

Exploring the Thematic Evolution of Family Studies Over the Last Three and a Half Decades with Network Analysis

Son Otuz Beş Yıldaki Aile Çalışmalarının Tematik Evriminin Ağ Analiziyle İncelenmesi

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Süreç/History

Geliş/Submitted: 01/04/2026
Kabul/Accepted: 04/06/2026
Yayın/Published: 25/06/2026

İntihal/Plagiarism

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Öz

Toplumun çekirdeğini oluşturan aile üzerine yapılan akademik çalışmalar son 30-40 yılda önemli bir ivme kazanmıştır. Bununla birlikte, aile sosyolojisi veya aile çalışmaları literatürünün tamamını keşfetmek yerine, aileyle ilgili araştırmaların indekslenmiş akademik bölümüne odaklanan uzlamsal bir araştırma bulunmamaktadır. Bu makalede, aile çalışmalarındaki korelatif ifadeleri inceleyerek aile çalışmalarının tematik evrimini keşfetmeyi amaçladık. Amacımıza ulaşmak için öncelikle, 1988 ile 2023 yılları arasında Web of Science (WoS) Aile Çalışmaları kategorisinde "aile" kavramıyla ilgili 4.485 makale analize dahil edilmiş ve veri temizliğinden sonra 3.327 makale daha ileri analiz için uygun bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmalardan 16.635 standartlaştırılmış anahtar kelime elde edilmiş ve bir standardizasyon süreciyle 5.804 benzersiz anahtar kelimeye indirgenmiştir. Daha sonra, tarihsel ve teorik değerlendirmelere dayanarak dört farklı dönem (1988–2000, 2001–2010, 2011–2019 ve 2020–2023) belirlenmiş ve anahtar kelimelerin derece, arasındalık ve özvektör merkezilik ölçümlerini incelemek ve aralarındaki ilişkileri ortaya çıkarmak için eş kelime ağ analizi uygulanmıştır. Bulgular, "ebeveynler", "ergenler" ve "çocuklar" gibi kuşak ve rol temelli ayrımlar etrafında yapılandırılmış aile ilişkilerinin gözlemlenen dönemde daha belirgin hale geldiğini göstermiştir. Ayrıca, "aile direnci" ve "sosyal destek" gibi konuların giderek daha fazla önem kazanması beklenirken, "metodolojik" ve "makro düzey" perspektiflerin literatürde zamanla azaldığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca, araştırma odağı "Afrikalı/Siyahi aileler"den "Çinli aileler"e doğru kaymıştır ve "uluslararası aile" sorunlarının göç ve beyin göçü süreçlerinin daha derinlemesine anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunması muhtemeldir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aile çalışmaları, eş kelime ağ analizi, aile ilişkileri, aile dayanıklılığı, sosyal destek.

Abstract

Academic studies on the family, which forms the core of a society, have gained significant momentum in the last 30-40 years. However, there is no specific longitudinal research focusing on the indexed scholarly segment of family-related research, rather than exploring the entire universe of family sociology or family studies in the literature. In this article, we aimed to explore the thematic evolution of family studies by examining correlative statements in family studies. To achieve our aim, first, 4,485 articles related to the concept of "family" in the Web of Science (WoS) Family Studies category between 1988 and 2023 were included in analysis, and 3,327 articles were found suitable for further analysis after data cleaning. From these studies, 16,635 standardized keywords were obtained and reduced to 5,804 unique keywords through a standardization process. Subsequently, four distinct periods (1988–2000, 2001–2010, 2011–2019, and 2020–2023) were determined based on historical and theoretical considerations, and co-word network analysis was applied to examine degree, betweenness, and eigenvector centrality measures of keywords to reveal their interrelations. The findings showed that family relationships structured around generational and role-based distinctions, such as "parents," "adolescents," and "children," emerged as more prominent in the observed period. In addition, issues such as "family resilience" and "social support" are expected to gain increasing importance, while "methodological" and "macro-level" perspectives appear to decline over time within the literature. Furthermore, the research focus has shifted from "African/Black families" toward "Chinese families," and "transnational family" issues are likely to contribute to a deeper understanding of migration and brain drain processes.

Keywords: Family studies, co-word network analysis, family relationships, family resilience, social support.

Atf için (to cite): Pehlivan, O., Gökmen, Y., Akgün Sakızıcı E., (2026). Exploring the Thematic Evolution of Family Studies Over the Last Three and a Half Decades with Network Analysis. *Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 28(2), 542-562. <https://doi.org/10.32709/akusosbil.1920650>

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1. Introduction

The last century witnessed controversies about the families in functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism from the micro to the macro level of social patterns to emphasize the unique shift paradigms in conceptualizing society. Accordingly, family sociology was shaped by these mainstream lines in addition to the feminist approach to discovering the issues of families in terms of family structure and relationships with other related terms.

Family sociology has seen a significant worldwide transformation in the last three and a half decades, which brings “*globalization*” into our daily lives more than ever. This study first examines prestigious sociology journals in Web of Science (WoS) from 1988 to 2023, examining where family studies in the literature changed in published articles over this period and taking into account the harmonization between the literature and theory to assess the degree to which family sociology has kept pace with these changes.

Although there are numerous articles regarding family studies in terms of different theories and paradigms, the number of studies about the terms and subjects in conjunction with families is limited. Additionally, there is no specific longitudinal research focusing on the indexed scholarly segment of family-related research, rather than exploring the entire universe of family sociology or family studies in the literature.

First and foremost, we aim to fill the gap in this area and reveal the trends over three and a half decades in family studies. Secondly, while the alteration has been ongoing continuously in the family, we intend to set out the most central concepts used in family studies in each period. Lastly, our purpose is to specify the thematic evolution of these concepts occur in family studies. We generally believe that family studies have considered many issues as profound discussion points to highlight the horizon of family, which is accepted as a milestone of society.

We scrutinized 3,327 articles that have at least five keywords from 4,845 articles in terms of family studies, and later we detected 16,635 standardized keywords that are included in these studies. After assessing similarities, single or plural versions of the words, we grouped and reduced the items that have the same or peer meaning. To obtain correct results in these types of studies, the mandatory data cleaning process generally takes a lot of time. In our study, we used different software throughout the data-cleaning process. Database errors were corrected by writing various macros. In addition to computer assistance, visual checks are of great importance for detecting possible errors and creating the data set completely and accurately. For this reason, we spent a significant portion of our time checking the data in question devoted to the articles. In the end, we reached a total of 5,804 unique keywords belonging to the period from 1988 to 2023.

The next step was to decide the periods to compare and define the differences according to the historical perspective. To do this, we examined the scientific literature following milestones in family studies.

The inauguration date is regarded as 1988 because before that date, some of the uploaded articles into WoS had either no keywords or fewer than five keywords that likely hamper the impartiality, accountability, and discredibility of the research.

The first stop is the second millennium, which indicates globalism. Globalism fosters an international community to get in touch with each other and presents new opportunities for individuals to contact different people. It also eases transportation to every part of the world, shortens the distances, and makes every place reachable. High technology augments communication skills, and common usage of computers whilst the Internet enhances the footprint of ordinary people in an artificial world.

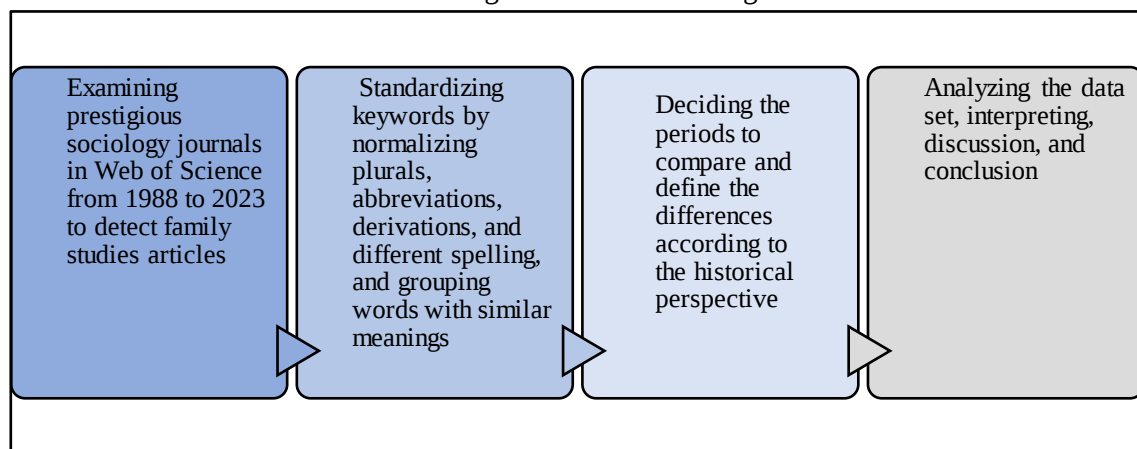
The second start of term is in 2010, which illustrates the two main incidents relevant to family and family studies. One of them is the enhancing usage of social media. The movie “*The Social Network*,” directed by David Fincher and released on October 22, 2010, told the story of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his friends. The movie was also a sign that the next decade would be intertwined with social media. Social media giants such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram had already turned into a phenomenon and become quite popular in the late 2000s. However, the 2010s were of striking importance in terms of diversification and understanding of

the functions of social media. The other issue is the accelerating immigration flows in different parts of the world that threaten the unity, sustainability and continuity of the family. Migration waves from Syria to Europe, from Myanmar to Asia, and from Latin America to the United States were among the most talked-about topics of the 2010s. Although some European states surrounded their borders with wire fences and walls, the influx of immigrants deeply affected European politics. Anti-immigrant movements and the far right began to regain strength in Europe for the first time after the Second World War.

The last stop, without a doubt, is 2020 because of the epidemic wave that shakes the social, economic, and welfare of countries. In late 2019, a deadly disease of unknown origin began to occupy the local agenda in Wuhan, China. Although some Chinese doctors, who perceived the devastating effects of this new virus on the human body, shared what they witnessed on social networks, some of them were questioned rather than taken into consideration. Although the disease, which is not yet understood, raises the suspicion that the SARS virus has re-emerged, in the following days, Chinese state media announced that the probable cause of the epidemic, which caused viral pneumonia in dozens of people across the country, was a “*new type of coronavirus*”. The first loss of life occurred in Wuhan on January 11, and the city was cut off from the outside world. As a result, the epidemic, which started with one case, reached millions of cases in the following months and turned into the center of discussions on health, politics, and human rights around the world. It also forced us to stay in our houses and enhanced the time spent with our families. This was also accompanied by new kinds of troubles that pushed us to question the legitimacy of the family.

Finally, we divided this period into four different terms, which are 1988-2000, 2001-2010, 2011-2019, and 2020-2023. This compartmentalization paves the way to compare the changes in historical perspective and underpins the periodic rise and drop of the frequencies that facilitate comprehension of family perception. The other analyses are mainly explained in the data collection and methodology sections. The research design is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Research Design



In this study, we aim to explore the thematic evolution of family studies and the most central concepts in each period by identifying key terms/concepts used in the literature. This study has addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the trends over three and a half decades in family studies?

RQ2: What are the most central concepts used in family studies in each period?

RQ3: How does the thematic evolution of these concepts occur in family studies?

After giving brief information about the design of the research, we conceptualized the study as follows. The introduction part elucidates the necessity of this study in terms of family studies and summarizes the data collection process. This part also indicates the choice of significant events that differentiate the thematic evolution of the family studies. The theoretical framework is the main baseline for explaining the differences in periods in academic literature. Data

collection and methodology reveal how the keywords are obtained and evaluated, and demonstrate some descriptive statistics. Furthermore, advanced co-word network analysis conducted in terms of statistics is explained thoroughly. The final part, discussion, and conclusion, is reserved to clarify the main findings and verify these with theories.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Family researchers have been observing and likely continue to monitor several global phenomena. Among them are;

“... increased cohabitation rates, a shift toward more open mate-selection systems, a later age for first marriage, smaller families, the continued influx of women into the paid labor force and their growing role as family's primary breadwinners, the rise in divorce rates, the number of dual-earner households, and an increasing surplus of elderly women as a result of longer life expectancies are all contributing factors.” (Berardo & Shehan, 2007, p. 295)

“... The married pair was only one, and frequently not the primary, component of the family structure in the traditional family. In the day-to-day operations of social life, ties with children and other relatives tended to be equally, if not more, significant. As the family's economic role diminished and marriage was founded on love or love plus sexual attraction, the couple began to be the center of family life. Once formed, a pair has its unique history and biography. It is a group founded on closeness or emotional communication. Nowadays, the realm of personal life is better described by "coupling" and "uncoupling" than by marriage and the family ...” (Giddens, 2005, p.29).

Kiernan (2002) stated that in most countries, the institution of marriage—at least the one we know today—has eroded. There is an increasing trend of cohabitation before or instead of marriage. Furstenberg (2007; 2014) articulated that the traditional connection between starting a sexual relationship and getting married has broken down. He mainly focused on the construction of a family and found that the marriage requirement, which was accepted as the prerequisite to creating a family, had varied and new types of togetherness been observed globally.

All Western countries have seen an increase in the number of nonmarital children born, albeit at quite varying rates, which has increased union instability and the number of single-parent households (Heuveline et al., 2003). Bearing children comes significantly later in life, especially after marriage, which contributes to declining fertility and rising rates of childlessness. The number of childless people is rising, particularly fast, in Asia's economically developed nations (Frejka et al., 2008).

Family sociology touched upon different topics from 1988 to 2023. It is crystal clear that all sociological phenomena are socially constructed and impacted by the social world and its components. Additionally, economic, political, cultural, and international mainstreams have force-multiplying factors that have impacts on the transformation of the social world. Therefore, the academic studies have been shaped by conceptualized in terms of these indicators and improving the theories accordingly. To sum up, a symbiotic relationship has been established historically that appears to illuminate the progress of scientific evolution. In this part, we scrutinized the periodic differentiation gradually.

2.1. First Period (1988-2000)

These years witnessed the economic and political revolutions around the world that fostered consecutive progress and provided a baseline for globalization. As mentioned before, it also altered and transformed the perspective of family sociology.

The changing economic conditions and the distinct decomposition between liberals and social democrats regarding handling the occurring problems have paved the way for discussions on family sociology. Work and family issues are one of the significant topics that have a great impact on the family in this period. Many scholars (Kanter, 1989; Walker, 1990; Higgins et al., 1994; Parasuraman et al., 1996; Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000) studied work and family issues in terms of sociology. Whilst most of the articles concentrated on the impact of working conditions on family welfare, tranquility, and serenity, the interrelations of paid work, housework, and family were also emphasized.

Another topic was gender and family relations, which progressed into two branches: inner family and working conditions. Both visions are nourished by the feminist perspective that indicates the patriarchal order abusing women. Scholars like McClintock (1993), Duncombe and Marsden (1993), and Collins (1998) exemplified this regard, and with the other researchers, they scrutinized gender and family considering race, class, and nation's approach.

Race, in particular, for blacks and African immigrants, was also questioned in many articles regarding family sociology. These types of studies have covered the domain by searching for provocative and uncomfortable conditions that extended and disrupted the family structure. They also indicated that the sociological study of race has been shaped by large-scale political processes. Poverty and inequality accompanied these studies as contributing elements (Winant, 2000).

Last but not least, school and family were mostly introduced in the aforementioned duration, addressing the complications and implications of parental involvement as a policy, through an exploratory theoretical approach (De Carvalho, 2000). Furthermore, these articles offer a critical analysis of a portion of this subject, concentrating on the reasons for and effects of the prolonged period during which the transition to maturity occurs (Furstenberg, 2000).

2.2. Second Period (2001-2010)

Even though the footsteps of the second millennium harbingered new hopes and enlightened ways for international peace, the 9/11 attack hampered the ontological security of all states and communities, which influenced people in an unfavorable way to commit to and trust each other. This effect brought the terrain many clashes and turmoils that changed the lives of many families in terms of disruption, migration, radicalized family members, and dissolution in the literature. Weakened family relations and augmenting intrinsic family violence were the first issues that pointed in a sociological perspective (Barnett et al., 2010).

Another point was the changing structure of the family with partners, who did not live together. Roseneil and Budgeon (2004) acknowledged that the concept of “family” continues to have an almost unmatched power to influence people on an emotional and political level. However, they claimed that a growing number of intimate and caring relationships between partners that do not live together “as a family” and within networks of friends occur outside of the “family”.

Economic difficulties and the cost of living sustained their presence, which impacted the relationships in the family. Daily discussions on a financial basis made life unendurable for many people who have challenges keeping welfare (Fomby and Cherlin, 2007). Parents who desired to provide stability and child well-being were affected not only by low-level income and high-level unemployment but also by disproportional birthrate range, marriage percentage, and long life expectancy (Small and Newman, 2001).

While the patriarchal burden of the 21st century has begun to lose weight, on the other hand, marriage mutated different socio-sexual orders that modernized family systems and turned the long marriage journey between parents into dusk. The return of cohabitation and the sexual revolution guided the pathway to transformed couples, children, and families (Therborn, 2004).

Simultaneously, gender and family issues prevailed in a contested environment (Giddens et al., 2009) and shifted more traditional characteristics of the family, such as religion, family background, and physical attractiveness into economic maintenance of the families (Sweeney, 2002).

2.3. Third Period (2011-2019)

First and foremost, this period brought the high intensity of social media into our lives and houses, and addicted us to new types of communication and ways of self-expression to others. While social media provides us with speedy, uninterrupted, indirect, and contactless communication channels, it also lessens the time that we share and spend together to socialize to adapt for the difficulties of communal incidents.

The second issue is immigration, which was triggered by the growing number of terror incidents, conflicts, disasters, and economic adversities. According to data from the World Migration Report (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021), there were approximately 281 million foreign migrants in 2021—a 27 percent rise from 221 million in 2010—who had crossed international borders. Significant migration and displacement events occurred this decade as well; these events have resulted in significant suffering, trauma, and fatalities. Global migration is not constant; instead, it is influenced by a variety of factors, including economic, geographic, demographic, and others. This leads to unique migration patterns, such as the long-term development of movement “corridors”. Changes in technology, geopolitics, and the environment have been influencing migration and mobility across the world.

In terms of family sociology, the transnational family is one of the items that drew the attention of most scholars to highlight the construction, adaptability, and transformation of families facing new habits and environments. Family studies eliminate cross-border family links by emphasizing physical closeness as a requirement for communication and engagement within families. Therefore, cross-border family practices are disregarded or taken for granted as impractical alterations in family dynamics that modify family procedures (Baldassar & Baldock, 1999; Mazzucato & Schans, 2008).

Although not new, transnational families are a rapidly growing family type. They were also put into question our conventional theoretical and methodological understandings of family life. Family studies focus on the effects of migratory processes—more especially, those of distance and separation—on family connections due to the sharp rise in mobility and the revolution in long-distance travel and communication methods. Family mobility, including migration, is more likely than in the past to be characterized by frequent and regular communication and connections between the sending and receiving regions. This has led to the conceptualization of transnational family members and global homes (Baldassar et al., 2014).

Another topic mostly discussed in this term was individual and family differentiation in the life cycle, which hampers the structure of the family and fosters individuals to demonstrate great progress in accomplishing their self-fulfillment. According to Cowan (2013), there is a wealth of literature that demonstrates the effects of acute and chronic stressors on people's physiology, psychology, and social interactions. On the other hand, little research has been done on how stress affects family members' health. It makes sense to believe that family transitions could impact family members in both positive and negative ways. Several unfavorable family transitions can affect family dynamics and cause members to experience undesirable physiological and emotional changes. Barrett and McIntosh (2015) indicated this new type of family as an “anti-social family” because of their lack of communication skills that mitigate the comprehensive understanding and cause dysfunctionality.

The aforementioned developments shifted the focal point of family sociology to family therapy, which is generally regarded as the prerequisite to sustaining the stability of a family in terms of family relationships.

Family members encounter a variety of relationships and connections, each with its own meaning and significance, regardless of the kind of family they reside in. While some of these family relationships are part of their everyday lives, others may merely be recollections or feelings. Many youngsters suffer from feelings of loss, alienation, and anxiety as a result of family dynamics, which might include complicated relationships with stepfathers or stepsiblings, or the divorce of parents or grandparents. Research approaches that are both inventive and versatile are necessary to capture the many complex aspects of a child's familial ties. Family relationships are emotionally charged and have the power to bring both pros and cons impacts and feelings into a child's life, especially the challenging ones (Pirskanen et al., 2015).

2.4. Fourth Period (2020-2023)

The mainstream of this period was decidedly the pandemic that shook the world intensely. The lockdown policy of the countries against COVID-19 augmented the time spent in houses and established both positive and negative impacts on family members. The impact of the pandemic

varies in strength, with the most devastating effects felt by subjects who are already disadvantaged in terms of financial resources, work, access to digital services and resources, and living conditions. As Adam et al. (2000) claim, the new risks are far more democratic as they affect everyone. COVID-19 is caused by a novel coronavirus that may not be bothered about our socioeconomic status or that of celebrities, teachers, or warehouse laborers.

Working from home was one of the most important strategies implemented to contain the pandemic, and 36.8% of workers did so during the epidemic's initial phase, particularly in the EU (Eurofound, 2020). According to preliminary statistics on the COVID-19 pandemic's effects (Boston Consulting Group, 2020), employees were experiencing a burden from their workload and personal responsibilities. Furthermore, since they might depend on smaller savings and riskier jobs, and because they were more susceptible to job loss, low-income households were more likely to encounter severe financial difficulties during prior emergencies (ILO, 2020).

In terms of family life, longitudinal research conducted in Italy between the ages of 18 and 85 years revealed that 60% of families were extremely stressed in March 2020 regarding family structure, employment, and financial worries. The researchers also emphasized the ability of family relationships to regenerate, demonstrating how families are a resource that favorably supports changes (Mazzucchelli, 2020). Parents who reported higher levels of overall stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic also reported higher levels of anxiety and withdrawal in their children, as well as fear, acting out, and COVID-19 pandemic-associated behaviors (Singletary, 2022).

Besides COVID-19, family violence is the other issue that is perpetrated by at equal rates between genders (Cares et al., 2021). Domestic violence is a reality that is present in all societies and influences many factors. The global catastrophe caused by COVID-19 presents significant obstacles for societies worldwide. While efforts to limit the virus are essential to safeguarding the health of the world, they are also putting children and adolescents in danger of domestic violence. The origins of this novel threat are explained by several criminological ideas. Stress levels in the most vulnerable families have increased, and with it, the risk of violence. These factors include the social isolation imposed by the measures implemented in the various countries, the impact on jobs, the economic instability, high levels of tension and fear of the virus, and new forms of relationships. Moreover, children have been confined to their homes due to mandated lockdowns implemented to stop the disease's spread, cutting them apart from people and resources that could be of assistance (Pereda & Díaz-Faes, 2020).

According to Drotning et al. (2023), there are some signs suggesting that family violence has increased as a result of the pandemic. In April 2020, there were 15% more contacts at the National Domestic Violence Hotline in the United States than there were in April 2019. Nonetheless, numerous studies indicate that these actions are raising the frequency and intensity of domestic violence. The rise in domestic violence brought on by COVID-19 is a contributing factor to the social and economic crises (Sharma & Borah, 2020).

While previous researches generally focused on merely a co-occurrence matrix to capture relationships among keywords and find the most salient concept without a longitudinal perspective, this study differs by utilizing sophisticated meta-path-based algorithms (PathSim, HeteSim, and DPRel) to construct era-specific relatedness matrices for a thorough co-word analysis to explore the thematic evolution of family studies. By executing a comprehensive co-word network analysis that traces degree, betweenness, and eigenvector centralities across four discrete periods spanning 1988 to 2023, this study explicitly captures how core structural hubs, accelerating concepts, and temporarily disappearing terms dynamically interact to shape the horizon of family research in the literature rather than focusing on direct social reality.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

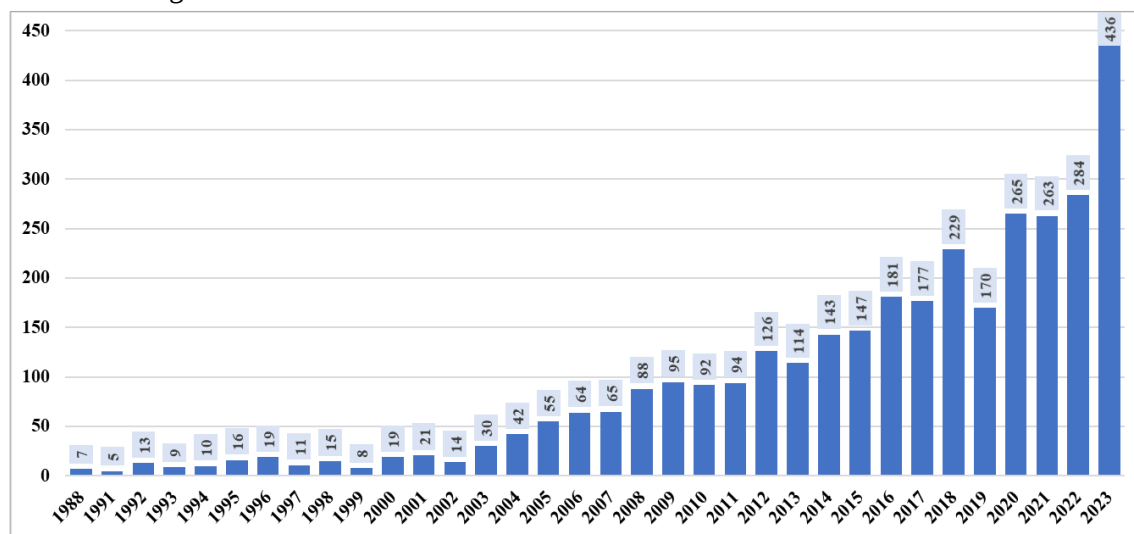
To find the appropriate corpus on family studies in distinct periods in the last three and a half decades, we combined the WoS Core Collection to focus on research papers in widely used databases, providing a comprehensive picture of the literature. According to Argoubi et al. (2020),

Albahari et al. (2022), and Ren et al. (2023), the WoS is a premier database that offers excellent information on a range of interdisciplinary issues. It is also a valuable resource for research abstracts and citations (Amrutha & Geetha, 2020). We have searched all articles relevant to the “family” concept in Family Studies of Web of Science Categories from 1988 to 2023 in an interdisciplinary (sociology, anthropology, psychology, family studies, criminology, and health studies). Using the phrase “*family/families*” to search the following fields inside a title (TI) and author keyword (AK), we looked through all research publications written in English. The query was specified as follows: $[TI = (“family”) OR TI = (“families”)] AND (AK = (“family”) OR AK = (“families”))$. In this study, we focused on a corpus that represents a specific indexed scholarly segment of family-related research, not the entire universe of family sociology or family studies. While the data collection strategy to obtain this corpus yields a robust longitudinal corpus, the specific inclusion and exclusion criteria inherently bound the scope of this study’s conclusions. First, the corpus is restricted to prestigious family studies in the Family Studies of Web of Science Categories from 1988 to 2023. While opting for another database or including unindexed grey literature might yield diverging or highly localized thematic patterns, the WoS boundary ensures that our network models reflect the most highly cited, peer-reviewed mainstream academic discourse in the field. Second, requiring the explicit presence of “*family*” or “*families*” within the title and author keywords serves as a high-precision filtering mechanism. This deliberate anchor ensures that the dataset remains strictly focused on core family dynamics, filtering out general sociological literature where family issues are only peripherally discussed.

In accordance with the query definition, a data set of 4,845 research publications published between 1988 and 2023 was compiled. We eliminated research papers with fewer than five author keywords or none at all [a total of 1,518 articles (1 keyword-3 articles, 2 keywords-36 articles, 3 keywords-411 articles, and 4 keywords-1,068 articles)] to guarantee the co-word analysis for the research articles containing an equal number of author keywords, and we collected 3,327 articles. Furthermore, to achieve higher topological precision and data consistency, defining a minimum threshold of five author keywords is necessary to ensure sufficient co-occurrence link density per document for a mathematically stable network structure, creating a trade-off that sacrifices overall sample recall (omitting 1,518 lower-density articles). However, we included the top 5 author keywords of the articles that had more than five keywords in the co-word analysis to normalize the number of co-occurrence of each keyword in the database.

The steps specified by Choudhury & Uddin (2016) and Xu et al. (2018) were used to standardize keywords, normalizing plurals, abbreviations, derivations, and different spellings, and grouping words with similar meanings. The number of articles gathered from WoS covering the period from 1988 to 2023 is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The Numbers of Research Articles Related to the Term of 1988-2023.



N=3,327.

After assessing similarities, single or plural versions of the words, we grouped and reduced the number of keywords that have the same or peer meaning for analysis. 5,804 unique keywords were found out of 16,635 standardized keywords obtained from 3,327 articles covering the years 1988 to 2023.

To allow for a more in-depth examination of the development of the “*family/families*” studies, the years 1988–2023 were divided into four discrete periods (1988–2000, 2001–2010, 2011–2019, and 2020–2023), as shown in Table 1. A more detailed study is made possible by this deliberate segmentation, which provides information on the thematic evolution and developmental trajectories within each designated time frame of the family discourse. The separation of family research into various sub-periods allows for a thorough analysis of the gradual changes in emphasis, themes, and priorities over a 35-year period, as well as the discovery of new trends and patterns. This methodical approach not only makes it easier to comprehend how the family concept has developed over time but also makes it possible to analyze its changing dynamics in more detail and coherence in the academic landscape.

In this paper, our focal point is to assess the thematic evolution of the family studies from 1988 to 2023 by scrutinizing the keywords indicated in WoS in terms of co-word network analysis. Before applying co-word network analysis, we applied co-occurrence analysis by examining the frequency and patterns of keywords appearing together in the authors’ keywords of the academic publics. This method displays the number of occurrences in each class and a summary grouping, and helps academics investigate trends and find streams within a certain topic by visualizing the connections between frequently used phrases. Consequently, before performing advanced network visualizations or metrics, analyzing these descriptive baselines is essential. It helps researchers to establish the “*building blocks*” of structural analysis. The results of descriptive statistics are also illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: The number of frequency and co-occurrence

Frequency (f)						Co-occurrence (co)					
Keywords	1988-2000	2001-2010	2011-2019	2020-2023	Total	Keywords	1988-2000	2001-2010	2011-2019	2020-2023	Total
families/family	24	127	211	124	486	families/family	96	508	844	620	2068
family function/functioning/functionality	8	20	59	49	136	family function/functioning/functionality	32	80	236	256	604
parenting/parenthood	14	23	65	33	135	parenting/parenthood	54	92	254	166	566
adolescence	7	22	63	37	129	adolescence	28	86	252	192	558
gender and family	6	38	39	37	120	gender and family	24	156	160	188	528
family therapy	3	12	69	35	119	family therapy	12	48	276	180	516
family structure	14	32	38	29	113	family relations/relationship	16	84	180	216	496
family relations/relationship	4	21	45	42	112	family structure	56	128	152	160	496
children	9	26	55	21	111	coronavirus	0	0	0	466	466
family violence	4	25	32	48	109	children	36	104	220	100	460
coronavirus	0	0	0	104	104	adolescents	4	48	240	152	444
adolescents	1	12	60	31	104	family violence	16	100	128	200	444
mental health/illness	4	4	34	33	75	mental health/illness	14	16	134	168	332
depression/depressed mood and adults	1	19	32	16	68	depression/depressed mood and adults	4	76	128	84	292
family systems	4	7	30	23	64	family systems	16	28	120	112	276
qualitative research	0	11	27	18	56	child welfare/policy/systems/services	0	24	124	108	256
LGBT/families	3	6	23	24	56	China/Chinese families	0	26	96	116	238
low income/low-income families/couples	1	21	20	12	54	qualitative research	0	44	108	84	236
China/Chinese families	0	7	24	22	53	parent-child relations/relationship	12	24	76	116	228
child welfare/policy/systems/services	0	6	31	15	52	family conflict	12	48	76	88	224

This dataset in Table 1 provides a comprehensive longitudinal overview of the conceptual landscape in family studies across four distinct temporal periods spanning 1988 to 2023. In the 1988–2000 period, the literature volume was low, focusing on core structural dynamics like “*families/family*” (f=24) and “*family structure*” (f=14). In the 2001–2010 period, an awakening of specific socio-demographic and structural lenses. For instance, “*gender and family*” indicates a major relative spike to f=38 occurrences during this decade. In the 2011–2019 period, the findings represent the volume peak for many classical sub-themes, such as “*family therapy*” (f=69), “*parenting/parenthood*” (f=65), and “*adolescence*” (f=63). In the 2020–2023 period, the sudden, explosive emergence of “*coronavirus*” (f=104/co=466) completely reoriented the field. It instantly became one of the most heavily discussed topics, tracking closely with ongoing concerns

in "family function/functioning/functionality" (f=49) and "family relations/relationship" (f=42) during 2020-2023

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Meta-path Methods

To investigate the longitudinal relationship between same-typed items (keywords) in heterogeneous networks, we performed widely recognized and often used meta-path techniques of PathSim (Sun et al., 2011), HeteSim (Shi et al., 2014), and DPRel (Gupta et al., 2019), utilizing the Keyword (K)-Article (A)-Journal (J)-Article (A)-Keyword (K) (KAJAK) paths with medium-type entities of the path as Journal(J). Although PathSim, HeteSim, and DPRel are all well-known, meta-path-based structural similarity measures created to address this issue, their underlying mathematical frameworks, target node limitations, and symmetry requirements vary greatly. PathSim specializes in discovering peer objects of the same type (such as keyword-to-keyword pairs), ensuring that terms with similar visibility and symmetric network placement are tightly grouped. HeteSim provides a uniform framework that can measure relevance across both same and different-typed entities along complex search paths, capturing multi-layered semantic constraints that simpler models miss. DPRel acts as a semi-metric measure that factors in both path counts and intermediate node degrees, capturing deep relational subtleties with high computational efficiency. By combining different methods, the network model is able to combine their own structural advantages and mitigate individual algorithmic limitations.

3.2.2. Calculating Weighted Adjacency Matrices

To investigate the evolution of the concept of "family/families", we first calculated the relationship matrix [KtxKt] for each meta-path method of PathSim (Sun et al., 2011), HeteSim (Shi et al., 2014), and DPRel (Gupta et al., 2019) concerning each term. However, individual algorithms are inherently prone to specific structural biases. By averaging the metrics generated by PathSim, HeteSim, and DPRel, the framework neutralizes these localized imbalances. To successfully elucidate the intricate keyword connections influencing the field's evolution, averaging the metrics guarantees that the consequence matrix can precisely detect subtle linkages and trends across vast, complex data sets. Thus, we computed the mean of the score of the relatedness matrix [KtxKt] obtained from these methods. To find the network structure of each period, we determined the average of the relatedness matrix [KtxKt] as weighted adjacency matrices [K_ixK_j] for four periods.

3.2.3. Computing the Results of Well-Known Network Diameters

To identify the most popular results for well-known network diameters (degree centrality, betweenness centrality, and eigenvector centrality), we applied co-word network analysis to weighted adjacency matrices [KtxKt] for four periods, as defined in the previous subsection. After finding the network diameter results for each period, we sorted the words by their 20 highest network diameter scores and created a new keyword set from their union. To examine the thematic evolution of the keywords in the generated set union of keywords, we created graphs showing the scores of network diameters (degree centrality, betweenness centrality, and eigenvector centrality) in each period.

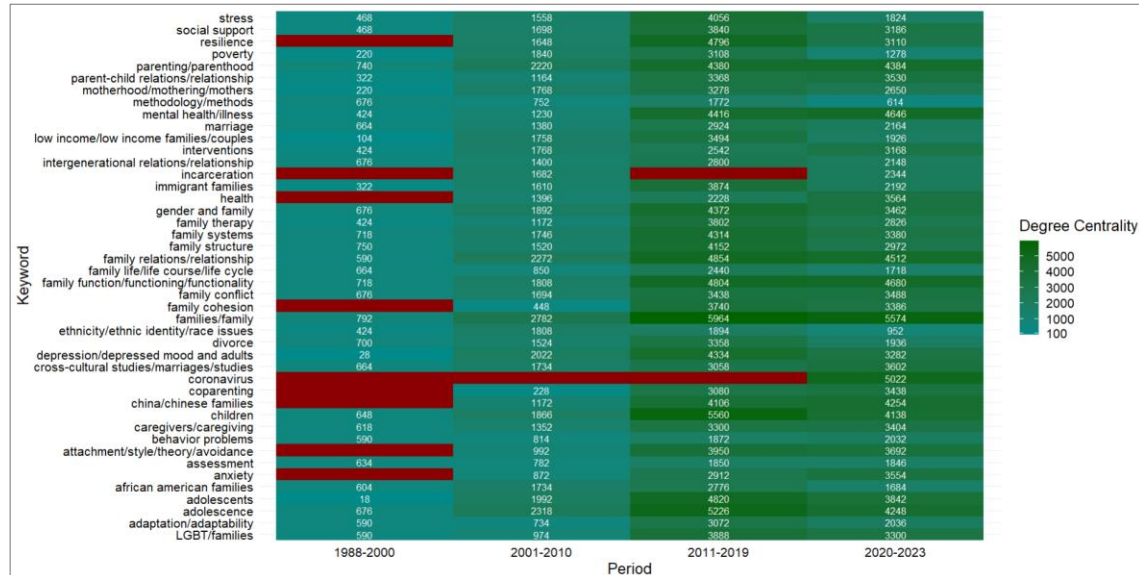
4. Findings

To compute relatedness matrices for each recognized era, sophisticated algorithms such as PathSim (Sun et al., 2011), HeteSim (Shi et al., 2014), and DPRel (Gupta et al., 2019) were utilized to do a thorough co-occurrence analysis and clarify the complex interactions among keywords in the field of family research. These advanced algorithms were selected because they demonstrated a strong ability to identify subtle relationships and trends among large, complicated data sets. A high-performance computer machine with an Intel Core i7 10th-Gen CPU and 8 GB of RAM was used to carry out the computational tasks. The software of R Studio version 1.4.1106 was selected because of its statistically powerful computing and graphics capabilities, and the Gephi 0.10.1 (202301172018) version was used to carry out the diameters' results of co-word network analysis. The results of network diameters are explained in detail in the next subsections.

4.1. The Scores of the Degree Centrality

We conducted co-word network analysis to review degree centrality, which represents the influence and importance of nodes in the network, as assumed by some other scholars (Carrington et al., 2005; Hanneman & Riddle, 2005). Both hypothetically and statistically, degree centrality demonstrates how often a keyword is used together with other keywords in networks. The scores of the degree centrality are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The Scores of the Degree Centrality



Note: The “NA” score of degree centrality of the keywords is indicated in red color.

The following are the main descriptive statistical findings that are depicted at Figure 3. Throughout all four eras, the term “*families/family*” naturally maintains the highest degree centrality score, peaking at 5,964 in 2011–2019 and continuing to be incredibly dominating (5,574) in 2020–2023. The abrupt appearance of “*coronavirus*” in the last era (2020–2023) with a gigantic degree centrality score of 5,022 demonstrates the field’s quick, crisis-driven reorientation. Before 2020, it was entirely nonexistent (shown in red), but it quickly rose to become the network’s second most connected hub of the studied corpus. The red tiles indicate periods where specific keywords had an “NA” centrality score, meaning they had not yet entered the analyzed network or lacked connections during those years.

In the studied corpus, nearly two-thirds (21) of the top thirty keywords reveal that historical trends are mostly accelerating and sometimes fluctuating. We can exemplify the terms “*stress*,” “*mental health/illness family functioning*,” and “*behavior problems*” as the accelerated terms. On the other hand, “*adaptation*,” “*family life cycle*,” and “*low-income families*” are enumerated as fluctuating terms. However, the rest of the part reveals that their existence has altered from time to time. In particular, specific durations, we recognized that these terms were not utilized. “*Resilience*,” “*incarceration*,” “*health, family cohesion*,” “*coronavirus*,” “*coparenting*,” “*China/Chinese families*,” “*attachment/style/theory/avoidance*,” and “*anxiety*” have temporarily lost their footprint in family studies within the literature. Therefore, we evaluated the theory to figure out why some expressions disappear in terms of network analysis.

The term “*resilience*” in family studies indicates the measures to identify and foster the main procedures that enable families to cope with crises and challenges and make them stronger against internal and external problems. This theory was first studied by some scholars like Luthar and Zigler (1991), and Masten, Best, and Garmezy (1990) to fortify the family members, especially children, for establishing protective factors. Garmezy (1991) proposed a three-step model to struggle with traumas and stress that hamper the stability of the family. Identifying the vulnerabilities, preventing the triggering points and perpetrators, and finally composing a stress-resilient core of the family are the pillars of the suggested model. While in the first period, we did not detect “*resilience*” as a keyword, the next three periods witnessed the rising significance

of the term. We assume that growing potential risks and hazards in political, social, economic, and environmental domains may pose significant threats to the unity and solidarity of the family. However, we frankly know that no family is problem-free. The family seems to likely reshape itself regarding the variety of dangers, rebound its strength, and construct a robust togetherness to repair the damaged relationships. Therefore, we estimate that family resilience may continue to be one of the important topics in the near future. Like Albenese et al. (2019), we also assume that the term “*family cohesion*” has been consistent with resilience and pursued a similar pattern historically.

“*Incarceration*” is another unseen term in two different periods. While two-thirds of other keywords are used, “*incarceration*” disappears from 1988 to 2000 and from 2011 to 2019 in the studied corpus. “*Incarceration*” has mainly two impacts on family issues. First and foremost, it may hamper the togetherness of family members and disrupts the family relationships. Secondly, we can anticipate that households with an incarcerated parent would have more dysfunctional family dynamics. Additionally, it augments family victimization, elder sibling delinquency, and family conflict, as well as poorer family organization and cohesiveness (Phillips et al. 2006; Nesmith and Ruhland 2008). The lack of “*incarceration*” in two periods conflicts with the rapid rise in the incarceration rate, most notably in the United States over the last four decades. The effects of incarceration on the family have worsened significantly as a result of the prison boom in the United States (Wakefield & Garcia-Hallett, 2017). This finding is also inconsistent with other continuous keywords like “*family cohesion*,” “*family conflict*,” and “*divorce*,” which are seen in all periods. We can estimate that the incarceration studies relevant to family probably shifted to systematic reviews on particular types of violence after incarceration.

The family, with its dynamics and structure, has a profound impact on a person's physical, mental, and social well-being throughout their life, from early childhood to old age (Slivšek et al., 2024). Even though family health was not a used term between 1988 and 2000, the usage of this keyword sped up after 2001, and in the following periods, we witnessed a growing tendency toward articles relevant to the subject. The accelerating trend indicates that this issue may continue to be the focal point of scholars mainly because of three reasons. First, the progress in medicine may foster new fertility methodologies and deliver opportunities to have children for the parents. Secondly, novel endemics and epidemics mutated progressively, and distinct types of contagious and infectious diseases transformed may swiftly pose a threat to the future of mankind. Therefore, people may stick to staying healthy to extend their life expectancy and improve their health awareness. For example, during the coronavirus period, people complied with regulations more seriously when they were introduced to the potential variation of the pandemic that would rapidly terminate the resilience and functionality of the human body (Grier et al., 2024). Thirdly, cognitive and mental dysfunctionality, besides the lack of household income, may trigger the instability of the family and unconditionally menace the existence of family support and health (Akee et al., 2024). In this way, family nursing may be more common when we consider the withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment in intensive care units. The existing tendency of the term “*anxiety*” can be regarded in the same perception that was fed from similar economic, social, mental, and physical sources. According to Rapee (2012), family influence and family support either facilitate or complicate the routine of family life and either foster or block the solidarity and unity of the family.

As we expected, within the literature, “*coronavirus*” is a periodic term that belongs to a special session, and therefore, this keyword was only seen in the last epoch. However, the enormous number of keywords “*coronavirus*” statistically can indicate the great importance and indispensable reality of struggling to stay alive. It has been crystal clear that the lockdown of people during the pandemic incited the emergence of different types of diseases and issues from mental to physical.

“*Coparenting*”, which is more or less equal sharing of parenting responsibilities by mothers and fathers, enhanced its footprint, particularly in the last two periods in the studied corpus. “*Coparenting*” has received more attention in the past 20 years from the domains of family and developmental sciences, which have defined its significance for family functioning (Margolin et

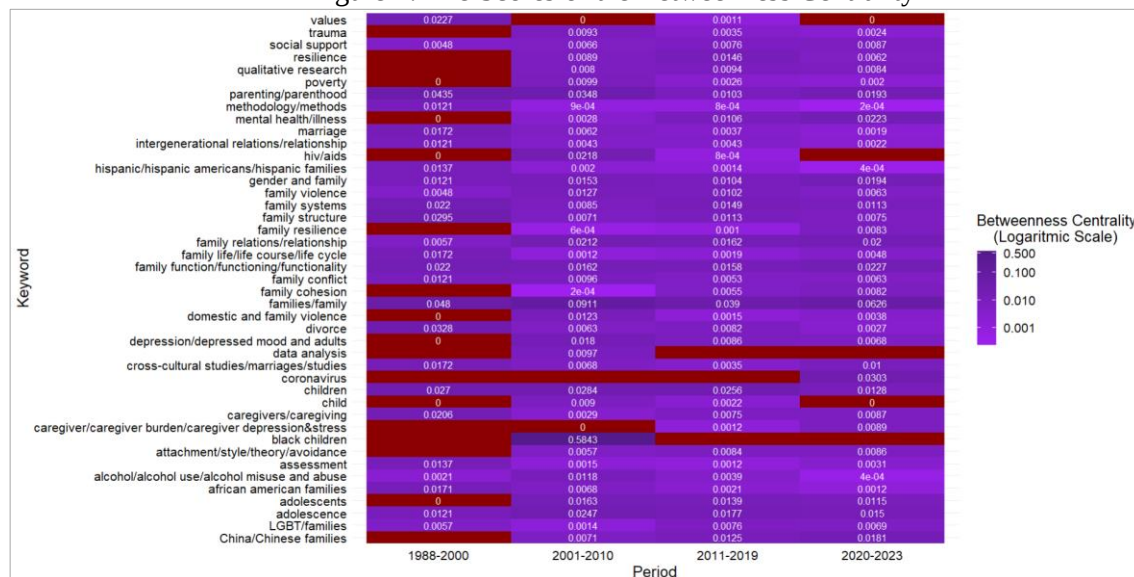
al., 2001). Initially, studies on coparenting helped to characterize the significance of the quality of divorced parents' relationships with their kids. The idea was then extended to include a variety of intact families, including same-sex parents, single parents, and traditional nuclear families (Favez et al., 2019).

Lastly, “*Chinese families*” are highly popularized research subjects in terms of family because a complicated yet engrossing tale of transformation, adaptability, and survival is presented by the history of Chinese immigration to other parts of the world, especially regarding the US. perspective, China is a very special instance because the country's demographic shift from a young to an aging society occurred considerably more quickly and at an earlier stage of economic growth than in the wealthiest nations. The immigration and huge gaps among the perceptions of distinct generations may trigger the lack of a common understanding of social and economic concepts. The traditional Chinese family is characterized by its emphasis on familial lineage. The transition from traditional to modern families accompanied by major social changes altered the roles of females compared to males and promoted high consumption aspirations, socio-economic status, and education opportunities. All these factors augmented the rapid transformation of families regarding cohabitation (Xie, 2013).

4.2. The Scores of the Betweenness Centrality

In brief, betweenness centrality is the measure of how many concept groups a keyword is included in. It additionally displays the percentage of shortest pathways that traverse a node, totaling across all nodes in pairs. In network analysis, network players are ranked according to their betweenness centrality score, which measures their level of control as an intermediary in a flow. In recent years, the algorithm has been regarded as an essential tool for analyzing the spread of disease, identifying key players to halt the spread of rumors, and many other applications (De et al., 2020). The scores of betweenness centrality are depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4. The Scores of the Betweenness Centrality



Note: The “NA” score of the betweenness centrality of the keywords is indicated in red color.

The main descriptive statistical conclusions that emerge from looking at Figure 4 are listed below. “*families/family*” naturally acts as a powerful informational gatekeeper across all periods, peaking significantly in 2001–2010 with a betweenness centrality score of 0.0911 in the studied corpus. “*Coronavirus*” instantly gets a noteworthy betweenness centrality score of 0.0303 upon its emergence in 2020–2023, mirroring its exponential growth in degree centrality. This demonstrates that it quickly developed into a crucial link between already-existing, distinct fields of research (e.g., linking health, economic hardship, and family dynamics) rather than merely emerging as a trendy, isolated issue. Bridge strength varies greatly throughout time, as seen by many major themes. For example, “*parenting/parenthood*” was an important conceptual bridge in the early years (0.0435 in 1988–2000), but as the literature became more diverse, its

gatekeeping significance declined. The sudden, isolated dark purple spike for “*black children*” in 2001–2010 (0.5843) represents a period where this specific node acted as an extraordinary bottleneck or crucial sole connector for a subset of literature, before those connections disappeared in later decades. Red tiles mark periods where keywords like “*qualitative research*,” “*resilience*,” or “*China/Chinese families*” have an “NA” betweenness score, meaning they had no bridging power within the network at that time.

“*Parenting/parenthood*,” “*gender and family*,” “*family systems*,” “*family function/functionality/functioning*,” and “*adolescents*” are found as the most used keywords in the other concept groups that underline the significance of these keywords in the studied corpus over the last three and a half decades. The core pillars of the family are parents and children. The family has been regarded and studied as a social system for many years by many scholars. Family system theory highlighted that excessive intimate mother-child connections include adaptive hazards. Furthermore, this theory emphasizes that the strength of the marriage is essential to the general functioning of the family (Rothbaum et al., 2002).

“*Methodology/methods*,” “*marriage*,” “*intergenerational relationships*,” “*Hispanic families*,” “*family life course/cycle*,” “*family conflict*,” “*divorce*,” “*caregivers/caregiving*,” “*alcohol misuse*,” “*abuse*,” and “*African American families*” are detected as the keywords used less betweenness centrality score compared to the other terms. They are in decline periodically, and it elucidates that some other terms have replaced them in family studies in the studied corpus. For example, Black American research focal point altered from family to racism studies (Jacob et al., 2023). Similarly, Hispanic families are mostly handled in studies relevant to work that mainly concentrate on the conditions, salaries, income, and wealth disparities instead of family issues (Varela et al., 2023).

While the last period witnesses the disappearance of keywords like “*values*,” “*HIV/aids*,” and “*child*,” the penultimate session also excluded data analysis and black children. We assume that this trend may continue in the future, and scholars may not be inspired by the aforementioned terms. As in the previous part, the keyword “*coronavirus*” demonstrates that it is a unique periodic term belonging to the 2020–2023 period.

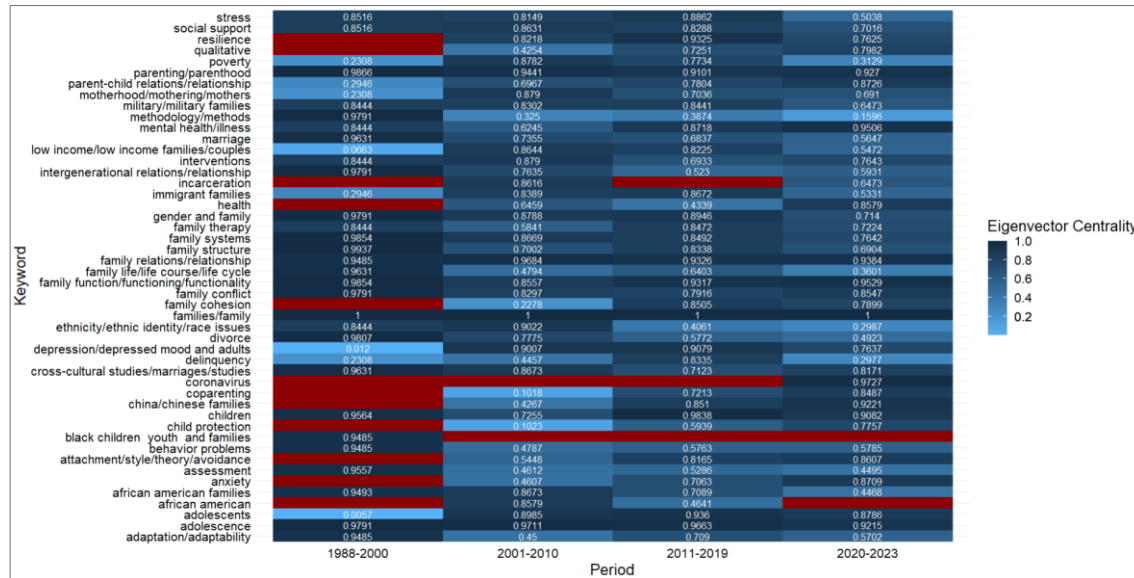
Caregivers and their stress enhanced their footprint in family studies, particularly in the last two periods. An estimated 36 billion hours of care were given to an adult with restrictions in daily activities by approximately 38 million family caregivers in the United States in 2021. Their unpaid contributions were projected to be of an economic value of \$600 billion. Family caregivers provide emotional and social support, assist with self-care or other daily chores, and manage difficult nursing and medical tasks (such as administering injections, maintaining medical equipment, and caring for wounds) in the home (Reinhard et al., 2023). These statistical and theoretical conclusions prove the accelerating attention to caregiving in the last two periods.

Opposite to caregiving, the betweenness centrality score of “*black children*” began to decline after 2011. Black families have cultivated their children with anxieties composed of stress, trauma, and rates of race-based mortality. It is necessary to pay attention to social policies that affect young Black children and their families in the areas of housing, education, and employment. These policies may also affect the socioeconomic status and upward mobility of families. Nowadays, for this reason, we suppose that black children's studies were likely approached in social support research to foster opportunities at the state level and from a social service perspective.

4.3. The Scores of the Eigenvector Centrality

The eigenvector weights contacts based on their centralities, as opposed to degree, which weights each contact equally. One way to conceptualize eigenvector centrality is as a weighted total of all direct and indirect connections, regardless of length. In other words, having qualified neighbors rather than having too many neighbors is a factor that increases the eigenvector centrality. To sum up, a higher eigenvector centrality score specified higher quality keywords and importance (Bonacich, 2007). The scores of eigenvector centrality are demonstrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. The Scores of the Eigenvector Centrality



Note: The “NA” score of the eigenvector centrality of the keywords is indicated in red color.

The following explains the main descriptive statistical conclusions that emerge from looking at Figure 5. The keyword “*families/family*” maintains a perfect eigenvector centrality score of 1.0000 across all four temporal periods within the corpus. When “*coronavirus*” first appeared in 2020–2023, it immediately received an extraordinarily high eigenvector score of 0.9727. This reveals that the pandemic topic did not just gain isolated traction; it immediately integrated itself with the most powerful, influential, and highly interconnected nodes already dominating the family studies discipline. Several topics show a clear shift toward deep systemic integration over time. For instance, “*mental health/illness*” transitions from an initial score of 0.8444 to a prominent 0.9506 in the final period. On the other hand, even while certain keywords continue to be active, their network prestige clearly declines. For example, “*Methodology/methods*” falls from the first era's peak of 0.9791 to the last era's 0.1596. This suggests that while these terms are still utilized, they have become decoupled from the most central, high-traffic hubs of contemporary research. Red tiles indicate times where keywords have an eigenvector centrality score of “NA,” which denotes complete absence or complete detachment from the network's primary power structures. Noticeable keywords like “*black children youth and families*” losing its connection after 2000 illustrate how structural reorientations can cause previously embedded sub-themes to fall completely out of the core academic conversation.

Within in the corpus, keywords that have high eigenvector centrality scores in the first period are “*stress*,” “*social support*,” “*parenting/parenthood*,” “*military families*,” “*methodology*,” “*mental health/illness*,” “*marriage*,” “*interventions*,” “*intergenerational relations*,” “*gender and family*,” “*family therapy*,” “*family system*,” “*family structure*,” “*family relations*,” “*family life*,” “*family function*,” “*family conflict*,” “*divorce race issues*,” “*cross-cultural studies*,” “*children*,” “*black children*,” “*behavior problems*,” “*family assessment*,” “*African/black families*,” “*adolescence*” and adaptation. The high eigenvector centrality score of these keywords may show that until the inauguration of the second millennium, family studies mainly concentrated on theoretical, structural, functional, and interracial issues. The macro-level perspective on global incidents may be in line with family research simultaneously. Social and economic turbulences accompanied by the end of the Cold War pointed out the pains of socialization and remedies are scrutinized in an academic environment to discover the proper solutions to transform the aforementioned period with minimal damage to humanity. It is theoretically known that every living system possesses two seemingly incompatible functions: the ability to transform and the trend toward homeostasis. The same view was regarded as the baseline for social systems, and because of this reason, although the influence of the positive

sciences on social sciences lessened during the 80s and 90s, the methodological impacts sustained their presence on family studies.

For example, Kelly (1997) concluded that three main aspects were effective during the late 1980s and 1990s, which is defined as a critical period in his study. First, even in the early 1980s, family variances and disruptions received more attention. Divorce, the entwined effects of race and poverty, and the diversity of sexual preferences rendered the obsession with the nuclear family model unsustainable. Secondly, we started to take note of the “*lived conditions*” of existence in authentic and diverse social settings. Lastly, partly because of the gender revolution, elements of micro-awareness facilitated keeping the pulse of society.

Most of the high eigenvector centrality scored keywords have lost their importance timely, however; “*social support*,” “*parenthood*,” “*family relations*,” and “*adolescence*” have maintained their existence and significance during the other three periods. The eigenvector centrality score of the keyword “*methodology*” dropped after the first period as a sign of a declining number of studies on the family domain. The disappearance of the keyword “*black children*” for the rest of the schedule and the non-occurrence of “*African families*” in two different durations are likely considered as the alteration of the focal point from family issues to economic aspects. Another reason can be that the nuclear family was replacing the extended African family, status was being attained rather than assigned, and the market was severing familial relationships (O’Laughlin, 2020).

The findings about “*incarceration*” are consistent with the degree centrality score, and the same results point out the credibility of the research, too. The rising level of family poverty from 2000 to 2019 was mitigated again in the last period, even though the economic crises stemming from the pandemic have continued to cause global turmoil. However, the sudden uprise in the keyword “*coronavirus*” in the last period may explain and cover the gap as a full conceptual understanding.

Finally, “*family relations*” and “*family functions*” are the keywords that maintain their importance during the four different periods. We contemplate that family may be a hub for relations, and the building and maintenance of family relationships provides an offset to the fallout of the otherwise distressing situation. Recent studies on natural disasters proved that family bonds, in particular, came to light as one of the key factors influencing a decreased susceptibility to hardship (Salvato et al., 2020).

5. Discussion

Family is the basic fulcrum and resilience baseline to socialize, adapt, and sustain coherence in the social environment. The studies on families deserve compliments and high value for the continuation of the socially constructed phenomena. We aimed to reveal the thematic evolution of family studies in terms of keywords, which are handled from an interdisciplinary perspective, to elucidate the tendency and future projection to fill the gap in this area. Providing the precise functionality of the family depends on the construction of relationships among the family members, and it is crystal clear that coping with the rising levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and trauma in a changing modern world prioritizes the family relationship. Family scholars should determine who is most likely to be without or lose family ties, how long and why people experience social isolation during different stages of life, how much loneliness there is concerning social isolation, and how different socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic communities' experiences with social isolation affect health. Whilst the focal point is altering from African/Black families to Chinese ones, the transnational family issues may pave the way to enlighten the migration and brain drain matters thoroughly. The family members, who do not get enough social support, establish another topic that may illuminate the caregiving issues relevant to the lack of family assistance. The rising attention in the last two decades to co-parenting currently promises us to share parental responsibilities fairly and to functionalize the capability of the precise and systematic sustainability of the family for future generations.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

We frankly assume that family relations built upon generation and role differences (parents, adolescents, and children) appear to preserve their importance in future studies.

According to our evaluations in light of the findings, while the methodological and macro perspectives of family studies come in sight to continue to drop, family resilience and social support issues seem to gain importance on the horizon in the studied corpus. The vulnerability of families' sustenance seems right now as the Achilles heel, and therefore, fortifying the families interconnected to the micro group studies based on social networks may be the prerequisite for family resilience.

The source of the limitations of this study unites with the data, which includes examining prestigious sociology journals in WoS from 1988 to 2023. It is possible to find different results with distinct data sets that cover other periods and portals. However, when adding a huge number of keywords to the research, the results of co-word analysis may change. The thematic picture presented in this study does not claim to be an exhaustive inventory of every niche sub-topic in the broader sociological sphere. Instead, it offers a highly representative, statistically rigorous map of the core, macro-level conceptual evolutions that have systematically structured mainstream family studies over the past four decades.

Future studies should actively shift away from conventional, inflexible macro-methodological viewpoints and toward comprehending the micro-level mechanics of social support networks and family resilience. Scholars should create longitudinal frameworks that can trace how external socioeconomic shocks change basic family functions and connections over time, given how quickly crisis-driven phenomena—like the COVID-19 pandemic—may totally reorient the conceptual topology of the subject. To guarantee the systematic sustainability of future generations, future research should focus on transnational family dynamics—especially the growing complexity within Chinese families—as well as growing caregiving responsibilities and the development of equitable co-parenting models as global demographics and migration patterns change. In a nutshell, the family may continue its scientific significance. When we reflect the prominence of the two issues, which are addressing the complexity of family structures and dynamics over the course of a person's life, and by advancing knowledge about the elements and mechanisms that support and protect the survival of multiple family members, we assess that future research on families may build on these achievements.

ARAŞTIRMACILARIN MAKALEYE KATKI ORANI BEYANI (makale tek yazarlı ise bu kısım doldurulmayacaktır)				
Yazarlar Adı Soyadı	Çalışmanın Tasarlanması	Veri Toplanması	Veri Analizi	Makalenin Yazımı
Oğuzhan PEHLİVAN	% 60	% 50	% 20	% 40
Yunus GÖKMEN	%30	% 20	% 20	% 30
Eda Akgün SAKIZCI	%10	% 30	% 60	% 30
ETİK KURUL İZİNİ				
Araştırma etik kurul izni gerektirmemektedir.				

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