating more actively. In contrast, financial rationality plays a less important role in the motivations of stay-at-home fathers and their families, while fathers' need to be actively involved in their children's lives is more prevalent.

By systematically exploring the motivations and barriers, our research can contribute to a better understanding of the changing role of fathers and the related social norms and expectations in today's Hungary.

Session 4.2: Gender and Families

Gendered Power Relations and Father's Use of Parental Leaves in Poland. Hybrid Masculinities Perspective

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Poland has extended fathers' parental leave rights considerably in the last decade. In 2013, 26 weeks of well-paid shareable parental leave were introduced. In 2023, an additional nine weeks of a non-transferable entitlement to paid parental leave for fathers were added to meet the EU Work-Life Balance Directive requirements. Additionally, in the last decades, we can observe changing models of fatherhood, which put more pressure on fathers' involvement in care and their close relations with children.

Yet regardless of the mentioned changes, Polish society is still characterised by a highly gendered organisation of family life. The changes mentioned above do not challenge unequal gender order but reproduce gender inequalities in new forms.

This paper aims to analyse how Polish fathers combine the dominating narrative of involved fatherhood with their general reluctance to take parental leave. The narratives from 30 individual, semi-structured interviews with Polish fathers conducted between December 2023 and February 2024 indicate that men are positive about parental leaves for fathers. They often see it as an expression of the changing gender roles in contemporary times and that the father's role is more often recognised as necessary for children. Yet, they do not treat their right to parental leave similarly to women's parental leave. In the case of fathers, parental leave is not treated as a mechanism that helps organise care in everyday life but instead, as a time to take a break from work, spend time with the family and establish a stronger relationship with their children.

Consequently, many men are not interested in taking parental leave, usually due to economic barriers or their work situation. And those who use parental leave rarely overtake care and domestic obligations from their female partners. They are stuck in the roles of second caregivers and helpers, whose obligation is to support an overburdened mother. Thus, men's use of parental leave does not equalise domestic responsibilities in Polish families.

Referring to the concept of hybrid masculinities of Tristan Bridges and C. J. Pascoe, we argue that the mechanism, which aims to challenge gender inequalities, may work in ways that perpetuate existing systems of power and inequity in historically new ways. In the narrative of interviews with Polish fathers, we can identify all three mechanisms characteristic of hybrid masculinities, such as discursive distancing, strategic borrowing and fortifying boundaries.

Gendered Burdens of Post-Disaster Recovery: Transformation of Households after the February 6, 2023 Earthquakes and Women's Experiences

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The February 6, 2023, Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes triggered an unprecedented mobility of people within the borders of Turkey, displacing hundreds of thousands of people from 11 cities. The state's failure to ensure adequate preparedness before the earthquake resulted in an overwhelming focus on emergency response, such as search-and-rescue operations, while long-term shelter provision remained neglected. As housing stocks plummeted and rental prices surged in both disaster-affected and host cities, survivors sought alternative shelter solutions. These included temporary or permanent stay at state-provided container and tent camps, migration to other cities which resulted in cohabitation with extended family members, and, in some cases, the physical separation of spouses across different regions due to employment constraints. While these arrangements were primarily driven by economic necessity, they also led to profound social transformations, fundamentally altering family and household structures.

Instead of establishing comprehensive institutional support mechanisms, the patriarchal state relied on micro-level connections – primarily familial ties – to bridge the gap in post-disaster governance, reinforcing traditional gender roles and placing the burden of recovery onto women within extended family structures. In this study, we examine the implications of disaster-induced displacement on household formations and family dynamics, with a specific focus on how women navigated this transformation which brought new caregiving responsibilities, economic hardships, and shifting family roles. To do so, we analyzed qualitative data collected through 32 in-depth interviews with women who experienced the earthquake and moved to Mersin or Ankara due to the disaster.

The preliminary findings have shown that many people who migrated right after the disaster chose the cities in which they already had extended family members they could rely on. Therefore, they experienced a sudden change in their household form and family dynamics. For survivor women, the loss of their homes and displacement into overcrowded living arrangements forced them to suppress their own trauma while assuming caregiving roles for their extended families. Working women, in particular, struggled to balance wage labor with heightened domestic duties, while gendered expectations intensified, with men further delegating household responsibilities to women. Consequently, women became the primary agents of resilience, tasked with the unrecognized labor of shelter provision, emotional support, and resource management within extended family structures.

This study shows that the post-disaster transformation – however temporary – of the nuclear family household into an extended one served as a pragmatic response to the immediate shelter crisis. Yet, it also reinforced the feminization of responsibility, wherein women were expected to absorb the social and economic consequences of disaster, with men withdrawing from domestic responsibilities. Pervasive discourses surrounding the “disaster of the century” have also reinforced the idea that women could not “abandon their families” in times of crisis, further limiting their autonomy. Finally, women experienced a transformation of intimacy and privacy, as the presence of additional family members led to increased regulation of their behaviors and a reconfiguration of personal and spatial boundaries within the household.

This article explores the family as a field using Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of *doxa* and *illusio*, focusing on how young girls in Turkey perceive and challenge traditional family structures and values. Through interviews conducted in six cities in Turkey with 35 families and 28 young girls, the study reveals a generational divide between young girls, older generations, and the AK Party's portrayal of the family as a cultural, religious, and moral cornerstone. The AK Party's populist rhetoric, which links the survival of the family to the survival of the state, promotes an idealized family that reinforces conservative and patriarchal norms. However, young girls increasingly see family life as a space of tension and restriction, leading to the erosion of family-specific *doxa*—the unquestioned norms and traditions—and the weakening of *illusio*, or belief in the family as a meaningful institution. The dissonance between idealized family imagery and lived experiences drives young girls to develop reactive *habitus*, characterized by anger and disappointment. They assert their individuality against the family, viewing it as an obstacle to self-realization. Their strategies include hiding their thoughts or rejecting marriage, signalling a shift away from the family as a lifelong commitment. They perceive the AK Party government as responsible for worsening family dynamics and gender inequality, an opinion that transcends class and political differences. These girls' rejection of familial and state-imposed norms highlights systemic and ideological frustrations rather than merely personal grievances, suggesting potential changes in the family field's social rules and power dynamics.

"I Really Wanted to Marry a Woman": Sexual Identity among Tongzhi Born in the 1960s and the 1970s

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Drawing upon in-depth interviews conducted between 2018 and 2019, this research qualitatively examines the experiences of married or divorced tongzhi men born in the 1960s and the 1970s in mainland China – where same-sex marriage has not been legalized – through the lens of sexual identity. In the Chinese context, tongzhi is the local concept referring to the men who have same-sex desires, and their wives are termed as tongqi. However, over the past decade, Chinese news reports have been framing married or divorced tongzhi within the marriage fraud discourse, constructing a heteronormative binary in understanding the marriage between tongzhi men and tongqi women. According to the marriage fraud discourse, tongzhi are the male villains who actively conceal their homosexual identity through marriage and reproduction, whereas tongqi are the female victims who are passively fooled, manipulated and exploited by these men. As a result, the "marriage fraud" is discursively premised on a fixed homosexual identity these tongzhi men have.

There have some studies suggesting that the marriage between tongzhi and tongqi in mainland China could not be reduced to the so-called fraud. However, despite these queer efforts, scholars tend to confine their discussions to the sociocultural dimension in the Chinese context – how the heteronormative, sociocultural forces, such as Confucian filial piety, have compelled tongzhi men to enter into marriage. Scant scholarly attention is paid to the socioeconomic dimension; and little is known about the relation between their sexual experiences and socioeconomic circumstances in the context of marriage. Moreover, the

existing literature on Chinese tongzhi predominantly focuses on younger men born after the 1980s within the western theoretical framework of homosexual identity. Older tongzhi men born before the 1980s remain largely marginalized in academic discussions.

Therefore, to fill these research gaps, this study explores the tongzhi men born in the 1960s and the 1970s and the research question is: How have socioeconomic conditions shaped their sexual experiences inside and outside marriage? Drawing upon interviews with ten married or divorced tongzhi men from rural and urban China, the findings reveal that, regardless of their socioeconomic conditions, many of them had no homosexual identity despite their perceived same-sex desires before and/or after marriage. No linear relationship emerged between their socioeconomic status and the formation of homosexual identity.

This research thus argues that for the tongzhi men born in the 1960s and 1970s, homosexuality is more likely to be an act and/or a relationship rather than a sexual identity. At the local level, this research finding challenges the dominant marriage fraud discourse in the Chinese society. At the global level, it contributes to the academic debate on the complexity of homosexual identity by showing a non-western, Chinese case from the socioeconomic perspective.

Session 5: Poster Presentations

A Typological Proposal for Blended Families: The Significance of Parenting and Siblingship Beyond Conventional Criteria in Shaping Blending Levels

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Defining what constitutes a family is increasingly complex amid contemporary social changes, leading to diverse family structures. As life cycles evolve, marriage becomes deinstitutionalized, separations and re-partnering increase, and relationships extend beyond heteronormative ideals, traditional criteria for defining 'family', such as consanguinity, cohabitation, and affinity, become progressively misleading.

Blended families, where at least one partner has children from a previous relationship, present a particularly interesting case due to their structural and relational complexity. These family constellations are on the rise, yet statistical data struggle to capture their exact prevalence due to research biases rooted in paradigms influenced by the nuclear family model. These biases contribute to the precarity and uncertainty surrounding family boundaries within these configurations, that suffer linguistic, legal and cultural anomie. Furthermore, despite their growing relevance, blended families have been predominantly studied within psychology, often emphasizing deviant or dysfunctional aspects, while sociology, especially in the Italian context, has shown limited interest.

This presentation addresses this gap by qualitatively exploring blended family dynamics in Italy through narrative interviews with research participants. The study is grounded in theoretical frameworks including David Morgan's family practices approach, which highlights the processual nature of "doing family"; Lynn Jamieson's conceptualization of intimacy and care; and perspectives that challenge adult-centered viewpoints in family research. The investigation aims to capture the heterogeneity and complexity of blended families by exploring the resources and experiences of family members themselves.

The central research question guiding this study is: "How are blended families done, taking into account practices of care and intimacy?" The empirical findings, analyzed using Grounded Theory methodology, emphasize the significance of the blending process, conceptualized as process of integrating individuals following the separation of an original nuclear family, which can occur at the level of parenting, sibling relationships, or both. This process can be structured at different levels, with parenting practices and sibling intimacy emerging as the most significant factors in developing a typological framework.

From the analysis, eight distinct blending levels emerge as ideal types, demonstrating how family re-composition is a dynamic process shaped by three distinct parenting practices and three different intimacy levels between siblings. The study challenges the biological understanding of parenting and siblingship by incorporating the experiences of step-figures and significant others, such as friends. Additionally, various family meshwork visual tools provide further insight into the intricate dynamics within blended families, offering a more nuanced perspective on these evolving relationships.

“Gugli Gugli Go Away!: An Autoethnographic Exploration of the 'Refusal' Pattern in a Radical Islamist Family”

Hanne Betül Ateş

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This research presents an auto-ethnographic analysis of ideological transformations and identity crises in my family spanning three generations. The main focus is on my parents' wedding, illustrating how traditions are reproduced despite radical Islamist transformation. The rejection and transformation of wedding rituals and similar traditions can be seen in my family history across two generations. However, the analysis explores which unchanging elements persist in new forms, asking: How is *nomos* reshaped in my family over generations?

My parents grew up in Osmaniye as the first generation to migrate from the village and receive education. In the 1990s, they moved away from their family and identified with a radical Islamist identity. They tried to establish a new order by breaking away from their family lifestyle. Today, however, their life has become a space that I also want to “escape” or “liberate” from. Is the desire for change a pattern? Why did the desire for transformation continue for generations without leading to lasting change?

The work investigates which traditional elements remain constant in the face of radical change and how they are reproduced. My parents' wedding provides a powerful example of where tradition breaks down and where it continues. For example, the fact that the bride did not wear a wedding dress but had a white one made, and that the tradition of the “convoy” was maintained despite a protest convoy at the wedding, reveals the intertwined nature of transformation and continuity.

The analysis combines autoethnography, visual, and oral history. I explore my stance on my family's political Islamist identity by examining wedding photographs and considering the emotional responses they triggered. These emotional responses are historically contextualized to gain a deeper understanding of my relationship to the past as a future generation. From this perspective, I explore how the ideological transformation in Turkey in the 2000s intersected with traditions, and how growing up as a witness perpetuated a pattern of “rejection” within the family. To clarify this, I include Tuğal's concept of the “assimilation” of Islamists during the AKP era in the 2000s.

Oral interviews with family members who witnessed the wedding provide additional data. These interviews uncover the traditional aspects of the ritual and enrich the autoethnographic analysis by revealing the emotional responses they evoked in me as I listened.

In my work, I combine Hirsch's concept of postmemory and Gordon's theory of Ghostly Matters to address memory and intergenerational trauma. Additionally, I draw on Bourdieu's concept of habitus to explain the continuity of ideological inheritance. I also incorporate Ellis's confessional-emotional autoethnography approach to reconstruct academic discourse by discussing what has the potential to be considered knowledge.

Ultimately, the paper asks the following question: Is my desire to narrate and expose my family's wedding a reflection of their desire to feel exceptional and significant while organizing it? How does the psychoanalytic origin of this pattern shape itself through Islamist ideology and transform into a sociological research domain, engaging in dialogue with the collective trauma of rural-to-urban migration in Turkey?

Plurality of Families and Pet Ownership: A Biopolitical Assessment

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As the concept of pluralism in family structures has gained increasing importance, it has become possible for individuals to define themselves as a family with their pets. From a sociological perspective, this critical review aims to examine the extent to which pet ownership differs from traditional family structures and to discuss this phenomenon through the lens of biopolitical theories.

With postmodernism, different identities have become more visible, and role changes within the traditional family have given rise to various family forms. In this context, people now define family not only through nuclear families that maintain blood ties but also through many other relationships, whether legally recognized or not. The ideology of modernity no longer limits the concept of family to the nuclear model. Instead, diverse family structures have emerged, and the idea of plurality in family life has gained significance. One such family form includes individuals and partners who own pets and consider themselves a family. Pet owners typically see themselves as their animals' parents, treat them like babies, give them human names, feed and train them, take care of their needs, and communicate with them through speech. Therefore, the bond between pet owners and their animals exemplifies the plural family structures of the postmodern era.

The unique contribution of this study, distinguishing it from the existing literature, lies in examining the topic not through pet-owner relationships within the framework of posthumanism, but as an indicator of family pluralism within a biopolitical context.

This study argues that there are various similarities between the traditional family structure and the family forms created by pet owners, specifically in relation to biopolitical management strategies. It explores how the institution of the family functions in the biopolitical context, addressing population control, the internalization of biopolitical norms, and the continuation of the neoliberal economy. The study then examines the role of the family institution in biopower, comparing traditional family structures with those formed by individuals who adopt pets and define themselves as a family. Additionally, it analyzes the relationship of biopower between traditional family structures, and plural family forms from both economic and normative perspectives and discusses the biopolitical feasibility of the discourse on 'plurality in the family'.

Family Life, the 'Outside World' and the Self: Intergenerational Transmissions, Intimate Lives and Multiple Pathways to Adulthood among North African Migrants' Descendants in Italy

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The transition to adulthood has become increasingly complex in European societies, where 'traditional' milestones are reached later and with less predictability (Schizzerotto, 2002). Italy in particular stands out as an extreme case, with a large number of young adults continuing to live with their families and remaining financially dependent on their parents (Magaraggia, Cherubini, & Gambardella, 2021). While the transition to adulthood has been extensively studied in relation to 'natives' (Magaraggia, Benasso, 2019; Gambardella et al.,

2021), there has been limited research on the experiences of the descendants of migrants, despite the fact that there are 1.5 million people aged 18-35 with a migrant background in the country (Riniolo, 2020).

This paper presents the first results of the research project 'Growing Old, Feeling Like a Citizen? Lived citizenship experiences among Muslim young adults of North African origin in metropolitan and provincial Italy' (University of Padua and Milan-Bicocca), a multi-site qualitative study based on biographical interviews, focus groups and ethnographic observation. The project aims to explore how the descendants of North African migrants experience and navigate adulthood and intimate life in contemporary Italy.

Drawing on the lived citizenship perspective (Kallio et al., 2020), the paper provides new empirical, intergenerational and intersectional insights into the diverse ways in which these individuals approach the transition to adulthood and perform citizenship and identity in their everyday lives. Particular attention is paid to the role of family life, the influence of the wider social context and the construction of personal identity (Nesteruk, 2022; Scocco, 2022). By considering both the 'outside world' and the family environment, the study explores how intergenerational transmissions of cultural values, expectations and experiences shape the identities and adult trajectories of the descendants of North African migrants (Cedeberg, Särholm, 2014, Schuster, 2016; Soehl, Waldinger, 2012). It highlights the complexities of belonging, citizenship, mobility and identity formation, and offers a nuanced understanding of how these individuals engage with both their family heritage and the 'dominant' culture to create their own transnational and diasporic identities and intimate lives.

[“Non-Reflexive” vs. “Self-Conscious”: Two Ways of Thinking about Adult-Sibling Relationships](#)
Irina Kretser
Independent Researcher

In recent decades, social scholars on kinship and family have prioritized performative approaches over more static ones, which were focused on the pre-given nature of kinship. However, following Janet Carsten's (2020) proposal to reconcile the opposition between two visions of kinship, I explore both 'kinship-as-being' and 'kinship-as-doing' as complementary narratives rather than competing approaches. I develop this idea in two ways. Firstly, I apply this idea to adult-sibling relationships, which have received little attention in social studies. Empirical data for this presentation comes from 47 semi-structured interviews with adult siblings living in an urban context in Russia conducted in 2016. Secondly, I move beyond the narrow "being/doing" dichotomy and shift my interest to non-reflexive vs. self-conscious sibling relationships.

Firstly, I reveal the distinctive features of a narrative about non-reflexive sibling relationships. The basic idea behind this narrative is that siblings believe that their relationships do not depend on their actions. While this narrative partly resembles the idea of kinship-as-being (or given), I am expanding the concept of givenness and showing that it is not limited to nature alone. A good example is a perception that not only nature, but also other external forces such as fate or horoscopes, determine sibling relationships more than siblings themselves. Another example is 'normative thinking', a term I suggest by analogy with 'genetic thinking' (Nordqvist 2017). This term refers to how existing cultural norms regarding sibling responsibilities are meaningful in everyday life and determine sibling relationships. The emphasis on the role of external forces clearly reveals another feature of

this narrative. Namely, the idea that sibling relationships will develop in the future according to their own internal logic, without the influence of kin work in the present.

Secondly, I reveal the distinctive features of a narrative about self-conscious sibling relationships. This narrative emphasizes two different but interconnected ideas: how people do kinship through everyday practices, and how they become aware of the effect of these practices on their kinship relationships. While the first idea has received a lot of attention in performative and practical approaches to the study of kinship and family, the idea of “self-conscious kinship” (Howell 2001, 2003) has not been explored enough. One of a distinctive feature of self-conscious narrative is everyday sibling creativity. Both the creation of new traditions and personalization of existing ones clearly demonstrate not only the flexibility of sibling relationships, but also the reflexive nature of this flexibility. Creativity becomes a response to changing circumstances and awareness of these changes. Besides creativity, a good illustration of a narrative about self-consciousness is how siblings manage their relationships through negotiations and selectivity. Once again, my aim is not only to highlight that sibling relationships are reproduced through the practices of selection and negotiation, but also to demonstrate that these processes represent a conscious and thoughtful approach to relationships. In the same vein, I show that the past, present, and future of sibling relationships are strongly connected in this narrative: childhood relationships influence adulthood relationships, which become the basis for thinking about dynamics of future relationships. This is particularly evident in remarks of research participants that lack of a shared childhood experience causes bad relationships in adulthood. Unlike the first narrative, where the future of sibling relationships seems clear and does not depend on the participants, the future in the second narrative is vague, and kin work is needed to create the future.

Despite the fact that the two analyzed narratives may seem to contradict each other at first glance, they can actually coexist within the same interview and serve different purposes.

Gender Stereotypes and Their Role in Maternal Burnout in Belarus and Sweden

Olga Novash

Demographic and Family Research, Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences

The research problem of the suggested study is a maternal burnout defined as the situations where exhaustion occurs as a result of being physically and emotionally overwhelmed with one's maternal role which can lead not only to personality deformation of both mothers and children but also to negative trends in women's childbearing behavior and, as a result, in demographic processes in general. The purpose of this mixed methods research was to explore the role of social and gender stereotypes in maternal burnout in Belarus and Sweden which represent two countries with rather contrasting societal orders: one is dedicated to more traditional social values and norms, while another is famous for its' egalitarian social achievements. The ideas of risk society and individualization developed by U.Beck [1] [2], notion of reproduction of mothering constructed by N.Chodorow [3] as well as the term "burnout" originally introduced by H.Freudenberger [4] and further developed by C.Maslach [5] served as the theoretical and conceptual framework of the present study. Mothers from both investigated countries initially answered the questions of the written online survey and later those who expressed the desire participated in the qualitative semi-structured interviews. Methods of data statistical analysis together with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and method of comparative analysis allowed to make the following conclusions. There is no statistically significant relationship between countries of

residence and level of maternal burnout in two sample groups of Belarusian and Swedish mothers, which indicates that mothers from both more traditional and more egalitarian societies may experience maternal burnout. Meanwhile, certain distinctions are revealed in experiences of mothers living in different societal systems. The Belarusian participants feel higher level of burnout mostly due to overloading with household chores and caregiving work, since gender stereotypes reflecting more traditional division of domestic labor still prevail in their society. At the same time, women themselves are often not ready to share their responsibilities with their partners, being unconsciously conforming to traditional gender roles. Swedish respondents-mothers more often feel the sense of parental burnout due to the pressure of good mother ideology and social discourse reflecting increased value of the child in society. The study findings suggest that to promote further gender equality in parenthood domain measures on not only institutional level but also on micro-level aimed at overcoming women's self-stereotyping are need.

Friday - September 12, 2025

Session 6.1: Transnational Families

Intergenerational Relationships in Polish Transnational Families in Germany

Zuzanna Kapciak

Social Sciences, SWPS University

This presentation will explore intergenerational relations in transnational families (Bryceson, Vuorela 2002). The context of the study is Polish migration to Germany, which intensified after Poland joined the Schengen Area. Since the 2000s, these then-young migrants have been establishing their own families and now have children who are young adults. Thus, looking at the 2nd and 1.5 generation of migrants (Bartley, Spoonley 2008) in relation to their parents, the paper answers the question: How are family relations in transnational families perceived by both generations? Studying transnational families is particularly important, as migration significantly impacts family relationships (Baykara-Krumme, Fokkema 2018) and directly influences parenting styles (Slany et al. 2017). Family relations are of key importance for young adults, especially crucial in migrant families.

The data stem from multiperspective interviews with young adults (n=11, ages 18 to 29) and their parents (n=12, ages 46 to 68) conducted as part of the IRIMTA project, financed by the National Science Centre Poland. The data were subjected to thematic analysis (Braun, Clarke 2021), accompanied by case-comparative and relations-focused approaches.

The results of our research show a variety of relationships and motives of parents and their children. Families were assessed based on their own perceptions of relationships and cohesion. The vast majority of families describe their relationships as good, but we can also distinguish bad and effortful ones. In good relationships, people assess their bond positively and report no or only minor reservations. In effortful ones, when asked directly, people evaluate the relationship positively, but during the conversation difficult topics and/or emotions appear and are actively addressed. In bad relationships, the evaluation is negative. The modern research design allowed us to check whether the heard stories are consistent - most of them are. In a significant number of families, transnational experiences were an important factor in shaping the relationships. More than half of young adults imagine that their relationships with parents would be different if they lived in Poland. The presentation will cover what defines a good and bad relationships, along with a detailed discussion of effortful ones. It will also include findings on people's willingness to change aspects of their relationships.

The contribution of this paper is to the sociology of families and the sociology of migration, showing a new perspective on family relations and allowing for a better understanding of intergenerational transnationalism (Bartley, Spoonley 2008). The paper discusses not only the relationships themselves, but also the hypothetical perceptions of those relationships if migration had not occurred. It also highlights the importance of support in migrant parenthood and identifies the types of support most valued by young adults.

Transnational Childhood Experiences and Adulthood Trajectories: A Linked Lives Perspective Gintė Martinkėnė¹, Irma Budginaite-Mackine¹ & Sigita Kraniauskienė²

¹ Department of Sociology, Vilnius University

² Center for Social Change Studies, Klaipėda University

This paper explores how young adults who grew up in transnational families reflect on their life trajectories. Grounded in the linked lives perspective within life course research, it also engages with scholarship on transnationalism and its intersections with life course transitions to examine how individual pathways unfold within family and social contexts.

The study draws on qualitative in-depth interviews with 18 young adults (aged 18-35) in Lithuania who experienced transnational childhoods. Using timelining and visual mapping methods for data collection, it captures participants' reflections on significant life events and transitions. The analysis identifies three distinct life course narratives - linear, fragmented, and projective - that reveal varied ways young adults interpret their experiences. While some narratives emphasize continuity with family migration histories, others highlight disruption or the pursuit of alternative life paths. Linear narratives reflect a steady life progression, with transnational childhoods fostering mobility and growth. Fragmented narratives portray disjointed events and shifting responsibilities, complicating a cohesive life story. Projective narratives show a deliberate break from parental paths, driven by a pursuit of independence, stability, and a secure family life.

By integrating insights from transnationalism and life course studies, this paper contributes to research on transnational family life and the relational dimensions of life trajectories. It demonstrates how young adults navigate their transition to adulthood in the context of their transnational childhoods, shedding light on the broader significance of family and mobility histories.

Doing Family in the Transnational Context: War-induced Family Arrangements

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The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to an unprecedented displacement of millions of Ukrainians, fundamentally altering family structures and caregiving dynamics. With martial law preventing most men from leaving the country, Ukrainian families have been forcibly split across borders, resulting in transnational caregiving arrangements, economic dependencies, and shifting gender roles. Women with children, who make up the majority of displaced persons, navigate host country policies that simultaneously offer temporary protection and impose restrictions on mobility and employment (UNHCR, 2024).

This paper examines how displaced Ukrainian families navigate these challenges by maintaining relationships through digital communication, reverse remittances, and adapted caregiving roles to maintain their relationships. It also critically assesses how policies on forced migration influence family cohesion, imposed (im)mobilities, and gendered labor dynamics in war settings. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing policies that support both temporary protection and sustainable solutions for displaced families.

This study employs a qualitative and autoethnographic approach to explore the lived experiences of displaced Ukrainian women and their families. By drawing on personal narratives, it provides an insight on how transnational family ties shape migration aspirations and economic decision-making, foster cross-border mobilities. While host countries offer temporary protection, their policies impose restrictions on mobility and employment, affecting displaced women's access to financial independence and long-term integration. For instance, Ukrainian women in Germany experience divergent trajectories: those reliant on social benefits face constrained mobility due to state-imposed obligations such as mandatory language courses and mandatory non-stop schooling for children, while those entering the workforce – particularly in education – gain financial independence, potentially shifting traditional family power dynamics (Byelikova, 2024). In contrast, women in Poland and Czech Republic often remain economically dependent on remittances from spouses, including those serving in the Ukrainian Armed Forces, further entrenching their vulnerability.

By situating these experiences within the broader framework of transnational migration and wartime displacement, this paper contributes to discussions how legal constraints, gendered mobility, and migration patterns in forced displacement contexts are intertwined. The findings underscore the importance of policies that move beyond temporary protection to foster long-term stability and support for displaced families.

The Impact of Family and Intimate Life Experiences on Migration Decision-Making of Turkish Highly Skilled Women

Selenay Kaşkaya

Social Research Methodology, Hacettepe University

High-skilled migration is often framed as an economically motivated choice, yet the decision to migrate is far more complex, shaped by aspirations, life transitions, gendered experiences, and interactional dynamics. Beyond career advancement and financial considerations, migration decisions are deeply embedded in personal histories, social ties, and significant life events.

This study explores how highly skilled Turkish women who migrated to Germany and the Netherlands navigate migration decisions within the context of family and intimate relationships. Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, selecting highly skilled Turkish women who had migrated from Türkiye to Germany or the Netherlands between six months and ten years before the study. Eligible participants held at least a bachelor's degree and were employed in skilled professions, including white-collar jobs, skilled labor, and academia. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 20 highly skilled Turkish women, the findings reveal that pivotal life events such as motherhood, marriage, divorce, or meeting a significant other serve as critical turning points in migration decision-making. Approaching migration through a life course perspective, this study emphasizes the central role of family as a key influence at every stage of the migration process.

Family support emerged as a significant enabler, though not necessarily in financial terms. Nearly all participants emphasized that emotional encouragement from parents played a decisive role in making and implementing the migration decision. Empowered by their extended family members, many women chose to migrate for the well-being of the families of procreation. Notably, some participants migrated with their loved ones, including partners or their pets, demonstrating that family is not solely defined by legal or biological ties but by

emotional bonds and shared commitments. However, family and intimate relationships also functioned as potential barriers. Migration as a mother, migrating with a nuclear family or leaving older parents behind introduced emotional dilemmas and constraints. Life transitions such as divorce, marriage, or entering a new relationship also played a crucial role, as participants reconsidered their futures, personal autonomy, and long-term well-being within the migration decision-making.

This dual role of family as both a facilitator and a source of emotional conflict challenges dominant economic narratives of high-skilled migration and underscores the deeply interactional nature of mobility choices. By highlighting the interplay between life course transitions, family support, and migration aspirations, this study advocates for migration policies that recognize and prioritize family well-being, acknowledging that high-skilled migration is not merely an individual decision but an interconnected process.

Session 6.2: Families across the Life Course

The Impact of Parental Loss on Fertility Intentions: A Life Course Perspective

Samira Beringer

Family and Fertility, Federal Institute for Population Research

The death of a parent can be a critical event in the life course even for adult children. Such loss is associated with grief. It disrupts intergenerational relationships. It may also impact resources like financial or social support. Previous research focused on the role of intergenerational support in childcaring or how the loss of a parent is related to fertility behavior, with the limited existing studies showing mixed results. Yet, hardly any studies explored how the death of one's own parents influences fertility decisions. This study aims to investigate whether the loss of one's own parent changes short-term fertility intentions because fertility intentions can be perceived as the stage preceding fertility behavior, in which decision making takes place. The theoretical background of my study draws on grief theories, Value of Children, economic approaches and the Theory of Planned Behavior within a life course perspective.

The analysis utilizes data from 14 waves of the German panel study (pairfam) - a representative study with persons of three birth cohorts (1971-73, 1981-83, 1991-1993) who were interviewed annually since 2008. Linear fixed effects regression models are employed for the analysis to estimate the intra-individual changes in the intention to have a(nother) child within the next two years after the death of one's own mother or father, with separate models for each parent. An analytic sample of 8,683 individuals was used to analyze the impact of the death of the respondents' mother, of whom 399 experienced this loss during panel time. Similarly, an analytic sample of 7,996 individuals was used to analyze the death of their father, of whom 768 experienced this loss during panel time. Control variables include period (wave-dummies), age, parity, partnership status and the interaction with whether individuals were already parents before the current loss.

Preliminary results suggest that the loss of the father does not change the intention to have a(nother) child within the next two years. The impact of the event of a mother's death presents a nuanced picture: Individuals who were already parents before the event show decreasing intentions, whereas those who were childless exhibit higher intentions. This could be interpreted as a grief response, which also impacts the value of children, particularly reflected in the presence of existing children.

The results show that the death of one's parents is an important life event that can influence family planning, depending on individual's stage in the life course.

Home as a Relational Space: Family Dynamics and Housing Vulnerabilities in Contemporary Italy

Sara Nanetti

Department of Sociology, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

Housing is not a neutral or merely functional experience; rather, it is a process rich in cultural, social, and affective meanings. The home is both a physical space and a symbolic place, a crossroads of practices, expectations, and constraints that deeply shape daily life and

family relationships (Boccagni & Kusenbach, 2020). It reflects and reproduces social models but can also serve as a site for experimentation and transformation of gender, generational, and community relationships (Donati, 2011).

Social transformations over the past decades have multiplied family forms and redefined modes of inhabiting space. Whereas in the past, home was often associated with a stable and nuclear family model, today we witness an increasing plurality of family configurations and housing experiences (Morgan, 2011), which take on different meanings across generational cohorts. From this perspective, the home is not merely an economic asset but a relational infrastructure (Scabini & Rossi, 2000). It can be a place of hospitality and protection, but also of solitude and conflict, particularly in contexts of economic and housing vulnerability. The quality of domestic spaces thus influences the quality of relationships, just as social networks and housing policies shape individuals' ability to feel “at home” (Satta, Magaraggia & Camozzi, 2020).

This presentation explores the interplay between housing and family life in contemporary Italy, drawing on data from a national survey conducted by CISF, which investigates housing arrangements, intergenerational solidarity, and the lived experiences of diverse family forms. The study is based on a representative sample of 1,600 respondents, covering a broad spectrum of family structures, age groups, and socio-economic backgrounds. The sample includes nuclear families, multi-generational households, single-parent families, and individuals living alone, capturing the diversity of contemporary Italian living arrangements. The survey examines key dimensions such as housing tenure, mobility, financial constraints, household composition, and subjective well-being in relation to home life.

Our study reveals that the home is not merely a backdrop to family life but an active agent that structures relationships, expectations, and inequalities. While the dominant discourse still idealizes homeownership and stable family units, empirical findings highlight an increasing plurality of living arrangements, including multi-generational households, co-housing solutions, and single-parent families facing housing insecurity. The results indicate that family forms influence housing choices, with couples with children prioritizing homeownership and space, while single-parent and single-person households face higher housing vulnerability.

The research further explores how housing conditions shape relational dynamics. High levels of housing vulnerability correlate with increased perceptions of loneliness and lower relationship satisfaction. Conversely, strong family ties and community engagement mitigate housing distress, supporting well-being and stability. Gender disparities persist in the domestic sphere, with women shouldering disproportionate household responsibilities, reinforcing traditional gender roles despite shifts in family structures.

By framing home as a relational and intersectional construct, this research challenges monolithic understandings of family life and emphasizes the need for inclusive policies that address the diversity of family experiences. The findings contribute to a broader sociological reflection on how economic constraints, demographic transitions, and social norms shape contemporary family formations and their intimate spaces.

[Tracking Ambivalence in Family Definitions at Different Stages of the Family Life Cycle](#)

Paula Pustulka ¹ & Małgorzata Sikorska ²

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The paper investigates how definitions of family differ at subsequent stages of the family life cycle (FLC) in Poland, where multiple framings of family collide. Highlighting temporal changes in ambivalence, we discern how certain stages of family life shape the main elements of family definitions at an individual level. Three distinct, temporally embedded stages of becoming and being a parent are analysed in relation to ambivalence on the basis of data originating from two qualitative research projects conducted in Poland. These feature in-depth interviewees (n=112) with individuals at these three stages of family life. We show that (1) ambivalence is a feature of family definitions when awaiting first-time parenthood, (2) it decreases for those parenting young children, and (3) becomes even more uncommon for those at the empty nest stage of family life. While the analysis reveals weakening ambivalence in family definitions, it also points to tensions between 'doing family' (family practices) and 'being family' (institutional perspective) as definitional approaches sociologically reflecting how people in Poland frame family. We posit that sociological ambivalence can be conceptually used to understand the meanings of family at distinct stages of people's parenting lives.

[Coping with Failure in Second Chance Education. How Young Adults Negotiate Pro-longed Transition into Adulthood and the Familial Influence Of Their Career](#)

Hatice Altindal

School of Education, Bergische Universität Wuppertal

Second-chance education in Germany offers an opportunity to achieve "Abitur" (highest general school degree that qualifies for tertiary education). It is a chance to correct the possible wrong decision due to an early stratifying general school system, which brings along the problem of inequality in participation in education. With the second chance education students are given the opportunity to pursue their educational aspirations, which previously existed to a large extent but were not realized. By graduating, students try to find their place in society and (re-)integrate themselves into it. Integration here means that the actor is integrated into networks, finds recognition and a place for themselves in society.

The students enrolled in second-chance education programs come from diverse family backgrounds. These family models range from traditional nuclear families to single-parent households, blended families, and extended family networks. Each family model presents unique dynamics that can significantly influence students' educational success and biographies. For instance, the level of support provided by different family structures can vary considerably, impacting the students' ability to persevere and succeed in their academic endeavors. Families that offer robust emotional, financial, and motivational support may provide a more solid foundation for students to thrive in second-chance education settings. Conversely, those with limited resources or strained relationships might present additional challenges that students must navigate to achieve their academic goals.

Now the question arises as to why these students want to be students again, even if they may have to give up their job, go through stressful phases and live or continue to live in precarious circumstances in order to do so, and what influence their family has on this desire. In this regard, my research questions are: What are the occasions and educational paths that lead to attendance in institutions of second chance education? How do young adults navigate through these reversed status passages? How do young adults interpret their educational biographical success / failure and how do they dealing with them? All of the above questions are examined with regard to family. How do different family structures and their emotional, financial, and motivational support influence students' educational pathways. How do

familial expectations and obligations affect students' educational aspirations and achievements in education settings?

My work will be a qualitative longitudinal analysis. The biographical interviews were conducted and repeated once a year with the same students for three years. 34 interviews were conducted.

Session 7.1: Alternative Families

Single Women Living with Animals: Human-Animal Relationships as an Alternative Family Form

Esra Gedik

Department of Sociology, Bozok University

As traditional family structures dissolve and processes of individualization accelerate, not only human relationships but also human-animal relationships are undergoing transformation. For single women, animals are not merely pets but beings with whom they form emotional bonds, develop shared living practices, and establish family-like relationships. This study aims to examine the experiences of single women living with animals and to consider this way of life as an alternative family model.

The research is based on in-depth interviews conducted with women from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds in Turkey who live alone with various types of animals. Through these interviews, the study explores how women position their animals as family members, the emotional and practical dimensions of these relationships, how they negotiate societal norms, and how living with animals shapes their daily lives. Furthermore, it discusses how women redefine concepts such as family, loneliness, and belonging.

In this context, the study argues that the concept of family is not limited to anthropocentric and heteronormative frameworks and that human-animal relationships also offer a form of "being a family." It suggests that women living alone with animals engage with traditional family structures and narratives of loneliness in different ways, pointing to reconfigured family forms based on interdependence, care, and emotional attachment.

Situated within feminist theory and human-animal studies, this research aims to contribute to discussions on the plurality and transformation of family structures in modern society, offering a new perspective on alternative family models.

The Experience of Being a Prisoner's Family

Dilek Almas

Department of Sociology, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University

Although imprisonment is a process focused on the prisoner, it directly affects the prisoner's family. In this process, women serve as a buffer mechanism in the transitions between the presence and absence of the prisoner within the family. As single parents, they strive to take on both maternal and paternal roles, minimizing the disadvantages of having a father who is incarcerated. These disadvantages are not unique to prisoners' families, yet they experience them disproportionately due to imprisonment. Consequently, women take on a heavy financial and emotional burden, struggling to maintain balance within shifting roles, power dynamics, and relationships with the prisoner, children, extended family, and society. While international studies extensively examine the experiences of both prisoners and their families, research in Turkey remains more prisoner-focused, often evaluating the lives of those left behind within policy frameworks. This study investigates how family life transforms for women during the imprisonment process. Rooted in the concept of symbiotic relationships, I conducted a digital ethnographic study. Over two years, I engaged in repeated

interviews with 20 women, complemented by observations and analyses of social media platforms actively used by prisoners' wives. The incarceration of men deeply disrupts the structure and emotional dynamics of families. Women struggle to establish financial and emotional stability in the face of these changes. Most of these women, belonging to low-income groups, make significant efforts to provide for both their children and incarcerated spouses. Despite these challenges, I observed that women develop various resilience strategies and rebuild their lives with a strong determination to persevere. Women, who strengthen their resilience in different ways, continue to show commitment to their families while also becoming more empowered as both women and parents.

Roots and Rise: The Role of Family in the Social Mobility of Roma in Turkey

Ali Egi

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This study examines the pivotal role of family in the social mobility of ethnic minorities. As an institution that directly influences an individual's life chances, the family is a key determinant in social mobility processes. Focusing on individuals from the Roma community in Turkey who have achieved middle- and upper-class status, this research explores the support mechanisms provided by families, their influence on educational and occupational choices, and their role in coping with social discrimination. The family, as a key component of life chances, can either facilitate or hinder mobility by providing individuals with economic, cultural, and social capital. In this context, the study analyzes the impact of economic structures within families, parents' educational and occupational backgrounds, social networks, and cultural values on the social mobility experiences of Roma individuals.

Conducted between 2019 and 2023 in various cities across Turkey using qualitative research methods, this study involved in-depth interviews with 33 middle- and upper-class Roma participants. The findings reveal that families' economic stability, their emphasis on education, and their strategies for managing social relations directly influence individuals' career paths. A stable income source within the family enables children to complete their education, while social networks serve as a key factor in supporting professional advancement. Additionally, due to the societal perception of Roma identity, some families choose to conceal their ethnic background, whereas others embrace it and instil a strong sense of ethnic belonging in their children. Parents' strategies for coping with discrimination and exclusion contribute to overcoming the barriers that Roma individuals may face in social and professional life.

In conclusion, the family is a significant institution that both shapes individuals' life chances and supports social mobility processes. Among the key factors enabling Roma individuals to advance in education and the workforce are their families' economic stability, commitment to education, and accumulation of social capital. This study aims to contribute to a more comprehensive sociological understanding by emphasizing the crucial role of the family in the social mobility processes of ethnic minorities.

A Scoping Review on the Well-being of Childless Women in Older Age

Ivett Szalma ¹ & Judit Takács ¹

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As fertility rates decline and voluntary childlessness becomes more accepted, understanding the long-term implications of childlessness is increasingly relevant in family sociology. This scoping review examines the well-being of childless older adults, with a particular focus on their social networks, satisfaction, and overall quality of life. By systematically reviewing studies using search terms related to childlessness, parental status, and aging—such as network, well-being, loneliness, support, end of life, and life satisfaction—this research aims to map the existing knowledge on how the absence of children affects social connections and subjective well-being in later life. We decided to review published academic articles only available through Scopus and Web of Science. Previous findings suggest that childless individuals may experience both advantages and disadvantages: while some studies highlight increased risks of loneliness and limited support in old age (Wenger et al. 2000), others emphasize greater independence and alternative forms of social engagement (Allen – Wiles 2013). By synthesizing both quantitative and qualitative studies, this review will identify key patterns and gaps in the literature, providing a nuanced perspective on aging without children. The findings can contribute to a broader understanding of social and emotional well-being in later life, with implications for family sociology and aging research.

Sessions 7.2: Family Caregiving

Who Takes Care of the Elderly When We Leave? Negotiating Care in Transnational Families in the Nordic-Baltic Region

Irma Budginaite-Mackine ¹, Maarja Saar ², Charlotte Melander ³, Anna Wojtynska ⁴, Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir ⁴, Svitlana Odyets ¹, Gintė Martinkėnė ¹ & Iryna Huliuk ¹

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The intersection of migration and aging poses significant challenges for transnational families, particularly in the Nordic-Baltic region, where welfare systems, migration policies, and cultural expectations influence the experiences of migrant caregivers. While transnational parenting has been widely studied, much less is known about how migrants manage the care of aging parents across borders. This paper introduces the TransCareNet project, which explores the complexities of negotiating transnational elderly care in the Nordic-Baltic region.

Adopting a comparative and intersectional perspective, the project examines how migrants in Sweden, Iceland, and Lithuania navigate their transnational caregiving responsibilities within diverse legal, economic, and social contexts. Building on transnational family studies, the research conceptualizes elderly care as part of the circulation of care, shaped by institutional frameworks, gendered expectations, and emotional obligations. It also places transnational caregiving in the broader context of welfare state policies, shedding light on disparities in access to care services and how migration policies structure care arrangements.

This paper will outline the project's conceptual framework, research questions, and insights gained from literature reviews conducted in the included countries. These reviews indicate that transnational elderly care remains primarily overlooked in migration and social policy debates, placing a heavy burden on migrant families. On this basis, the paper develops a conceptual framework and theoretical lens for the study of transnational elderly care, emphasizing the significant inequalities among different migrant groups, depending on variations in legal status, socioeconomic resources, and gender, that influence migrants' ability to manage elderly care across borders. To provide empirical examples, it draws on a secondary analysis of interview materials from two studies focusing on mobile Lithuanians conducted in 2018-2019 and 2022-2023.

Understanding how migrants navigate fragmented welfare landscapes and balance formal and informal care networks is essential for developing more inclusive policies. By examining the intersection of migration and aging, this study contributes to ongoing discussions on transnational family solidarity, migration governance, and the role of social policies in shaping care arrangements across borders.

Women's Informal Caregiving for Older/Disabled Family Members and Self-Rated Health in Turkey

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Long-term care for the older adults and individuals with disabilities in Turkey is organized around public and private care institutions, community care services, and informal caregiving. Despite the rapidly growing population in need of care, social policies have largely prioritized family-based care over diverse, affordable, and accessible alternatives. Women are primarily responsible for caregiving, which in turn affects their employment trajectories, health, and overall well-being.

This study examines the association between informal caregiving, employment status, and self-rated health. Using the TurkStat 2019 dataset, we conducted descriptive and regression analyses on a sample of 7,647 women aged 18 to 65. Almost 10 percent of this sample reported providing care at least once a week for someone due to old age, chronic health conditions, or disability. Of those providing care, over 60% cared for a family member, and over more than a quarter provided care for 20 or more hours per week. Despite this intensive caregiving burden, nearly 35% of these women were also employed full-time.

Preliminary regression analyses revealed that family caregiving was not significantly associated with self-rated health when controlling age, marital status, work status, education level, and caregiving time. However, employment was positively linked to self-rated health, while the interaction between employment and caregiving showed no significant association.

These findings suggest a complex relationship between caregiving, employment, and self-rated health. The association between work and health may be bidirectional: healthier individuals are more likely to work, while employment may offer social, psychological, and financial benefits that enhance well-being. The lack of a clear association between caregiving and health raised questions about potential moderating factors such as social support, coping mechanisms, and socioeconomic status. We will investigate how these moderators influence this association by performing additional analyses by including more recent waves of the datasets and expanding the sample size.

It is also critical to assess how long-term care policies in Turkey contribute to gender disparities in employment and well-being. Current policies largely assume that family caregiving—primarily performed by women—is a sustainable solution, overlooking its long-term consequences. Recognizing caregiving not only as a responsibility but also as a factor potentially influencing women's well-being and economic participation is essential. Addressing these challenges through gender-sensitive policies that expand formal care services, provide caregiver support, and integrate workplace accommodations would help create a more equitable and sustainable long-term care system.

Social Capital and Caregiving: A Gender Perspective on Support Networks in Italy

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Caregiving is a multidimensional social practice intertwined with gender dynamics, social capital, and support networks. This study contributes to the debate on family diversity by exploring personal networks and caregiving experiences for frail older adults and individuals with disabilities in Italy. Conducted within the PRIN-funded project Social Capital in Care Practices in Italy: Caregiving and Social Support, the research adopts a multimodal approach, combining dyadic interviews and personal network analysis techniques to examine the relational configurations in which caregivers are embedded. Data collection involved 50

dyads, each composed of a caregiver and a reference person (who supports the caregiver), with particular attention to gender differences. The study aims to explore the role of social capital, gender dynamics, and support networks in caregiving, focusing on perceived well-being and the ability to cope with caregiving responsibilities.

The analysis of interviews confirms that caregiving tasks entail significant emotional and physical costs (Sabo & Chin, 2021), particularly for women, who report higher stress levels than men, especially in cases of intensive caregiving commitments (Willert & Minnotte, 2021). Furthermore, gender dynamics shape caregiving experiences in specific ways: men tend to focus primarily on practical tasks and are less likely to seek out support services, whereas women adopt a more relational approach, closely monitoring services and employing external support to manage both practical and emotional aspects of care (Kokorelias et al., 2021). At the same time, the availability of social capital influences caregivers' skills and well-being. Specifically, bonding social capital, characterized by dense and cohesive networks, provides immediate support but may limit access to new information and alternative resources. In contrast, bridging social capital, based on weaker and more diverse ties, facilitates the acquisition of innovative knowledge and the management of caregiving relationships (Roth, 2020). Consistent with Baik et al. (2024), caregivers who benefit from stronger formal and informal social support tend to develop virtuous cycles of reciprocity, improving both their psychological well-being and the quality of care they provide.

The study's findings confirm the central role of social capital and gender dynamics in caregiving, suggesting a critical reassessment of their function. While support networks serve as protective factors for caregivers' well-being, their impact varies depending on the structure and quality of social ties. Gender differences emerge as a key variable: female caregiving is characterized by greater emotional and managerial involvement, with a significant impact on stress levels and quality of life, whereas male caregiving remains more limited to practical tasks. This role segmentation is further corroborated by empirical evidence but raises questions about caregivers' ability to adapt to more equitably distributed caregiving models. From this perspective, social capital cannot be considered solely as an enabling factor but must be analyzed in terms of its capacity to expand or constrain support opportunities. These findings call for broader reflection on intervention strategies, suggesting that strengthening bridging networks and fostering greater integration between formal and informal support systems could enhance the balance between caregiving and individual well-being while reducing gender inequalities in care provision.