

University of Edinburgh

School of Social and Political Science

Social Work Subject Area

Julie-Ann MacQueen PhD Scholarship Proposals

Applicants should apply either for *Option 1* or *Option 2*. Applicants are also free to apply for both Option 1 and Option 2 but in this case you must upload a separate research proposal for each option, and you must also indicate which option is your first preference. For further details about either option you are welcome to contact the lead academic for either proposal but please ensure you do so in good time before the deadline passes.

To apply you should complete a 1,000 word research proposal with 'MacQueen Scholarship Application' as the Heading, outlining how you would pursue the chosen option as a doctoral student. You should upload it, along with a copy of your CV to the PGR admissions portal along with your application to study a PhD at the University of Edinburgh. You should cite the primary supervisor of your PhD to be the lead academic of the proposal for which you are applying. You should make explicitly clear which supervisor led option you are applying to pursue at the start of your proposal and also, if applying for both options, which is your preferred option.

You must have applied via the University system by **23/03/2023** to be eligible for consideration.

Full guidance on the application process and who to contact with queries can be found [here](#).

Please note that the MacQueen scholarships offer the payment of fees for either Home, EU or International holders of the scholarship, plus an annual stipend at the current UKRI stipend rate and an annual £750 research grant. Please note that the duration of the PhD award is for three years only if full time or six years part time (pro rata).

It is anticipated that an award decision will be made by the end of April 2023.

Option 1 MacQueen Scholarship 2023

Proposal title:	Single-parent families: experiences of fathers and grandparents in South Africa		
Lead academic:	Franziska Meinck	Email:	Franziska.meinck@ed.ac.uk
Additional academics:	Hannabeth Franchino-Olsen		
External partners (if any):	Nicola Christofides (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg) Nataly Woollett (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg)		
Mode of study:	Full time (3 Year) or Part time (6 Years pro rata) Open to Home, EU and International applicants		
Proposal (max. 750 words):	<p>Background</p> <p>Globally, up to a quarter of all children grow up in single-parent families, where the parent lives alone with the child or children without a partner. There is an increasing evidence-base showing that children growing up in single-parent families have consistently worse outcomes across the life course. In particular growing-up in a single parent family is associated with increased risk for poor mental health (Weitof et al., 2003), aggression (Kroese et al., 2021), and poorer educational attainment (De Lange et al., 2014), when compared to growing-up in a two-parent family. Single-parent families report consistently higher levels of poverty and parenting stress (OECD, 2022) than two-parent families.</p> <p>In South Africa, 42% of children live with only their mothers, 4% only with their fathers and 21% live without their biological parent and most commonly stay with a grandmother (2020). South Africa is therefore experiencing very high rates of single-parent families compared to e.g., Britain where only 15% of children are in single-parent households (Office for National Statistics, 2021). The limited research available from South Africa on single-parent families highlights a higher risk for teenage pregnancy, neonatal mortality (Ramaiya et al., 2014), sexual risk behaviours, suicidality in girls and hypermasculinity in the form of aggression and violence in boys (Morrell, 2006).</p> <p>However, thus far research has investigated factors associated with living in single-mother headed homes and little is known about single fathers and grandparents who act as primary caregivers for children, or about intergenerational patterns of single-parenthood.</p> <p>Aims</p> <p>This PhD project therefore has three aims: 1) to describe single parenthood in both fathers and grandparents in South Africa; 2) to investigate factors associated with single parenting among fathers and among grandparents on all levels of the socio-ecological model; and 3) to examine intergenerational patterns of single parenthood and their underlying mechanisms.</p> <p>Methods</p> <p>The PhD project will use a quantitative design using descriptive statistics and regression modelling thus making it suitable for a student with limited experience of quantitative methods. It could be turned into a sequential explanatory mixed methods study design</p>		

where patterns in the quantitative data will be explained through interrogations of qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), but this component is not currently funded.

The quantitative data will stem from the INTERRUPT_VIOLENCE Study, a three generational longitudinal study on intergenerational violence transmission in South Africa, of which Dr Meinck is the PI. INTERRUPT_VIOLENCE will have three waves of data from 1650 participants interviewed in 2010/11 (mean age 13.5 years old), 2011/2012 (mean age 14.5 years old) and 2022/2023 (mean age 26 years old) and include data on the original participant's primary caregiver (aged 45-90) and child (aged 6-17). Data collection will be completed by December 2023 and as such the student will have a readily available dataset for analyses.

There is an option for the PhD student to collect qualitative data in South Africa in the fieldwork sites adjacent to the INTERRUPT_VIOLENCE Study with both adults and children. The annual research support grant could be used to fund this. If the qualitative data collection took place, the student will be based at the University of the Witwatersrand Rural Campus and will be well supported by the study team in field. Some experience conducting in-depth qualitative interviews and data analysis is a requirement.

Conclusion

Conclusion The project will provide rich and reliable information on the factors associated with single-fatherhood and -grandparenthood in South Africa and will improve our understanding of mechanisms associated with intergenerational transmission of single-parenthood.

References

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Option 2 MacQueen Scholarship 2023

Proposal title:	Forced migration and sole parenting		
Lead academic:	Dr Steve Kirkwood	Email:	s.kirkwood@ed.ac.uk
Additional academics:	Dr Georgia Cole		
External partners (if any):			
Mode of study:	Full time (3 Year) or Part time (6 Years pro rata) Open to Home, EU and International applicants		
Proposal (max. 750 words):	<p>The situations that force people to flee their homes often radically change family structures. People may be separated from their partners, children, or other relations. Tragically, family members are often killed by war, conflict or persecution. One consequence is that many people who are forcibly displaced end up being sole parents. How does this impact on family practices, well-being, relationships, interconnectedness and integration?</p> <p>The aim of this PhD project is to generate a better understanding of how the experience of forced migration produces and impacts on sole parenting. The research questions include</p> <p>What types of family structures and practices are produced by forced migration among sole parents?</p> <p>How does forced migration impact on the relationship between children and their sole parents and other family members?</p> <p>What forms of integration are enabled or hindered for sole parents because of forced migration?</p> <p>Becoming a refugee can result in people experiencing a range of harms, including the violence or trauma that occurs in contexts of war and persecution or during the process of travelling to a place of safety. Moreover, further harm can be experienced in a host country, such as through racism or abuse, poverty or destitution, or indeed from harsh asylum systems themselves. However, people may also have very positive experiences, such as gaining safety, making new connections, and other moments of joy. These experiences, and the structures and policies related to the asylum system, may intersect with parenting practices in complex ways.</p>		

The specific experiences of particular families are likely to vary due to several factors. Separation – and sometimes later reunification – of parents from children is likely to shape the way parenting is done or experienced, including parenting at a distance. Cultural norms and expectations around parenting and gender – of both home and host countries – will affect parenting, and could include feeling stigmatised as a sole parent, or differences in generational attitudes. However, being in a different cultural context may also open up possibilities for parenting and connectedness that may not have been available in someone's country of origin. How these experiences link with well-being, integration and child development are worthy of exploration.

It is envisaged that this PhD would involve primarily qualitative methods to explore the experiences of forced migrants who are sole parents. This would likely focus on the context of Scotland or the wider United Kingdom, but other contexts could be considered. The research should be collaborative, meaning that forced migrants, or groups, communities or organisations that represent them, are involved in some way in the design and / or undertaking of the research. A variety of research methods could potentially be considered, such as interviews, focus groups, surveys, observational methods or online methods. Participatory, creative and / or artistic methods are particularly encouraged.

This research is intended to improve our understanding of the experiences and practices of forced migrants who are sole parents, and especially how 'refugeehood' and parenthood intersect. It is hoped that this will shed light on the topic, as well as give voice to those in this situation, ideally to inform policy and practice that would improve their experiences if desired.

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