



**Research Network 13:  
Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives**

**Biennial Report (2017-2019)**

by Detlev Lück  
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## **Executive Board and Advisory Board of RN 13 elected for the subsequent term 2019-2021:**

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## **Activities of the research network:**

### **RN13 Newsletter**

RN13 is publishing a quarterly newsletter for its members since December 2013 and has continued to do so throughout the term 2017-2019. Two board members, Jacques-Antoine Gauthier and Katarzyna Suwada, were in charge of this task. Initially the newsletter was sent as a PDF document by e-mail to all RN13 members, by the end of the months March, June, September, and December. Later on the mailing list tool of the new ESA website was used for the distribution. The newsletter provides information relevant for RN13 members, in particular: news on RN13 activities, current call for papers and conference dates, new publications in English language published or recommended by RN13 members as well as one project presentation reporting about an on-going research endeavour. Each issue also has a cartoon related to family sociology issues. A secondary aim of the newsletter is to give a further incentive for family researchers to join RN13 as a member. In the term 2017-2019 eight issues have been published.

### **RN13 website**

In August 2017, ESA relaunched a new online presence, after a previous ESA website had been hacked. This new online presence provided and pre-defined a structure for all research networks for their self-presentation. RN13 filled this structure and enhanced its contents over the course of the term 2017-2019 through its representatives for the website, Sara Mazzuchelli and Ronny König. The contents include a documentation of the current board, of past and present conferences, activity reports and RN13 newsletters. RN13 also collected ideas for further contents that do not fit into the current structure and for potential future extensions of the structure itself, which eventually will be shared with the ESA secretary.

### **PhD student support**

The support for young researchers and PhD students has always been a particular interest of RN13. Accordingly, when ESA had established that each research network should have a PhD and early career representative in 2013, RN13 had followed this request. And although ESA's initial idea of organising a PhD and early career forum, in which all RNs' representatives would participate, was never realised, RN13 continued to have this position in its board and, for the term 2017-2019, even nominated two PhD and early career representatives: Alice Zanchettin and Ronny König. They served as contact persons for young researchers for bringing forward their interests. And they took care of RN13's promotion of young researchers. This promotion in particular consists of a special invitation to PhD students to submit papers in the Call for Papers to RN13 Interim Meetings as well as the organisation of an award of the best PhD paper(s) during the Interim Meeting. In the term 2017-2019, RN13 awarded the *two* best PhD students' papers at the Interim Meeting in Kuopio with 250,- € each.

### **RN13 Interim Meeting 2018 in Kuopio, Finland (11.-13.6.2018)**

From the 11th to the 13th of June, 2018, RN13 held its Interim Meeting 2018 in Kuopio (Finland), at the University of Eastern Finland. The local host and main organiser was Anna-Maija Castrén, also a member of the RN13 board. The conference theme was "Families known and unknown" and addressed the presumable certainties and redefinitions of what family is and who is entitled to have family. RN13 received 64 submissions for the conference and accepted 57 for presentation. Due to withdrawals in the end, 40 papers were presented in Kuopio – 37 as oral presentations and 3 as posters –, among them 8 presentations by PhD students. The overall quality of presentations was very satisfying. The best two PhD student paper presentations were chosen by the RN13 board

during the conference and awarded with a PhD prize of 250,- € each. There were two keynote speeches, by Ingrid Arnet Connidis (Western University, CA, “Who counts as family? Assessing realities of later life”) and Petra Nordqvist (University of Manchester, UK, “Relative strangers: Reflections on families, connections and reproductive donation”). The meeting was organised into 11 sessions, which all were plenary sessions (no parallel sessions). In total, 52 scientists attended the Interim Meeting. Non-members of RN13 paid a conference fee of 50,- € to give an incentive to join RN13.

### **ESA Conference 2019 in Manchester with sessions organized by RN13**

For the ESA Conference 2019 in Manchester (20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2019), RN13 had published a Call for Papers asking for submissions on the following research themes:

*RN13\_a*: Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives (Open Session)

*RN13\_b*: Family forms and their change in historical time or across the life-course

*RN13\_c*: Couple formation

*RN13\_d*: Marriage and cohabitation

*RN13\_e*: Multi-local families

*RN13\_f*: Multicultural and transnational families

*RN13\_g*: Same sex couples

*RN13\_h*: Family planning and fertility

*RN13\_i*: Infertility and reproductive technologies

*RN13\_j*: Work-family balance and work-family conflicts

*RN13\_k*: Gender-arrangements and the division of work within couples

*RN13\_l*: Parent-child relations, mothering and fathering practices

*RN13\_m*: Parental leave

*RN13\_n*: Family dissolution and post-divorce families

*RN13\_o*: Intergenerational relationships and kinship networks

*RN13\_p*: Elder care

*RN13\_q*: Family policies and interventions

*RN13\_r*: Family research techniques and methodologies

RN13 received 201 submissions – 139 for RN13 sessions and another 62 for joint sessions. Altogether 153 submissions (103 plus 50) were accepted for oral presentation. After a further drop-out due to withdrawals, 147 papers (98 plus 49) were presented in Manchester. These were organised into 38 sessions (25 plus 13). RN13 did not assign any submission as distributed papers.

RN13 had proposed a semi-plenary session together with RN35 (Sociology of Migration), which had not been accepted. RN13 also initiated and participated in the organisation of joint sessions together with other Research Networks. The following joint sessions were organised:

*JS\_RN01\_RN13*: “Intergenerational relations in times of ageing societies” (joint session with RN01 Ageing in Europe)

*JS\_RN04\_RN13*: ““In the child’s best interests?”: Global perspectives on parenting culture, family policy and child well-being” (joint session with RN04 Sociology of Children and Childhood) – five sessions

*JS\_RN11\_RN13*: “Families, intimate relationships and emotions in the making of social worlds” (joint session with RN11 Sociology of Emotions) – three sessions

*JS\_RN13\_RN21*: “Introducing (under-utilized) surveys for European family research” (joint session with RN21 Quantitative Methods)

*JS\_RN13\_RN35*: “Relatives at a distance: Doing family across borders” (joint session with RN35 Sociology of Migration) – three sessions

## **Publications**

RN13 has organised or initiated several publications, including special issues of journals as well as edited volumes, in order to make the research of its members more visible and to offer its members and conference attendees opportunities to publish their work. Several board members of RN13 have engaged in these projects. The process between the decision to organise a joint publication and the publication itself can easily take two to three years, so that a single publication cannot easily be assigned to a particular term. The following publications are those into which RN13 has invested work within the term 2017-2019:

- In November 2018, RN13 published a report on RN13 in *The European Sociologist*, issue 42 ([www.europeansociologist.org](http://www.europeansociologist.org)).
- In 2018, Isabella Crespi, Stefania Giada Meda and Laura Merla published an edited volume with Palgrave Macmillan, titled “Making Multicultural Families in Europe. Gender and Intergenerational Relations“ with 14 contributions based on the ESA conference 2015 in Prague.
- In 2018, Detlev Lück and Anna-Maija Castrén published a special issue of *European Societies* (Vol. 20, No. 5), titled “Family Understandings in Contemporary Europe” with 5 contributions, also based on the ESA conference 2015.
- Presumably by the end of 2019, Vida Česnuitytė and Gerardo Meil will publish a further edited volume with Emerald on “Families in Economically Hard Times. Experiences and Survival Strategies in Europe” with 9 contributions, again based on the ESA conference 2015.
- In 2018, Karin Wall, Eric D. Widmer, Jacques-Antoine Gauthier, Vida Česnuitytė and Rita Gouveia published a further edited volume with Palgrave, titled “Families and Personal Networks. An International Comparative Perspective”.
- Based on the ESA conference 2017 in Athens, Almudena Moreno and Pedro Romero Balsas have started working on an edited volume on fatherhood and parenting, which currently is in preparation.
- A team of eight of co-editors from the RN13 board, coordinated by Anna-Maija Castrén, has initiated the realisation of a Palgrave-Handbook on Sociology of Families in Europe with many contributions and authors. This long-term project was initially discussed several years ago between Palgrave Macmillan and Isabella Crespi who was the RN13 coordinator at the time. It had been planned by Isabella Crespi and Detlev Lück, but then postponed due to the work load which seemed too large to take on for the involved people at the time. However, after involving further people, and revising the concept twice, the endeavour has now been approached. Authors have been found and manuscripts are expected in winter 2019/2020.

RN13 has maintained close contact with Palgrave Macmillan as well as with Emerald Group Publishing who both expressed interest in publishing papers or books from RN13 conferences.

## **Plans for future activities:**

- RN13 is planning to hold its next Interim Meeting 2020 in Olomouc (Czech Republic) at Palacký University from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of June. the local organiser is Dana Sýkorová who has offered to host the conference. The Call for Papers will be published in Autumn, after the conference theme has been finalised.
- RN13 is aiming to proceed with its endeavour of publishing Palgrave-Handbook on Sociology of Families in Europe, aiming to get close to a publishable manuscript by the end of the term 2019-2021.
- RN13 is trying to initiate new publication projects, based on papers presented at the ESA conference 2019 in Manchester.
- RN13 will continue to publish its newsletter and is considering adding a new section to it.

- RN13 will continue to update and enhance its website and is propose extensions of the structure pre-defined by ESA.
- RN13 is planning to continue to give out two PhD prizes of 250€ each at its Interim Meetings.