

The Theme

Intergenerational Family Solidarity across Europe is the theme of this issue of the journal Društvena istraživanja. Intergenerational family solidarity is a construct that includes relationships among family members and their mutual exchange: relations of grandparents and their grandchildren, social support, quality of marital satisfaction, intergenerational differences, the importance of the quality of relations of the elderly and their adult children. The quality of life of older family members is linked to reciprocity in relationships, the more involved the older members are in the family, the more satisfied with life they are; this is then reflected in different ways in the younger generations and vice versa. The texts in this issue combine a contemporary view of family relationships, described in the model of intergenerational solidarity by US scientist Vern L. Bengtson. The dimensions of this model are frequent contacts, emotional proximity, similarity in thought, geographical proximity, receiving help / helping, contacts, proximity, i.e. different factors associated with the quality of life at different periods of an individual's life cycle.

Intergenerational Family Solidarity across Europe is the theme of the COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) Action IS1311 Intergenerational Family Solidarity across Europe (INTERFASOL) funded by the European Union. The authors of this thematic issue are active scientists in the field of psychology, sociology and other fields of social sciences, as well as collaborators in the COST Action IS1311 involving hundreds of scientists from 28 countries (EU, Israel and Turkey). The aim of the COST project is to explore the various concepts of intergenerational family solidarity through an interdisciplinary approach, using qualitative and quantitative methods.

In this issue, Isabelle Albert and Dieter Ferring of the University of Luxembourg present some results from a larger research study on intergenerational relations with an emphasis on intergenerational solidarity in adulthood and the role of family norms in intergenerational support and ambivalence. Based on the results of this research, the authors conclude that normative aspects of intergenerational solidarity are less important compared to affective aspects when predicting support exchange between adult children and their parents, but that family values had a moderating role in the relation between support exchange and ambivalence. Valentina Hlebec and Maša Filipovič Hrast from the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana analyse the characteristics and determinants of intergenerational financial transfers within families using mixed care for elderly people, where mixed care refers to a combination of formal and informal care for the elderly, within dyads comprising a care recipient and a family caregiver. The work is based on the first Slovenian national survey of social home care users and their family members, and suggests that the income of the elderly person and amount of care received are important for financial flows upward (to the elderly parent) and downward (from the elderly parent).

Andreja Brajša-Žganec and Ljiljana Kaliterna Lipovčan from the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar and Ivana Hanzec from the University Department of Croatian Studies, using a representative sample of 1000 Croatian citizens divided into three age groups, investigated how the perception of social support obtained from different sources (family, friends, significant others) contributes to well-being (happiness, life satisfaction and domain satisfactions) across the life span. The results were analysed by means of multiple group structural equation modelling (SEM) and showed that only the social support of friends was significantly associated with well-being across all age groups. Participants who perceived adequate social support from friends expressed higher levels of subjective well-being. Ursula Trummer and Sonja Novak-Zezula from the Centre for Health and Migration in Austria consider intergenerational solidarity in families of migrants. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews based on qualitative methodology, they explore family structure, family life, and family solidarity among migrants. Results show that intergenerational family solidarity is weakened by migration in relation to frequency of contacts and that high normative solidarity prevails. All this results in a sense of guilt and unmatched family obligations while support for parents and relatives is maintained by sending money and goods to the home country.

We are aware that these papers make up only a small part of the discussions on intergenerational family solidarity in today's scientific community. However, we hope that they will contribute to an improved scientific understanding of the relationships of intergenerational solidarity in the family, which could raise more attention among scientists in this field in the future.

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