



ASA Family Section Newsletter

Spring 2025

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Alemu, M. (2025). Better than My Father or Better than His Absence: Understanding How Variation in Patterns of Absence Influence Intentions for Fatherhood. *Qualitative Sociology*, 48(1), 151-182.

Burger, K., Mele, F., Johnson, M. K., Mortimer, J., & Han, X. (2025). The intergenerational reproduction of self-direction at work: Revisiting Class and Conformity. *Social Forces*.

Choi, K. H. (2025). Educational gap between partners and sterilization. *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

Choi, K. H., & Soave, A. (2025). Subsidized Housing: The Panacea to Canada's Housing Affordability Crisis?. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie*.

Gibby, A. L., Lankes Smith, J., Yorgason, J. B., Bardsley, A., Holmes, E. K., & James, S. L. (2025). What is your type? Latent classes of newly married couples' gender ideologies. *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

Gonalons-Pons, P., & Ansari-Thomas, Z. (2025). The Social Division of Care Work Time Over Half a Century. *Demography*, 11879571.

Hara, Y., & Yu, W. H. (2025). Mate preferences and marriage-related behaviors: The case of Japan. *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Manning, W. D., Guzzo, K. B., Dush, C. K., & Juteau, G. (2025). Pandemic-Based Stress and Timing of Fertility Intentions among Partnered Adults. *Socius*, 11, 23780231251321549.

Milkie, M. A., Sayer, L. C., Nomaguchi, K., & Yan, H. X. (2025). Who's Doing the Housework and Childcare in America Now? Differential Convergence in Twenty-First-Century Gender Gaps in Home Tasks. *Socius*, 11, 23780231251314667.

Oh, E. (2025). Norms or Knowledge? Unpacking Views on Maternal Employment among the College Educated in South Korea. *Qualitative Sociology*, 1-30.

Park, S. Y., & Oh, E. (2025). Getting a Foot in the Door: A Meta-Analysis of US Audit Studies of Gender Bias in Hiring. *Sociological Science*, 12, 26-50.

Zheng, H., & Yu, W. H. (2025). Paradox Between Immigrant Advantages in Morbidity and Mortality: Dynamic Patterns and Tentative Explanations. *Demography*, 11868456.

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

The conversations below are part of a new series from the Mentoring & Inclusion Committee called *Dear ASA Family Section*. It's a *Dear Abby* style Q+A where more advanced family sociologists answer questions from members.

NAVIGATING THE NON- ACADEMIC JOB MARKET A conversation with Haley Swenson

*Dr. Swenson is a Research and Writing
Fellow at New America's Better Life Lab*



Q: How can qualitative researchers effectively apply for non-academic jobs and position themselves for success?

Haley Swenson: One of the best things a qualitative researcher can do to prepare for jobs outside the academy is to follow and engage with the kind of work or the industry they would like to someday pursue, as early and often as possible. Today many various sectors and occupations could benefit from the skills and expertise of qualitative researchers. From think tanks and policy analysis; to consulting and management; to market research or user experience design in technology companies; and the burgeoning world of AI tool development, people with extensive knowledge of qualitative research have much to offer. Being able to articulate what that special thing is they offer potential employers—and to understand what problems those employers encounter and need solved—is critical to a successful transition from the academy.

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

Navigating the non-academic job market (cont.)

Q: Which experiences and skills should graduate students highlight (or avoid emphasizing) on their CVs to appeal to non-academic qualitative research positions?

HS: The answer to this question truly depends on the industry and job type you're entering. For instance, for one employer, it may be your teaching experience that is most valuable; for another, your research methods and methodology, your ability to analyze qualitative data, or your ability to synthesize huge areas of knowledge. In my line of work as a gender equality researcher and writer, there are two skills that stand out above the rest that I bring to my work from qualitative research. One is the ability to interview diverse people and solicit meaningful information from them. The second is my ability to read and research broadly on a seemingly intractable social problem, and then systematically develop a strategy for moving the needle on that problem.

In terms of what **not** to emphasize? Don't lean heavily on your publishing record or your PhD in selling yourself to a potential employer. In fact, beyond listing your PhD as part of your education in your resume, you may not need to talk about it at all. Resumes and cover letters for alt-ac jobs need to focus on telling a coherent and convincing story that the various experiences you have had in your career to date have prepared you to execute every single item in the job description. Even if writing, for example, is part of the job description you're interested in, think about how the kinds of writing you have done do or do not translate into being able to meet the employer's needs. It is unlikely your peer-reviewed paper in a top journal prepared you to write social media copy or reports for stakeholders, but maybe other kinds of writing you did in graduate school did give you that experience. Talk about those experiences and how they relate to the job at hand.

Remember: To get the job you want, you must convince a potential employer that your background has prepared you for the role. Worry less about explaining your academic background and more about telling the story of how your past prepared you precisely for a job like this one.

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

Navigating the non-academic job market (cont.)

Q: How can job-seekers effectively frame the experiences and skills gained during graduate school to demonstrate value in non-academic roles?

HS: The best piece of advice I have gotten is to ask yourself: What do I know or what can I do, because of my background (and that is not exclusively your graduate school career), that this employer is looking for? From there, the challenge is simply translating the skills and terms we use to describe those things in the academy into language that resonates in the industry or occupation you're interested in joining. What you might now call "critical thinking and analysis," for instance, your future employer might call "strategy development."

That's why my first piece of advice is to start identifying and following that work as soon as possible. That might mean following potential employers on LinkedIn, reading about their work in the news or on their websites, and networking with people in the sectors you'd like to join. You will get a sense of how they talk about what they do and, in turn, be able to talk about your own experience in similar terms.

Q: What alt-ac jobs might be out of reach and, alternatively, which present realistic career pathways for qualitative researchers?

HS: I think one mistake qualitative researchers make in thinking about opportunities outside the academy is to see themselves solely as researchers. There are job opportunities with the title of "qualitative researcher" out there—but there are many more jobs out there in which qualitative researchers could thrive that may only be peripherally related to research. Successful researchers have a long list of skills, talents, and knowledge that puts many other jobs in reach. I have social science and humanities PhD friends who now work in jobs as diverse as communications strategy, social change, web programming, instructional design, AI startups, UX research, public opinion research, audience engagement, and personal finance. Maybe the most universally important skill qualitative researchers have is an ability to develop new skills and expertise in a range of areas. I hesitate to say any career pathway is off-limits to a person with that talent.

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

NAVIGATING THE NON-ACADEMIC JOB MARKET

A conversation with Mindy Fried

Dr. Fried is the Principal of Arbor Consulting Partners, a research consulting group based in Boston, Massachusetts.



Q: How can qualitative researchers effectively apply for non-academic jobs and position themselves for success?

Mindy Fried: I'll start with a basic question: Are you open to working in a range of settings or do you have a preference for particular settings? For example, do you want to work in a university research center? For a non-profit organization, or in the for-profit sector? Do you want to use your qualitative research skills in the advocacy world for a think tank or a labor union? Are you interested in working as a consultant – either in a large firm or a small independent consultancy? There are many places where you'll find qualitative researchers, and often they're part of a research team. Check out the list of websites I've included at the end of this post that may help you explore different types of workplaces. Here are a few tips as you gear up (or continue!) your job search:

Develop a resumé of 1-2 pages:

Customize a 1-2 page resumé based on the focus of the jobs/organizations you're exploring. Think creatively about how to present your skills as a qualitative researcher, and of course, include any reports/documents you've written that reflect your accomplishments as a qualitative researcher. Include your academic achievements as well. And if you've received any testimonials or feedback (or acknowledgement/awards) for your qualitative research, certainly include these. Also, include the range of platforms you're proficient in using for analysis.

If you have any experience in survey design, mention this, and include any collaborations you've done with quantitative researchers. Even if you're going for a qualitative research position, employers look favorably on those who are familiar with surveys and survey analysis.

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

Navigating the non-academic job market (cont.)

References: References should include professors, former employers and colleagues who value your qualitative research skills, your ability to manage a project, and your experience collaborating with other researchers (including quantitative researchers).

Writing a cover letter: Cover letters are hard to write! You have one page to make the case for why you're the best candidate. Use enough of the organization's language from a job post to communicate you understand what they're looking for (but don't go overboard in using their language). Express your interest and excitement about the position and say WHY you're interested. (e.g., you're passionate about the issues, you have the right skills, you work well independently as well as in collaboration with others, you've been a valued member of research teams). You want to be concise, grammatically correct (seriously! It makes a difference!), and enthusiastic.

And here's my (drum roll, please) pitch for informational interviews!: I'm a big fan. Contacting well-connected people in your field whom you respect/admire and asking them for a bit of their time is worth a try. If you're able to meet with even one or two people, it may very well contribute to building your network. If/when you meet with said people, start by telling them how much you admire their work and want to value their time. Be ready to present yourself and your work in a succinct fashion, and let them know you're not looking to them for a job; rather, you'd like to hear their take on the landscape for jobs in your area. Once you've established a rapport, you can ask them if they can suggest anyone you should contact. If they say "yes," ask them if you can use their name when you reach out to these people.

Good luck!

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

Navigating the non-academic job market (cont.)

Resources shared by Mindy Fried

Nonprofit job boards

- [Institute for Nonprofit Practice](#)
- [Idealist](#)

Research and policy centers within universities

Many universities have research centers. If this is your jam, look up research centers that focus on your topical areas of expertise.

- [University of California Berkeley](#)
- [University of Michigan Ann Arbor](#)
- [University of Massachusetts Boston](#)
- Also, check out [Inside Higher Ed](#)

Government (local, state, federal and government agencies)

Your best bet in our current political climate would be to focus on local and state jobs. And here's where informational interviewing might come in handy!

Public school district research departments

Search in the local school districts you're interested in.

Consulting (e.g., professional firms, consulting collaboratives, independent consulting)

Find local consulting firms you're interested in and contact them regarding job listings.

Evaluation research

Check out the [American Evaluation Association](#).

UX research or market research

Check out [this website!](#)

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

NAVIGATING CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE

A conversation with Paula Fomby

*Dr. Fomby is a Professor of Sociology at
the University of Pennsylvania*



Q: What advice and/or strategies do you have for adapting our teaching and research during this period of seemingly constant political and cultural change?

Paula Fomby: In the classroom, I turn to history to introduce moments of tension, conflict, disruption, and even profound systemic change that are analogous to but removed from our current circumstances. Students discuss these events impartially and with genuine intellectual curiosity and compassion and are usually able to make a connection to the current moment themselves. Using historical examples of popular fiction, drama, or other media gives students insight into how others have processed anxiety and apprehension in uncertain times, and this can be a springboard for students to connect current public issues to their personal experiences and sentiments. In teaching about the family, I usually draw on US history - the legacy of American Indian boarding schools, the role of the Freedmen's Bureau in formerly enslaved people's marriage uptake after the Civil War, the privatization of the cost of a college education in the 1970s - but use whatever time, place, or event excites you!



DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

NAVIGATING CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE

A conversation with Youngmin Yi

Dr. Yi is an Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department at Wellesley College



Q: What advice and/or strategies do you have for adapting our teaching and research during this period of seemingly constant political and cultural change?

Youngmin Yi: I don't think I can answer this question as succinctly as I was instructed (so sorry, Pilar/Family Section!), and I think it is impossible to answer it in a way that is focused just on the adaptation of teaching and research projects in the spirit of survival (so sorry, question-poser!) as I think it is important to take stock of the context in which this question is posed. I believe that one of the biggest challenges and greatest strengths of being a sociologist is that we have access to a wide range of perspectives, tools, and insights about the human condition that allow us to make sense of our past and present and even consider possibilities for the future.

A strength, because if we take full advantage of what sociology has to offer, we may be especially well-equipped to investigate and understand the past and present, and even respond to the particular moment in time in which we find ourselves. A challenge, because it is for these very reasons that our discipline and we/our colleagues are under attack. And if I can get more vulnerable here, sometimes "ignorance [can be] bliss/comfort," and in times like these, that very human part of me finds that the sociological imagination, awakened (I like to think), is almost impossible to turn off. It offers information, awareness, frames of analysis, and a sense of responsibility to act upon or share that understanding. It is empowering, sobering, and, apologies to Mills, but the sociological imagination can be overwhelming and a real b*tch. We can blame sociologists for my ridiculously long answer to a clear and concise question about sociological research and teaching in a turbulent time.

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

Navigating cultural and political change (cont.)

With all of *this* [gestures wildly] going on, adaptation of our research and teaching is going to look different for different people facing different circumstances and needs. It'll depend on the extent to which your work or your position relies on external research funding, whether the research and teaching structures and teams that you lead or work in focus on or employ graduate students, whether your current position requires you to prioritize institutional leadership over your research projects or course development, whether you or your work is especially likely to be impacted, and, importantly, whether your capacity to center your professional work has changed in light of other necessary priorities, like your safety, economic security, and physical and mental health and that of those to whom you are linked. If I could offer a few concrete pieces of advice, grounded in my own personal relationship to my work and identity as a sociologist and person it would be these:

1. Keep going. We and our work are important and meaningful, so, as you are able, “Keep on keepin’ on,” as my awesome advisor Dan Lichter always said to me in graduate school and still does (and many of us Lichter students and fans say it to each other, too). Pre-emptive adaptation to a not-yet-realized future that is absent of our research, teaching, and service will only make it feel all the more inevitable. Remember: navigating bureaucracies, updating course materials, reconfiguring research teams, striking a potential funding opportunity off our list – sometimes we are treading water and that is a key part of the research process and professional sociological work.

2. Get connected and lean into community. Connect with colleagues and organizations inside and outside of your institutions and familiarize yourself with policies, resources, and groups that may have existed all along but may have felt more or less salient depending on who you are and your experiences.

Examples:

- If you are an academic, connect to campus and cross-campus initiatives on academic freedom.

DEAR ASA FAMILY SECTION

Navigating cultural and political change (cont.)

- If you are a researcher, explore and become familiar with what resources and protections are available to support you and your team members who may be impacted by funding cuts or program closures. For example, does your institution have provisions for helping “float” staff? If you are less impacted, might you be able to shift and redistribute responsibilities and roles in your collaborations in a way that is responsive to and recognizes unequal impact, power, and security?
- If you are an educator, (re)consider, the relationship between you, your students, and your course material and your pedagogical values. Maybe it is time to put your class learning objectives on critical consumption of claims about society and application of theory to life front and center. How can our teaching contribute to shared space for sociological meaning-making that benefits our students and us?
- Ask questions (and maybe offer ideas) about how periods of crisis are recognized in evaluation and promotion criteria – there might not be answers now, but it doesn’t hurt to ask the question and document the impacts.
- Consider the ways that in addition to seeking support and resources, we can contribute to the fostering, strengthening, and expanding of spaces and resources for information-sharing, solidarity, and mutual support. There is so much cooking across the sociological community right now.

3. To the extent possible, don’t turn away. Now is the time to consider each of our own engagement with praxis and what it might look like.

- Is it in the classroom, by making connections between course materials and the current moment to support our students’ and our own abilities to grapple with what we are seeing and experiencing?
- Does it require a shift in your bandwidth for pragmatic reasons? Is it recognizing that we are limited in what we can do in our professional roles, giving ourselves permission to name that, and seeking other spaces and ways outside of our professional duties to “make a difference in the quality of human life in our time” (Mills 1959 [2000], 226)?

Take good care. I am so proud to be a sociologist and I am in awe of what we can and will be able to do when we work together and care for ourselves and one another.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Note from the chair on contributing to the Linda Burton Award

Dear Family Sociology Section Members,

In 2020, the section council created the Linda Burton Awards as part of its efforts to promote inclusivity, affirm the section's commitment to diversity and ways to better support scholars from underrepresented groups at all levels of career development. Named the Linda Burton Awards in honor of section member and former Distinguished Career Award winner Linda Burton, they include travel grants for one graduate student member and one non-student member from racialized groups to attend the annual meeting. A council-appointed committee determines selection criteria and procedures for this award. Affirming the values inherent to the Linda Burton Awards and enhancing our support of this effort is essential in today's climate.

The section conducted a fundraising drive for this new program in 2020 and in 2022. ASA has now given the section permission to hold another fundraising drive. New funds that are raised now could allow us to give out multiple awards per year for several years without any more action. I write to solicit any contributions you feel comfortable making to this cause. The goal is to raise \$3,000 to \$5,000 before August 12, 2025. We hope you will provide any support you can to this worthy cause.

How to make a contribution to the Linda Burton Award:

1. Make an online contribution via the ASA online member portal at <https://my.asanet.org/cv5/cgi-bin/memberdll.dll/info?wpr=donationnew.htm&selDon=ASASC064AWD>. All donations to the section made at this time through this URL go to the Linda Burton Award.

2. Note: ASA prefers donations be made online. Contribute by check, made payable to "American Sociological Association" with "Family Section" on the memo line. Checks should be sent to Secretary-Treasurer Margaret Gough, 440 Providence Ct, Unit 102, Long Beach, CA 90803

The ASA is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization recognized by the IRS. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please consult your tax preparer for details.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lise Meitner Excellence Program

The Lise Meitner Excellence Programme is designed to attract and specifically promote exceptionally qualified female scientists

- Permanent W2 post with group equipment
- Application Deadline: April 8, 2025.

The Max Planck Society has initiated a number of measures to attract increasing numbers of women to a career in science and provide them with equal opportunities for all stages of their career. An important initiative is the Lise Meitner Excellence Program. The position as a Lise Meitner Group Leader will be advertised to recruit and promote exceptionally qualified female scientists. There is a multi-stage, competitive selection process, held in close consultation with interested Max Planck Institutes. The Lise Meitner Groups are furnished with their own resources for their entire duration.

For more information, please see [here](#).

https://www.demogr.mpg.de/en/career_6122/jobs_fellowships_1910/lise_meitner_excellence_program_14081

New Annual Meeting Guide Program

ASA is introducing something exciting at the 2025 ASA Annual Meeting in Chicago to help first-time attendees feel more connected – the ASA Annual Meeting Guide Program! A small group of first-time attendees will be paired with an experienced meeting guide to help them confidently navigate the meeting and get the most out of the experience. Guides will arrange a brief 20-to-30-minute meet-up with their group, which will take place at the start of the Annual Meeting.

Those interested in being a guide, please [complete this form](#) by May 29, 2025. If selected to be a guide, you must register for the Annual Meeting by June 30, 2025, to participate in the program. Meeting guides are only expected to be available in relation to the Annual Meeting.

First-time meeting attendees can apply to be matched with a guide by [completing this form](#) by June 9, 2025. Applicants must register for the Annual Meeting by June 30, 2025, to participate in the program. Priority will be given to first-time attendees of the 2025 Annual Meeting who are also ASA members and in order of application so apply early!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Expand the Public Understanding of Sociology

ASA's Communications Director, Mary Spiro, frequently receives requests from media representatives seeking subject matter experts to comment on many topics relevant to the discipline of sociology. If she contacts you or your section looking for a source, please respond quickly, as most media personnel are on tight deadlines. Likewise, if you have a story idea to pitch to the media or something you would like promoted through social media, please contact Mary to discuss it. She can be reached at mSpiro@asanet.org.

Advocacy Update!

The ASA actively advocates for social science research on Capitol Hill. Recently, the Association co-signed two public statements, one urging the restoration of [taxpayer-funded data](#) removed from federal agency websites and another [reaffirming our commitment](#) to academic freedom, stable research funding, and evidence-based policy. ASA remains dedicated to collaborating with others in the scientific research community to advance its mission: supporting sociologists, strengthening sociology as a science and profession, and promoting its societal contributions. To further these efforts, ASA publishes Rapid Response Reports—concise research briefs that provide background information and access to subject matter experts on timely sociological issues. These reports have been widely circulated in the media and on social platforms. You can explore ASA's latest RRRs, press releases, and social media updates on [Newswise](#)—a valuable resource for journalists.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Is Your Research Federally Funded?

ASA is gathering insights from members who have received federal funding to showcase why efforts to reduce such funding—including indirect costs—are misguided. If you're interested in sharing your research, please email communications@asanet.org with the subject line **FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH**. This is an open request with no deadline.

Postdoc Position(s) at the Max Planck | University of Helsinki Centre for Social Inequalities in Population Health, Rostock

The Max Planck – University of Helsinki Center for Social Inequalities in Population Health is currently seeking to appoint one or more full-time post-doctoral researchers. We welcome applications from researchers with a PhD in demography, sociology, statistics, epidemiology, public health, economics, computer science, and allied fields. The successful candidate(s) will work on one or several of the four research themes of the Center: [1] the links between family and health, [2] the role of genetic factors in shaping health inequalities, [3] international comparisons of health and health inequalities, and [4] developing new methods, in particular longitudinal modelling approaches, methods for causal inference, and techniques leveraging genetic data.

We are also open to applicants interested in other topics covered in the Department Social Demography at the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR), including fertility, mortality and morbidity, and labor markets. The successful candidate(s) will develop their own agenda within the Center, and they will contribute their skills and knowledge to other projects in the Center and to the MPIDR. We are seeking creative, self-driven, and collaborative scholars. Good knowledge of quantitative methods and statistical software such as R, Python, or Stata is required.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for Book Proposals: ASA Rose Series in Sociology

The ASA Rose Series in Sociology, a joint publication of the Russell Sage Foundation and the American Sociological Association, invites seasoned scholars to submit proposals for books that offer fresh perspectives on enduring controversies, challenge prevailing paradigms, and provide synthetic analyses of contemporary public issues. The series focuses on critical areas of research, including the Future of Work, Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration, and Social, Political, and Economic Inequality. We also welcome interdisciplinary work that intersects with these themes. Rose Series books are designed to be accessible to both academic and general audiences, ensuring broad impact and relevance across multiple fields.

Benefits of Publishing with the Rose Series:

- **Quick and Professional Review Process:** Russell Sage compensates expert reviewers to ensure timely and high-quality evaluations of proposals.
- **Seminar with Established Scholars:** Authors are invited to present drafts of their manuscripts to leading experts, strengthening the final product and generating excitement for the forthcoming book.
- **Extensive Marketing Support:** The Rose Editors, Russell Sage Foundation, and ASA collaborate on a comprehensive marketing effort to maximize the visibility and impact of Rose Series books.
- **Author Meets Critic Session at ASA Annual Meeting:** Each year, one new Rose Series book is selected for a special Author Meets Critic panel discussion at the ASA Annual Meeting.
- **Rose Book Speaker Series:** Hosted by the University at Albany Rose Editors, this lecture series offers authors a platform to present their work to diverse audiences and emphasize the policy relevance of their research.

Interested authors are encouraged to submit their proposals. Proposals are reviewed on a rolling basis. For more information, please contact us at roseseries@albany.edu or reach out to a member of our editorial team: Joanna Dreby (jdreby@albany.edu), Aaron Major (amajor@albany.edu), Katherine Trent (ktrent@albany.edu), and Steve Messner (smessner@albany.edu).



THE CASE FOR GRANDMOTHERS BY NEDA MAGHBOULEH

*THIS PIECE ORIGINALLY APPEARED ON THE CONTEXTS MAGAZINE BLOG

It was a bracingly cold morning in 2019 in a far suburb of Toronto, Canada. I stepped across the threshold of Amina's bungalow, taking her hand and leaning in to kiss the air beside each of her cheeks. In my other hand, I clutched a box of sweets I'd brought for her elderly mother, a token of appreciation for welcoming me into their home.

Amina, a mother of five, was a participant in my multi-year study following the successes and challenges of 148 Syrian mothers and teenagers admitted to Canada under the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative (SRRI). On that chilly November morning, I found Amina's elderly mother, Zeynab, playfully wrangling her youngest grandchild, a rambunctious toddler, on one of the thin mattresses (doshak) that lined the home. From behind a drywalled addition, Zeynab's own mother, Rashida, called out for assistance getting up from bed. A few minutes later, having gathered all four generations of her family together on the doshak, Zeynab opened the box of sweets, inhaled deeply, and offered the first chocolate to me.



Multigenerational households like Amina's are rare in Canada, even among migrant populations. The country's immigration system makes it particularly challenging for migrant families to establish multigenerational households, even when they desire to do so, as it favors younger "economic" migrants while making it difficult for them to bring their elderly relatives along. In fact, since 2015, fewer than 5% of those admitted to Canada under the SRRI have been above the age of 60. Compared to the United States, Canada has a weaker family reunification program and employs a more restrictive definition of "family" (defined only as parents, spouses, or children under 18 years old). Beyond these policy constraints, many migrant families encounter financial obstacles that prevent them from bringing their elderly family members to Canada.

Nearly all the families in the study were forced to leave behind multiple members of their households when they relocated to Canada. And according to study participants, the most critical missing persons were elder matriarchs like Zeynab and Rashida, whom they described as invaluable sources of power, support, and wisdom. Only two of the 53 households in the study had successfully resettled their elder matriarchs in Canada.

As my collaborators and I described in a recent article, "Grandmothers Behind the Scenes," studying these two households offered a unique window into what life could be like if immigration policies better supported the preservation of multigenerational households.



The experiences of Zeynab and another grandmother named Jihan illuminated both the challenges and possibilities associated with multigenerational migrant households in this context. One of the key challenges we identified stemmed from the broader devaluation of older adults in Canadian society, which was intensified by their exclusion from immigration services like career and employment programs. These conditions led to a loss of authority and social status—a stark contrast to the respected positions these women held back in Syria.

Still, the resettled grandmothers demonstrated remarkable resilience, reclaiming their roles as valued members of their families and within the broader migrant community. Through various creative, life-affirming pursuits, they provided essential care and support within and beyond their households.

Zeynab found tremendous purpose through work within her household, where she cared for her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and her own elderly mother. This caregiving labor enabled her daughter Amina to take English classes and work for pay outside the home, strengthening the family's foothold in Canadian society. Zeynab took pride in teaching the youngest children their family's language, culture, and religious traditions. And after Amina experienced mistreatment from her husband in the months following their resettlement, Zeynab provided constant emotional support that ultimately empowered Amina to separate from him.

At first glance, it may seem that Zeynab was giving much and receiving little. Yet, there was a balanced reciprocity in these relationships. Zeynab, a cancer survivor, credited her survival to her “second mother,” her daughter Amina.



Jihan, the other grandmother in our case study, forged her sense of purpose in her broader community, aiding the resettlement processes of those outside her household. For example, having previously paired over a hundred couples back home, she reestablished her matchmaking services in Toronto (in her efforts to help the Syrian Canadian diaspora grow, she also tried several times to recruit members of our research team into her pool of eligible Toronto singles!). Jihan created a local lending circle for Syrian women entrepreneurs who lacked access to capital investment. And for the many newcomers forced to leave their elders behind, Jihan became a source of wisdom on every topic, from cooking to marriage to finances.

Despite scarce material resources, both Zeynab and Jihan provided essential forms of care that improved others' lives, both materially and socially. Yet Canada's commitment to reunifying elders with their families remains weak. The current immigration system tends to portray elders like Zeynab and Jihan through a deficit lens, construing them as social burdens rather than assets. This perspective fails to acknowledge the countless forms of valuable care and support that older adults provide to their families and society. By highlighting the contributions of Zeynab and Jihan, our research underscores the importance of multigenerational caregiving in promoting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.



THE GENDER OF INHERITANCE: THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE EARLY 20TH- CENTURY DALLAS ELITE BY SHAY O'BRIEN

*THIS PIECE ORIGINALLY APPEARED ON THE
CONTEXTS MAGAZINE BLOG



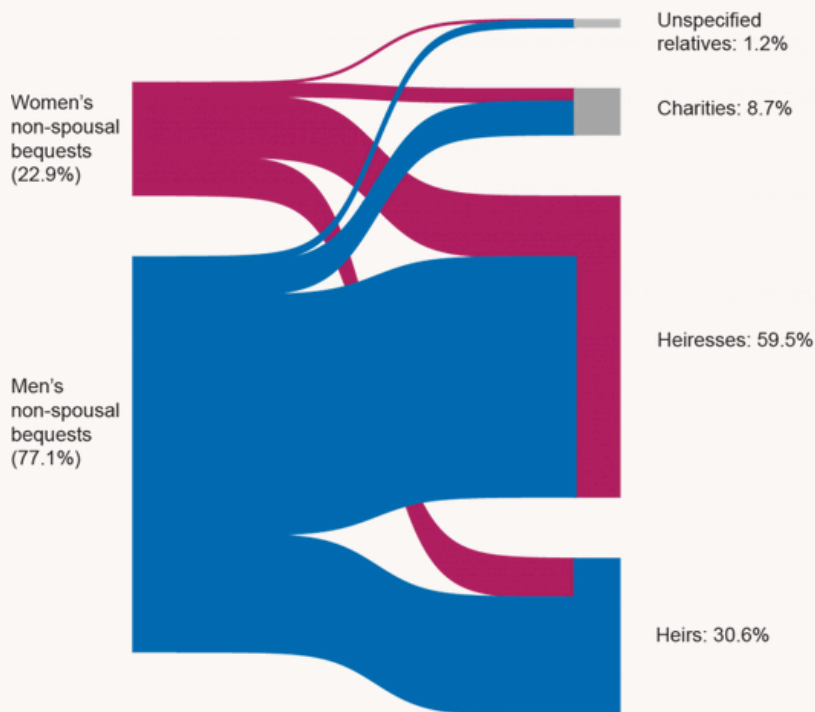
We are on the verge of one of the biggest wealth transfers in world history – what some social scientists have called “The Great Wealth Transfer.” We are also living through a huge increase in wealth inequality. Yet we know surprisingly little about a key type of wealth transfer: inheritance. What do people actually do with their wealth when they die?

In a new study published in Socio-Economic Review, I meticulously trace the inheritance practices within a specific wealthy population – the White upper class of Dallas, Texas – from 1895 to 1945. To do this, I linked bequest data to a kinship network I constructed using the Dallas social registers and other archival sources. I also analyzed qualitative data, including memoirs, oral histories, and the wills themselves.

I began by asking a simple descriptive question: Who inherited what? Based on what I already knew about this population (it was super patriarchal) and everything I’d read about inheritance practices among the wealthy (they typically favor sons), I expected to find that men inherited more than women. This is a very common “family wealth arrangement” in a global-historical context. It’s even the case in supposedly gender-equitable legal contexts like France and Germany.



But the Dallas data revealed a surprising pattern. The figure below illustrates that, overall, women inherited triple what men did. It wasn't even close. Even when I exclude bequests between spouses, which overwhelmingly went to wives (who tend to outlive their husbands), women still inherited twice as much as men.



Note: These data aggregate all known non-spousal bequest flows in the Dallas elites estates data, adjusted to 2024 dollars. Women's estates are underrepresented. Bequests with no estimated value are excluded.

What on earth was going on? That's a question for the qualitative data. As it turns out, there was a general social expectation that if elites died with any financially vulnerable, socially recognized close kin, those heirs would receive extra bequests. That mostly meant husbandless women and fatherless children. It was a kind of private, gendered safety net approach to distributing fortunes at death. This expectation was so strong that one local banker, Buckner McKinney, felt the need to explain in his will why he was not leaving an extra bequest to his unmarried sister Hallie—she was already quite rich.



Of course, this interpretation is based on the convenient fiction that fortunes are fungible—in other words, that we can simply count the dollar value of each person’s inheritances, divide them up by gender, and call it a day. Yet a deeper look at the data shows that men and women inherited different forms of wealth. Men inherited properties that gave them opportunities for accumulation and control, like stocks and trusteeships. Women inherited the kinds of wealth that gave them status and stability, like mansions, trusts, and jewelry. We can think of this as a gendered family system: men were matched to properties that enabled them to get even richer, and women were matched to properties that helped them maintain their family class status—without giving them significant economic control.

The findings from my study offer two key takeaways. First, we still need a lot more information about variations in gendered inheritance practices among the wealthy. What other gendered inheritance practices are out there? How do those practices influence the distribution of wealth across gender categories and the population more generally? And how do they influence the relative stickiness of wealth across generations? Second, even in extremely patriarchal contexts, understanding inheritance and class persistence requires us to pay attention to women.



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