



# Newsletter of the International Academy of Family Psychology

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## From the President's Desk

### CHALLENGING TIMES

This year has started with many concerns. The political climate has changed in a number of countries, putting national interest first and thus weakening international collaboration and solidarity. In Europe, the Brexit has been officially realized, while negotiations about future rules of collaboration between the UK and the European Union are ongoing and will have to find suitable ways to remain connected in separation. Such changes affect not only economies at large, but also families with multinational roots who reside in England and partners who hold different passports.

At the same time, many problems cannot be confined, avoided, or solved within borders. Many refugees still seek shelter in the face of terrible war and terror in their home countries but are caught in camps in neighboring countries or at the border of Europe. Given the high number of refugees and the reluctance of other countries to accept them, many of these camps provide unworthy living conditions. Furthermore, flight has separated many families across the globe and national law often inhibits or even prohibits family reunion. The chances for finding a joint solution among the European partners are small and likely to decline as the Corona virus calls for closed doors.

Alongside these problems and rising social inequality, several countries see a rise in autocratic structures and regimes. According to the Transformation Index, biennially published by the Bertelsmann Foundation (see → <https://www.bti-project.org/en/home/>), 3.3 billion people worldwide are ruled by autocratic regimes, yielding the highest value since the start of this monitoring 14 years ago. Even among every fourth democratic state, trust in political fairness is declining. As issues of power gain prominence,

minorities face harder times. Racism and religious discrimination are on a rise in many countries.

### FAMILY SCIENCE AND POLITICS

Why do I mention these trends in a newsletter of the International Academy of Family Psychology? Does family psychology not rather focus people's private life seeking to provide better conditions for personal relationships? Yes and no. Families' well-being is crucial for collective well-being and states to thrive, just as welfare regimes with their family policy, health provisions, educational systems, and tax systems provide the frame and support system for families to thrive.

It may be of interest for our readers to see how family-friendly policies vary across countries. Last year, UNICEF has released a comparative study which informs about family-friendly policies in 41 high- and middle-income countries (see → [https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/Family-Friendly-Policies-Research\\_UNICEF\\_%202019.pdf](https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/Family-Friendly-Policies-Research_UNICEF_%202019.pdf)). The ranking is based on four country-level indicators: (1) the duration of paid leave available to mothers; (2) the duration of paid leave reserved specifically for fathers; (3) the share of children below the age of three in childcare centers; and the share of children between the age of three and compulsory school age in childcare or preschool centers. Although this analysis has a limited focus and does not capture more complex measures like family-friendliness of the tax system or families' access to counseling and prevention, even the four indicators used here were not available for all 41 countries. Ten countries could not be ranked regarding childcare enrolment, indicating a substantial lack of information on this important provision which is relevant for the labor-division between the partners, single mothers' chances of employment, and children's learning experiences in the early years.

Family science and family psychology have strong ties to politics, not only when it comes to public childcare or public funding for family therapy or counseling. Family science informs politics about the changing ways of partnership formation and child-bearing, the diversity of family structures and family life, the determinants and consequences of parenting, partnership dissolution and repartnering. It addresses issues of work-life balance in changing labor markets, issues of poverty and its consequences for family life and children's upbringing, risks to children's well-being in the context of interparental conflict, parents' impaired mental health, and dysfunctional parenting as evident in abuse and neglect. And it explores new topics such as parents' responsibilities in monitoring how their children navigate the digital world. "Sharenting" is one of these new issues, along with changing demands and options in supervising children's whereabouts in the world wide web, challenges to parenting while being absorbed by social network communication, but also improved options for family communication at a distance, provided by new technologies.

Family psychology gains importance in social reporting. Some countries regularly provide reports about the situation of families in the country (see the report about Austria in this issue). In Germany, the last general report on families was published in 2006, followed by a special report about the politics of family time in 2012 which addressed measures to increase the time available for family life. The next general report is due in June 2020 and will be provided by a commission of seven experts. The commission includes a sociologist and demographer (Michaela Kreyenfeld), a sociologist and expert on migrant families (Helen Baykara-Krumme), a sociologist and expert on educational inequalities (Reinhard Pollak), two economists (Miriam Beblo and Axel Pluenecke), an expert of international family law (Nina Dethloff) and one psychologist (myself). Clearly, sociology and economics play the

dominant role in social reporting about families, but it is noteworthy that the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (which appoints the commission) granted the position as head of the commission to a psychologist.

The focus of our report will be on "Parenting", a key issue in family psychology. We will discuss how family forms have changed, how family law has to be adapted to match these changes, how migrant families could be integrated more successfully, how an equal division of employment and family care could be better supported, and how family poverty could be fought more effectively. Most importantly, we will discuss how parents' values, practices, and investments in raising their children have changed, how children's schooling and academic success has become a major issue for parents, and how support services like family life education, counseling, and therapy might better reach out to families in need.

#### THE NEXT IAFP CONFERENCE: MARCH 22-24, 2021 IN MUNICH

IAFP will soon celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. In late March 2021, the next IAFP conference will be held in Munich, Germany. Mark your calendar! Hosted by the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, it will take place in a remarkable historical building in the center of town. Joining forces and allowing for interdisciplinary exchange, the event will be organized as a joint conference of the International Academy of Family Psychology and the European Congress of Family Science. The broad topic invites a variety of submissions from family psychology as well as related disciplines:

#### **Partnership | Parenting | Family Wellbeing in Changing Cultural Contexts - Family Science in Dialogue with Policy and Practice**

We will soon release the conference website with information on keynote lectures, invited

symposia, presentation formats, abstract guidelines, and deadlines for submissions. Please keep track of our news (see → <https://iafponline.com/>).

### THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter includes four contributions. The first paper by *Harald Werneck* offers insight into the situation of families in Austria including trends and current issues in family policy in Austria. Along with solid demographic data, this report includes information about the high importance attached to families, conditions fostering a strong alliance in partnership, norms of child-bearing, and the acceptance of same-sex parents in public opinion.

Furthermore, two contributions inform about family psychology in the Czech Republic and Japan. *Irena Sobotková* addresses structural conditions of family psychology in the Czech Republic and then offers a closer look at her research on family memories as a research example of intergenerational narratives. This research was jointly conducted with a historian (*Radmila Švaříčková Slabáková*) and draws on qualitative, semi-structured, three-generational interviews which were collected from thirteen families in the Czech Republic. As she points out, the preservation of family memories emerged as an important value among the participating families and was found to contribute to family resilience.

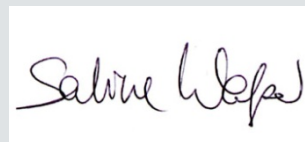
*Naoto Nihonmatsu* and colleagues draw a broad picture of family psychology in Japan, covering a number of issues and research examples. They address demographic changes in family structure and the low birth rate contributing to an aging society which increases demands on family care and health services. Issues of divorce and remarriage as well as family support during infertility treatment are also covered. Quite importantly, the authors also describe how the Great East Japan Earthquake affected families and

how support services had to adapt to this critical situation of damage and loss.

Finally, this newsletter includes a report on the Expert meeting “The early years: monitoring and promoting child wellbeing in Germany – The *Children in Germany – KiD 0-3* study” which took place in Munich, Germany (June 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019). In their report, *Ulrike Lux* & the KiD 0-3 Study Team provide detailed insight into the background and program of this conference which foregrounded issues of child abuse and neglect. The papers presented during the conference addressed epidemiological research, issues of monitoring trends in this domain, as well as interventions, particularly for hard-to-reach groups, to meet children’s needs.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter! Keep in touch with IAFP and consider contributing to our next newsletter.

Best wishes for a productive, enjoyable, and family-friendly year 2020,



**Sabine Walper, Ph.D.**  
**President of the IAFP**



## The Situation of Families in Austria

### THE DATA BASE

To picture the current situation of families living in Austria, there are various reports published on a regular basis. A central source of information is Statistics Austria (<https://www.statistik.at/>). Their work concerning families contains annual reports on population size and composition, demographic developments (“Demographic Yearbook”), and families and households (“Statistics on Families and Households”). Every ten years, there is a statistical report on households and families based on the register.

In cooperation with Statistics Austria, the Vienna Institute of Demography (VID) publishes an annual barometer of births. In addition, the VID and the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR) run the Human Fertility Database with open access to detailed statistical information on fertility.

Concerning not only statistical information, but qualitative research on attitudes and values concerning the areas of work, family, religion, and politics, there is the European Values Study (EVS), which is published once every ten years. The corresponding study in Austria in 2018 was conducted by the Institute for Empirical Social Studies. Another values study, partly concerning families, is the Youth Values Study by the Institute for Youth Cultural Studies (Heinzlmaier & Ikrath, 2012).

The report “Familien in Zahlen” (FiZ; translates in “Families in Numbers”) by the Austrian Institute for Family Studies (Österreichisches Institut für Familienforschung, ÖIF, <https://www.oif.ac.at/>) is published annually and provides statistical information about the developments of families in Austria, mainly based on data retrieved from Statistics Austria. There are statistics about birth rates, marriage and divorce, households, and

other information concerning families. In the meantime, the ÖIF publishes research reports and working papers on various topics applying to families, about once a year.

### THE STRUCTURE OF HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

The most frequent form of households in Austria is the single-person household (37% of households in 2017), which includes singles living alone and people living alone after separation or widowhood (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). In addition to that, in 2017, there were 23.9% couples without children, 26% couples with children, and 6.6% households of single parents, who were mainly female. The proportion of patchwork families is relatively stable with 8% of all couples with children since 2004 (Geserick, Buchebner-Ferstl, Schraml, Schraml & Wernhart, 2016). Concerning their housing, couples with children have the smallest amount of space per person (Geserick, Buchebner-Ferstl, Schraml, Schraml & Wernhart, 2016).

According to the FiZ Statistics of 2018 by the ÖIF (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018), about 2.5 million families lived in Austria in 2017 (with a total of 8.8 million inhabitants in Austria), which includes couples with and without children as well as single parents with children. This number increased by 5% since 2007. The EVS in 2017 showed that family is the most important area of life for the Austrian population, 87% rated it as a “very important” domain (Institute for Empirical Social Studies, 2017).

The FiZ Statistics of 2018 reported about 80% of all Austrian adult couples to be married and 20% to be in a not-married relationship (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). According to the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP, <https://www.ggp-austria.at/>) of 2009 and 2013, cohabiting can be seen as some kind of a testing phase for marriage,



as about 80% of the married couples lived together before getting married (Buber-Ennsner, Neuwirth & Testa, 2013). In 2017, there were about 45,000 weddings in Austria (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). This number is increasing since 2007. The mean age at the first marriage is 30.4 years for women and 32.7 years for men (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). This mean age increased since 2007 for both sexes, while the age difference between men and women slightly declined to 2.3 years. According to §89 of the General Civil Code, the rights and duties of both married partners are considered equal.

In the EVS in 2017 (Institute for Empirical Social Studies, 2017), the most important aspects for a positive relationship or marriage were loyalty (rated as “very important” by 81%), children (60%), and time for friends and hobbies (50%). The aspect of a positive economic basis of the relationship becomes increasingly important for Austrian couples since 1990.

#### SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

The number of divorces in Austria has decreased from 2007 to 2013, since then the numbers seem to fluctuate. In 2017, there were about 16,000 divorces. The portion of officially mutual divorces has been quite stable over time and affects around 90% of all divorces (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). Based on the current rate of divorces, it can be expected that 41% of the marriages entered in 2017 will be divorced in the course of marriage. This rate has decreased since 2007, when it was almost 50%, which was the maximum since 1945 (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). The mean duration of marriage until divorce in 2017 was 10.7 years. This mean duration has increased since 2007, as there are increasingly more couples that divorce after many years of marriage (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018).

More than two thirds of couples with children are married (Buber-Ennsner, Neuwirth & Testa, 2013). After divorce, the children typically live with the mother. The GGP (Buber-Ennsner, Neuwirth &

Testa, 2013) reported the contact frequency between children of divorced parents with their father. Almost half of the children had contact to the father at least once a week. The frequency seems to depend on the age of the children at the time of the divorce as well as on the time passed since the father moved. The younger the children and the longer the time since the father moved, the less frequent was the contact between children and father. The more frequent the contact, the higher was the satisfaction of the father concerning the relationship to the child.

#### SAME-SEX MARRIAGES AND PARENTHOOD

By the beginning of the year 2019, same-sex marriage is legally allowed in Austria. Before, same-sex couples only had the opportunity to enter into a registered partnership.

In the EVS (Institute for Empirical Social Studies, 2017), people were asked their opinion on same-sex parenthood. Overall, 55% agreed that same-sex parents were just as good parents as others, 13% had no distinct opinion, and 32% disagreed. Agreement was higher among women than among men (62% vs. 48%), higher among younger people (74% of people aged 18-29 vs. 37% of people aged 70 or older), and those with higher education (64% of academics vs. 30% of graduates of compulsory school). Concerning gender roles, 63% agreed that families would suffer from a mother with a full-time job and 53% agreed that employment of the mother had a negative effect on children. Nevertheless, the development of the past decades shows a trend away from traditional gender roles. In 2018, almost 70% disagreed with the traditional division of tasks, which is earning money as male and taking care of house and family as female (Institute for Empirical Social Studies, 2017).

#### CHILD-BEARING

The Austrian idea of an ideal family is strongly determined by the two-child norm. The GGP of

2009 and 2013 showed that more than 50% of the Austrian population wish for two children (Buber-Ennser, Neuwirth & Testa, 2013). More than one quarter wished for three or more children, while 3-10% saw a family with one child or without children as ideal. The Austrian ideal number of children is way higher than the actual number of children. In 2017, there were almost 88,000 births in Austria and the fertility rate was 1.52 children per woman (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). In 2016, the Austrian fertility reached its maximum for the last 30 years with a rate of 1.53 children per woman. The mean age of the mother when receiving her firstborn in 2017 was 29.5 years and increased by 1.5 years in the time from 2007 to 2017 (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). As a result of the increasing age at the time of the birth of the first child, in addition to the increasing life expectancy, the times of adults spent without children gets longer as the time before birth as well as the time after the children become adults get increasingly longer (Geserick, Buchebner-Ferstl, Schraml, Schraml & Wernhart, 2016). The proportion of illegitimate children increased from 2007 to 2017. With the first child, 51.8% of the parents were not married at the time, while concerning all children born in 2017, 42% of the parents were in a not-married relationship, compared to 38.2% of the parents in 2007 (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). As the GGP (Buber-Ennser, Neuwirth & Testa, 2013) reports, life satisfaction is higher for people with children than for those without.

#### PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT AND CHILDCARE

Of those who have children under 15 years old, 66.9% of the women and 92.7% of the men were working in 2017, which is slightly more women and slightly less men than in 2007 (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). The part-time ratio of the working parents went up to 75.1% for women and up to 7.8% for men. The part-time ratio for men almost doubled in the time from 2007. In 2017, 28.6% of the children under 3 years were looked after outside the family (Kaindl & Schipfer, 2018). In

2007, only 13.9% of the children under 3 years were in external childcare. The proportion of children between 3 and 6 years in external childcare went up as well, from 86.6% in 2007 to 94.7% in 2017. In a working paper on childcare in Austria, the ÖIF (Baierl & Kaindl, 2011) reports differences in proportions of childcare between the federal states of Austria, mainly concerning children under 3 years. The proportion of childcare outside the family is higher in Vienna (with 1.9 million inhabitants the only big city in Austria), but the proportions of the other federal states show a tendency to become alike. The differences between federal states concerning childcare of children between 3 and 6 years old are smaller. At this age, the main external childcare takes place in nursery.

When children are looked after at home, parents do not divide the resulting tasks equally between the partners. All tasks concerning childcare are mainly performed by mothers. The most equal division of tasks concerns playing and putting the kids to bed, which is equally divided between parents in 65% for playing and 50% for bed time. In the course of time from 2009 to 2013, the division of tasks became more equal between the parents (Buber-Ennser, Neuwirth & Testa, 2013).

The most important characteristics for children to learn at home in the opinion of Austrians are good manners (80% find it important), responsibility (80%), tolerance and respect (73%), as well as independence (68%) (Institute for Empirical Social Studies, 2017). For Austrians, the perceived importance of these characteristics remained relatively stable for the last 30 years, while other characteristics also became more crucial, mainly those concerning autonomy.

#### HOME-LEAVING AND CO-RESIDENCE WITH PARENTS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

An important task for young adults is the separation from their parents, which is strongly associated with moving. In Austria, young adults

tend to remain in their parents' household longer than in the past decades. In 2014, about 50% of male and 27% of female young adults at the age of 25 still lived with their parents (Geserick, Buchebner-Ferstl, Schraml, Schraml & Wernhart, 2016). Possible reasons, among others, are a longer training period, the postponed start of the first job, and housing costs. The GGP of 2009 (Geserick, 2011) showed that male young adults tend to stay even longer with their parents than females at all ages (20-39 years). Of those living with their parents, 76% lived with both of their parents, 19% lived only with their mother, and 5% only with their father in 2009. In 10% of the cases, there was a third generation of own children living in the same household as well and in 6.3% of the cases, the partner of the adults living with their parents were situated in the same household (Geserick, 2011). Concerning moving out of the parents' household, a difference between urban and rural living can be observed. In rural areas, 34% of adults aged 20-39 years lived with their parents in 2009, while only 22.3% did so in urban areas. But most Austrian young adults move out for at least three months for the first time at the age of 18-20 years old (Geserick, 2011).

### CONCLUSION

Families underlie constant change. An interesting current development aims towards longer periods of living with the own parents in times of (young) adulthood. This is connected to changes in other areas, e.g. longer duration of professional training, and in other aspects of family life as well, e.g. the postponing of starting one's own family.

Some of the most interesting developments in Austria concern same-sex couples and marriage, as well as the increasingly arising question of same-sex parenthood. In general, the concept of family and the division of family and household tasks, just as the social roles people play in this domain, shows developments away from traditional ideas of family life. At the same time,

some of the traditional ideas remain dominant in the notion of family for many Austrian people.

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- Austrian Institute for Family Studies: <https://www.oif.ac.at/>
- Human Fertility Database, Vienna Institute of Demography, & Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research: <https://www.humanfertility.org/cgi-bin/main.php>



Statistik Austria – STATcube:

[http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/services/statcube/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/services/statcube/index.html)

Vienna Institute of Demography:

<https://www.oeaw.ac.at/vid/>

**Harald Werneck, Ph.D.**  
**University of Vienna**



## Family Psychology in the Czech Republic: A Brief Overview and Information About the Latest Publication

Family psychology is a relatively new discipline in the Czech Republic. The first comprehensive monograph called *Family psychology* was published in 2001. Thanks to the readers' interest, the book was already published in the third edition (2012).

However, we have to say that we have a very good and long tradition of family therapy and family counselling, i.e. the applied areas of family psychology. Many publications focusing on clinical and counselling work with families have been published by 2001, but there was a lack of a systematic description of the main topics, methodological background, and research practices. Also, many outstanding Czech psychologists worked with children and families and published their experiences long before 2000. If I were to select only one of them, it would be Prof. Zdeněk Matějček, who – together with his colleagues – is internationally known for his work on neglect and emotional deprivation.

With regards to family psychology as a separate subject within university education, I started teaching family psychology at our Department of Psychology, Palacký University in Olomouc in 2000. Currently, it is taught at some other universities in the Czech Republic. However, the concept of the subject varies, sometimes is limited to applied areas such as family and marriage counselling.

Research in the field of family psychology is carried out mainly at our institute in Olomouc and also in Brno. Our research mainly concerns the functionality and resilience of families. In Brno, at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University, there is an Institute for research on children, youth, and family that has excellent research and publishing results. Although the theoretical basis

of the research is developmental psychology, the results also relate to family psychology.

### FAMILY MEMORIES – A RESEARCH EXAMPLE OF INTERGENERATIONAL NARRATIVES

The latest book in the field of family psychology, which I would like to introduce, is “Family and its memory in us as mirrored in three-generational narratives”. This book, written by a psychologist (Irena Sobotková) and a historian (Radmila Švaříčková Slabáková), is a unique follow-up to the previous book by a larger team of authors in which family memory was examined from the perspective of four traditional academic disciplines: psychology, literary theory, history, and philosophy. The aim of the present book is to explore the phenomenon of family memory more deeply and examine its contents, functions, meanings, and methods of transmission. The interdisciplinary approach, but with a clear methodological anchorage in the field of family psychology, also made it possible to answer broader questions such as how individuals, family generations, and entire families work with their memories and how they incorporate them into the present-day social-political context.

The research results draw on qualitative, semi-structured, three-generational interviews which were collected from a group of thirteen families in the Czech Republic (three generations were interviewed separately within each family). Extensive multidisciplinary literature was used to reflect on the outcomes of the interviews.

The book is divided into four main parts (Family Memory, Recollections and Childhood, Intergenerational Transmission, and the Legacy of the Family) which represent the four main

research topics. Each part comprises four chapters which further develop the main research topic.

The first part "Family Memory" can be read as an introduction to the topic. It examines family memory in relation to the contemporary genealogical boom and deals with the temporal frame and the content of family memory. It considers a link between family memory and family resilience. While variability in the participants' interest in their family past was expected, as well as a varying understanding of what the family past is, the fact that the memories of the youngest generation go most deeply into the past is quite surprising. The gender aspects of family recollections were also analysed and certain gender stereotypical patterns in recollections were revealed.

The second part explores memories of childhood. While memories of childhood in generational perspectives have changed, the recollections of a place related to childhood and the smells and sounds of childhood have remained deeply individual. Nevertheless, these individual recollections can also cast light on family relations and family functioning. When recollecting childhood, family cannot be omitted.

Intergenerational transmission is the topic of the third part, although a generational point of view is applied in all of the chapters. How have family gatherings changed? How have family traditions and rituals been maintained? Do families keep old photos and material artefacts and what do these objects mean for various generations? How have family professions and hobbies been transmitted? A change in family behaviour was observed on the one hand (family gatherings are less frequent, traditions are being forgotten), while family hobbies are still vividly transmitted and serve to build up a positive family culture on the other.

The fourth part examines the meaning of family memory, its values, and its legacy. The value of "what the family is", expressed in family

recollections of major historical events such as the Second World War and Communism, is studied in one chapter of this part. The fact that functional and resilient families (ten families out of thirteen were identified as such) are also coherent in the question of values in all three generations is quite encouraging.

Thus, one of the main research results of the book is the fact that family memory is closely connected to many aspects of family functioning and to family and personal resilience. It has been shown that family memory cannot be studied without considering the present-day social-political discourses concerning the past.

The content of family memory is composed of recollections which are important for the construction of one's own identity. One of the functions of family stories is a strengthening of family relations, family values, and of family identity. In those families in which talking about the family past is frequent and the meaning of family stories is shared among the family members this is usually a good atmosphere. Good relations within the family support the family talking about the past. Our research has shown that what is important is not only a congruent view of the family of its past, but mainly a focus of the family in terms of what holds the family and its generations together, what makes an awareness of the continuity of the family stronger, what can be drawn on. This can be the preservation of traditions, family gatherings, and shared recollections, an attachment to a family place (a house), an interest in family photos and artefacts, shared family hobbies, and also an ability to see examples of one's own behaviour in these ancestors. The family function, as well as family cohesion and intergenerational relations, are supported by all these dimensions of family memory.

It is evident that emotional relations among family members play a key role. Disputes and disagreements in families bring about a reluctance

to recollect the past. In families which are identified as less functional (three families within our sample), there was only a small or even no interest in preservation of family traditions, old photos, and memorial family objects. There were no intergenerationally shared hobbies, no shared family places and expressions about family values were quite unconvincing.

Personal and family resilience was identified as an important mediator between the content of recollections and the quality of relations in the family. A selective dealing with the recollections can function as a resilient – protective or restoring – factor. Families and family members which select within the recollections what is important, what connects the family, were identified as more resilient, although disputes or even divorces also took place.

Personal and family memories are woven into the collective/national discourses about the past and can be an interesting impulse for family therapy and counselling. Talking about the past in families can be supported or, in contrast, suppressed by official discourse. Family identity can be endorsed or suppressed in the same way. Families which consider their family past as contrasting with an official state version could group in terms of their interpretations of the family past. A difficult negotiation of the family past among its members can create conflicts and disputes which in turn influence the ambience in families and their functionality, respectively their values and legacy.

It seems that a shared recollection of the past, under condition of good relations in the family, strengthens shared intergenerational views on various aspects of life, including politics. Functional, resilient, and coherent families have strong and intergenerationally shared values and similar political views.

Although many of our findings are alarming for the future existence of family, it does not seem that the attachment of young men and women to the

family past has been weakened. On the contrary, in some families, the youngest members were most interested in the family past. The importance of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren has been emphasized in this book. Grandchildren frequently identified with their grandparents as their role-models and as persons from whom they have learned various skills.

For the majority of our families, including the youngest generations, the preservation of family memory was an important value. We consider this an important trend related to an omnipresent vogue for genealogical research and potentially leading to the growing importance of family memory (while the traditional structure of the family has been weakened).

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## Trends of Family Research in Japan

### DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH ABOUT FAMILIES IN JAPAN

National agencies provide periodical statistical reports about families in Japan. For example, the "National Basic Survey on Life" by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and research analysis on various types of family forms by the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications inform about basic demographic features of families. Every year, the "National Basic Survey on Living" reports the number of households for various family forms. Furthermore, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau periodically reports on surveys of single parents, unmarried people, and unemployment households.

According to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (2018), the number of single-person households in Japan has increased dramatically across the past 30 years. Compared to 6,826,000 single-person households in 1986, it has almost doubled to 13,613,000 in 2017. However, the same survey also showed that the number of family households with couples only or single parents and unmarried children increased compared to 1986. According to the survey of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2017b), the number of single mothers increased to 1 million between 2005 and 2015 and the number of unmarried single mothers is rapidly increasing. At the same time, it is clear that the number of three-generation households decreased. Therefore, as trends of Japanese families, the number of households increased, and the average number of members in a household decreased.

As for marriage, a survey by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2017a) revealed that the number of unmarried people at age 35 to 44 years who live with their parents was at a high rate between 2005 and 2016. This

phenomenon has been highlighted by research on the so-called parasite singles.

Japan is an aging society. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (2018) reports that the number of households of a person over 65 years has increased from 9,769,000 in 1986 to 23,787,000 in 2017. This type of household now accounts for 47.2 % of the total number of households in Japan.

These surveys in the current Japanese society show that the differentiation of households increasingly proceeds within various types of households, while also the number of elderly in families has increased.

### LOW BIRTH RATE AND AGING

In Japan, a declining birth rate and increasingly aging society are more prominent compared to other developed countries. The aging rate, which indicates the percentage of the population over 65 years relative to the total population, reached a share of 27.7% (Cabinet Office, 2018), i.e. more than one in about four people in the total population is a senior person. On the other hand, the annual number of births tends to decrease in recent years and the number of births in 2018 was 920,000, which is the lowest number ever recorded (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2018). These demographic changes are also affecting families. That is, the relative number of singles and couples without children increased.

In a study of middle-aged couples, no relationship was found between the presence or absence of children and the subjective well-being of the couples (Fukushima & Numayama, 2015) and the absence of children does not affect the happiness of a couple in a simple manner. However, couples without children are likely to have an ambiguous boundary to their family of origin (Hirayama, 2019), they often get involved in problems of their family of origin, and are easily exposed to



interventions of their parents or siblings in the case of partnership problems. In addition, the background of the recently declining birth rate is the increase not only in couples without children but also in single-person households. Young unmarried people who are 20 to 34 years old account for 45.8% of the same-age population and the percentage of unmarried persons among the population aged 35 to 44 clearly increased (to 16.3%) compared to the level before the 1990s (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2017). These data show that in Japan, grown up sons and daughters are more likely to live with their parents than in other countries. In the future, there will be a need for the development of research focusing on such families.

With regard to family care, the mental and physical burden of family caregivers is very high. From the perspective of family psychology, good family relationships have been shown to reduce the burden of family care (Hiraizumi, 2015) and interventions which strengthen family relationships have been shown to be effective for supporting family caregivers. On the other hand, it has also been suggested that good family relationships strengthen the idea that care should be provided by family members and as a result, they suppress the use of external care services (Karasawa, 2001). From these findings, to support family caregivers, it is important not only to aim for a good relationship within the family but also to improve openness to external support so they can properly use social services.

#### DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

In Japan, the divorce rate peaked at 2.3% in 2003 and has been on a slight decline since then. In 2018, the estimated raw divorce rate was 1.66% and the number of divorces was 207,000 (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2018). Since the number of marriages was 590,000, it can be said that one pair was divorced to about 3.5 couples who married. According to Fukumaru (2019), the

characteristics of divorce in Japan can be summarized in the following four points. 1) 90% of all divorces were based on the mutual divorce agreement established only in the talks between the partners, while for the remaining 10%, divorce was involving judicial agencies such as divorce mediation, referee divorce, or a divorce trial. 2) Divorce rates for couples are highest within 5 to 10 years after marriage. 3) 60% of the divorced couples have minor children. 4) In Japan, a single custody system is adopted, so either one gets custody, but in 80% of the cases, the mother becomes the custodial parent.

Family psychological research on divorce is mainly about the effects of divorce on children. Noguchi (2013) examined the psychological development of children who experienced parental divorce and showed that children who experienced parental divorce after adolescence are more likely to react to the parental divorce and tend to be high in depression. In addition, it was also examined how the parent-child relationship and visitation after divorce affects children's adaptation. Noguchi, Aoki and Odagiri (2016) examined the association between visitation after divorce and parent-child relationships. As a result, the divorce group had lower trust in parents and children than the non-divorce group and children who saw their non-custodial parent or the separated parent had higher trust than those who did not, especially trust in the father was high. This suggests that, even after divorce, children's father image is formed in relation with the mother and it is important to maintain a good and high-quality parent-child relationship. In addition, there is research focused on children's recovery process from the experience of parental divorce (Fujita, 2016). There are many studies carefully investigating children who have divorced parents, including their relations with their parents after divorce.

Remarriage tended to increase until 2006, but then decreased and has been stable in recent

years. In addition, couples with one or both partners being remarried have risen, exceeding 25% in 2005 and 26.8% in 2015 (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2017). In other words, at least one partner is remarried in every fourth couple. In Japan, as the number of remarried families increases, research is being conducted on the problems and difficulties posed by remarriage. Two models of the stepfamily have been proposed (Kikuchi, 2018) by referring to two family models by the French legal sociologist Théry (1986). One is called "alternative family model" and places a stepparent as a substitute for a biological parent and forms a relationship just like a biological parent and child (Kikuchi, 2009). In such families, trying to play a real parental role creates psychological conflict and confusion for both, stepparents and children (Nozawa & Kikuchi, 2014). The other model is called the "continuous family model" which is a family's way of thinking that a stepparent is a member who added to the original family later and it is premised that the stepparent and the separated parent both continue the parent-child relationship with their children after divorce and remarriage (Kikuchi 2009). In the family where the stepparent does not act as a natural parent, it is shown that the stepchild evaluates the relationship with the stepparent positively (Nozawa & Kikuchi, 2014). In addition, in interaction with parents who live separately, it has been shown that children feel affectionately about having relationships with their parents in valuable time which does not involve discipline (Ogawa, 2018). From these studies, it can be inferred that in remarried families in Japan, the family relationship will be more positive in the "continuous family model" than in the "alternative family model". Therefore, it is necessary to capture divorced and remarried families as "networks" that go beyond household, without being bound by separate parents or stepparents (Nozawa, 2011). As mentioned above, although research on stepfamilies has increased in recent years, research on stepfamilies from the

viewpoint of children in Japan has only just begun and future research is desired (Nozawa and Kikuchi, 2014).

#### FAMILY SUPPORT FOR INFERTILITY TREATMENT

Kitamura (2012) analyzed consultations of the "Infertility Hotline in Tokyo" which provides counseling to persons who suffer from infertility. As a result, 93.2% of the consultations were by women. These women are often hurt by insensitive remarks such as "Please do your best now" from the husband, "I want to see my grandchildren quickly", "Baby still?", and "A child is sorry if it remains a single child" from the parents. Although the problem of infertility is a matter of husband and wife, it is a special problem that women have a much greater physical, physiological, and psychosocial burden. From such a perspective, many psychological studies on infertility treatment in Japan focused on the psychological burden of women, but there are still only very few studies on couples. Therefore, in this paper, we introduce the few psychological studies on infertility treatment focusing on couples in Japan.

First, Koizumi, Terui, Kitamura, Ito and Kashiwagi (2015) considered infertility as an experience of losing children and examined the process by which women under infertility treatment accept the loss. As a result, it was shown that the intimacy of the marital relationship affects the acceptance of the loss (the feeling of growth and the stabilization of feelings) during infertility treatment. Hirayama (2018) pointed out that it was important to have couples work together to address problems when performing couple therapy on couples who were undergoing infertility treatment. He reported that it was very important to remove the biased perceptions about infertility treatments such as "want / do not want children", "degree of desired children", and "consciousness for sexual intercourse". In addition, infertility treatment may end quite differently, either because of pregnancy

or due to increased age and various burdens. Mio, Sato and Komatsu (2018) analyzed the process by which women who finished infertility treatment find their own way of life without children. The authors reported that women were more likely to accept "their life without children" if the couple had jointly agreed to "finish the treatment". The support from the husband always plays an important role for the wife to establish "a way of life like oneself".

Thus, as inferred from the findings of the research introduced in this paper, Japanese family research on infertility treatment has begun to show evidence that "husband's cooperation is important". In the future, it is necessary to investigate the specific role of husbands in infertility treatment and the role of the whole family including parents and brothers.

#### THE GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE AND ITS IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The survey on the Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred on March 11, 2011 is also of interest for family research. Japan is an earthquake-prone country. The Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake of 1995 caused great damage and the Kumamoto earthquake, which occurred most recently in 2016, is fresh in our memory. Among the many earthquake disasters, the damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake was enormous, not only due to the tsunami and the collapse of buildings, but also due to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident which resulted from the earthquake. According to a report by the National Police Agency (2019), there were 15,897 cases of death, 2,532 people missing, and 6,157 people injured in the Great East Japan Earthquake. In Fukushima prefecture (2019) where the nuclear accident occurred, it was reported that more than 30,000 people had been evacuated outside Fukushima Prefecture. Ikeno (2019) insists on the need to take into account the special needs of family forms such as single-parent families and

families whose community life has been deprived by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, in order to consider how to support families and communities during times of disasters. In particular, in the case of the Great East Japan Earthquake, it was necessary to care for the loss experience not only for the families but also for the local area units and it was important to consider various aspects of family support at evacuation destination.

#### RESEARCH ON THE THEORY AND TECHNIQUES OF FAMILY THERAPY

In Japan, research on system theory is in progress. Wakashima (2001) introduced the concept of time to system theory and proposed the Information Recurrent Model. This model has been somewhat successful in modeling the notion of resistance to change. Wakashima and Matsui (2003) simulated this model mathematically. As a result, there were three conditions for individuals to create group change: 1) to accelerate the change of the group, 2) to increase the degree of retention of the behavior pattern of the individual, 3) to weaken the interaction between the individual and the group. Change in the behavior pattern of a group was shown to occur if any two of these conditions were satisfied. Also, Wakashima and Matsui (2004) examined this model through case studies. As a result, in order to transform the group, it was important that the speed with which the individual's behavior changed became apparent to the group, and that the individual's behavior was important to the group. In addition, it was shown that strong individual-group interaction enhances individual influence and motivation, leading to group transformation.

In addition, in recent years, attempts have been made to apply integrated information theory to family research. Family therapy has shifted from a paradigm of family system theory to a paradigm of narrative and there has been no theoretical development. Wakashima, Sakamoto, Hiraizumi,

Itakura, Ikuta, Sato and Hanada (2018) applied the Shema of Integrated Information Theory (Tononi, 2004) to the family system and tried to explain the family system from differences and interactions. According to Integrated Information Theory, there is a difference between neurons and their interaction increases the amount of information and produces consciousness which is a whole three-dimensional phenomenon. In research which applied this Shema to family system, the hypothesis that "couples with high difference scores and high interaction scores have higher problem-solving ability and family resilience compared to the other groups" was tested. As a result, the hypothesis was not supported. From these results, two issues emerged: 1) re-examining the difference between partners in the couple and 2) assuming a situation where the couple needs information.

#### RECENT TRENDS AND RESEARCH THEMES

Recent family studies in Japan have focused on various family forms such as divorce, remarriage, and couples without children. The traditional form of families has changed and family diversification has progressed. That is changing the focus of family research. However, compared to other countries, research on infertility treatment and same-sex marriage in Japan is insufficient. What is required of Japanese family research in the future will be to address the subject of Japanese unique family forms such as low birth rate and aging.

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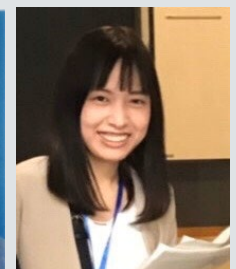
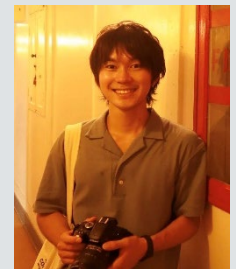
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## Report on the Expert meeting “The early years: monitoring and promoting child wellbeing in Germany – The Children in Germany – KiD 0-3 study”

Child abuse and neglect do have serious short- and long-term consequences for physical and mental health – especially when experienced in early childhood years of development. Numerous risk factors for different forms of maltreatment are already known, be it at the level of the child, the parents, the parent-child interaction, or the whole family system in its ecological context (Belsky, 1993; Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Higgins, Delfabbro & Segal, 2017). However, there is no (gold) standard or framework which risk factors have to be necessarily taken into account when looking at different forms of child abuse or neglect. In the face of lacking representative data on risk factors and psychosocial adversity in Germany, the national representative study “Children in Germany” (“Kinder in Deutschland – KiD 0-3”; Eickhorst et al., 2015) was conducted by the German Youth Institute (DJI) in cooperation with the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) from 2013 to 2017.

In contrast to some other countries, structured intervention programs are not systematically implemented or even missing completely in Germany, although early childhood intervention was extended constantly and the number of evaluated programs increased considerably since the National Centre for Early Prevention (NZFH) began its work. Hence, there is a need for the development and implementation of successful intervention programs and a systematic evaluation strategy has to be set up to find the effective components of different programs in Germany.

For these reasons, in early June 2019 an expert meeting of international researchers was convened at the German Youth Institute in



Munich to discuss the results of the KiD 0-3 study and ongoing international research on psychosocial adversity, child maltreatment, and interventions in early childhood. The expert meeting started on Sunday afternoon with two opening speeches in a discussion-friendly atmosphere: First, Research Director of the DJI and current President of the International Academy of Family Psychology, Dr. Sabine Walper, gave the first talk on “Research on psychosocial adversity and intervention in early childhood in Germany: An overview” and presented the starting points and the development of early childhood intervention. Secondly, Dr. Ute Thyen, head of the advisory board of the NZFH and professor of Social Pediatrics and Youth Medicine at the University of Lübeck, gave an overview on “Early intervention programs in Germany” with a special focus on early interventions in cases of developmental delay and disability. With a very nice welcome reception and ongoing discussions we ended the first afternoon.

Within the next two days, we wanted to answer the following questions:

- (1) Focusing issues of epidemiology and the prediction of child maltreatment, which data are most suitable to assess child maltreatment?
- (2) Considering a potential monitoring of psychosocial adversity and child maltreatment, how could results of the KiD 0-3 study be used and what lessons can be learned from international experiences?
- (3) Focusing intervention research and effective programs, particularly for hard-to-reach groups, to meet children's needs, what would be important when implementing intervention programs and conceptualizing evaluations to measure (un-)intended effects?

#### EPIDEMIOLOGY AND PREDICTION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

In the first session on Monday, Dr. Christoph Liel, Divisional Head of Research on prevalences and implementation at the Research Department Early Childhood Intervention at the DJI, talked in his presentation about the "Epidemiology and prediction of child maltreatment: Results from KiD 0-3 study (Part I)", focusing the prediction of various forms of child maltreatment. The findings of the study show that parental stress and intimate partner violence (IPV) have a high predictive value for child abuse. In the prediction of child neglect and children's exposure to IPV, the accumulation of various risk factors is more predictive.

In the next presentation, Dr. John Eckenrode, Professor for Human Development and Associate Director of the Bronfenbrenner Centre for Translational Health at the Cornell University, focused his presentation on "The epidemiology of child maltreatment – which data do we need?" He described the strengths and weaknesses of different sources of epidemiological data on child abuse and neglect. He strongly recommended the combination of objective risk assessments and clinical judgement in individual cases, since no risk

model provides 100% sensitivity and 100% specificity.

In the last presentation of the morning, Dr. John Fluke, Research Professor of Pediatrics and Associate Director for Systems Research and Evaluation at the University of Colorado, gave his talk about "Real or imagined? – Sources of variability in understanding child maltreatment". The presentation raised questions about how the variability in risk factors and its measurement influences our view on child abuse and neglect.

The morning ended with a joint discussion about the pros and cons of having a higher rate of "false positive results" in the context of child maltreatment (families who are identified to be at risk, but in fact do not act accordingly). If we use risk assessments to identify more families at risk (high sensitivity) in order to offer them support like early childhood intervention, this might not be of great harm, although economic resources might not be endless to offer support to every family.

#### MONITORING OF PSYCHOSOCIAL ADVERSITY AND CHILD MALTREATMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Susanne Ulrich, Researcher at the Department on Early Childhood Intervention at the DJI, gave further insights on "Psychosocial adversity in early childhood: Results from KiD 0-3 (Part II)". She introduced a cumulative risk model and a latent class analysis (LCA) to identify and compare different types of burdened families. While both models identified unstressed and multiply burdened families, the LCA also revealed two groups at an intermediate risk level – socio-economically burdened families and families with higher parenting stress and conflict potential. While unstressed families and families with parenting stress had increased usage rates of universal programs, multiple and socio-economically burdened families more frequently used the indicated and targeted programs.

The focus of the next talk, held by Dr. Howard Dubowitz, Professor of Pediatrics and Director of the Center for Families at the School of Medicine at the University of Maryland, was on “The neglect of child neglect”. The presentation raised questions about how to define and assess child neglect in order to help families. As he pointed out, assessing neglect without blaming the parents works best, if we want them to accept recommendations provided by institutional support. The instrument SEEK (“Safe Environment for Every Kid”), which he developed for pediatricians, is a suitable tool to this end.

Subsequently, Dr. Ingrid Schoon, Professor of Human Development and Social Policy at the Institute of Education, University of London, and Research Director of the Department of Quantitative Social Science, broadened the perspective on families at risk by looking at “The connection between poverty and adverse experiences in early childhood”. She presented different views on poverty and showed how economical strain affects families and children in multiple ways.

Dr. Heinz Kindler, Head of the Research Department on Family Welfare and Child Protection at the DJI, summarized what he learned from the afternoon sessions to open the following discussion: First, there is a need of a definition to monitor something (e.g. the common sense definition of child neglect; define target groups as a starting point). Second, it needs a purpose why to monitor something (e.g. clinical level for individual, family or child; prevalence of families at risk; reports of child protection services), and third, high data quality with convincing indicators is needed. Regarding the last two points we discussed the possible value of different outcomes that should be in the center of assessment. There was substantial agreement that the focus should be on risk factors, that can be influenced by families and early childhood intervention programs. Furthermore the positive, resource-

oriented outcomes such as child well-being, children’s rights, or parental knowledge should be taken into account to capture the whole picture of families at risk. Most importantly, all attendees agreed that longitudinal data, which follow young children at least until school age, is urgently needed.

After a typical Bavarian Dinner we had the chance to meet the international experts for interesting one-to-one talks and discuss the possibilities of joint publications.

#### CHILDREN’S NEEDS – INTERVENTION RESEARCH

Dr. Jörg Fegert, Professor of Child and Youth Psychiatry at the Ulm University Hospital and head of the "Competence Centre for Child Protection in Medicine" in Baden-Württemberg, opened the sessions of the last day with a presentation on “Research opportunities of prevalence and intervention studies in Germany” that linked the issues of monitoring of the previous day with a prospect into interventions. With recent data on the prevalence of child maltreatment in German adults, he showed that multiple forms of child maltreatment often occur together and nearly 90% remain undetected.

Taking a deeper look into effective interventions, Dr. Jane Barlow provided us with an overview of the “Effectiveness of early intervention programs on child- and family-related outcomes”. In her presentation, she pointed out that from a biopsychosocial perspective, interventions could have very different starting points. Overall, most effective interventions focus not only on individuals, but on the dyad.

From a very different perspective, Dr. Marni Brownell, Prof. of Community Health Sciences at the University of Manitoba, presented the “Evaluation of programs designed to improve child development and family functioning – Lessons from Manitoba”. With the possibility to use Canadian administrative data, she reported on

the positive effects of financial support provided by the "Healthy Baby Prenatal Benefit Program" in promoting pre- and perinatal health.

Fathers as long "neglected" parents were foregrounded in the presentation of Dr. Shawna Lee, associate professor at the University of Michigan School of Social Work, where she is director of the Parenting in Context Research Lab: "Engaging fathers in home visitation programs to promote child socioemotional well-being". With a specific prevention approach within the "Healthy Start" program, she tries to address fathers as caregivers via personalized text messages ("Text4Dad") to promote greater paternal involvement in early childhood interventions.

The following discussion focused on how practitioners can best path the way into support services for families at risk in Germany. One of the problems might be that family midwives, doing the home visiting programs, are not part of the public health system like in other countries, but freelancers. Thus, depending on their individual stance, they might or might not be connected with early childhood interventions or child protection services. The international attendees explained that other countries also rely on "navigators" in the communities who inform about the diverse intervention programs and lead the families through the support system.

The last day ended with the presentation of Dr. Franziska Meinck, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, in the Centre for Evidence-Based Interventions, University of Oxford. She shared her insights on "Program implementation and evaluation – opportunities and challenges". By looking at the process of broadly disseminating programs that have proofed their effectiveness in first evaluations, she placed implementation fidelity in the centre of her talk.

Summarizing the discussions from the three days, Sabine Walper emphasized that the German system of early childhood intervention might be

more complicated than in other countries as it combines the health and social sector, but the National Centre for Early Prevention has an essential function in bridging these sectors and in implementing support services for families with young children. She pointed out that scientific findings within a population-based approach are urgently needed to inform social policy and improve the quality of early childhood interventions. Therefore, knowledge on the psychosocial adversities in growing up are as necessary as good theoretical models of the mechanisms how high risks and low resources lead to child maltreatment. We also need better ways to measure child maltreatment and particularly neglect. With regard to the quality of interventions, dyadic parent-child interventions seem particularly effective, but can only be disseminated broadly when we have more rigorous intervention research.

All in all, it was remarkable that the expert meeting succeeded in addressing a broad range of issues from psychosocial adversities in families to the prediction and monitoring of child maltreatment up to interventions and their implementation. Thanks for these more than stimulating and thought-provoking insights!

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