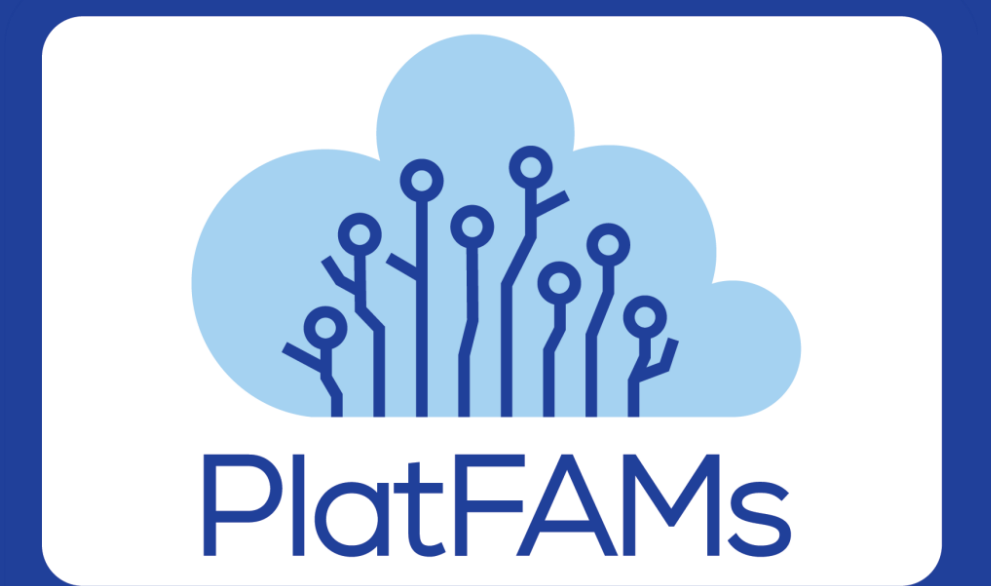


PlatFAMs



Platforming Families: Tracing digital transformations in everyday life across generations



How are digital platforms embedded in the lives and practices of modern families?

The PlatFAMs project focuses distinctively on intergenerational experiences in relation to the platformisation of family life.

PlatFAMs' methodology includes innovative and participatory design where 313 grandparents, parents, and children and youth from 104 families in Estonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain and the UK were included in the data collection.

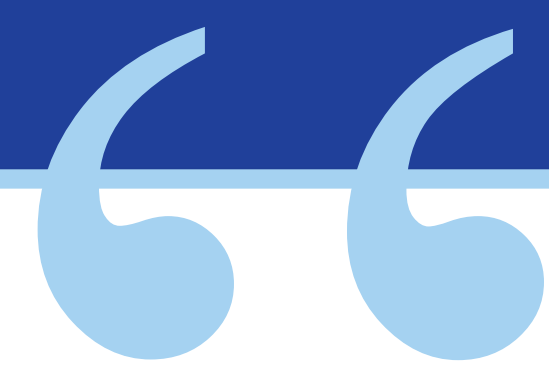


Read more about
the PlatFAMs
project



PLATFORMED FAMILY DYNAMICS

The platformisation of family relations and communication



My family members are in one group, and my husband's family members are in another group. We are grouped into small groups like that... So that's how we know about each other.

Elena (late 30s), mother, Romania

Using WhatsApp

The domestication of WhatsApp by multi-generational families in the platform society

Sonia Livingstone, Bogumiła Mateja-Jaworska, Oana Negru-Subțirică and Andra Siibak

Qualitative research with 65 three-generation families in four European countries explores how WhatsApp is used to mediate family kinkeeping and family boundaries. Findings show that, although family life is ‘platformised’ insofar as a data-driven business model increasingly provides the infrastructure for family communication, equally evident are families’ diverse symbolic and material practices of domesticating WhatsApp. It is largely the needs of families to sustain meaningful relationships while limiting demands on their energies and emotions that shape their uses of WhatsApp. Nonetheless, heavily platformised family communication may render families vulnerable to future commercial business decisions.



It's set up so that Mum, Dad, friends, and family can see where I am. I want it. If something happens to me, they can know where I am. If I get lost or... If something happens, there's always someone who knows where I am. I did it for my own security.

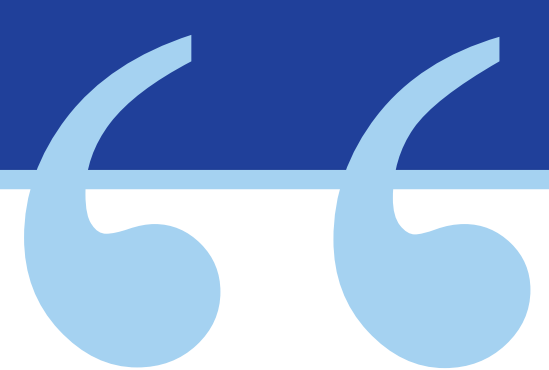
Ramona (14), daughter, Norway

Tracking and checking

The normalisation of intimate surveillance in three generation families in Norway and Spain

Kristinn Hegna, Victoria de Leon Born, Judith Jacovkis, Raquel Miño-Puigcercós and Maja Nordtug

This article argues that research on the normalisation of family surveillance requires deeper empirical and theoretical engagement to understand how and why families incorporate surveillance technology into their daily lives. Many Spanish and Norwegian families use technology to track activities and locations of family members through family control apps, Snapchat, banking apps, and kindergarten communication tools etc. Normalised surveillance practices integrate with family values such as care, openness, and responsibility, obscuring concerns about privacy and power. Some interviewees exhibit paradoxical behaviors or yield to social pressures from platforms, while a few resisting the normalization of family surveillance highlight the pervasive nature of digital platforms in family life.



I'll sit on my settee, [my wife] sits on her settee, we get sent through a video of our littlest grandson and you can hear that we're both watching it at slightly different times so the sound's different but we're both watching it. We're not watching it together; we're watching it separately [...] We do everything individually. We do the same things.

George (64), grandfather, UK

Care and Intimacy

Platforms That Bind: The transformation of intimacy in three-generation European families

Mariya Stoilova, Paula Lozano, Sara Malo, Andra Siibak and Georgiana Susa-Erdogan

This paper explores how platformisation reshapes intimacy within multigenerational European families by shifting the focus from couples and sexual relationships, to families’ everyday practices of care, communication, and connection. By theorising intimacy as inseparable from digital infrastructures, it shows how platforms are active mediators of relationality. The analysis identifies three key dynamics: segmentation, where algorithmic silos fragment family life; immersiveness, where platforms embed themselves in relational practices; and resistance, where families create space for tactile forms of intimacy. This work contributes to understanding how families negotiate, embrace, and contest platformised relationality across generations.

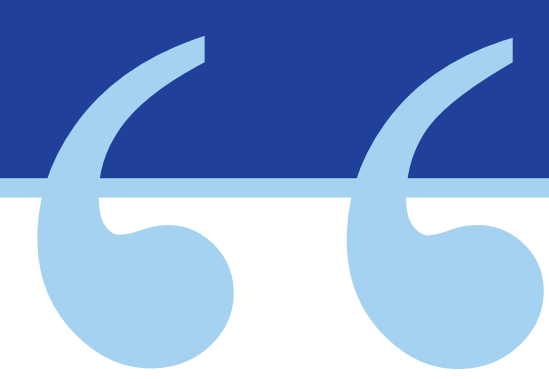
PLATFORMED FAMILY CONTEXTS

The platformisation of contexts for family practices and digital futures

Streaming platforms

Doing Family in the Age of Streaming Platforms: Exploring the Role of Netflix, Spotify, and YouTube for Family Relations

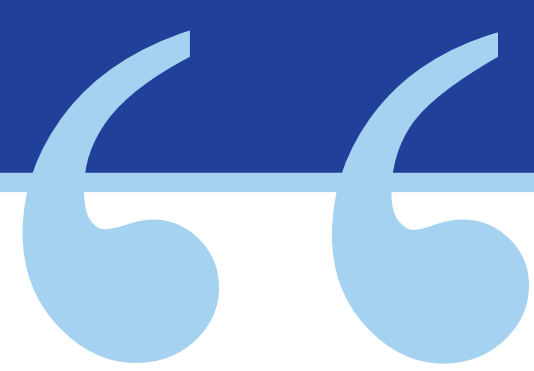
Bogumiła Mateja-Jaworska, Maja Nordtug, Iulia Domocus, Gustavo Herrera Urizar, Johanne Lahlum Hortman, Flavia Medrea, Pablo José Rivera Vargas



Finding a film we want to watch and being able to watch it the whole way through before anyone falls asleep or has to go somewhere. It's really hard!

Arthur (46), father, UK

As family life becomes increasingly platformised, families' practices are influenced by streaming platforms like Netflix, Spotify, and YouTube. This article examines how families engage with these platforms to gather, argue, share, and mediate. We focus on how the family, as a community, is constituted within environments primarily designed for individual users. We analyse how the affordances of these platforms shape family dynamics and the material environments of the families studied. Our conclusions are drawn from in-depth interviews with 93 three-generation families across five countries: Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, and the UK



YouTube separates—differentiates, divides—according to interests and hobbies. But it really connects me with the younger child, my little granddaughter (3), because my grandson (11) is already grown up, he has his own interests, and I don't watch with him.

Olga (59), grandmother, Poland

Digital ecology

An ecological approach to platformised family lives

Moisés Esteban-Guitart, Ola Erstad and Lluís Parcerisa Marmi

Digital platforms are an integrated part of everyday family life. 'Platformised families' represent relational systems embedded in digital infrastructures for learning, socialising, gaming, and commerce, where micro, meso, and macro contexts merge. This paper discusses the development of ecological perspectives in understanding human development, especially the concept of 'media ecologies' emphasising the role of digital media framed within family settings. The paper presents a systematic review of empirical research defining ecological perspectives to understand platformised family lives as socio-cultural processes. We present a model for better understanding the complexities of platformised ecologies of family practices with empirical examples from the PlatFAMs project.

Health platforms

Digitally Platformed Family Health

Maja Nordtug

Health and family life are increasingly platformised through commercial and state platforms. Health tracking platforms quantify activities and bodily functions, while government platforms organise individual health information. This article analyses the affordances of these platforms to explore how families' roles in health matters are shaped through interaction with digital platforms. The study is based on interviews with children, parents, and grandparents in 19 Norwegian families, along with an analysis of one commercial and one governmental health platform. As little is known about how health platforms transform families and their implications for family life, this study is crucial for understanding the influence of platform society on family health.



Do we really want our kids to be responsible, or just to follow our rules? As a mom, I know I'll have to use parental controls because I'm scared my daughter could talk to a predator. But at the same time, she needs to learn what a predator is, not to talk to strangers...

Maria (42), mother, Spain

Futuremaking

Imagining Family Futures: Narratives of Digital Life in a Platformed World

Antonio Membrive, Mariana Largo, Signe Opermann, Maris Männiste

Digital platforms shape our everyday lives and influence how we imagine the future and anticipate actions. Building on the concept of digital futuremaking, this article explores how families imagine platformed futures that guide present and projected actions. Through reflexive thematic analysis, we examine narratives across three generations in 31 families in Spain and Estonia. These, often contradictory, narratives provide insights into how families construct future scenarios and express their agency. The findings reveal ambivalence toward digital futures: some narratives reflect fear and dependence on tech companies, while others express resistance and hope, highlighting how platforms can enhance agency and strengthen family relationships.



Grandma has a little trouble with... for example, Health Norway [the governmental health app], she needs help with that from my mom. Yes. So it's a bit challenging.

Alex (17), son, Norway

Media generations

Doing media generations within and across European families: Towards ‘platformed generations’?

Veronika Kalmus, Signe Opermann, Oana Benga, Victoria de Leon Born, Moisés Esteban-Guitart, Noelia Hernando, Bogumita Mateja-Jaworska, Ionut Mone, Maja Nordtug and Mariya Stoilova

This paper introduces ‘platformed generations’ to advance the conceptualisation of ‘media generations’ in the platform era. Based on a grounded-theory-inspired analysis of interviews with three genealogical generations from families across six European countries, we specify four dimensions: (1) identification by members of their own and other generations; (2) involvement in the platformisation process; (3) agency regarding platforms; and (4) uniformity versus variety/dividedness. The parents’ generation, despite internal diversity, is closest to the ideal type of being ‘platformed’. The children’s generation, although highly involved, faces social and institutional constraints on their agency. The ‘subsequently platformed’ grandparents’ generation remains deeply divided.

“
...It's nice to go to Grandma's. But I miss that she doesn't have ... a more fancy phone because then I could Facetime her. Or she could use WhatsApp. But she doesn't like that. She thinks that there are spies on the phone. She's old...
”

Hassan (14), son, Norway

“
... I think people like me use Facebook to death and I don't really see any different alternatives emerging; secondly, it's the social network of my generation, where the people important to me are, you know...
”

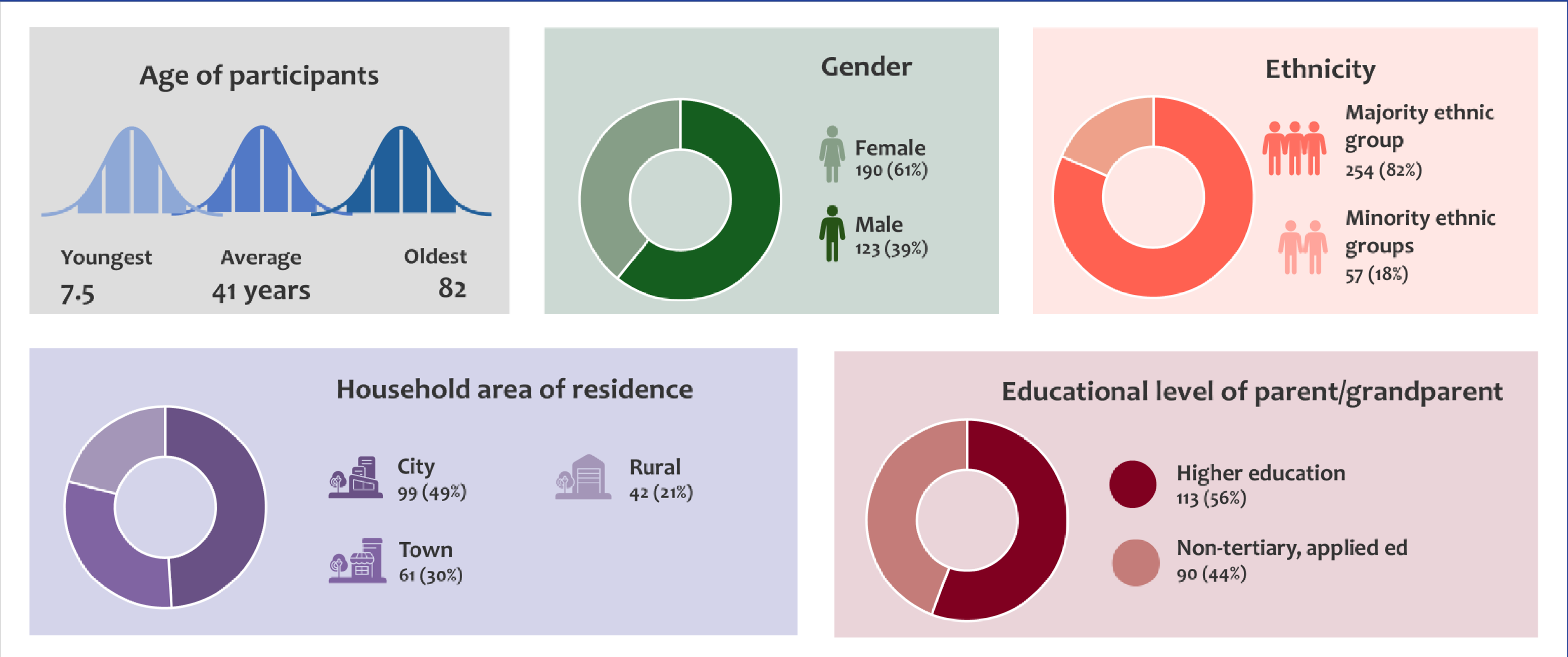
Toomas (53), father, Estonia

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative three-generation study

PlatFAMs’ methodology includes innovative and participatory design where grandparents, parents, and children and youth from more than 100 families were included in the data collection. Aiming at recruiting diverse families, we include same-sex, single parent, blended, immigrant, and transnational families. Collecting data using visual cues like cards with platform logos and inviting the families to participate in the design of their family’s ‘perfect app’, our 313 individual interviews and 10 family interviews provide a rich database for high quality scientific publications.

The PlatFAMs full sample



Scan to read documentation of methodology

313 participants from 104 families
Six countries: Estonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, UK

PUBLICATIONS

...and other ongoing work from the project

SPECIAL ISSUE: Families, relationships and technologies

research article

How digital technologies become embedded in family life across generations: scoping the agenda for researching 'platformised relationality'

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This article advances the unfolding research agenda on families, relationships and societies in the so-called 'platform society' by applying both a relational lens and a multigenerational approach. Our scoping review of the multidisciplinary research literature revealed two main themes linking relationality and digital platforms: (1) the intensification of connectedness, especially in relation to intimacy, belonging and care, and (2) power struggles and conflicts in a context of interdependency and vulnerability. The studies identified suggest that relationality is transformed rather than interrupted through the emergence of new platformed practices as well as the reconfiguration of existing ones. Hence we propose an emphasis on 'platformised relationality', and call for greater specificity in the analysis of platform affordances in future research on families' engagement with digital platforms, as well as greater attention to family relationships beyond the often-studied parent-child relationship.

Keywords digital technologies • platforms • family relationships • relationality • generations • intimacy • power dynamics

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How digital technologies become embedded in family life across generations: Scoping the agenda for researching 'platformised relationality'

This review article was published in a special issue on families, relationships and technologies. Since its publication in April 2024, the article has been downloaded more than 3000 times – testifying to the buzzing interest in this research field.

This article is open access.
Policy Press, 2024



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**The Platformization of the Family
Towards a Research Agenda**

Edited by
**Julian Sefton-Green
Kate Mannell
Ola Erstad**

OPEN ACCESS

palgrave macmillan

The Platformization of the Family Towards a Research Agenda

Editors: Julian Sefton-Green, Kate Manell, Ola Erstad.

This open access book outlines how the digital platforms that mediate so many aspects of commercial and personal life have begun to transform everyday family existence. It presents theory and research methods to enable students and scholars to investigate the changes that platformization has brought to the routines and interactions of family life including intergenerational communication, interpersonal relationships, forms of care and togetherness.

- The book
- Emerged from a seminar jointly funded by the Collaboration of Humanities and Social Sciences in Europe project (CHANSE), the Norwegian Research Council (PlatFAMs) and The Australian Centre of Excellence for the Study of the Digital Child (Digital Child).
 - Situates debates about platformization, mediatization and datafication within a history of change in social organization
 - Pursues the significance of datafication within self-understandings family narrative
 - Summarizes current state of knowledge about the platformization of the family while

This book is open access.
Springer Verlag/Palgrave, 2025



Special issues

DIGITALEducationREVIEW

The platformisation of contemporary educational contexts. Opportunities, tensions and risks
Editors: Raquel Miño, Moisès Esteban-Guitart, Paula Lozano

PlatFAMs articles in the pipeline:
From individual resignation to collective action. Families' critical literacy in the face of data surveillance
Raquel Miño, Paula Lozano, Judith Jacovkis, Lluís Parcerisa

Learning and mediation in the use of digital platforms in intergenerational families in Spain
Carlota Rodríguez, Mariana Largo, Gustavo Herrera, Sara Malo



Doing Family with Digital Platforms
Editors: Maja Nordtug, Kristinn Hegna, Antonio Membrive Ruiz (PlatFAMs), Annette Rønning (DK)

PlatFAMs articles in the pipeline:
Joint Family Media Engagement Events in the Platformised Society. A Case Study
Moisès Esteban-Guitart, Antonio Membrive, Mariana Largo, Sara Malo

From Restriction to Trust: Understanding Deferential Media Mediation Through Mother-Father-Child Triads in Norwegian Families
Jo Fosby Jaavall, Kristinn Hegna