

# RN13 Newsletter

## *Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives*

Research Network 13 of the European Sociological Association (ESA)

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### Invitation for Membership



European  
Sociological  
Association

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 an RN13 member is easy. If you are not an ESA member yet, you can sign up [here](#) for RN13 membership together with signing up of ESA membership. If you are an ESA member already you need to first log in into your ESA online account [here](#); then go to the "Become a Member" page [here](#); then go through the registration process by checking "RN13" on the 2nd page just clicking "next" otherwise.

If you have forgotten your ESA login data or if you need any other information about your ESA member status please ask to the ESA secretary Andreia Batista Dias: [esa@europeansociology.org](mailto:esa@europeansociology.org)

— Jacques-Antoine Gauthier & Katarzyna Suwada

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### 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.*

### Upcoming Conferences / Call for Papers

**"Private, Civil and Public Sexualities". International Academic Conference. Institute of Sociology, Prague, Czech Republic, Czech Academy of Sciences, 4 October 2019**

- Deadline for abstract submission: **April 19th 2019.**

Contemporary society (often called late modern) is characterized by a critical reflection on traditional views towards partner relationships (e.g. Giddens 1999, Bauman 2003), parenthood (Silverstein 1996, Beck Beck-Gernsheim 2004), and definitions of their relevance. Due to the ongoing processes of individualization and de-

traditionalization, the boundaries of what is viewed as acceptable in the area of intimacy have been shifting. This is related to weakening normativity as well as a change and loosening of the very concept of sexuality and of gender and sexual identities (Roseneil 2007, etc.). A crucial aspect of intimacy is sexuality, in all its various shapes and colours, including bodily experiences and self-awareness; romantic or sexual relationships; and the organization of sex and sexuality in the private and public spheres, in institutions, or on a structural societal level. Not only gender but also age, ethnicity, nationality, economic status, religion, (dis)ability, and other individual or structural aspects and characteristics need to be taken

into account when trying to understand the complexities of sexualities in today's societies and individual lives.

Three dynamics within the realm of intimate, sexual, partner, and parental identities, interactions, and institutions are of significant interest. The first dynamic is represented by individualization and detraditionalization, but also diversification and temporality. Secondly, we can observe the constitution of new identities, communities, publics, and institutions as well as the transformation of those already existing (or previous). Here new concepts are being discussed — for example, sexual (e.g. Richardson 2018, Weeks 1998) or intimate citizenship (Plummer 2003), among others. Thirdly, as a counter dynamic to this liberalization and innovation, a re-familialization, re-traditionalization, and construction of so-called traditional identities, values, social formations or institutions is gaining social and political relevance. This dynamic also brings about new phenomena such as homonationalism (e.g. Puhar 2007) or a wider anti-gender ideology movement (e.g. Paternotte and Kuhar 2017).

The 11 th Sexualities conference calls for interdisciplinary contributions as well as papers from various individual academic disciplines that will apply different theoretical and methodological approaches and diverse paradigmatic frameworks. We are especially interested in single paper or panel (of 3–4 related papers) proposals focused on:

- Partnership(s) and parenting — reflecting the diversity of relations and models, as well as the diversity of reproduction strategies;
- Citizenship(s) and governance — reflecting private and public sexual, gender, intimate, or bodily identities and politics at both a structural and individual level
- Childhood, adolescence, and socialization — reflecting forms and spaces of sexual and gender socialization.

As a cross-sectional focus, we welcome contributions on:

- Medial, digital, and (pop)cultural representation(s), production(s), and audiences of the above noted topical areas.

Besides these areas, we also welcome academic papers and panels dealing with other topics and agendas within the realm of sexuality/sexualities.

From the beginning, as one of its main goals, the Sexualities conference (organized in Slovakia and Czechia) has always challenged approaches to sexuality/sexualities in the Central and Eastern European region by enabling intersectional and multiparadigmatic discussions, academic exchange, and networking. Therefore, contributions with

this regional focus (but also transcending its borders) are welcome.

#### [Conference website](#)

For any questions and queries:  
[sexualities@soc.cas.cz](mailto:sexualities@soc.cas.cz)

#### **Call for papers: LIVES Best Paper Award 2019 For Early Scholars (2000 Euros)**

In order to stimulate advances in the areas of vulnerability and life course studies, the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research LIVES (NCCR LIVES) encourages early career scholars to apply to the LIVES Best Paper Award 2019.

The award will be delivered during the next Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies (SLLS) conference taking place in Germany at the University of Potsdam, 25 - 27 September 2019. In addition to the award, the author will be invited to present the awarded paper during the conference and have her/his travel expenses, conference and hotel fees (3 nights) covered.

#### **Participation criteria**

- The paper must be empirical (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method) and make an important contribution to the domain of vulnerability and life course research. The study would preferably be longitudinal and/or interdisciplinary.
- The paper must have been published (including online first) in an internationally renowned peer-reviewed journal during the year 2018 only.
- To be eligible for the award, the author must be the main contributor of the paper as well as have received his or her PhD in 2012 or later (graduation date)

#### **Application deadline**

Early career scholars can apply to this award by submitting the published version of the paper in PDF and a short paragraph (100 words max) explaining why the submitted paper deserves to win.

Applications can be submitted until **31 May 2019** via this link: <https://www.lives-nccr.ch/en/award>

To know more about the NCCR LIVES, please visit: [www.lives-nccr.ch](http://www.lives-nccr.ch)

## Call for papers: "Practical and Ethical Dilemmas in Researching Sensitive Topics with Populations Considered Vulnerable"

This special issue intends to build awareness of these challenges and offer guidance for researchers who intend to develop research on sensitive topics with vulnerable populations.

Conducting research with populations considered vulnerable might be fraught with ethical and practical dilemmas that might place the development of the research at risk. People can be defined as vulnerable when they lack the autonomy to make their own decisions or experience impairing conditions, which might constrain their physical and/or cognitive autonomy.

These dilemmas might be even more challenging when the nature of the topic is sensitive (e.g., sacred, stressful, and/or private). There is little information available in the field of social sciences on the ethical and prac-

tical dilemmas faced by researchers when researching sensitive topics with populations that are considered vulnerable.

We invite contributions, whether theoretical or empirical, that address but are not limited to the following topics: (i) the analysis and conceptualization of sensitive topics and vulnerable populations; (ii) accessing and recruiting vulnerable populations to talk about sensitive topics; (iii) responsibilities and conflicts of developing research on sensitive topics with populations considered vulnerable; (iv) issues of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality; (v) risks when dealing with vulnerable populations and sensitive topics; (vi) the safety and protection of participants and researchers; and (vii) personal, ethical, and methodological issues, in general.

For more information:

[Access to the call of the special issue](#)

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## New Publications on Family Issues

- Aeby, G., Gauthier, J.-A., & Widmer, E. D. (2019). Beyond the nuclear family: Personal networks in light of work-family trajectories. *Advances in life course research*. 39, 51-60. [Access here](#)
- Meil, G. (2018), Guest editor of the special issue on Leave Policy and Use in Mediterranean and South American countries. *Revista del Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social (In English)*. 136.
- Meil, G. (2018), Spanish fathers benefiting from maternity leave: Experience and policy demands. *Revista del Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social, Economics and Sociology*. 136, 17-37.
- Meil, G., Romero-Balsas, P. & Castrillo-Bustamante, C. (2019), The effectiveness of corporate gender equality plans in improving leave provisions for fathers in Spain. *Community, Work & Family*. 22:1, 96-110, [Access here](#)
- Moreno-Mínguez, A., Ortega-Gaspar, M., & Gamero-Burón, C. (2019). A Socio-Structural Perspective on Family Model Preferences, Gender Roles and Work-Family Attitudes in Spain. *Social Sciences*. 8, 4.
- Moreno Mínguez, A. Vírseda, V., & Antonio, J. (2018). Well-being and living arrangement of elderly people from European comparative perspective. *The Social Science Journal*. [Access here](#).

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## Communication

Please note that this Newsletter is also available from the RN13 website under the tab 'Reports'

[Access to ESA-RN 13 website here](#)

# A Glance into Current European Family Research

by DANA SÝKOROVÁ, PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLMOUC, CZECH REPUBLIC



## Graying siblinghood. A sociological study of siblinghood in late adult-hood

The project is supported by the Czech Science Foundation/GAČR (project No. 17-07321S, duration: 2017–2019).

Responsible researcher: Dana Sýkorová

Team members: Hana Šlechtová, Gabriela Nytra, Naděžda Špatenková, Pavlína Jurníčková.

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### Background

Siblinghood is a unique social relationship. This is naturally the longest attachment of individuals and their family of origin, this being supported by the growing life expectancy at present. The bond is extremely complex which is given by the character of its grounding in the wider family, overlapping and distinctiveness of the social networks of adult siblings at the same time, the ambiguity of social expectations concerning siblings, and thus the necessity for permanent re-negotiation of the social role of siblings in the context of changing social circumstances and competing commitments of individuals in late modern society.

Systematic research concerning adult siblinghood lags behind studies on intergenerational (parent-child) relationships. Research which is related primarily to elderly siblings is mostly in the narrow context of caring for parents, and does not sufficiently deal with the living experience of siblinghood in older age and its negotiation by elderly siblings.

### Project's objectives and methods

The objective of our research is to *understand* siblinghood in late age, i.e. to reveal the core of experience of siblinghood and identify meanings related to relationships among older siblings; to understand the siblings' interactions, the circumstances of maintenance or failure of sibling bond and siblings' strategies of making/remaking siblinghood. The research is designed within interpretive sociology. Sibling relationships are approached as a part of the networks of the family of origin and families of procreation, the life course perspective is also considered. The core of the research is a qualitative approach, out of

its types the constructivist grounded theory. The study, designed as multisource research, interconnects the perspective of particular siblings or other family members, and provides more dimensions of reflection of siblinghood as well as a complex perspective of the mutual interconnection of relationships defined by membership in the family of origin and in the families of procreation of particular siblings. The pluralism of data resources as well as the application of multiple methods increase the data validity.

The research sample consists of persons of 50+ years of age who have at least one living sibling. The data are obtained in three basic ways:

(1) *Unstructured, in-depth individual interviews* which are combined with observation. If private documents – family pictures – are available this data source is also used for analysis. Additional data from the research participants, their siblings, family of origin, families of procreation are obtained by means of questionnaires: the applications of an adopted version of the Family Structure Questionnaire, Sibling Questionnaire and Sibling Contact Questionnaire (Burbidge, Minnes, 2014) and the Adult Sibling Familial Relationship Scale (Wałęcka-Matyja, 2015). We strive to include the participants' siblings into the research.

(2) *Unstructured focus groups* are realized; these are established with regard to the corresponding criteria with influences which, according to the relevant literature, intervene into sibling people. That means four groups consisting of singles, divorced, widowed and seriously ill participants. The fifth group of childless persons increases

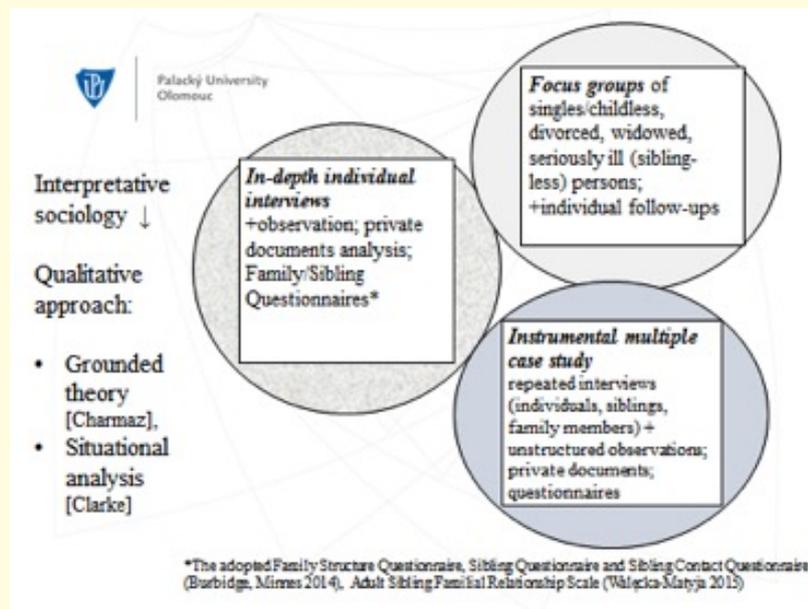
the sensitivity necessary for inductive theory construction of the siblinghood (analogically to the technique of increasing theoretical sensitivity). Individual follow-up interviews are conducted with the focus group participants in case of need, formed during the data analysis, usually after the discovery of thematically new problems.

(3) The last method is *an instrumental multiple case study*. Selection criteria of the cases are the same as those applied to the focus group method; those case studies that include repeated interviews with the participants, their siblings as well as other family/kin members if possible deepen the insight and understanding of the studied phenomena and the particular situations. Additional methods stated in relation to individual interviews are used within the study: unstructured observations, study of the available private documents and questionnaires. The study of three cases are conducted.

The large number of interviews, observations and documents carried out within the research supports a greater compactness, or the scope of validity of the constructed theory. It also enables the quantification of the occurrence of categories, subcategories and their fea-

tures at the same time. The guideline for an inductive data analysis is rules developed within the grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), or situational maps and analyses that extend the hitherto analytical procedures of the grounded theory (Clarke et al., 2015). The validity control is ensured by triangulation of the data sources; methods of data sampling; achieving richness, density of description, saturation; monitoring of the influence of researchers on the data; triangulation of analyzers; audit trials and triangulation by means of the existing theories (Denzin, Lincoln, 2000). The supposed contribution to sociological theory is both the theory of siblinghood grounded in data and impulses for discussion over the core of sibling relationships against the background of competitive theories/concepts of family solidarity and family ambivalence.

The primary focus of the research on individuals in the pre/senium is considered fundamental for a deepening of the knowledge of siblinghood in these life stages. In addition, the selected approach to studying siblinghood should help achieve an improved understanding of family relationships in general.



## References

- Burbidge, J., Minnes, P. (2014): Relationship Quality in Adult Siblings with and without Developmental Disabilities. *Family Relations* Vol. 63, No. 1, pp. 148–162.
- Charmaz, K. (2014): *Constructing Grounded Theory*. London: Sage.
- Clarke, A. E., Friese, C. Washburn, R. (2015): *Situational Analysis in Practice: Mapping Research with Grounded Theory*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Denzin, N. K. Lincoln, Y. S. (2000): *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Wałęcka-Matyja, K. (2015): Adult Sibling Familial Relationship Scale (ASFRS) – Construction and Psychometric Properties: Preliminary Report. *Hellenic Journal of Psychology*, Vol, 12, No. 3, pp. 172–189.

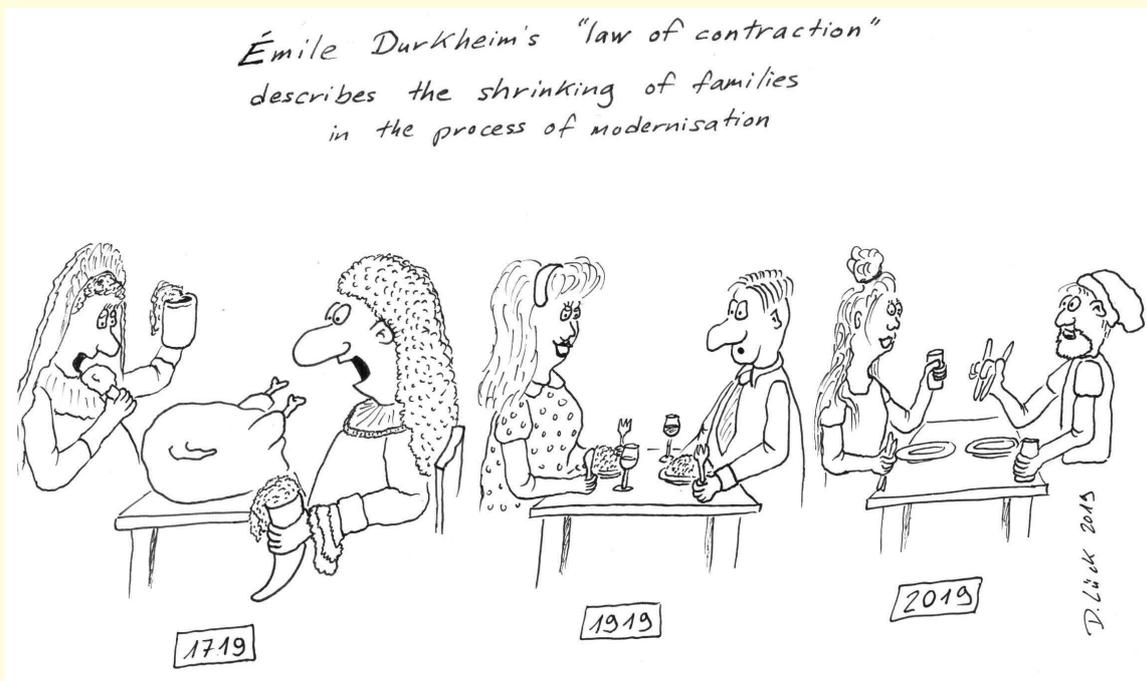
### Call for cooperation:

As part of the research project, a monograph focused on siblinhood in late adulthood/old age is being prepared. In this connection, we would like to invite potential co-authors, i.e. authors of monograph chapters, to cooperation. We intend to submit a proposal for the book to reputable publishers such as Routledge, Palgrave-MacMillan or Sage, in the 1st half of 2019. Colleagues interested in cooperation are welcome to discuss the structure or content of the monograph. We will be pleased if you could inform us about your interest in cooperation as soon as possible, but no later than **7 April 2019**. Please send a message to the address [dana.sykorova@upol.cz](mailto:dana.sykorova@upol.cz).

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<https://www.overleaf.com/project/5c93bf172340940d67059dd8>

### Cartoon



by Detlev Lück

## **The floor is yours ...**

- Do you have contents for the next RN13 Newsletter (June 30th 2019)?
- 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 k.suwada@umk.pl.

**The next deadline will be June 15th 2019.**