



# State of the Art: Research Trajectory in the Master's Degree in Intervention in Family Relations, Universidad de Caldas–Colombia (2013-2020)

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**Abstract.** This article presents a comprehensive overview of the Graduate Research Projects (GRPs) conducted within the Master's Degree program in Intervention in Family Relations at the Universidad de Caldas, Colombia, between 2013 and 2020. The general objective was to recover the knowledge generated through research and intervention processes in the Program. The methodology involved a systematic, documentary review of the Master's theses, analyzing the studies conducted in the field of family relationships and intervention processes over eight academic years. In-depth interviews were also conducted with six directors and ten authors of the theses to identify common themes, elements, and differences. The analysis highlights the theoretical positions, research topics, methodological approaches, conclusions and recommendations of the GRPs, as well as the perspectives of graduates and directors. The results and conclusions a) reveal the epistemological, theoretical and methodological advances in the research studies, b) show the alignment of the GRPs with institutional and professional needs of the authors and the relevance for their seedbeds or research lines, and, c) state the connection of the GRPs to the proposed research lines. Furthermore, the article

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explores the integration of theses with institutional initiatives, with some utilizing the intervention proposals as a supportive framework while others viewed it solely as a degree requirement. Finally, the article underscores the intersection of epistemologies such as systemic, socio-cultural constructivism, and social constructionism, which align with the approaches of the Master's Degree Program and the methodological framework proposed for family intervention.

**Keywords:** State of the art, family relations, intervention, systemic epistemology, constructivism, social constructionism.

### **Estado del arte: trayectoria investigativa en la Maestría en Intervención en Relaciones Familiares, Universidad de Caldas – Colombia (2013-2020)**

**Resumen.** Este artículo es el resultado de la realización de un estado del arte de los trabajos de grado (en adelante TG) de la Maestría en Intervención en Relaciones Familiares de la Universidad de Caldas, entre los años 2013 y 2020. El objetivo general fue recuperar el conocimiento acumulado a partir de la trayectoria los procesos investigativos y de intervención realizados en la Maestría. La metodología comprende una revisión sistemática, documental de las tesis de la Maestría para indagar y recopilar información acerca de los estudios realizados en el campo de las relaciones familiares y los procesos de intervención en el transcurso de ocho años académicos. El registro de información fue complementado con entrevistas a profundidad a seis direct oras-es y diez autoras-es de las tesis, con el fin de identificar ejes centrales, elementos comunes, similitudes y diferencias. El análisis de este artículo da cuenta del énfasis en las posturas teóricas, objetos de conocimiento, ejes temáticos, procesos metodológicos, conclusiones y recomendaciones de los TG, las voces de las-os egresadas-os y las-os directoras-es. Los resultados y las conclusiones muestran a) las tendencias y los avances epistemológicos, teóricos y metodológicos de los estudios investigativos, b) la relación que hay entre los TG en cuanto a sus ejes temáticos o problemáticos con las funciones laborales unidas a las necesidades institucionales y profesionales de las-os autoras-es y a la pertinencia con semilleros o líneas de investigación a la cual pertenecían, y, c) la conexión del TG con propuestas articuladas a las instituciones. Esto último, ha sido una

oportunidad de continuar desarrollando procesos con el soporte de los lineamientos de la propuesta de intervención. No sucedió lo mismo con quienes presentaron este proceso solamente como un requisito para obtener el título. Finalmente, y como conclusión de cierre, en el desarrollo del artículo se cruzan las epistemologías: sistémica, constructivismo sociocultural y construccionismo social, las cuales responden tanto a los planteamientos la Maestría, como a la invitación metodológica de la intervención que propone el programa académico para afrontar con las familias los problemas sociofamiliares por los cuales consultan.

**Palabras clave:** Estado del arte, relaciones familiares, intervención, epistemología sistémica, constructivismo, construccionismo social.

## Introduction

Conducting research to analyze the state of the art of the GRPs developed by the students of the Master's Degree in Intervention in Family Relations required adopting an analytical approach towards the positions, perspectives, objects of knowledge, thematic focus, methodological processes, analyses, conclusions and recommendations derived from these studies. It also involved shedding light on the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge addressed by various professions and disciplines such as: Social Work, Family Development, Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, and Economics. These academic settings serve as platforms for exploring knowledge about families and family relationships. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the contributions made by institutions like the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) and universities including Santo Tomás de Aquino, Caldas, Nacional de Colombia, Pontificia Bolivariana, Antioquia, Católica Luis Amigó, de la Sabana, Fundación Universitaria Monserrate and Externado de Colombia.

During the initial exploration of the state of the art in Colombia concerning families and family relationships over the past 20 years, one permanent study on families stands out. López-Montaña and Herrera (2017) have already highlighted the pioneering and unique nature of "The family in Colombia: state of the art 1980-1994" by Calvo and Castro (1995) at the national level. Other studies have predominantly focused on individuals and individual or family problems. This statement has relevance to the state of the art of the GRPs conducted within the Master's Degree Program in Intervention in Family Relations, as the emphasis lies

on family relationships rather than solely the broader field of family. However, it is important to note that family as a social group is considered in studies as the context for studying these relationships. This distinction becomes evident in studies conducted in Colombian institutions and universities in the 1970s and 1980s, which sought to provide insights into phenomena considered integral to family life, such as abuse, domestic violence, family structure and internal dynamics.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, research efforts began to offer intervention proposals that positioned the family as a central “subject” of study. This shift reflected a growing concern to understand the forms and changes in family organization, the problems associated with processes of modernization and modernity, which had already been a topic of concern two decades earlier. There was also an expansion of interest in exploring the characteristics of families and their internal and social issues. This led to analytical and interpretative studies conducted by disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and economics, as well as analytical and psychotherapeutic approaches from psychology, and fieldwork drawing on theoretical and methodological advancements in social work and family development. The field of family work predominantly found its epistemological strength in the realm of psychotherapy, as exemplified by research conducted by Sánchez (2000) titled “*State of the art on family violence from a systemic perspective in five cities of the country—Medellín, Santa Fe de Bogotá, Santiago de Cali, Barranquilla and Cartagena 1987–1997*”. Subsequently, state-of-the-art studies focused on themes or issues related to childhood and family, such as Duarte et al. (2010) “*Family and Early Childhood: a state of the art 1994–2005*” and Ayarza et al., (2014) “*Families in Urabá: state of the art on families, typologies, parenting and their transformations.*”

During the same decade, there was a growing interest in studying the family and issues related to family relationships and problems within the family context. This interest was particularly evident in disciplines and professions such as psychology, social work, education and family studies. Noteworthy studies include Bonilla et al. (2016) “*Family: a state of the art in Colciencias research groups in psychology between 2010–2015,*” Morales (2015) “*State of the art of family research in the universities that offer the psychology program in the city of Ibagué,*” Páez (2017) “*Trends in research on the family in Colombia. An educational perspective,*” and Charry-Higuera (2014) “*Approach to the state of the art of family studies in Colombia. An Approach to Social Work.*”

From an interdisciplinary perspective and embracing approaches to family studies, notable works include Sánchez (2007) “*State of the art of research of the Department of Family Studies 1996–2005*”, and the work of López and Herrera (2017) “*A state of the art of family in Colombia: the place of the family and disciplines.*”

This article aims to explore the research trajectory of students of the Master’s Degree in Intervention in Family Relations at the Universidad de Caldas. It presents the findings of a state-of-the-art analysis of 20 GRPs conducted between 2013 and 2020. The article focuses on the most significant aspects, including the epistemological,

theoretical, and methodological foundations of the research studies. It also examines the thematic and problematic axes, along with their respective categories. Furthermore, the article highlights the intervention proposals guidelines derived from these studies, demonstrating the academic mission of integrating research and practical applications.

## Methodology

The research was conducted through a systematic documentary review, which involved the selection, access and registration of 20 theses from the Master's Degree in Intervention in Family Relations at the Universidad de Caldas, covering the period from 2013 to 2020. This approach was chosen to capture and retrieve the accumulated knowledge derived from the thematic and problematic trajectory of investigative and intervention processes.

Out of 23 research papers, 20 GRPs, submitted between 2013 and 2020, were analyzed. Unfortunately, access to three of the theses was not possible despite attempts to contact the graduates and authors. This limitation was due to difficulty in accessing the University premises in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 health emergency. Additionally, ten authors and six directors of the works were randomly selected and voluntarily participated in in-depth conversations or interviews. An interview guide was used to explore a) the reasons, motives and importance of each study, b) the origin and context of each study, c) the recognition of methodological applicability in the context of families and their family relationships based on the results, and d) the relationship between research and intervention.

The state of the art had five moments:

1. Initial approach: This involved accessing the documentary sources available at the University library and the documentation center of the Department of Family Studies. Due to the Covid-19 health emergency, online requests were made to obtain theses from some graduates of the Master's Degree program.
2. Invitation to authors: Authors who participated in the interviews were invited to provide further insights into the reasons, significance, and applicability of their studies, particularly regarding the criterion of the relationship between research and intervention.
3. Reading and classification: The GRPs were read and classified according to thematic axes, as well as the identified epistemological, theoretical, and methodological trends. The proposed intervention guidelines in each GRP were also examined.

4. **Information processing:** Their information was processed using qualitative data analysis criteria, employing software such as Atlas Ti. This allowed for the identification of similarities, connections, and differences across various components of the GRPs, in line with the objectives of the state-of-the-art analysis. The information was organized based on the research objectives, including trends based on the results and developed products, epistemological, theoretical and methodological trends, thematic, problematic and categorical axes, types and research approaches according to theme and problem, and the alignment with intervention proposal guidelines.

The information obtained from the documentary review was cross-referenced, leading to the development of central thematic axes that guided the analysis. Table 1 provides an overview of some aspects of the GRPs:

**Table 1.** GRPs, epistemological, theoretical and methodological approaches.

GRPs	Topic	Epistemological-Theoretical Trend	Method and Methodological Approach
1	Resignification of family relationships during family coping with childhood cancer. (González, 2016)	Systemic and Constructionist	Discourse Analysis, Hermeneutic
2	Discourses and practices of action in families that experienced child sexual abuse. (Calvo, 2017)	Social-Systemic Constructionist	Hermeneutic
3	Family tensions and confrontation of lesbian identity in the filial maternal relationship. (Rodríguez, 2017)	Social Constructionist: Systemic	Hermeneutical History
4	Meanings of the polyamorous or open partner experience and their experience in the family relationships of origin. (Cardona, 2017)	Social constructionist	Hermeneutic and theoretical foundation
5	Sense assigned by families to family socialization processes in early childhood, based on the presence and use of information and communication technologies in family settings. (Martínez, 2017)	Symbolic interactionism	Hermeneutics
6	Peacebuilding Families in Scenarios of Conflict and Violence. (Vargas, 2018)	Socio-cultural constructionist	Phenomenologic
7	Meaning of family conflicts and changes associated with the use of psychoactive substances. (Callejas, 2018)	Systemic Social Constructivist	Hermeneutic - grounded theory

8	Social construction of emotions in the context of international maternal migration. (Vargas, 2018)	Social constructionist	Narrative and hermeneutic analysis
9	Dialogic creations in psychosocial intervention that generate coping capacity and change in the face of child sexual abuse within the family. (Martínez, 2018)	Systemic and Constructionist	Grounded and hermeneutical theory
10	Systematization of social work in the intervention in family relationships in the process of restoration of rights of the ICBF. (Figuerola, 2019)	Sociocultural	Empirical position
11	Parenting practices in the prevention and exposure to risky behaviors in children. (Ortiz, 2019)	Social constructionist	Comprehensive and hermeneutical descriptive
12	Social Survival Strategies in Displaced Families. (González, 2019)	Social constructionist	Narrative and Hermeneutic Dialogue
13	Relational Dynamics in Same-Sex Couples. (Arias, 2019)	Social constructionist	Hermeneutic: case study and hermeneutic
14	Communication in families of adolescents linked to the criminal responsibility system. (Puerta, 2019)	Symbolic interactionism	Case study
15	Family experiences and teenage pregnancy. (Duque, 2019)	Phenomenology	Conversational
16	Practices of family accompaniment of educational agents and psychosocial professionals in the institutional modalities of early childhood care of ICBF. (Valenzuela, 2019)	Constructivist partner	Deconstruction
17	The sense of family in the higher education setting. (Sánchez, 2019)		Hermeneutics
18	Care practices in grandparent relationships with school-age children. (Rojas, 2019)	Constructionist	Hermeneutics
19	The role of the surrogate father in the process of raising adolescents with cognitive disabilities, Foster Homes with Disabilities. (Garzón, 2020)	Social constructionist	Hermeneutics
20	Family interactions, when one of its members is a transsexual woman. (Mejía, 2020)	Social constructionist	Biographical and hermeneutical approach

Source: Compiled by authors, information taken from the GRPs

Social Constructionism offers a comprehensive perspective for understanding human interactions and, in the context of this study, family relationships. It highlights the significance of language in shaping a form of life that mediates actions and interactions contributing to the creation of truths and the construction of realities that give meaning to the human world and life experiences of individuals. Language, being a public and context-

dependent phenomenon, is constantly in motion and subject to changes influenced by the individuals involved, rather than seeking universal or generalizable truths, social constructionism views language as a pragmatic means through which local truths are constituted (Gergen, 1996, p. 93). Language is understood as a tool for transforming and reshaping the relational and interactive contexts that individuals have constructed.

One of the approaches identified in the GRPs is the application of constructionism in understanding identity and relationships, which has important implications for professionals working with families, such as therapists or consultants. It promotes an appreciative perspective on individual or collective problems and acknowledges the role of perceptions in shaping family relationships. Within the interactive world, collaborative work, socially shared responses, and coordination enable the creation of meanings. Constructionism does not focus on what “is,” but rather on what “is between us” in our relationships and interactions (TG13). According to Gergen (2007) and Gergen and Warhus (2001), constructionism seeks to explain how people describe, explain, and account for the reality they inhabit. However, words alone do not carry meaning; they acquire significance through human interaction.

Another prevalent theoretical approach found in the GRPs is the integration of social constructionism with the systemic approach, as evident in five studies (GRPs 1, 2, 3, 7, 9). This perspective allows for the identification of diverse relational forms within family and social subsystems, each with its own way of constructing rules, norms, and interactive criteria. It recognizes the interplay between family relationships and multiple relational contexts, as observed in the families under study. Consequently, the reconfiguration of family relationships, as pursued in intervention processes, involves recognizing the capacities of the family system in both the construction of problems and the transformative processes based on coping mechanisms (TG1 and 3). From a systemic-constructionist viewpoint, Sánchez (2013, 2014, 2015) and Sánchez-Jiménez (2016) argue that individuals in every relational context engage in processes of meaning circulation, interpreting and co-constructing personal experiences through socio-family transactions and linguistic and paralinguistic exchanges. These processes occur when narrating a problem, constructing a redefinition with the therapist, or evolving towards languages of change.

Both social constructionism and systemic epistemology emphasize the relational nature of individuals and their interconnectedness with other relational systems. In GRP 2, for example, the individual is viewed as a social being who actively constructs and reproduces social reality through interactions, encounters, dialogues with others, and social practices, all of which are influenced by language. The beliefs, motives, reasons, and intentions of individuals are shaped and permeated by these social interactions.

***Sociocultural constructivism or socioconstructivism***, found in GRPs 10 and 16, posits that individuals construct meaning through interactions with others within a structured environment. This approach emphasizes the unity of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, semiotic mediation, and joint construction within asymmetric



relationships (Serrano and Pons, 2011, p. 8). It aligns with the critical perspective of education, which encourages the problematization of reality by considering the perspectives of others. This approach recognizes that interactions and relationships within each family context contain different perspectives through which problems are addressed and meanings are constructed. The construction process is collaborative, and education is seen as a socio-constructive process that allows for the exploration of diverse perspectives when addressing problems.

*Symbolic interactionism*, identified in TG5, places the family in a central position within its epistemic discourse. It suggests that families, as groups of individuals engaged in interaction, have the capacity to create their own symbols and meanings, which are evident in the process of family socialization through practices and discourses. This approach provides insights into the processes of socialization, communication, and interaction experienced by individuals within families, highlighting the interrelated nature of these aspects.

### **Methodological trends**

As indicated by the table, there is a strong alignment between the epistemological, theoretical, and methodological approaches in the analyzed works. The hermeneutic epistemological position is prominently utilized in 12 of the GRPs, and it is unnecessary to repeatedly explain this approach within the theses. The hermeneutic approach enables the integration of three levels of interpretation in each of the theses: (a) the voices and perspectives of the individuals providing information, (b) the ways in which the study subjects interpret and articulate their realities related to the studied topic or problem, and (c) the interpretations offered by the authors themselves as they develop the study. Consequently, all of these theses emphasize the significance of the social context as a relational platform that influences how individuals perceive, understand, interpret, and attribute meaning to their realities, as well as their comprehension of sociocultural, community, and family dynamics (GRPs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 17, and 19).

Within the hermeneutic framework, there is an emphasis on understanding the process of resignification of family relationships (GRP 1), exploring the factors that influence these relationships (GRPs 2, 9, and 17), and capturing the lived experiences of individuals in their daily lives, including their ways of being, feeling, and expressing themselves in the world. This approach also delves into interpreting the underlying meanings in social interactions and the construction of various human expressions (GRPs 3, 5, and 17). It enriches the understanding of the studied problems and their implications for the external context (GRP 4) and sheds light on how families create their interactive environments and attribute significance to their actions (GRP 5). In the hermeneutic perspective, there is a recognition that interpretation, understanding, and expression are essential for making meaning of human experiences and actions, always situated within

a specific context (GRP 6). It enables the comprehension of human behavior within localized relational and interactive contexts that are influenced by symbolic aspects, discourses, feelings, and actions inherent in language (GRPs 5, 7, and 19).

It is interesting to note that even though GRPs 11, 16, 18, and 20 do not explicitly mention the hermeneutic approach, their methodologies and analyses are aligned with this approach. The conceptual explanations and analyses within these theses are centered around the same approaches discussed in the previous 12 theses, indicating a connection to the hermeneutic perspective. On the other hand, GRP 14 lacks clarity regarding the methodological approach employed. In the case of GRP 10, it appears that the approach adopted was systematization.

### **Thematic, problematic and category axes**

It is evident that the descriptions provided in this section, as well as the subsequent section on the **“contributions of intervention guidelines,”** focus on the motivations behind the chosen topics of the GRPs and the methodological proposals. The information presented is based on the accounts provided by some graduates and thesis directors who voluntarily shared their insights.

A common thread among the GRPs is the identification of three key moments within family relationships, which may reflect a desire to capture the dynamic nature of problem formation over time. These moments include:

1. The attribution of meaning and significance to experiences before, during, and after a problematic situation within the family.
2. The process of resignification, wherein individuals and families seek to enrich their understanding and experiences by seeking alternative meanings in their everyday lives.
3. The description and explanation of change, whereby families articulate new meanings and perspectives that have led to transformative experiences, relationships, and actions.

This logic underlying the studies revolves around categories such as meanings, resignifications, senses, changes, and processes that are interconnected with family dynamics.

The choice of thematic, problematic, and category axes in the GRPs is often influenced by personal interests and professional motivations. These interests are intertwined with the academic structure, utilizing the lines of research as a supportive platform for the Master's Degree and interventions in family relationships.

A significant number of these axes directly relate to the authors' work and professional responsibilities, indicating that the GRPs serve as a bridge between work

contexts and categories of family relationships directly associated with the thematic content of the master's degree. The research exercises are thus anchored in the needs of the work context itself, and the topics selected align with the professional and academic processes pursued by the students, some of whom may be involved in research groups or research lines that are linked to their work or university activities.

For example, one interviewee mentioned being motivated to strengthen the educational intervention aspect studied during their undergraduate program in Family Development. They also highlighted the importance of delving into the psychosocial area, as the undergraduate curriculum fell short in adequately addressing family orientation, which is a predominant approach in their interactions with families. (I. C. Vargas, personal communication TG8, September 15, 2020).

In another case, a student initially focused on the adolescent population in the criminal responsibility system, reflecting their work context. However, their research underwent several changes, leading them to explore the meaning of life for adolescents and eventually deciding to investigate family communication among adolescents. This choice allowed them to fulfill their initial objectives and align their research with their work with families. (S. M. Puerta, personal communication TG14, October 3, 2020).

In yet another example, a student mentioned that pursuing the master's degree complemented their work with adolescents in the field of addictions. (A. E. Callejas, personal communication TG7, February 10, 2021).

The development of the research proposals in the GRPs was influenced by several factors: a) the institutional need, b) the work activities, c) the relevance of addressing certain issues, either due to a personal circumstances or emerging situations in professional practice, and d) the impact of the intervention proposals.

The selection of the master's degree program itself was not accidental. It was driven by a genuine interest in furthering learning and building upon previous experiences gained through professional practice. Pursuing the master's degree allowed students to deepen their knowledge and qualifications, particularly in the field of family relations, and enhance their professional competencies.

One graduate interviewed exemplified this personal and professional motivation. They expressed their interest in addressing a conjunctural issue of great importance in the country's transformation, specifically the signing of peace agreements between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

One of the authors refers to their desire to approach the topic from a generative perspective, focusing on the category of PEACE, which reflected their personal and academic purpose. They saw it as an opportunity to contribute to their professional training and engage with the social sciences in the context of family relations. (L. M. Vargas, personal communication TG6, September 13, 2020).

Indeed, the emergence of the research topics in the GRPs is intertwined with the professional trajectories of the authors. There is a close connection between their

personal experiences and motivations in their professional work, which is reflected in their research. The personal and professional dimensions are not separate but rather integrated, as the authors' voices and perspectives are shaped by their individual backgrounds and professional journeys. Therefore, it is not meaningful to consider a disconnection between the personal and the work aspects, as they are intertwined and contribute to the same sense of purpose and motivation in the research process.

For example, one author expressed interest in conducting the GRPs is rooted in their prior involvement and experiences in research seedbeds during their undergraduate studies. Being part of a research seedbed focused on family and human mobility allowed the author to explore the topic of the family in the context of international migration. This initial exposure sparked their curiosity and passion for the subject. Furthermore, the author's opportunity to receive a Colciencias scholarship as a young researcher provided them with a valuable platform to delve deeper into research on maternal migration. This experience further solidified their interest and commitment to studying and understanding the complexities of the topic. As a result of these formative experiences and personal growth, the author chose to pursue the topic of maternal migration for their GRPs in the Master's Degree program. This decision reflects their desire to continue expanding their knowledge and contributing to the field of study that captivated their interest.

Certainly, personal experiences and knowledge gained from significant events in one's life can greatly influence and motivate the choice of research topics in the GRPs. These experiences can shape the trajectory of a person's professional career and contribute to the development of their investigative processes. The following paragraph exemplifies how personal motivations, combined with conceptual and theoretical knowledge, drive the exploration of relational networks in family dynamics:

The topic specifically arises from a personal experience, the interest of researching that ... You always have reasons to do things, the reasons for me connect more with the arguments, that is, with what you can show that when you show it, that is, you fill it with content, meaning and meaning and expose it as an idea, it generates a kind of conviction for people, the motives are of an emotional, internal and subjective type that connects (...) In my experience as an educator I had constantly noticed the difficulties that young people, who were in the middle of their careers from 15 to 25 years old, had when they identified themselves in a different orientation than the hetero normative one. (A. L. Rodríguez, personal communication TG3, October 10, 2021).

Furthermore, the impact of the intervention proposals is discussed, as they are an integral part of the master's degree framework. Graduates' inputs play a significant role in shaping the intervention routes that guide the overall intervention process. These routes serve as the guiding horizon, providing meaning and purpose to the mastery itself. They outline the action plan, encompassing not only methodological

considerations but also conceptual aspects, shaping the approach taken in intervening in family relationships across various contexts, particularly within work scenarios, as stated in the following text:

At the institutional level I have had the opportunity to socialize the proposal in ICBF programs in whose name the word PEACE is in their name. Through my research experience, I have aimed to raise awareness among the human resources involved in promoting this peace. It is important to recognize that peace is not a perfect state, and the proposed methodological route serves as an intervention approach in this context. (L. M. Vargas, personal communication TG6, September 13, 2020).

It is also expected that the proposals will be applicable in various intervention scenarios, as highlighted in the following excerpt:

The intervention proposal is currently being studied to be implemented in the mayor's office of Villamaría, aiming to address the specific needs of transgender women. Its applicability extends to institutional and academic contexts, with a primary focus on enhancing socio-family relationship. The proposal seeks to strengthen and foster understanding within families that include transgender women, in order to prevent discrimination and reduce the symbolic violence to which these individuals are often subjected. (N. Vargas, personal communication TG20, October 20, 2020).

A recommendation made by both graduates and instructors is to incorporate a seminar dedicated to the preparation of intervention proposals within the Master's program. This seminar should consider the specific contexts in which professional work with families is conducted, as well as the labor and institutional frameworks. The objective is to ensure that the intervention guidelines developed in each GRP have a greater degree of cohesion and can be effectively implemented by graduates or other professionals working in relevant institutions. This approach is aligned with the research seminar, as it would foster a more impactful learning experience from the outset of the Master's program, emphasizing the need to strengthen the depth of understanding and the construction of intervention proposals.

### **Contributions of the intervention guidelines**

From an academic perspective, it was observed that out of the 20 GRPs analyzed, 7 of the studies (3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 17, and 20) demonstrate forms of academic and institutional impact, as reported by the graduates who authored these studies. Table 2 provides an overview of the intervention proposals and the specific contexts in which they are being implemented, tailored to the unique characteristics and needs of working with families and their relationships. Furthermore, two statements from the graduates highlight the institutional impact of their intervention proposals:

At the institutional level, I have had the opportunity to share the proposal with ICBF programs that include the word PEACE in their name. Through the research

experience, it raises awareness among the human talent involved in achieving this imperfect peace. The proposed methodological route serves as a form of intervention. (LMVL, GRPs 6, virtual interview, October 2020).

The intervention proposal is currently being studied for implementation in the Mayor's Office of Villamaría, aiming to address the specific needs of transgender women. Its applicability extends to institutional and academic contexts and primarily contributes to the family sphere. The focus is on strengthening and understanding families that include transgender women, with the goal of preventing discrimination and symbolic violence they may face. (NMV, GRPs 20, virtual interview, October 2020).

It is noteworthy that several of the graduates were successful in implementing their intervention proposals within the relevant entities, surpassing the initially expected impact. One notable example is GRPs 20, where the intervention proposal evolved into a local public policy. This achievement not only marked a significant milestone in the master's degree program but also allowed for ongoing implementation and validation of the proposal within the specific context.

These accomplishments add substantial weight to the argument put forth by one of the interviewed consultants (MHL), who emphasizes the importance of research agendas and lines of the master's degree being closely aligned with the realities and contexts in which they operate. This alignment would ensure that the intervention proposals have a more profound impact on the social contexts influenced by the academic institution. While Table 2 provides a glimpse of such impactful works, it is crucial to acknowledge the contributions of all the studies conducted in the master's program.

**Table 2.** Some guidelines of intervention proposals and execution contexts

GRPs	Topic	Context of implementation of the intervention proposals
3	Professional support to individuals and families in the process of identifying and revealing diverse sexual and gender identities: a look from a systemic-constructionist perspective	Observatory of Gender and Sexualities and Center for Support to Families of the Universidad de Caldas
4	Guidelines for Psychosocial Intervention with People Experiencing Polyamorous or Open Partner Relationships	Family Center of the Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana de Medellín and Family Center of the Universidad Católica de Pereira.
6	Guidelines for the Route of Intervention with Peacebuilding Families: Peace is Made from Within	Families of the San Lorenzo Refuge of the municipality of Riosucio - Caldas who have survived the armed conflict.
8	Guidelines for a Route of Intervention Transnational Motherhood and Emotional Experience	Families where the mother has migrated abroad.

12	Intervention Route Guidelines for Families Who Have Experienced Adverse Situations and Seek to Rebuild Their Lives	Displaced population of Manizales and La Dorada, articulated to joint research between the Universidad de Caldas and the Universidad Nacional de Manizales.
20	Intervention proposal “A path towards understanding the gender identity processes of transgender women”	Transgender women from the municipality of Villamaría - Caldas.

Source: Compiled by authors, information taken from the GRPs.

The scope of the intervention proposals in the socio-family field is significant, as they have addressed and provided insights into various situations and transitions experienced by families. Eight of the analyzed GRPs (1, 3, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, and 20) focused on understanding and responding to emerging events or transitions within families. These intervention proposals served as a) guidelines that facilitated the creation of reflective spaces, b) recognition of family dynamics that directly affected family relationships and, c) accompaniment during the coping processes – referred to as “processing” by some authors, are essential for families to navigate and make sense of their experiences.

It is important to highlight that while these proposals were developed for specific situations or problems, they have the potential to be adapted and applied to similar contexts or situations. This adaptability is possible because they are grounded in theoretical positions such as systemic thinking, social constructionism, and socioconstructivism. These approaches enable a comprehensive understanding of families, their relationships, and the problems they face, while considering the unique context in which they are situated. Within these approaches, there is an emphasis on the dialogical relationship between families and professionals. The proposals aim to create conversational encounters where families and professionals engage in a dialogue that promotes mutual recognition and the reshaping of meanings and interpretations related to the given situation. The narrative becomes a vital tool for recognizing the other’s perspective and reevaluating the significance and implications of family dynamics.

## Conclusions

Conducting a state-of-the-art analysis of the degree works developed by students of the Master’s Degree in Intervention in Family Relations at the Department of Family Studies, Universidad de Caldas, until 2020, requires taking an analytical perspective on various aspects. These include the positions and perspectives adopted, objects of knowledge, thematic areas explored, methodological processes employed, analyses conducted, as well as the conclusions and recommendations derived from the study of the family.

Examining the state of the art on the theme of the family is crucial to gain insights into the existing knowledge in this field and to understand how different professions and disciplines have approached it. Disciplines such as Social Work, Family Development, Psychology, and Sociology have all contributed to the understanding of family dynamics. By exploring the states of the art, it becomes possible to identify the various contexts from which knowledge about the family and family relationships has been generated.

The academic sphere, including universities, research groups, centers, and institutes, represents one of the primary settings where knowledge on families has been developed. Additionally, the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) and its zonal centers, along with NGOs affiliated with the institution, play a significant role as territorial entities responsible for addressing family-related issues. These institutions are considered strategic partners in the implementation of state policies related to families.

Consequently, the analysis of the state of the art reveals two important aspects. Firstly, it highlights the work and interventions conducted with families from diverse backgrounds, including indigenous communities, Afro-Colombians, and peasants, whose rights may have been violated. Secondly, it emphasizes the focus on vulnerable populations, such as children, adolescents, and individuals with disabilities or special needs.

This state of the art review encompasses the epistemological approaches, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, methodologies, and research conducted in the field of family and family relations. It provides an overview of the results, conclusions, and notable recommendations from each topic and problem investigated. Through this analysis, it becomes evident both the progress made and the limitations encountered in the studies conducted since the inception of the Master's Degree in Intervention in Relationships in 2013. Furthermore, by considering the intervention guidelines developed from each research, it becomes possible to identify the proposals that have emerged in response to various thematic and problematic aspects within the field of family relationships. These proposals, to some extent, are influenced by the institutional interests associated with each student's affiliation.

However, the intervention guidelines and their epistemological positions have not yet been systematically and significantly emphasized as an integral component that defines the identity and contributes to the academic growth of the field of intervention in family relationships, as well as the professional development of students and graduates.

Another concern related to the research developments and their alignment with the intervention guidelines is the assumption that highlights the significance of these works carried out by the students. On one hand, graduates argue that the research outputs of the master's degree reflect the genuine motivation of the students to contribute to the understanding of relational problems and potential forms of intervention. They aim to address contextual events or demands specific to their working institutions. On the other hand, it is recognized that these studies provide



an opportunity for analysis that can have an impact on the environment, aligning with the academic mission of the Master's Degree and the University. Finally, it is acknowledged that the degree works, which serve as the basis for intervention guidelines with families, draw upon the students' personal and professional experiences and work status. It is not uncommon for graduates to express their personal and professional expectations, which revolve around the desire to obtain a postgraduate degree and achieve this level of qualification.

Overall, this state of the art review sheds light on the advancements, challenges, and diverse motivations behind the research proposals and their relevance in the field of intervention in family relationships. It underscores the need for further exploration and integration of the intervention guidelines within the academic framework, as well as the recognition of personal and professional aspirations of students and graduates.

The Master's program in Intervention in Family Relations emphasizes that the majority of research studies conducted within the program are influenced by various factors and sources. These include the research projects and lines of the Collective Family Studies Group, professional work experiences integrated with the program's research lines, as well as the contextual circumstances and structural issues within the field of family relationships at local, regional, and national levels. The academic framework and collaboration between the University, the Master's program, the region, and the professional labor fields, in conjunction with research and intervention efforts, form the foundation of the program's trajectory and have sparked the interest in studying and taking action on various epistemological, theoretical-conceptual, and methodological aspects. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the continuity of these works as students transition into becoming graduates and professionals in the field.

It is worth noting that there have been comprehensive state-of-the-art reviews that delve into the theme of family relationships, particularly in problematic family situations. These reviews recognize the research process as a foundation for investigating different aspects, situations, and characteristics of family dynamics. The objective is to generate significant impact through the projects developed in this field of knowledge. By acknowledging the existence and progress of research works integrated with intervention practices, the state-of-the-art reviews provide insights into the advancements made and the gaps that emerge from each study, enriching the ongoing research processes in the field of family issues. They also contribute to the intervention processes within specific contexts where problematic family relationships are encountered.

One common element identified across the analyzed studies is the concept of "coping," which emerged as a significant category in the development of the research and the formulation of intervention strategies. The concept of "coping" is highlighted in almost all the studies reviewed. It is a crucial aspect in the support and guidance provided by professionals, as it is inherent in family relationships regardless of the specific problematic situation. Whether stemming from conjunctural events, other

dynamics within family relationships, or as part of the mechanisms for survival and functionality within families and among their members, coping is intertwined with conflicts, adjustments in primary relationships, and the acquisition of tools, skills, or strategies that are discovered or strengthened through the support and guidance provided in the intervention process. Editorial staff

It is recommended that the Master's Degree program includes an intervention proposal seminar to complement the training process. This seminar should be designed based on the specific contexts of family or social intervention, as well as labor and institutional fields. The aim is to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to adapt their intervention proposals to different situations and settings.

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