

**ESA RESEARCH NETWORK ON SOCIOLOGY OF FAMILIES AND  
INTIMATE LIVES**

**REPORT 2003-2005**

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## **1. Committee elected in 2003 and main aims for 2003-2005**

At the business meeting that took place in Murcia, Spain (6<sup>th</sup> ESA Conference), the members of the network elected the following Committee:

Karin Wall (Coordinator)

Co-chairs: Bernadette Bawin, Ulla Bjornberg, Julia Brannen, Eric Widmer, Wolfgang Walter.

The members of the RN Families and Intimate Lives also discussed the various ways of strengthening the network and decided that it would be important to implement the following activities/objectives during the period 2003-2005:

- To organize an interim meeting in order to allow for an in-depth discussion of on-going research on one or two specific themes;
- To organize a data-base (preferably through a web-site) of all the members of the network containing information on their contacts, research projects and recent publications;

## **2. Activities in 2003-2005**

### **2.1 Organization of the interim meeting “Lisbon Workshop on Contemporary Families”, 3-4 March 2005.**

The main aim of this meeting was to provide an arena for in-depth exchanges on specific themes that dominate contemporary research on the family. The meeting was organized around two workshops: *Work, family and Welfare States* and *Family Interactions throughout the Lifecourse*. There were also two plenary sessions and a final reporting session which allowed for keynote presentations and a more general discussion of research results and current trends in research on families and intimate lives. The complete programme may be found in Annex I.

The meeting was hosted by the ICS (Instituto de Ciências Sociais, University of Lisbon) and was financed by the ESA, by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT-Portugal), by the University of Lisbon Foundation, by the Calouste Gulbenkian

Foundation and by the ICS (Final Budget: 10.950 Euros). The total number of participants was 72. This number included 54 researchers working on the family and 18 PhD students. The list of participants and the list of abstracts may be found in Annex I.

## **2.2 Website**

A website for the RN Families and Intimate Lives - <http://www.ics.ul.pt/esa> - was set up at the ICS/University of Lisbon. The committee coordinator designed a questionnaire which was sent out to all the researchers who had at some time participated in the ESA paper sessions on the family. The questionnaire asked for information on addresses, personal websites, main research interests, on-going projects and recent publications. In September 2005 92 researchers had registered and were part of the database. This represents the core of the network but there are many researchers that participate irregularly (they are, nevertheless, on our mailing list so they always receive information on the activities of the network).

In order to update the information, the website allows new members to register and other members to update the information they provided in 2004-2005.

The website also has information on the Lisbon interim meeting (programme, list of participants, abstracts, papers) and information on the family paper sessions at the 7<sup>th</sup> ESA Conference (final programme, list of abstracts).

## **3. 7<sup>th</sup> ESA Conference – Torun, September 2005**

### **3.1 Paper sessions**

The RN on Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives organized eight paper sessions at the ESA Conference in Torun. They were grouped into seven main research topics: Family Change and Demographic Trends; Defining and Rethinking Families, Kinship and Affinity; Family and Work; Family Instability, Stress and Violence; Intergenerational Relationships and Social Networks (2 sessions); Fathers, Stepfathers and Parenthood after Separation; Family Interactions and Intimacy. See Annex II for the Programme and the titles of the papers. Most of the paper-givers were senior or junior researchers but eight of them were doctoral students. The sessions attracted many participants not only from within but also from outside the network, in particular the sessions on Family and Work , Intergenerational Relationships and Social Networks,

Family Interactions and Intimacy. Overall, the quality of the presentations and the debate was assessed positively by the Committee and the members of the network. As coordinator, I also felt that the cohesion of the network was stronger than in the last conference, and that this aspect contributed positively towards participation in the debate.

### **3.2 Election of a new Committee and plans for 2005-2007**

At the business meeting in Torun, the members of the RN Families and Intimate lives network elected the following committee for 2005-2007: Karin Wall (Coordinator), Co-chairs – Ulla Bjornberg, Ritta Jallinoja, Eric Widmer, Julia Brannen.

The positive feedback from the Lisbon interim meeting led to the decision to organize a second interim meeting. It will be hosted by the University of Lausanne and organized by the co-chairs Eric Widmer and Ritta Jallinoja. However, it was felt that the organization of two workshops in the Lisbon meeting had separated the researchers and prevented them from hearing some interesting papers. The Lausanne meeting will thus concentrate on one main research theme.

There was also a discussion on the need to implement some form of publication of at least some of the papers presented during the interim meetings. The Committee promised to look into some possible solutions.

The website will be kept on and updated.