

RN13 Newsletter

Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives

Research Network 13 of the European Sociological Association (ESA)



Sounds of the network ...

What has happened in RN13 recently? What is happening in the close future? In this section we want to keep you up-to-date.

Invitation for Membership

To those of you who are researching on family issues, but are not RN13 members until now: We want to invite you to join us! This will cost you only 10 Euros for two years on top of your ESA membership fee. But it will make you part of a European network with regular conferences and own publications. Further, you will regularly receive this newsletter by e-mail. Becoming a RN13 member is easy. If you are not an ESA member yet, you can sign up for RN13 membership together with signing up of ESA membership: <http://www.europeansociology.org/member/> If you already are an ESA member in good standing you can sign up for RN13 membership using the following link: http://www.europeansociology.org/membership_rn_affiliation/ If you have forgotten your ESA ID or if you need any other information about your ESA member status please ask to the ESA secretary Gisèle Tchinda-Falcucci: esa@europeansociology.org

— Detlev Lück & Jacques-Antoine Gauthier

Upcoming Conferences / Call for Papers

« New families » special issue of *L'Année Sociologique*

Families have often been cited to be one of the most important social institutions: families fulfill key material and emotional needs, and play a major role in integrating individuals in society. Although families continue to fulfill these roles, the family as a social institution has undergone dramatic transformations in the last years. The delay in the transition into adulthood, lower fertility and marriage rates, the steep increase in divorce and separation, the legal recognition of same-sex marriage, the diffusion of cohabitation and step families, or the new

assisted reproductive technologies have been some of the main changes in contemporary family configurations. These demographic transformations have not happened at the same time or to the same degree in all countries. Regarding the internal organization of families, women's increasing labour market participation and the need to balance paid and unpaid work remain questions of interest for researchers and public policies. The problematic articulation of family and work is not a new question, but the problem is far from being solved, as illustrated by recent comparative research on time use data. Gender inequalities persist, even if men have increased their

participation in domestic and care work. Public policies have tackled these issues in different ways, and various alternatives have been discussed, some of them in collaboration with the private sector and with employers. The objective of this call for papers for *L'Année Sociologique* is to help us understand the reality and everyday lives of new contemporary families. We seek papers that make an empirical contribution to the interplay between family life and other contemporary social transformations: These are some of the questions that might be addressed in the contributions to this special issue. We expect papers to present sound empirical analyses –quantitative or qualitative–, focusing on one case or with a comparative perspective. Both papers in English and French can be considered for publication. Deadlines: A first draft of the contributions is expected by September 3rd 2017, to be published in the second issue of the journal in 2018. Potential contributors are invited to contact the coordinators of this special issue.

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Demographic Change, Women's Emancipation and Public Policy: Interrogating a Divisive Nexus – Gender and Intersectional Perspectives.

An International Workshop organised by the Chair of Sociology/Social Inequality and Gender with the Marie Jahoda Visiting Professor Programme in International Gender Studies Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany), 18-20 April 2018

Women have been the subject of demographic research and politics for the last 200 years. Based on the unquestioned assumption of procreation as a 'natural fact,' women became the primary objects of study of demography as well as – involuntarily – causal agents of demographic imbalances. Their 'fertility behaviour' further became the main indicator for demographic developments. Not only does this limited perspective contribute to the naturalisation of the gender order, it also implies that women's emancipation is the cause of low reproduction rates in Western nation states. At the same time, under the surface, not all women are addressed in the same way in demography. Instead, such 'interpellations' are structured by race, class, ability and age. Against this backdrop, the workshop aims to widen and strengthen the discussion about demography, gender order and public policy by developing new approaches and explanations informed by gender and intersectional perspectives as well as critically examine the epistemological and methodological foundations of current demography. Another aim

is to establish a European-wide network of critical gender and intersectionality researchers with respect to these issues.

We are interested in contributions for the themes named below and for which we propose the following crosscutting issues: Contributions that

- deal with historical and/or contemporary perspectives;
- are substantiated in, or linked to, concepts of intersectionality, feminist theory and gender studies, critical race theory and postcolonial studies, approaches for analysing classism;
- have a regional or national or European focus and compare regions or nation-states from post-socialist perspectives;
- examine social practices and/or social and/or symbolic structures (discourses) at an analytical level;
- study specific social fields and/or relations between different social fields, such as: politics, media, science and research, economics, medicine;
- study specific policies and/or their relations to one another, especially: family, demographics, migration, reproductive technologies, gender equality, and/or the state, at either a European or global level;
- analyse critiques, concepts and/or the influence of social movements.

We welcome both theoretical and empirical proposals, in particular those concerning the following themes:

1. Challenging Theories and Methods in Demographic Research: The focus on women in demographic research is embedded in a – regularly self-diagnosed – limited range of theory and methods like the "Theory of Demographic Transition," rational choice theories and quantitative methods. Therefore, we are looking for contributions addressing (a) critical discussions of established theories and methods in demographic research, e.g. works that examine the epistemological foundations or the restrictions of quantitative methods. Especially we are looking for (b) historical and contemporary insights into social categorisations through statistics, the main methodological instrument and a legitimizing tool in demographic research and policies. We are also interested in (c) new perspectives and approaches that challenge current positions in demographic research and/or that innovatively link demographics with critical approaches such as intersectionality, feminist studies and postcolonial studies.
2. Social Constructions of Gender, Parenthood and 'Having a Child' in Demographic Discourses: As

mentioned above, ‘women as mothers’ are the focus of demographics, whereas men and ‘men as fathers’ are seen to be of minor importance. Hence, we are looking for explorations of the social construction of femininity and masculinity, as well as motherhood and fatherhood and/or heteronormativity in demographic discourses. Inherently connected with the construction of gender is the societal perception of having children or not having them. Based on an understanding of procreation as ‘natural fact’ and the norm of ‘having a child’, child-free women have experienced severe discrimination just like non-conformist negotiations of motherhood (e.g. “regretting motherhood”) have been marginalized. Therefore, we ask for contributions illuminating processes of normalisation and/or comparing perceptions of having children and living child-free in different (trans)national contexts.

3. Reproductive Technologies (RTs) Between Individual Salvation and Pro-natalist Governance: ‘Involuntary childlessness’ has functioned as legitimation for promoting and funding reproductive technologies like artificial insemination, in vitro fertilisation or surrogacy. However, due to ethical concerns, any medical developments have been continuously accompanied by negotiations about appropriate policy frameworks. At the same time, nation-states integrated RTs into their population policies. We are looking for contributions discussing these tensions. In what way are RTs instruments of pro-natalist governance? How are feminist perspectives dealing with the ambivalence of women’s reproductive rights and state interests in stabilising a ‘traditional’ gender order? We are also looking for contributions that consider RTs to more broadly include contraception and termination of pregnancy, as the use of contraception by women is often named a further ‘cause’ for declining fertility rates.
4. Policy Analyses on Demographic Change and Women’s Emancipation: Demographics is an inherently political topic; in particular, discussions about ‘care chains’ and ‘a crisis of reproduction’ since they raise questions about the alignment, justification and efficiency of past and current policies. Here, we are looking for contributions dealing with the following questions: How is the ‘demographic challenge’ balanced with efforts of women’s emancipation and gender equality, especially in vital political fields of Western welfare states like family, labour and internal affairs? How are global perspectives, particularly migration and the global south, incorporated into (Western-)national and European population policies? What are the positions and influences of social movements and NGOs?

Both junior and senior scholars are invited to submit an abstract (between 500 and 800 words on the

topic, objectives and research questions, plus, if applicable, the empirical background of the paper) in the form of a word- or pdf-document. Abstracts should include FULL contact details, especially your name, institutional affiliation, plus mailing and e-mail address. **Abstracts should be sent to Heike Kahlert and Daniela Heitzmann (conference-sozsug@rub.de) by September 15 th , 2017 (for more information about the organising chair, see: www.sowi.rub.de/sozsug/index.html.en .** Authors will be notified of the acceptance or rejection of their proposal by October 15 th , 2017.

The workshop is an opportunity to discuss work in progress and research results, as well as form networks for further international collaboration. Therefore, papers will be discussed in small groups. These groups will work together throughout the whole workshop. The papers (with a maximum length of 7.000 words) are due on January 31 st , 2018, and will be delivered to participants of a given working group. All participants are expected to have read the papers in advance. During the workshop, the authors will introduce their papers briefly, and each participant will comment on one paper. Selected papers will be published.

Note: Unfortunately, no funding, fee waiver, travel or other bursaries can be offered for attending the workshop. The workshop fee (approx. 100 €) will cover conference materials and catering during coffee and lunch breaks.

New Publications on Family Issues

- Homanen, R. (2017). Making valuable mothers in Finland: assessing parenthood in publicly provided maternity healthcare. *The Sociological Review*, 65: 2, 353-368.
- Homanen, R. (2017). Enabling and controlling parenthood in publicly provided maternity healthcare: becoming a parent in Finland. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 39: 3, 443-457.
- Homanen, R. (2013). *Doing Pregnancy, the Unborn, and the Maternity Healthcare Institution*. Doctoral thesis in Women's Studies. Tampere University Press, Tampere. (Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 1797).
- Schwiter, K., and Baumgarten, D. (2017). Stay-at-home fathers on the wane - in comes daddy-day! Changing practices of fathering in German-speaking countries. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 7(1), 83-87.
- Tiitinen, S., Homanen, R., Lindfors, P., and Ruusuvoori, J. (2014). Approaches used in investigating family support in transition to parenthood. *Health Promotion International*, 29: 3, 518-527.

A Glance into Current European Family Research

by RITA CAVALLOTTI & FRANCESCO MARCALETTI, UNIVERSITAT INTERNACIONAL DE CATALUNYA (E)



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Intergenerational solidarity within family A research project ongoing in Spain

In developed societies, the risks of a crisis of intergenerational solidarity are becoming more evident due to increasing structural imbalances between generations (Binstock 2010). The population ageing represents the context within which conflicts between generations for the distribution of resources may arise at every level of social life. Although at the level of local communities and families, intergenerational solidarity appears to persist, other kinds of pressures seem to increase the distance that separates generations (Donati 2015). Within this frame, the aim of the research “Intergenerational Solidarity within the Family” of IESF-UIC (Institute for advanced studies on family of the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya), currently ongoing in the frame of the Banco de Santander’s Cátedra “IsFamily”, was to analyse the dimensions characterising intergenerational solidarity in Spain.

The research has been defined in close connection with the project “I Don’t Want to Be Inactive - A Longer Life: a Generational Challenge and an Opportunity for Society”, promoted by Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan (UCSC) (Rossi et al. 2014). Inspired by the results of the Italian study, the IESF-UIC research project proposed to re-apply in Spain the same kind of study, while adopting a series of changes. In analogy to the Italian project, a relational approach (Donati 2013) was pursued and the target population was defined as people aged between 65 and 74 years. This proposal takes advantage of already tested methodology and research tools, and as well the opportunity to carry out comparative analyses of main tendencies emerging in both countries, although sampling strategies have been different (probabilistic in Italy, quota sampling in Spain). Thus, while keeping the analytical core of the study already carried out in Italy, the Spanish research has been enriched with further analytical elements, both specific for the national context and

for deepening the intergenerational solidarity dimensions within family.

The final goal of the analyses is to reinterpret the relational (sociological) perspective applied to the study of intergenerational solidarity within family, as well as classic “Bengtson & Roberts” theory on intergenerational solidarity (Bengtson & Roberts 1991). In other words, on the one hand the research goal is to describe and interpret the dimensions of intergenerational solidarity in Spain in the light of the quantity and quality of the relations exchanging resources, individual goals, norms, and values within family, and which extend to other relevant social spheres (e.g. neighbourhood and friendship networks). Specific variables have been included into the questionnaire in order to respond to this research question. On the other hand, a second research goal is to analyse the collected data in the light of the taxonomy of dimensions of intergenerational family cohesion – e.g. association, affection, consensus, resource sharing, the strength of familism norms, and the opportunity structure for interaction – analysed by Bengtson and Roberts (1991) as elements whose interrelationship explains the intergenerational solidarity. The question related to this second research goal is whether it is possible – based on Spanish data – to confirm the same kind of interrelationships among the elements explaining intergenerational solidarity within family, or whether other subsets of interrelationships may be identified.

The survey questionnaire was composed of 99 questions, covering several topics: family relations and intergenerational relations within family, familial and friendship networks, attitudes towards other generations, gratefulness and equality feelings, health conditions and leisure habits, ICT use, being in a paid job, participation into volunteering activities and the socio-political sphere, social capital, values, representations of the elder condition, incomes and economic situation. The field research, which extended from November to December 2016, led to the collection of 629 completed interviews in a quota sample of 65-74 year old residents with children alive, across the whole Spain. The final sample used for the analyses sum 608 valid cases (males 46,7%, female 53,3%; 65-69 years old 53,6%, 70-74 years old 46,4%).

We used the dimensions “intensity of intergenerational help given” by the respondents and “total amount of intergenerational help given” as proxy variables measuring intergenerational solidarity. Preliminary exploratory multivariate analysis of the variance (MANOVA) show the relevance of structural relational dimensions above other individual characteristics or descriptive dimensions (Tab. 1). The analyses show meaningful results – in terms of statistically meaningful differences in the mean values explained by the independent variable – only when the independent variables are “living alone or not” and “living with a partner or not”.

Tab. 1 – Intensity and total amount of help given. MANOVA results

Independent variable	Dependent variables	Mean	Box's M Sig.	Levene's test Sig.	Wilks' Lambda Sig.	F Sig.	Eta squared
Sex	Male	6,76	0,578	0,448	0,499		
	Female	6,76					
	Male	10,60					
	Female	10,15					
Living alone	No	7,05	0,021	0,016	0,000	0,000 ⁽¹⁾	0,034
	Yes	5,31					
	No	10,83					
	Yes	7,98					
Living with a partner	No	5,61	0,162	0,034	0,001	0,001 ⁽²⁾	0,028
	Yes	7,30					
	No	9,46					
	Yes	11,07					
Living with children	No	7,23	0,029	0,227	0,352		
	Yes	6,70					
	No	11,05					
	Yes	10,39					
Using internet connection	No	6,75	0,694	0,714	0,957		
	Yes	6,77					
	No	10,38					
	Yes	10,30					
Chronic illness	No	6,86	0,388	0,701	0,603		
	Yes	6,55					
	No	10,57					
	Yes	9,90					

⁽¹⁾ For $p < 0,025$. ⁽²⁾ For $p < 0,05$

These results will be made object of further analyses. At the same time, the survey results will be contextualised within the frame of a review of the international literature on intergenerational solidarity between generations and of the research projects devoted to the topic. Furthermore, both the setting of the survey and the interpretation of its results, will acquire more relevance when compared to findings for Spain, arising from the analyses of international surveys, such as ESS (European Social Survey), EVS (European Values Survey), or SHARE (Survey on Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe).

Updates about the research are available at <http://www.uic.es/en/iesf/news> and <https://www.researchgate.net/project/The-intergenerational-solidarity-within-the-family>.

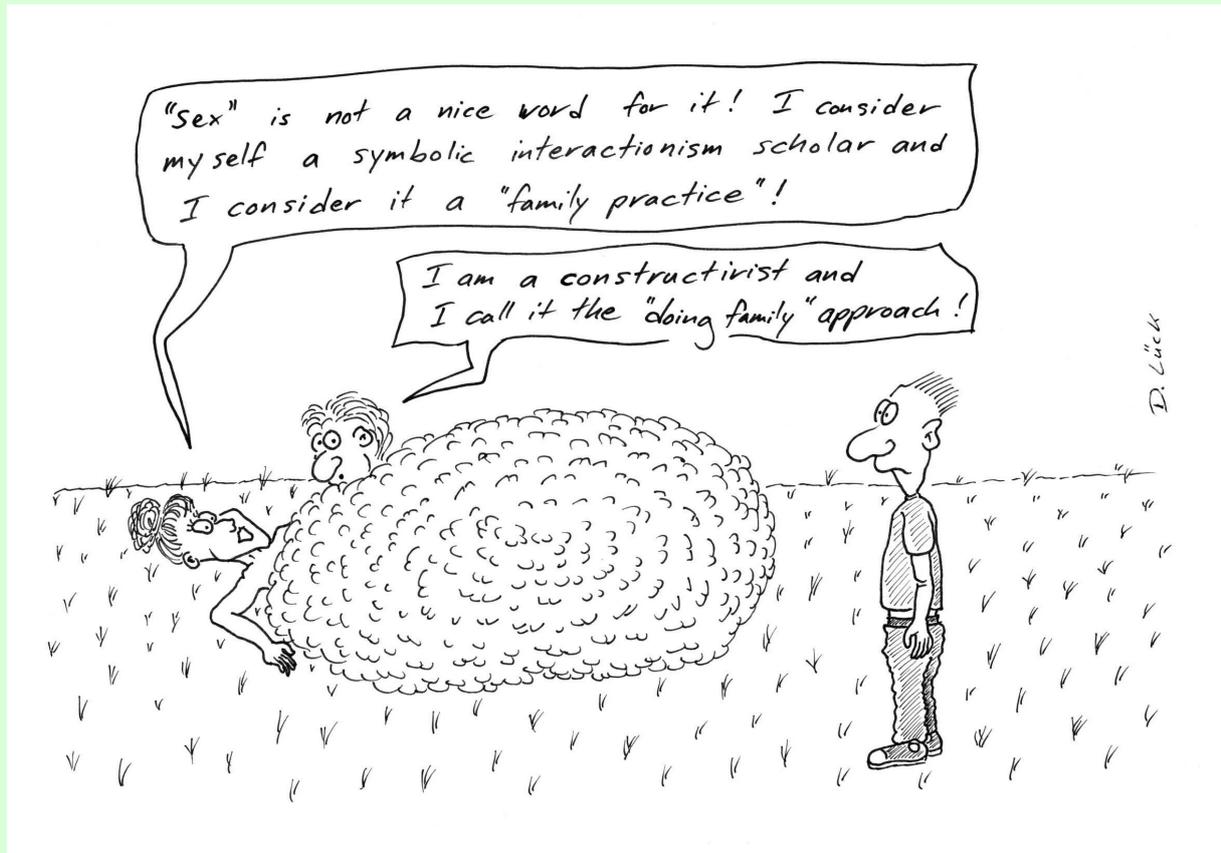
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- Rossi, G.; Boccacin, L.; Bramanti, D. & Meda, S. G. (2014): Active Ageing: Intergenerational Relationships and Social Generativity. in: Riva, G. et al. (eds.): *Active Ageing and Healthy Living*. Amsterdam: IOS Press, pp. 57-68.

Cartoon



By Detlev Lück

The floor is yours ...

- Do you have contents for the next RN13 Newsletter (30. September 2017)?
- Do you have new English publications on family issues?
- Do you know about new English publications which you recommend reading?
- Do you know about upcoming conferences or other events?
- Do you have an open position or a job to offer - or are you looking for a position?
- Do you have a research projects which you would like to present in a short article?
- **Please contact:** jacques-antoine.gauthier@unil.ch and detlev.lueck@bib.bund.de. **The next deadline will be September 15th 2017.**