



LINKED LIVES OVER THE LIFE SPAN: A DYADIC APPROACH TO INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT



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In Linked lives, we approach the human mind and social development by studying dyads of intimately related persons. Our project concentrates on four core family relationship dyads: spouses; parents and children; siblings; and grandparents and grandchildren.

We investigate how different dyadic relationships develop, how the functions and strengths of these relationships change over time, and how dyads interact with each other.

The concept of linked lives coined by Glenn Elder captures the essence of our approach. For example, economic depression may cause employment difficulties for the breadwinners of households which, in turn, may negatively affect the relationships between spouses which, in turn, may lead to adverse parenting practices within the family. The strength and duration of a relationship, such as a pair bond or a sibling bond, can also buffer against life adversities. Thus the quality of the social tie itself may mediate how social events affect individual outcomes.

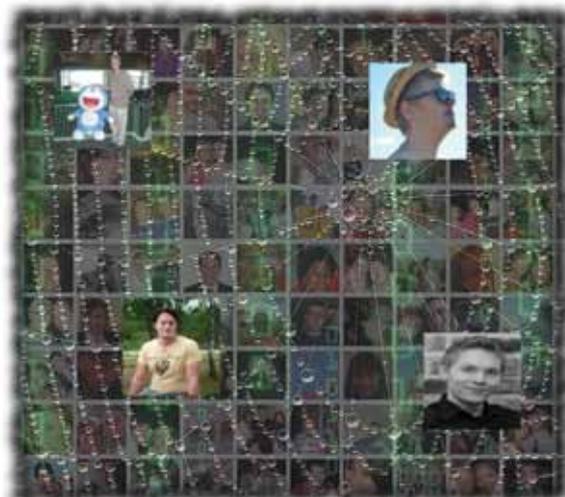
Studying dyads also permits a more rigorous understanding of the family. While one often reads

about “dysfunctional families” or “happy families”, there is yet little research that examines to what extent the quality of one family dyad is related to that of another family dyad. We can assess how linked dyads shape each other over time, and thus how families function as higher-level units.

We use data from several longitudinal studies with household-based sampling from the United Kingdom (the British Household Panel Survey, currently continuing as the Understanding Society study), Germany (Pairfam), the United States (National Survey of Families and Households), Finland (Gentrans), and Australia (Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia). In addition,

we create a new demographic dataset using Finnish population registries. The data is analysed with network and dyadic analyses and meta-analysis.

The research is based at the Population Research Institute (PRI) of Väestöliitto, the Finnish Family Federation. The research group includes Anna Rotkirch (PRI), Markus Jokela (Institute of Behavioural Sciences, University of Helsinki); Venla Berg (PRI), Anneli Miettinen (PRI) and Lassi Lainiala (PRI). International partners include Robin Dunbar and Tamas David-Barrett (University of Oxford), Michaela Kreyenfeld (Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research) and David Lawson (University College London).



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