



*Athenaeum Centre for
Family Studies and Research*

5th ESFR Congress Announcement - Call for Papers

Family transitions and Families in transition

Catholic University of Milan, Italy

29 September - 2 October 2010

The 5th ESFR Congress will be focused on the transitions that the family faces during the course of life, the identification of resources and risks associated with them, and the processes that families go through whenever a transition occurs.

Transitions have for long been a central concern in family studies. The key transitions in the family life cycle are brought about by predictable or unpredictable events like gaining new members (marriage, birth, adoption...), losses or threats of loss (death, illness...) and breaking up of existing relationships (separation, divorce, migration, left behind families...). Other equally specific events appear less focused and delimited, such as the transition to adulthood or old age. Families therefore have to reorganize their relationships in response to the challenges set off by these transitions.

Moreover, families are always in transition, as they are involved into the economic, social and cultural events characterising the contemporary world, and thus have to manage the challenges prompted by setbacks like financial problems, job mobility or loss, natural disasters, political changes, and so on.

All the transitions that the family experiences may either point to a difficulty to cope with change, or represent valuable opportunities to transform relationships. When a transition occurs, the family finds

itself at a crossroad: it can either re-organize its relations or let them degenerate. Hence in the process of coping with the difficulties brought about by the critical events of the family life cycle and the social context, families may access to both internal and external resources.

The study of the family facing different kinds of transitions allows researchers from various disciplines to focus on the relational, symbolic, and structural aspects that constitute the family itself, while identifying resources, risks, strengths and weaknesses.

The Congress aims to explore the dynamics and the context of family transitions/families in transition through a number of key themes:

- * Major family transitions: transition to married life; transition to parenthood (including adoption and foster families); transition to adolescence and adulthood; transition to old age; transition to divorce and remarriage...
- * Critical life events affecting family life: illness, presence of disabled members, death of a member, migration...
- * Major contextual events affecting family life: political changes and family development, cultural changes and family structure, economic hardship, welfare state changes...
- * Intra and intergenerational processes describing/explaining the transitions that families face during their life.
- * Strategies and approaches that support family transitions and families in transition at political, social, and relational level.

We invite papers that address these and other issues related to the main theme either in a single country or in a comparative perspective. All disciplines are welcome.

The deadline for submitting an abstract of not more than 250 words is 1st February 2010.

In case of abstract acceptance, the author(s) will be invited to present a full paper which may be selected for a possible publication either in the official ESFR journal, *Family Science*, or in *The family in the New Millenium*, the Doha Institute publication, or in the Catholic University Athenaeum Centre for Family Studies and Research's journal, *Studi Interdisciplinari sulla Famiglia*.

More information can be found at: <http://esfr2010.unicatt.it/>

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