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Committee on  
Family Research  
(RC06/CFR)

*International Socio-  
logical Association*



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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Dear RC06 Colleagues,

I hope things are going well with you.

We are looking forward to seeing some of you at the ISA Forum in Rabat which is now less than a month away. The response to the call for papers was very vibrant and as a result we will have 26 sessions on family and related issues at the Forum. It will be great to see so many of you in Rabat and please do attend the Research Committee Business Meeting as well (which is on the Thursday morning – details in Pei-Chun's note following this one). I know that many of you did not get the necessary funding to attend the forum which is a pity. We will be sure to report back on the Forum after the event.

One important thing we have to discuss at the Business Meeting is filling the role of Vice President, vacant since the death of our esteemed Vice President, Professor Hachiro Iwai.

We also want to discuss further Research Committee events, especially as the Forum is held only every few years. We as a Board are eager for members to have opportunities to get together, either virtually or face-to-face. Therefore, if you have any suggestions of events we could host or partner in hosting, please let us know. Perhaps there are national or regional conferences that might present an opportunity for our members to get together to present their work.

Finally, remember also that we are welcoming of new members and if you come across people whose work is relevant please feel free to point them to the details of the Research Committee at <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/research-networks/research-committees/rc06-family-research/>.

I wish you well with all you have on.

With best wishes,

June, 2025

*Mary Daly*  
*President, RC06*

## FROM THE SECRETARY



Dear RC06 Family Research Members,

I hope this message finds you all well!

The Board has met once this calendar year and we've been collaborating through regular email exchanges on various tasks.

I'm excited to share two important updates from our community that reflect our ongoing progress and engagement.

**Growth for the RC06 Research Committee:** We are thrilled to announce that 39 new members have joined us since the beginning of 2025, bringing our total to 196 members. This is a fantastic milestone for our community.

**The ISA Sociology Forum in Rabat:** The ISA executive committee has sent several emails to members who will participate in the Sociology Forum: [RC06 Family Research](#). For members who may need a visa, please check this website: <https://www.isaforummorocco.com/> and keep in touch with the organizing committee.

RC06 will have a business/community meeting during the Forum: [RC06 Business Meeting](#) (Thursday, 10 July 2025 at 09:00 - 10:45 in ASJE013 (Bloc 1, Annex of the Faculty of Legal, Economic, and Social Sciences)). We look forward to meeting RC06 members there.

With warm regards,

June, 2025

*Pei-Chun Ko*  
Secretary & Treasurer, RC06

## FOCUS ON AFRICA 2

### An Overview of the Changing Nature of Family in Nigeria

#### *Introduction*

Family in Nigeria, encompassing life, practices, and meaning, has undergone considerable change over the past decade. This change can be attributed to the socio-economic, socio-political, socio-cultural, and religious factors that have shaped present family discourse and decisions. The narratives around family bear the themes of one or more of these factors. This contribution seeks specifically to highlight the perceived trilemma challenging the family landscape in Nigeria.

- i. Security issues manifesting in kidnapping and banditry.
- ii. Socio-economic factors characterised by high inflation, foreign exchange rate volatility, low productivity, weak governance, and poor infrastructure.
- iii. The unanticipated influence of negative social media access, use, and outcomes on the family.

The above became a central focus in recent family research, and it is complex to determine the singular or cumulative impact of each on the fundamental structures and dynamics of Nigerian families. These factors are explored in brief detail below.

#### *Insecurity: Kidnapping, Banditry, and Internally Displaced People (IDPs)*

The home is universally regarded as a primary sanctuary, a space where family members expect and deserve to feel secure, but the current kidnapping and banditry waves in the country are making homes insecure. The electronic and print media report frequently the hideous attacks on families as members are kidnapped regardless of age, sex, or socioeconomic status. Schoolchildren at various educational levels have been targeted, and parents have been seized, leaving their children vulnerable and alone. While some abductees are released after days or months in captivity, a significant number tragically never return, leaving families to grapple with the devastating news of their demise, often received after prolonged periods of agonizing uncertainty. Family researchers narrate, among other issues, the continued dominant induced trauma and socioeconomic costs these kidnappings have cost families across Nigeria. In Northern Nigeria, where the banditry crisis is more prevalent, families have had to sell valuable assets, including houses and lands, to be able to pay exorbitant ransom fees. Furthermore, families incur significant debt in their desperate attempts to secure the release of their loved ones, and more recently, a couple of families have resorted to use social media to solicit funds

to help secure the release of loved ones from the kidnapper's den. *Facebook*, *X* (formerly known as *Twitter*), and *GoFundMe* have been used as crowd funding sites for some families desperate for help. Conversely, less privileged families, lacking the necessary digital literacy, infrastructure, or financial resources to access social media, rely on traditional community-based family insurance schemes. These schemes involve community members and immediate family organising negotiators to engage with kidnappers to secure the freedom of those abducted. A discernible pattern emerges wherein families directly affected by kidnapping overwhelmingly turn to other families for initial support. This reciprocal dynamic of assistance underscores the primacy of familial solidarity in times of crisis. The care diamond model provides a valuable framework for understanding how support is mobilised for these affected families, with immediate family, wider community networks, Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) swiftly intervening to alleviate their plight, often in the face of perceived governmental inaction. The long-term effects of kidnapping and banditry can include emotional and psychological challenges for children in families and severe economic strain on parents as well as the disruption of established social structures.

Closely related to the insecurity issue is the phenomenon of internally displaced peoples (IDPs). This calamity threatens security and the concept of home for many families. Displacement occurs due to a confluence of factors, including climate-induced disasters like catastrophic flooding and violent acts of terrorism and land expropriation stemming from herder-farmer conflicts, ethno-religious strife, and other documented forms of violent upheaval. Consequently, families and entire households are rendered internally displaced, compelled to reside in inadequate makeshift accommodations, designated camps, or within host communities perceived as relatively safer than their regions of origin. Often these survivors have no agency of their own and are largely dependent on the actions or inactions of state and non-state actors. This adds to the narrative of the decline of the family the world over as families affected by crisis and experiencing displacement face physical death, weakening family bonds, violent socio-cultural shocks, and unprecedented trauma. For rural families, in particular, displacement often entails a devastating double jeopardy: the tragic loss of family members compounded by the 'internal death' of the family unit as their traditional subsistence agricultural practices, reliant on familial labour, are shattered, and their agricultural produce, established livelihoods, and ancestral homes are destroyed. Being internally displaced persons (IDPs), they seek shelter in makeshift camps in relatively more peaceful areas of the state. The life course perspective gives an insight to analyse the significant transitions, altered life trajectories, and critical turning points experienced by these displaced families. Within the confines of the IDP camps and even in host communities, the traditional role of male as provider is challenged in a setting where food aid is collected and prepared centrally; family

units have fewer opportunities to organise or take on family roles as means of livelihoods have been lost or changed. The literature also points to violence against women in terms of exchange of sex for other favours in IDP camps or host community settings. The concept of a 'home' to return to one day is not unanimously shared among IDPs due to diverse levels of trauma, feelings of insecurity, and lack of faith in the government to secure them, if and when they eventually return home. Some other studies show that families in IDP camps display great resilience as they put their faith in God for hopes of a peaceful return home despite the situation they find themselves in. Forced displacement can disrupt how generations within families relate and the passing down of traditions. The loss of elders can affect the support and knowledge available to younger family members. The breakdown of familiar support systems can increase reliance on external aid. The psychological impact of displacement on family members requires attention and resources. To mitigate the effects of being internally displaced in a place they call home, it is recommended that a more robust government presence be engaged in providing social safety nets to the displaced, dignity in the camps, as well as restoration of IDPs to their own homes.

### *Socioeconomic Realities and Family*

The World Bank projects a modest economic growth of approximately 3.6% for the Nigerian economy in 2025. This anticipated growth is intended to partially alleviate the persistent economic instability that the nation has grappled with in recent years, primarily stemming from high inflation rates, the scarcity and exorbitant cost of premium motor spirits (PMS), elevated food and overall living expenses, and the marked volatility of foreign exchange rates, among other significant factors. While this projected growth offers a degree of optimism for macroeconomic stabilisation and potentially higher economic returns, its immediate implications for the general populace, particularly families and households, remain concerning. Many continue to face increasing difficulties in accessing fundamental amenities and essential commodities. Furthermore, the entrenched socio-economic disparities within the country are widening, exacerbated by decades of unequal resource distribution amidst a backdrop of ineffective political leadership often characterised by corruption and self-interest. This confluence of factors severely impedes social and economic development and contributes to a scarcity of secure and adequately compensated employment opportunities within the nation. Consequently, Nigerian families are compelled to develop and implement diverse coping mechanisms and adaptive strategies to navigate the challenging financial realities of the national economy. The inadequacy of critical infrastructure, including an unreliable power supply, poorly maintained transportation networks, and insufficient healthcare and educational facilities, further restricts access to essential resources and perpetuates unequal life chances. This necessitates individuals and families taking proactive steps to improve their quality of life beyond the

provisions offered by the state. These varied and often precarious socioeconomic circumstances compel families and couples to adopt innovative coping mechanisms and adaptive skills. One notable manifestation of this adaptation is the increasing prevalence of commuter marriages as a strategy to mitigate socioeconomic disparities. A commuter marriage is characterised by one spouse (typically the husband) working and residing in a separate location, designated as the secondary home, while maintaining the primary family residence where the wife and children live. The constrained economic outlook for families also significantly influences their decision-making and spending patterns, impacting choices regarding residential location, children's education, healthcare access, and, critically, marital stability. Empirical evidence strongly suggests a direct correlation between financial satisfaction and marital stability, which in turn profoundly affects overall family well-being, child-rearing practices, and interpersonal relationships within the family unit. The strain of economic hardship can exacerbate existing inequalities within families. The long-term consequences of economic instability for family structures and social cohesion require comprehensive and well-targeted policy interventions, that directly address the root causes of inequality and actively promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Families are encouraged to strive for marital harmony amidst changing economic reality, as the benefits of a stable marital relationship have been hailed as a powerful tool in navigating external adversity and fostering resilience within the family unit.

### *Social Media for Social Good...or Family Good?*

Another critical area of contemporary sociological inquiry concerns the multifaceted effects of social media and its profound impact on established family values. The intersection of social media and family life presents a complex tapestry of both potential benefits and significant drawbacks, with the latter arguably holding greater sway in current narratives. Concerns regarding mental health, the exacerbation of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the emergence of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), and other related social realities persist within society. These enduring issues are being re-examined through the lens of new technologies and digital media, prompting the development of novel research questions, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks. It is crucial to recognise that the impact of social media on familial experiences is not uniform across all segments of society. A significant digital divide exists, particularly along the lines of rural versus urban residency, levels of educational attainment, disparities in income and generational gaps. Consequently, not all families possess equitable access to social media platforms due to limitations in infrastructure, varying degrees of technological literacy, and disparities in financial resources. Individual family members engage with the internet for a diverse array of purposes. Increasingly, family-related issues are being publicly scrutinised and judged on social media

platforms. The younger generation, commonly referred to as Gen Z, appears to have embraced the practice of openly sharing experiences that were traditionally considered private, confidential, and deeply personal. Content relating to acrimonious divorces; failed marriages; relationship advice from self-proclaimed ‘influencers’ and ‘relationship experts’; and diverse approaches to child-rearing and parental practices are frequently trending topics on these platforms. This trend underscores the urgent need for thoughtful policies governing online discourse, particularly regarding who can disseminate information and the nature of that information. While concerns about impeding free speech may arise, it is essential to acknowledge that not every individual possesses the expertise of a certified family practitioner. The mere ability to express an opinion does not inherently qualify that opinion as sound or unbiased, especially when it may be coloured by personal experiences or lack empirical grounding. The pervasive influence of social media on family life extends to cultural transmission and how identities are formed. While social media can help connect people across distances and offer access to different cultural information, it also presents challenges for keeping traditional values and practices alive. The often-idealised ways families are shown on social media can create unrealistic expectations and make people feel inadequate. Also, the way social media shows people content can limit exposure to different viewpoints, potentially affecting understanding between cultures within families. Ethical questions around social media use in families, including privacy, consent, and the risk of online harm, need careful thought and steps to protect everyone. To effectively address these salient issues, there is an urgent imperative for a more prominent and engaged role for qualified family practitioners, informed family policy makers, experienced family therapists and counsellors, as well as relevant governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, local social welfare offices, and dedicated NGOs. These entities must collectively prioritise the well-being of families by providing accessible counselling services, comprehensive care, and evidence-based therapeutic interventions, with the overarching goal of fostering resilient and thriving family units. As contemporary challenges to family life continue to emerge and evolve, it is increasingly important to advocate for the establishment of dedicated family institutes where formal courses on family dynamics, child development, and interpersonal relationships are taught. Successful models of such institutions exist globally, and while a few NGOs and FBOs in Nigeria have begun to address this need, a more concerted and widespread effort is required. Such institutions could play a crucial role in disseminating accurate information and evidence-based perspectives on family issues, thereby counteracting potentially misleading or harmful opinions circulating in the public sphere, particularly on social media. In this way, social media can be harnessed for the greater good of families. The establishment of family institutes could also serve to bridge the existing gap in social media access, promote responsible usage, and mitigate negative outcomes. Furthermore, the limited visibility and accessibility of qualified marriage counsellors

and therapists within Nigerian society represent a significant gap in support services. These professionals are increasingly necessary to assist families in navigating the complex stresses, conflicts, and multifaceted perplexities that arise as a direct consequence of the trilemma identified in this newsletter. May families around the world find strength, support, and enduring success.

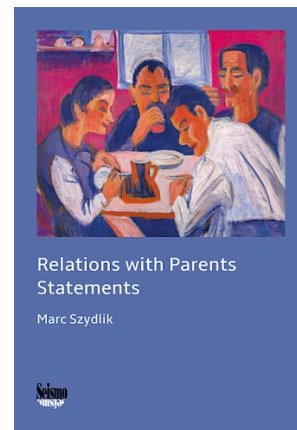
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## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

- ❖ Szydlík, Marc (2025). *Relations with Parents: Statements*. Zurich: Seismo.  
<https://doi.org/10.33058/seismo.30901>

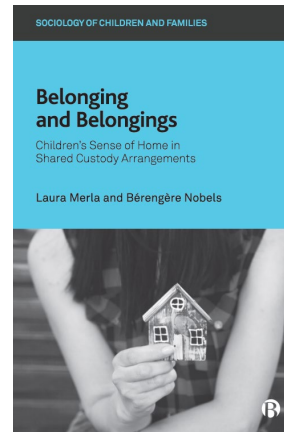
This book offers personal firsthand thoughts on family situations and histories. Daughters and sons express and explain their connections with their parents from early childhood across the whole life course. They talk about cohesion, ambivalence, conflict and distance. They report love and hate, eternal bonds and painful separations. The statements address both relationships with living parents and past ties to mothers and fathers who have passed away.



This is the fourth book of the SwissGen project, a representative survey of intergenerational relations in Switzerland. The analysis volumes offer key findings and examine central generational issues in depth (“Generationen zwischen Konflikt und Zusammenhalt” / “Generations between Conflict and Cohesion”). The data volume provides general information on the research project and basic quantitative results in form of summarised tables (“Relations with Parents: Questions and Results”). The book at hand is the qualitative complement to the analysis volumes. It offers over 1,500 statements of adults in their own words.

- ❖ Merla, L. & Nobels, B (2025) *Belonging and belongings. Children's sense of home in shared custody arrangements*, Bristol University Press.

Based on in-depth fieldwork with Belgian children aged 10 to 16, this open access book examines how children in shared physical custody define and negotiate their place within the household of each parent. The authors analyse how family practices within and between each dwelling shape children's sense home, and the strategies and skills children develop to manage and position themselves in these different environments.



## Articles

- ❖ Kaufman, G., Meng, S., Zhou, K., & Compton, D.L. (2025). For the children: attitudes toward marriage and divorce in the United States. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 66(2), 238-257,  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00380253.2024.2427678>

**Abstract:** The deinstitutionalization of marriage suggests more support for divorce and the forgoing of marriage. In this study, we examine attitudes toward both marriage and divorce in the context of having children and how they coincide with each other, creating a new typology of attitudes. Based on a national probability sample of 2,789 adults from the American Marriage Survey conducted in 2021, we find that just over half (55%) of people express transformative deinstitutionalization attitudes, in which they support divorce as well as forgoing marriage, while the next largest group (22%) hold divorce deinstitutionalization attitudes, in which they support divorce but also encourage marriage when children are involved. Findings show that women, gay, lesbian,

bisexual, and pansexual individuals, and those who are cohabiting or divorced are more likely to hold transformative deinstitutionalization attitudes compared to pro-institutionalization attitudes, which support marriage and oppose divorce when children are involved. Meanwhile, older individuals, those who attend religious services more frequently, and those who identify as more politically conservative are less likely to hold any form of deinstitutionalization attitudes. Interestingly, education and parenthood have no impact on this set of attitudes. Given trends that show decreases in marriage and increases in LGBT identification, there may be further movement toward the disconnection of marriage and children.

- ❖ Petts, R. J., Kincaid, R., Mize, T.D., & Kaufman, G. (2025). Gone too long or back too soon? Perceptions of paid parental leave-taking and variations by gender and family structure. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.13101>

### **Abstract:**

**Objective:** This study examines perceptions of paid leave-taking itself and variations in these perceptions by parent gender, sexual orientation, and marital status.

**Background:** Previous research largely focuses on the consequences associated with leave-taking, particularly highlighting workplace penalties associated with leave-taking. There has also been limited attention to workers with diverse family forms. We seek to better understand the culture surrounding paid parental leave in the U.S. by focusing on evaluations of leave-taking itself and whether such evaluations may reduce or exacerbate inequalities by gender, sexual orientation, and marital status.

**Method:** We use data on 2964 U.S. respondents from a survey experiment in which employer-offered paid parental leave-taking, parent gender, sexual

orientation, and marital status were randomly assigned. We use OLS models to assess perceptions of paid leave-taking and the causal effects of parent gender, sexual orientation, and marital status on these perceptions.

*Results:* We find that respondents view 11 weeks of paid parental leave as the right amount of leave, on average. We also find variations in perceptions of leave-taking by parent gender, sexual orientation, and marital status; mothers with husbands and single parents are viewed more favorably for taking longer leaves than fathers with wives, mothers with wives, and fathers with husbands.

*Conclusion:* There is increasing support for paid leave within the U.S., but support for parents' leave-taking largely reflects gendered stereotypes and may reinforce broader patterns of gender inequality.

- ❖ Augustijn, L., Claessens, E., Miettinen, A., Hakovirta, M., Mortelmans, D., Riser, Q.H., & Steinbach, A. (2025). Joint Physical Custody and Mothers' Life Satisfaction in Belgium, Finland, and Germany. *Journal of Family Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2025.2451192>

**Abstract:** Joint physical custody (JPC) is an increasingly common care arrangement in which children live about equally with their parents after separation or divorce. This study examined the association between JPC and mothers' life satisfaction in Belgium, Finland, and Germany. The objective was to determine whether mothers with (asymmetric or symmetric) JPC differed in terms of life satisfaction from mothers with sole physical custody (SPC) and whether there were country-specific differences. Using data from the studies Divorce in Flanders, Survey among Separated Families in Finland, and Family Models in Germany, we estimated OLS regression models for resident mothers in SPC and JPC families with minor children. Results showed significant differences between countries. Mothers in Belgium did not differ in terms of life satisfaction depending on their child's physical custody arrangement. However, mothers with symmetric JPC had higher life satisfaction than their counterparts with SPC in the Finnish sample, while both asymmetric and symmetric

JPC mothers reported higher life satisfaction than SPC mothers in Germany. These differences, however, disappeared after introducing control variables to the regression models. Findings suggest that selection into different physical custody arrangements may explain the positive link between JPC and mothers' life satisfaction; a finding with far-reaching implications.

- ❖ Steinbach, A., Augustijn, L., & de Bel, V. (2024). The quality of the stepfather–child relationship in sole and joint physical custody. *Family Relations*, 73(5), 2981-2995, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.13056>

### **Abstract:**

*Objective:* This study examines whether the quality of the stepfather–child relationship differs among sole physical custody (SPC) and joint physical custody (JPC) families and compares the association between the father–child and the stepfather–child relationship across the two physical custody arrangements.

*Background:* An increasing number of families opt for JPC after separation or divorce. Because children in JPC families spend more time with their biological father than children in mother SPC families, the question arises whether JPC affects the quality of the stepfather–child relationship.

*Method:* We investigated 279 SPC and 182 JPC stepfather families with children aged 1 to 14 from the Family Models in Germany study. Ordinary least squares regression models and interaction effects were estimated. Results: The quality of the stepfather–child relationship was generally high in both SPC and JPC families and did not differ between the two arrangements. The father–child relationship was positively, albeit weakly, associated with the stepfather–child relationship in both arrangements, indicating spillover effects.

*Conclusion:* JPC does not affect the quality of the stepfather–child relationship.

*Implications:* This study does not provide any evidence that JPC is an ill-suited physical custody arrangement when considering the quality of relationships in stepfamilies.

- ❖ Davies, K., & Carter, A. (2025). Living with Brexit: Families, relationships and the temporalities of everyday personal life in 'Brexit Britain'. *The Sociological Review*, 73(1), 156-174, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261241260112>

**Abstract:** Drawing upon ethnographic research with families as they navigate a year in 'Brexit Britain', this article explores how people live with Brexit, examining the effect of Brexit politics on everyday personal life, particularly relationships with family. In order to examine how macro-political events and timescapes interact with the quotidian, the article explores interactions between 'Brexit time' (including key political moments as well as periods of slowed political activity) and 'personal time' (including the day-to-day rhythms of everyday life and more special occasions). The temporal interactions between Brexit and people's daily lives, whether through the constant low-level simmering presence of the issue, the impactful moments when Brexit 'boils over' into family life, or a more profound relationship with the substance of Brexit politics, offer a lens through which we can understand how politics and other socio-economic events of (inter)national significance are lived in the context of everyday personal lives. The resonance of this analysis applies beyond Brexit and contributes to political sociology more broadly as well as to sociologies of everyday personal life.

- ❖ Bramanti, D., Bosoni, M.L., & Nanetti, S. (2025). The Sociology of the Family in Italy: Its Contribution to Public Debate and Social Policies. *The American Sociologist*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12108-024-09643-1>

**Abstract:** The article explores the sociology of the family in Italy, examining its contribution to the public debate and its role in understanding the major transformations of the family. The focus is on a few key issues, including secularization and the crisis of religious marriage, the reduction in the number of children, separations and divorces, changing couple lifestyles and gender roles, socialization within multigenerational families, new biographical paths, reconciling family and work, migrant families, the aging population process, and family care tasks. The sociology of the family has seen significant transformation since the 1970s, often with contrasting sociological paradigms. While from different perspectives, the empirical research conducted by sociologists of the family has made it possible to understand families' specific resources in Italy, as well as their needs, on both a material and a relational level. Particular attention has been paid to the tasks of socio-education of new generations and the care of fragile and elderly members. Italian sociologists have contributed to make evident the post-modern dialectic between the rights of individuals, women and men, and the rights of families that can promote a sense of belonging, solidarity, and common good. In this sense, sociologists have played an important role in giving concrete shape to interventions to monitor families' transformations and needs (such as the National Family Observatory and the ISTAT multi-purpose surveys) and to support families (the National Plan for Families and, recently, the Family Act). Finally, the article sheds light on open issues on which the work of family sociologists is mostly focused today, with special attention to the future of the family and its role in the development of society.

- ❖ Hamilton, S., Keenan, J., Pusey, L., Ribbens McCarthy, J., Stedmon, J., & Taylor, F. (2025). Decolonising the aftermath of death in UK contexts: theoretical approaches, institutional 'constraints', and everyday experiences. *Mortality*, 30(2): 1–23,

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13576275.2025.2458588> (Available on request from [Jane.McCarthy@open.ac.uk](mailto:Jane.McCarthy@open.ac.uk)).

**Abstract:** Innovative decolonising work always entails going beyond diversity, but has only recently been raised in relation to ‘bereavement studies’. This paper explores what it may entail to ‘decolonise’ death and its continuing aftermath in the lives of the living. In the UK, documented experiences of racialised inequalities and discrimination have clearly evidenced the pervasiveness of institutional racism across many key areas of life. In the bereavement sector specifically, the paucity of appropriate support for minoritised ethnic populations was identified as a central issue in the 2022 UK Bereavement Commission Report, with services poorly placed to respond. Addressing these concerns raises profound challenges associated with the whiteness of coloniality/modernity, onto-epistemological in/justice, and institutional power constraints. Attending with openness to lived experience offers a possibility for social justice that may benefit all in responding to the aftermath of death. Following the diverse panel convened under this title for the CDAS conference 2023, we build in a somewhat ‘unruly’ fashion on our continuing conversations, asking whether ‘decolonising’ might demand reconsideration of how, as well as what, we write. Hoping to encourage dialogue between scholars, practitioners and lived experience, we offer no firm conclusions but seek to open new spaces to address the ‘deadly silence’ that currently predominates.

- ❖ Stedmon, J., Hamilton, S., Pusey, L.D., & Ribbens McCarthy, J. (2025) ‘If I break your leg, you won’t ask me to fix it for you’: innovative explorations in ‘decolonising’ UK bereavement services. *Mortality*, 30(2): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13576275.2025.2451080>

**Abstract:** This paper acknowledges that decolonising white-led UK bereavement services is an ambitious endeavour, addressing the arrogance and inequities embedded in the Whiteness of coloniality/modernity. Specialised

'bereavement support services' (BSS) may in themselves represent an anachronism of a modernity whose core narrative of control and progress through rational scientific knowledge is profoundly challenged by death. In this paper, we address theoretical considerations, arguing that there can be no universal theory of 'grief' based in Western scientific models. Instead, we propose radically innovative openness to diverse understandings of the meanings and authoritative 'knowledge' of death, situating 'bereavement' and its aftermath in the spatial/historic/political power dynamics of intergenerational histories. Contemporary 'bereavement' theory, we argue, must understand how experiences of lives and deaths for minoritised and oppressed groups are bound up in complex ways with trans-generational heritage, including a pluriverse of ways of being in the world, and past and continuing traumas. We suggest that progress in practice and bereavement support requires less need for prescribed action and, instead, greater consideration and open-ended exploration of how white-led organisations can approach decolonising work, and what key principles and values may be appropriate. Writing personally, we offer individual contributions reflecting our experiences of seeking to 'decolonise' bereavement support in various contexts.

- ❖ Antonia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, S., Evans, R., Klass, D., Okoth, H.O., Pendle, N., Ribbens McCarthy, J., & Riek, J.J. (2025). Contemporary responses in Africa to the aftermath of death: developments and decolonising challenges. *Mortality*, 30(2), 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13576275.2025.2477611>

**Abstract:** Despite death and bereavement studies being dominated by scholars and empirical material from Europe and North America, death and bereavement studies have often assumed the universality of their knowledge. This limits the epistemic and ontological potential of the field and can result in a misunderstanding of death and bereavement, including in Europe and North

America. However, more than this, because of the political power of these centres for the study of death, it has also resulted in the imposition of knowledges and practices about death on populations around the world through colonial rule, aid and development initiatives, neo-colonial practices and global health policies. We advocate for the decolonisation of death studies by which we do not mean a return to a pre-colonial past, but instead the embracing of a plurality of ontologies about death and bereavement, and a recognition of the power embedded in all claims about the meaning and processes of death and its aftermath. We explore these themes through a focus on three case studies in Africa in Senegal, South Sudan and Uganda.

- ❖ Laß, I., & Wooden, M. (2025). Working from home and bi-directional work–family conflict: Longitudinal evidence from Australian parents. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 87(3), 1153–1177, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.13062>

### **Abstract:**

**Objective:** This study investigates the effects of working from home (WFH) on both work-to-family conflict (WTFC) and family-to-work conflict (FTWC) among parents, and whether family demands and the COVID-19 pandemic moderate these effects.

**Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic saw a marked increase in the incidence of WFH in many countries, which many argue has been beneficial for families. Convincing evidence in support of this hypothesis, however, is scarce.

**Method:** Panel data from 19 waves of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey (covering the period 2001 to 2021) are used to estimate fixed effects regression models of both FTWC and WTFC where the explanatory variable of interest is the share of usual weekly work

hours worked from home. The sample is restricted to working parents aged between 18 and 64 years (9850 persons; 54,764 observations).

*Results:* For both genders, the level of WTFC declines with the proportion of time worked from home. By contrast, the association between WFH and FTWC differs between mothers and fathers, with FTWC lower for mothers but higher for fathers (and especially for single fathers and those with young children) when working mostly from home. These associations remained largely unchanged during the pandemic.

*Conclusion:* WFH is particularly beneficial for mothers' reconciliation of work and family life but has ambivalent effects for fathers. This, in turn, may mean mothers will be more likely than fathers to have preferences for continuing WFH post pandemic.

- ❖ Jendrzey, K. (2025). Representation of migrating mothers in children's and young adult literature on transnational families. *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 14(1): 8-25,  
<https://doi.org/10.1332/20467435Y2024D000000042> [Open Access].

**Abstract:** This analysis examines literary representations of migrating mothers in seven Polish children's and young adult books on transnational families, evaluated through grounded theory. While media discourse oversimplifies migration as a deviation from the normative ideal of the present mother, resulting in the deprecating label 'Euro-orphans', literary depictions offer a more nuanced perspective. The study identifies three distinct types of mothers – 'deviant', 'incomplete' and 'complete' – with migration portrayed as a juncture in family life that challenges their maternal status. The narratives reveal different family trajectories and obstacles while offering nuanced portrayals of mothers, including their biographies and character traits. Ultimately, however, they reinforce conventional norms of 'good' motherhood by portraying transnational

family and motherhood as deviations from the norm. Nonetheless, the narratives acknowledge children's active roles in co-shaping their family arrangements and the evolving status of the 'good' mother, emphasising that children are not merely victims of their circumstances.

- ❖ König, A., Schwittek, J., & Jendrzey, K. (2024). "Good childhood": Children's perception and evaluation of transnational families. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 9, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2024.1470541> [Open Access].

**Abstract:** In public debates, transnational families are portrayed as a deviation from the norm of "good childhood." In Europe, this is emphasized by the term "Euro-orphans," branding parents' (especially mothers') absence as a violation and scandalizing it. Children's voices are rarely heard in public discourse, and although research is now turning its attention to the "stayer children," they and their perspectives on transnational family life remain underrepresented, especially in Europe. In a German-Polish project, we investigate how children perceive and evaluate transnational family life based on 27 group discussions with 12-14-year-olds (with and without own transnational family experience) in Poland. The analysis shows that (1) the presence of parents is central to the normative pattern of a good childhood from children's perspective, but (2) they use differentiated criteria when assessing (temporary) parental migration, i.e., they do not refer to "universal" needs of children. Additionally, (3) children request that they be informed about the migration-decision early on and involved in the organization of the time of separation to make it as acceptable as possible for them. Thereby, they offer interpretations of transnational families that contribute to erode the norm of good childhood. We see our paper as a sociologically and socio-politically relevant contribution to expanding the discussion on transnational families, both from the perspective of children who discuss and problematize transnational family life as more than merely a question

of violating the norm of parents' presence, and with our focus on the European region, which provides specific contextual conditions for transnational families.

- ❖ Schwittek, J., & König, A. (2025). Making Friends as Interactional Work: Young Refugees in Germany. *Symbolic Interaction*, 48(1), 23-45, <https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.1207> [Open Access].

**Abstract:** This article focuses on the friendships that young refugees make in Germany as their country of arrival. Although friends are highly relevant in children's lives, little attention has been paid to this subject regarding young refugees. We conducted ego-network interviews with 17 young refugees aged 9–15, with which we explored the opportunity structures in which young refugees choose their friends and their ways of establishing and deepening friendships, as well as the limitations thereof. Core dimensions of friendship, as proposed by Shmuel Eisenstadt, are used as sensitizing concepts: voluntariness, moral quality, unconditionality, trust, deep meaning/brittleness, and ambivalence. By reinterpreting them through an interactionist lens, the analysis reveals the complex work young refugees invest into making friends and establishing themselves in the social world of their school and peer groups.

- ❖ Li, N., & Yeung, W.J. (2025). Paternity Leave-Taking and Early Childhood Development: A Longitudinal Analysis in Singapore, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.13100>

**Abstract:**

*Objective:* This study investigates the longitudinal association between paternity leave-taking and multiple domains of young children's developmental outcomes and identifies the underlying mediating mechanisms through fathers' involvement, father–child closeness, and family dynamics.

*Background:* Some Asian societies have recently initiated parental or paternity leave policies to encourage fathers' participation in childcare and raise fertility rates. However, little is known about whether and how this policy influences early childhood development in a mid-to-long-term period from preschool to early primary school years.

*Methods:* Using two waves of data from the Singapore Longitudinal Early Development Study (SG-LEADS), we conduct structural equation modeling to examine both the direct and indirect effects of paternity leave-taking on children's academic and behavioral outcomes when they are 3–8 years old. Propensity score matching is adopted in sensitivity analyses, presenting that the effect of paternity leave is not due to selection.

*Results:* Taking 2 weeks or more of paternity leave is associated with fathers' increased involvement in childcare activities, strengthened father–child closeness, and enhanced family dynamics. Taking paternity leave has both direct and indirect effects on promoting children's academic achievements, whereas much of its impact on reducing children's behavior problems is through an indirect effect of improving family dynamics.

*Conclusion:* Relatively short paternity leave (2 weeks) could have cumulative effects on children's development from early to middle childhood, mainly through cohesive father–child and parental relationships. The study findings have policy implications for enhancing work–family reconciliation and promoting gender equality in society, especially in the Asian context.

- ❖ Rajendra, S.J., Cheng, Q., Yeung, W.J., & Singh, L. (2025). Socioeconomic Status Predicts Infant Word Recognition: Evidence from a Linguistically, Ethnically, and Socioeconomically Diverse Community Sample in Singapore. *Infancy*, 30(2), e70014. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/inf.70014>

**Abstract:** Prior research has demonstrated that infants have the capacity to recognize some familiar words. However, past studies have not analyzed the

sociodemographic generalizability of research findings. In the current study, we examine word recognition in a linguistically, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse community sample. A community sample of Singaporean infants from diverse socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds between 5 and 12 months of age were tested on their ability to recognize common nouns in a looking-while-listening task. Results revealed that parental socioeconomic status, the amount of exposure to English, and infants' age significantly predicted their word recognition performance. A subsequent sensitivity analysis revealed that the effects of SES and age on word recognition were robust. The results demonstrate that socioeconomic status contributes significantly to variation in infants' abilities to recognize familiar words. Findings emphasize the importance of integrating and analyzing effects of sociodemographic representation into studies on infant word learning.

- ❖ Loh, B., Yeoh, B.S.A., Lam, T., & Yeung, W.J. (2025). Lower-income Marriage Mi-grants and Domains of Integration in Singapore. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/apv.12439>

**Abstract:** Drawing on the domains of integration, this paper illuminates the integration experiences of female marriage migrants from lower income cross-national families in Singapore. Through interviews with 38 cross-national families of the Singaporean-husband and foreign-wife pairing, we show how the integration of lower income marriage migrants in Singapore is experienced through the interrelated domains of the structural, social and cultural, while foregrounding the family as an added domain of interest. Although marriage to citizen-husbands create privileged pathways to citizenship rights and hence forms of integration, this is neither predictable nor unidirectional—family members play a crucial part in rendering support and at times, constraining female marriage migrants' integration. Contributing to wider debates on whether cross-border marriages are indicators, if not, facilitators of integration, this

paper shows how female marriage migrants' integration in Singapore is highly relational and tied not only to the level of support and openness from their husbands, their interactions with other domains of integration are also dependent on the quality of relationships with extended family members.

## Editorial

- ❖ Schwittek, J., König, A., & Ducu, V. (2025). Editorial: Living apart together – Growing up in Transnational Families. *Families, Relationships, Societies*, 14(1), 2-7, <https://doi.org/10.1332/20467435Y2024D000000053>

**Abstract:** In this special issue, we bring together research on transnational families that draws from the insights of this interdisciplinary and differentiated research field. Since the groundbreaking studies by, for example, Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) or Parreñas (2005), family sociological studies have provided valuable insights into parenthood (especially motherhood) and doing family at a distance. While these and subsequent studies have focused especially on the question of whether and how transnational doing family is practised, it now seems almost a given that families (can) continue to exist at a distance, utilising numerous creative and above all media-based methods (Madianou and Miller, 2012), and developing adaptive capital (König et al, 2021). At the same time, the many sociological, educational and psychological studies on transnational families worldwide provide ample evidence of the unequal positions and conditions under which transnational families operate to maintain family life (Cienfuegos-Illanes and Brandhorst, 2023). The contributions in this special issue start with this and explore new angles. An important strength of this special issue is that it centres children in transnational families, with several contributions paying particular attention to children's subjectivities – a perspective that is increasingly being adopted in research (Ducu, 2018; König et al, 2024). Furthermore, another aim of this special issue is to bring

together studies from different transnational spaces and various – precarious and privileged – social positions, thus differentiating our knowledge of the heterogeneity of transnational families.

This special issue is based on contributions presented at the conference *Living Apart Together: Growing Up in Transnational Families*, which took place in April 2023 in Essen, Germany. Its focus was on the heterogeneity of transnational families and their discursive representations and societal evaluation, as well as on the shaping of transnational family life and the conditions it provides for children while growing up. The discussions among the authors and other experts at the conference stimulated an interdisciplinary scholarly discourse on living and growing up in transnational families, sparking ideas for new topics, objectives and perspectives.

## Publications from 2024 (received in 2025)

- ❖ Yeung, W.J., & Jones, G. W. (2024). Emerging Dimensions in Marriage in Asia. *Journal of Family Issues*, 45(5), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X231157403>
- ❖ Yeung, W.J., & Jones, G. (2024). Emerging Issues in Marriage in Asia. *Journal of Family Issues*, 45(5): NP1-NP8.
- ❖ Yeung, W.J., & Lu, S. (2024). Family Dynamics in Cross-national Families with Young Children in Singapore, *Journal of Family Issues*, 45(5): NP9-NP37.
- ❖ Chen, X., & Yeung, W.J. (2024). How income relates to young children's development in different socioeconomic settings in China, *Chinese Sociological Review*, 57(2), 143-171, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21620555.2024.2396456>

- ❖ Chen, X.J., & Yeung, W.J. (2024). COVID-19 experiences and family resilience: A latent class analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 87(1), 280-299, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.13031>
- ❖ Lu, S., & Yeung, W.J. (2024). The rise in cross-national marriages and the emergent inequalities in East and Southeast Asia. *Sociology Compass*, 18(5), e13219.
- ❖ Yue, Bi, Ding, X., & Yeung, W.J. (2024). The Link Between Hours of Center-Based Childcare and Child Development in 3- to 6-Year-Olds: Evidence from Singapore. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 68(3), 76-89.
- ❖ Hong, R., Ding X., Chan, K., & Yeung, W.J. (2024). The Influence of Socioeconomic Status on Child Temperament and Psychological Symptom Profiles. *British Journal of Psychology*, 115(3), 535-554.
- ❖ Aassve, A., Adsera, A., Chang, P.Y., Mencarini, L., Park, H., Peng, C., Plach, S., Raymo, J., Wang, S., & Yeung, W.J. (2024). Family Ideals in an Era of Low Fertility. *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, 121 (6), e2311847121.

## Book Chapters

- ❖ Bardhanroy, M. (2024) Proletariat speaks: The Women Workers' Voices in the IT Sector. In D. Darwish (Ed.), *Effective Technology for Gender Equity in Business and Organizations*, pp. 87-122. IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/proletariat-speaks/354998>
- ❖ Schwittek, J., & Jendrzey, K. (2025). Kindheitsforschung in internationalen und mehrsprachigen Kontexten. In H. Friederike (Ed.), *Methoden der Kindheitsforschung*, 3, pp. 107-122. Beltz Juventa. [https://www.beltz.de/fileadmin/beltz/leseproben/9783779972525\\_shortened.pdf](https://www.beltz.de/fileadmin/beltz/leseproben/9783779972525_shortened.pdf)
- ❖ König, A., & Schwittek, J. (2024). Gutes Ankommen – eine multi-methodische Annäherung an die Perspektiven von geflüchteten Kindern. In A. Schierbaum, M. Diederichs & K. Schierbaum (Eds.), *Kind(er) und*

*Kindheit(en) im Blick der Forschung. Kinder, Kindheiten und Kindheitsforschung*, 30, pp. 263-283. Springer VS. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-42625-5\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-42625-5_15)

## Podcast

### ❖ Open Societal Challenge Existential Dis/Connections

PODCAST Jan 2025 'What are the tensions in 'decolonising' 'bereavement and grief' in the UK today'. Available on Spotify and Amazon music or by using this link <https://open.spotify.com/show/1I3R8IJEyBsFzZtMWPLhti>.



<https://bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/belonging-and-belongings>

*Jane McCarthy*

*Honorary Associate, The Open University UK; Visiting Professor, Bath University UK; Visiting Fellow, University of Reading UK*

## Projects

### ❖ Family Capabilities

The Family Capabilities project is an area of science that has not been developed globally. In this project, we think of family as a verb rather than a noun or an adjective. We are therefore interested in what families do. In understanding what families do, we are developing 1. Two theories - A theory of family capabilities and A theory of family needs and 2. An intervention for strengthening family capabilities using an ethic of care framework. We started these two streams concurrently, with the developing theory conducted with diverse families through interviews. This stream is ongoing with a current sample size of 100 participants (adult and adolescent in a family).

For the developing intervention, we completed two cycles of PAR with families and practitioners in an urban and rural area in Cape Town to develop the intervention through multi-modal methods. We used object and photo elicitation and Lego. We have completed two cycles and validated the tools between the cycles. Sample: 129 participants and 42 validation participants.

*Multi-modal methods examples:*



Between August and October 2024, data collection for the Family Capabilities study employed various creative and participatory methods to explore and understand everyday family life. Methods included Draw and Tell activities, where participants created visual representations of their families to spark discussion; Object-Based Storytelling, using meaningful household items to explore emotional and material dimensions of family life; and Photo Voice and Elicitation, where participants shared photographs to illustrate what their families did together and what family meant to them. The I-Poems method highlighted individual voices through poetic narratives drawn from transcripts and later validated with a student and academic group of participants. Lego-Based Workshops encouraged hands-on engagement and reflection, with validation sessions held with practitioners and academic staff.

*Outcomes:* Professor Roman started “The Family Space” as a hub for the science of family capabilities and messaging about families through a medium comfortable for all [[https://www.youtube.com/@The\\_Family\\_Space](https://www.youtube.com/@The_Family_Space); [https://www.tiktok.com/@the.family.space?\\_t=ZM-8vVSTIhDE2A&\\_r=1](https://www.tiktok.com/@the.family.space?_t=ZM-8vVSTIhDE2A&_r=1)].

We used the voices of the families to develop iPoems [<https://youtube.com/shorts/WzNp5rXG85A?feature=share>] which reflect

what families do, who the main carer is in the family but also the strain of being the carer.

We started dissemination of findings through messaging to families using video clips uploaded into “The Family Space”:

[https://youtu.be/ZVbu3Uk\\_xxo?si=1s6GZiOFT4GdE7y2](https://youtu.be/ZVbu3Uk_xxo?si=1s6GZiOFT4GdE7y2)

For more information:

[https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph/special\\_issues/6HFUCA4O7G](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph/special_issues/6HFUCA4O7G)

*Professor **Nicolette Roman** (Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Children, Families and Society, Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, University of the Western Cape); Dr **James Reid** (University of Huddersfield, UK); Dr **Chante Johannes** (Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Children, Families and Society, Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, University of the Western Cape)*

### ❖ **Self-Positioning in transnational spaces – Children's narrations and narrations about children living in transnational families (TraNa)**

Transnational families are a significant social phenomenon and a central subject in global academic debates. Our current research project TraNa contributes to these discussions by centering both the European context and, crucially, the perspectives of children.

TraNa builds upon the research in the completed German-Polish research project DoDzi (<https://www.uni-due.de/biwi/koenig/dodzi/>) but takes a new perspective. In DoDzi, we investigated how children interpret and evaluate transnational family arrangements. A central focus was on how children relate these arrangements to what we call a “normative pattern of good childhood” – a core concept of the project. To explore this, we conducted group discussions with children aged 12 to 14, some of whom have parents who (temporarily) work abroad, and others who have no such experience. In the current follow-up project TraNa, we turn our attention to the transmission of knowledge about and images of foreign countries within transnational families and examine how children position themselves in national and global contexts. We focus on

transnational families from Poland and understand children as actors within as well as beyond the family. A hitherto rather neglected point in research is the question of how images and knowledge of abroad are conveyed and shaped in transnational families and how children position themselves abroad. Our starting point is that socialization in a transnational family arrangement has relevance to children's self-positioning – in Poland, Europe, or the world.

The German-Polish project is divided into two parts. The core concept of the current project is the (trans)national self-positioning that connects both parts: (A) From a sociological perspective, we investigate the experiences of children living in transnational families and their (trans)national self-positioning. We conduct biographical, mapping-based interviews with children aged 12 to 14 years who have grown up in transnational families in Poland. Rather than defining the children as "left-behinds," we empirically investigate the conditions under which they feel left behind, where their scope of action is limited or expanded in this arrangement, and how they position themselves in (trans)national spaces – in the present and in the future. (B) From a perspective anchored in literary studies, we investigate how transmigration is represented and which narratives unfold in children's literature about living transnationally. We examine how transnational (family) life is literarily portrayed, how places abroad as well as the transnational spaces are depicted, and what positions child characters take in them. Through a narratological analysis, we focus particularly on the literary techniques by which such narrations of transnationality are produced. Additional elements of the project are an international workshop about transnational childhood and a public relations module, in which we transfer our results to schools by developing teaching materials on transnational family life, based on the storytelling of children.

*Project Homepage:* <https://www.uni-due.de/biwi/trana/>

*Researchers:* **Alexandra König** (PI), **Jessica Schwittek** (PI) & **Katarzyna Jendrzey** from the University of Duisburg-Essen; **Dorota Michulka** (PI) and

**Sabina Świtła** from the University of Wrocław; **Magdalena Rembowska-Pluciennik** from the Polish Academy of Sciences Warszawa.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ❖ Major Grant Awarded

Yeung, Wei-Jun Jean, *Building Human Capacity in Singapore's Population: A National Longitudinal Study of Child and Maternal Well-being*, (Principal Investigator), S\$5,000,000, April 1, 2024- March 31, 2028, FY23 Prenatal/Early Childhood Grant (H24P2M0009), Human Potential Program, Singapore. Co-PIs: Cai, S., Ding, X., Lee, Y.S., Lim, S., Ooi, D.S.Q., Hong, R., M. Zheng.

## NEW & RETURNING MEMBERS

Welcome to new or returning members who joined at the end 2024 or the beginning of 2025:

1. M. Isabel GARRIDO GÓMEZ Spain	26. Safà EL KOURA Italy
2. Erika BUSSE United States	27. Mira GUNAWANSA Australia
3. Carmel HANNAN Ireland	28. Khalid LAHSIKA Morocco
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14. Cristina SOLERA Italy	39. Damla EROĞLU ALPMAN Turkey
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